

Looking for the silver linings

■ There's not a lot of good news on any front since Bush took over, but there's a few environmental victories

Of all of the disastrous hallmarks of the Bush presidency, Bush's darkest legacy in the long run may be his unmitigated assault on the environment and his deliberate campaign to cover up the immediate threat of global warming.

The Bush Administration has undermined the Environmental Protection Agency, appointed corporate cronies in the oil industry to critical environmental posts, and muzzled top scientists from warning the public about the im-

minent climate crisis. It was no exaggeration when Al Gore said "George W. Bush has by all odds been by far the worst president for the environment in the entire history of the United States of America -- bar none."

Yet, Bush's actions have brought the environmental movement closer together than ever before, as activists have redoubled their efforts to combat Bush's relentless assault on the planet. During recent Earth Day activities, we saluted those who took part in the top five environmental victories of the past year.

Saving ANWR: In what the Sierra Club called an "against-all-odds victory for wildlife, wild places and all Americans," the Senate rejected Sen.

Ted Stevens' (R-AK) attempt to attach provisions to the Defense Appropriations Bill last December that would have opened up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling for oil. And weeks ago, the House Budget Committee also refused to appropriate funds for ANWR drilling in the FY2007 budget. Thanks to overwhelming pressure from environmental advocates, one of our nation's most pristine natural refuges remains safe from corporate poachers.

Governors Embrace Apollo: In July, The Apollo Alliance, one of the best progressive ideas of the millennium, gained important new supporters.

Six new Democratic governors – Rod Blagojevich (IL), Jim Doyle (WI), Christine Gregoire (WA), Ted Kulon-goski (OR), Janet Napolitano (AZ), and Brian Schweitzer (MT) – joined an earlier trio – Jennifer Granholm (MI), Ed Rendel (PA), and Bill Richardson (NM) – in embracing the Alliance's goal of achieving sustainable American energy independence within a decade. The nine governors are all leaders in state-based efforts at energy efficiency and increased use of renewables, the core twin planks of the Apollo program. That program calls for a national investment of \$300 billion over the course of ten years to build the basic production and distribution infrastructure needed for a cleaner energy economy.

Cleaning Up Mercury Pollution: While Bush's EPA has deregulated controls on mercury emissions – making it easier for power plants to emit this deeply harmful chemical into the environment – several states have strengthened anti-mercury laws. Gov.

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GFWSC Conservation Notes

Gas well explosion kills one, forces evacuation

A Tarrant County gas well exploded April 22nd, killing at least one person and causing the evacuation of over 500 residents near IH 20 in Forest Hill. The blast occurred at the well head as workers were attempting to regulate pressure. No fire was reported, but nearby residents were evacuated to shelters until the gas release could be contained. Officials of ETO Energy and the federal government were investigating the cause of the explosion and expected to have answers within a few days.

State approves Region C Plan

By a 5-1 vote the Texas Water Development Board has approved proposals submitted by the Region C Water

Planning Group for inclusion in the 2007 state water plan. The five year plan, subject to approval by the State Legislature next year, includes constructing four new reservoirs in East Texas at a cost of 3.3 billion dollars, despite strong objections from timber companies, property owners, and environmental groups.

TXU to build new coal-fired plants

TXU Corp. has revealed plans to build eleven new coal-fired power plants at nine of its existing locations, some replacing natural gas powered units. The new units will increase the company's generating capacity by 47% and will be on line in 2010. TXU contends that a switch to cleaner coal

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**Program
Notes**

Let's Hope April Showers Brought May Flowers: The May program of the Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club will be presented by the staff of the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens. Staff members will provide an overview of activities at The Gardens followed by a guided tour of the Water Conservation Garden. Put May 17 on your calendar now so you won't miss this informative meeting and program.

Support our printer

Alpha and Omega Printing and Graphics reduces our newsletter print cost 10% of every job Fort Worth Group Sierra Club members refer to it. Owner Mark Shippey is one of the few printers in this area who actively encourages the use of recycled paper and soy-based inks.

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Mission statement

The purposes of the Sierra Club are: To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

Looking for the silver lining behind Bush's dark environmental clouds

Rod Blagojevich of Illinois announced a proposal to reduce mercury emissions by 90 percent, and weeks later, Gov. Jennifer Granholm of Michigan followed suit. Massachusetts' legislature just passed legislation that would prevent mercury pollution in household items such as thermostats, automobiles, fluorescent lights and electrical switches.

And Idaho just passed a two-year moratorium on the building or operating of mercury-emitting coal-fired power plants.

Mayors Say Yes to Kyoto: We remain one of only two major industrialized nations that have not signed the Kyoto Protocol. Yet America's mayors are letting the world know that they stand with the global community – not Kyoto. So far, 220 mayors, frustrated with federal environmental inaction, have created their own Kyoto-complying standards, investing in cleaner vehicles, cutting dependence on oil, and promoting efficient and renewable energy projects. Check out Cool Cities for more info on this growing movement.

Clean Cars Movement Rolls On: Last

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year, Clean Car legislation – requiring the reduction of harmful auto emissions – was adopted in California and now eight other states have followed suit. These states combined cover a full third of the car and SUV market in the US.

Honor Roll: Madison Gas and Electric Co. of Wisconsin decided to stop burning coal at the state's dirtiest coal-fired power plant and switched to renewable energy. Gov. Tom Kaine of Virginia rebuffed a proposal that would have opened up the state's beautiful coastline to offshore drilling. Atlanta's Development Authority greenlighted an innovative new public transportation plan for a beltline connecting the entirety of Atlanta's downtown and surrounding the line with green space for walking, jogging, biking, and public enjoyment.

Sam Graham-Felsen, a freelance journalist and documentary filmmaker, contributes to The Nation's new blog, The Notion, and co-wrote this article with Katrina vanden Heuvel.

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And even more Sierra Club Outings

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buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. \$8 for adults, \$4 for children. Separate Sierra Singles table. Walk it off with an optional urban hike at a nearby park at 2:30 pm. No dogs please. Leader: Terry Jensen 972-988-8687 ext 3101(W) or ss@dfwnetmall.com.

June 4, Sunday

New member cookout. Attend an informal cookout in Fort Worth at a member's home. This is open to new members primarily. Cookout will include hot dogs and hamburgers and will begin at 5 p.m. and conclude by 7:30 p.m. Reservations required by May 31 and include \$5 per person to cover meal costs of meal. Vegetarian options available. Bring your own folding chair, plate, cup and utensils. For more information or to RSVP, contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242 after 8 p.m. RSVP required to attend.

June 17-18, Saturday-Sunday

Birds, Bats, and a beautiful river Car Camp at the South Llano River State

Park near Junction, Texas. The South Llano River is spring-fed, flowing over limestone rocks, with great scenery. The river is great for swimming or tubing, or for just keeping cool. We will camp in the walk-in area, and reservations should be made well in advance for this heavily used park. The park is 250 miles from FortWorth, down Hwy 377, and should take about 4-5 hours of driving. We will tube the river on Saturday morning, and go to Mason for the Bat flight at the Nature Conservancy's Eckert James River Preserve in the evening. This is an incredible experience. The scenic drive to bat caves does require high clearance for fording the rivers, but we can car pool as needed. More tubing on Sunday morning or hiking the great trails. There are some of the finest bird blinds in Texas (or the country) at South Llano. Website: www.tpwwd.state.tx to access the South Llano River SP site and Contact Marilyn Turnage at 214-533-2481 or marilynturnage@msn.com to sign up for trip or for more info.

The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club

No pets, firearms or radios are allowed on Sierra Club outings. All children (17 years or less) must be accompanied by a parent on any outing. All overnight trips require preregistration with the trip leader. A donation of \$5 per person to the Fort Worth Sierra Club is requested for all overnight trips.

May 11-14, Thursday-Sunday

Canoe a section of the Buffalo National River in central Arkansas on Fri and Sat for a total distance of < 20 miles over 2 days on this national wild and scenic river where no motorized boats are allowed. A celebratory dinner at the Riverside Inn is planned for Saturday night and a potluck for Friday evening. Camp each night at Tyler Bend Park located at the midpoint of the canoe trail. You must leave on Thursday by noon due to the seven-hour drive to the campsite. Shuttle service and canoe rental must be arranged in advance by contacting the outfitter at 870-439-2888 or 870-439-2386. The number of canoes available is very limited. The website is www.gilbertstore.com. Shuttles for personal canoes may be provided by the contacting the canoe outfitter to arrange this. This trip is open to experienced canoeists and requires approval of trip leader. This is not a technical river, but current and prior canoeing skills are needed. Leader: Marilyn Turnage, 817-491-2382 (e-mail marilynturnage@msn.com).

Club Outings

May 20, Saturday

River Legacy Dayhike We'll hike 6 miles on a paved trail to observe the Trinity River bottom forest, wildlife and open areas east of River Legacy Park. Bring water and sunscreen. Optional restaurant lunch afterwards. Directions: From I-30 in Arlington, exit Collins and take Collins north past Green Oaks Blvd. After crossing Green Oaks approx. 400 feet, turn left into the new River Legacy Park east entrance and park at the south section (walk south from the parking lot to find the map). Meet on the bridge near the parking lot at 8:30 AM. Please no dogs. Hike cancelled if raining in Arlington. No reservations just show up for hike. Leaders: Claudia Blalock 817-924-6242(H) and Judy Cato 972-238-5738(H)

May 19-21. Friday-Sunday.

Annual Caprock Canyon Rail-Trail Bike Ride at Caprock Canyon State Park. Learn about some of the natural wonders in the state of Texas as we do a warmer weather bike ride at Caprock Canyon. Ride departs from the state park on Saturday a.m., and is

about 23 miles on the Rail-Trail bike route. Moderate to strenuous. Very scenic. Need fat tired bike. Helmets and extra tubes or patch kits required. Must have leader's permission to participate in trip and bike ride is limited to 12 persons. But we will also have day hikes in the park for those who do not wish to ride. Make camping reservations with Caprock Canyon State Park. Ride departs from the Little Red Camping Area. Leaders: Dan Smith (bike ride), fwsieran@aol.com or 817-410-2955 (contact Dan for approval for trip). Dayhike leader: Margaret Knox, springvalley109@yahoo.com.

May 21, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch & Dayhike. Plant-based buffet with a large variety of food selections at Celaborelle, 817-922-8118, 2257 Hemphill just north of Elizabeth Blvd, Fort Worth. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 12 noon to 2:00 pm. \$7. Separate table for Sierra Singles. Walk it off with an optional hike at 2:30 pm. No dogs please. Leader: Terry Jensen 972-988-8687 ext 3101(W) or ss@dfwnetmall.com.

June 4, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch & Dayhike. Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat

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Coming Events

May 17, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Newsletter deadline. Submit articles, ads, letters, or other information in writing. Articles may be submitted by mail or email. B&W or color nature photos and electronic images (150 dpi or greater) will be accepted (prints returned if submitted with SASE). Photographs of outings or other club activities encouraged. Identify subject of photo and state photographer's name. Do not write on the back of photos. Mail submissions to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1874, Burlison, Texas 76097-1874, bring to the ExCom meeting, the general meeting, or email jmoody166@mac.com.

May 26, Friday

Noon meeting for Sierrans unable to attend the evening general meeting. This group meets the last Friday of each month at 2 p.m. in the Red Room at the Tin Cup, 1025 W. Abram, Arlington. Bonnie Bowman will be heading up this meeting.

June 5, Monday

Newsletter folding party at Braum's,

General Meeting Wednesday, May 17

7:00 Azalea Room of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center Complex. Going north on University, take the 2nd entrance into Botanic Gardens. The Garden Center is straight ahead. Program notes on Pg. 1.

6770 Bridge St. at 6:30 p.m. Call Steve Turner, 457-7131.

June 6, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.

Fort Worth Sierra Club ExCom Meeting, 6:30 p.m., at Spiral Diner, 1314 W. Magnolia. For more information, contact Susan Haney, 254-582-8228.

June 6, Tuesday

Outings Meeting immediately following the ExCom meeting to plan new outings and reminisce about old trips. See location above. Contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

Conservation Committee Meeting

The Conservation Committee meets on an as-needed basis. All members are welcome. For meeting information,

contact: Chair Glenn Ford, 469-6540, Earl Burnam, 244-2328, or Bob Scott, 282-1372.

Conservation

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and mechanical retrofits will reduce nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and mercury emissions, but did not commit to a decrease in carbon dioxides. Clean air advocates are concerned that TXU will not be using the best available technology for pollution control, and that the new plants would be "grandfathered" in years to come when new emission controls are required. The announcement came three days after a "rolling blackout" caused fears in North Texas that electric generation would be inadequate to meet demand

Visit our web site

You'll find the newsletter on-line a week or more before you receive it via mail delivery. Plus, there's always an updated outings listing and other features. We're at <http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/fortworth/>.

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