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Enjoy,  
and  
Protect the  
Planet

# Sierra Sentinel

The Greater  
Fort Worth  
Group of the  
Sierra Club  
July-August  
2009

## New EPA cement plant pollution rules endorsed by diverse groups

### Cities, state officials, citizens all turn out to support tougher, more aggressive rules for cement kilns

Representatives from Dallas and Fort Worth were joined by state officials, a variety of environmental and public health groups, and concerned citizens in calling on the EPA to adopt tough new rules governing pollution from cement plants at a national EPA hearing at a DFW Airport hotel.

In what was the best-attended hearing of three scheduled by EPA across the country, supporters had to set-up their own "cap and trade" system for doling out speaking times to all the people who wanted to testify.

Individuals who could stay longer donated their five-minute slots to those who had to leave early. Over half the slots were already filled by Monday afternoon, meaning early times were at a premium.

Mayor Robert Cluck of Arlington, State Representative Lon Burnam and State Senator Wendy Davis all testified in support of the rules, as did City Hall staffers from Dallas and Fort Worth, and other public officials and representatives of local government.

"This kind of response proves the public wants the government to be more aggressive in dealing with the biggest industrial polluters in DFW," said Jim Schermbeck, organizer for Downwinders at Risk, the local citizens watchdog group that has lead the effort to reduce pollution from the largest concentration of cement kilns in the country.

"It's summer, and the hearing location was terrible, but a crowd still turned out to say they want these cement plants better regulated. It's important to them," Schermbeck said.

Schermbeck's group was joined by a half dozen others in praising the EPA, including the Sierra Club, Environmental Defense, Arlington Conservation Council, the Interfaith Environmental Alliance, Public Citizen, and the Environmental Integrity Project.

"Cement kilns have remained a poorly regulated smokestack industry for air toxics like mercury, hydrochloric acid, soot particles and hydrocarbons, and that's why EPA needs to adopt the proposed rules," said Dr. Neil Carman, Clean Air Director for the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club.

"We urge EPA to adopt the proposed rules and end the delay in protecting our most vulnerable populations from

hazardous airborne contaminants released by these facilities. While there is an ecological, political, and economic case to be made for why these proposed rules must be adopted by the EPA there is an even more compelling argument – the public's right to a healthful environment," said Cherelle Blazer, the new Dallas Clean Air and Clean Energy specialist for Environmental Defense Fund.

EPA picked DFW as a hearing location in part because it's home to the largest number of cement kilns in the U.S. It also has the largest number of older "wet kilns" than any other region. EPA's new rules pose the biggest challenge.

*Please see TOXIC, Page 2*

### Do we ♥ New York enough to poison a Texas aquifer and compromise public health

In June, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that "the healing of the Hudson River begins today."

The Sierra Club responds that GE's plan to send dangerous PCB's from the New York superfund site to Texas means that "soon the poisoning of the Ogallala Aquifer could begin."

Dr. Neil Carman, a chemist with the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club said, "This is like a shell game, moving hazardous toxic PCBs from one sensitive location to another. The Waste Control Specialist dump site is already controversial because it is located over vulnerable aquifers. We are concerned about contamination of the Ogallala Aquifer and other aquifers in this dry region of Texas that needs to protect and conserve water for drinking and agricultural uses."

"We are also concerned about both public health and environmental disasters along the train route. GE plans

to ship 81 carloads in a mile long train every 4-5 days for six months beginning around July 1. The train cars will have plastic covers that would do nothing to hold the toxic waste in the event of a derailment. These train cars should be properly capped with a steel cover that would contain and minimize any spill of PCB's. Communities along the route must be informed and first responders warned so they can be prepared to handle a potential disaster."

In February 2009, the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club asked the EPA to halt the shipments until an Environmental Impact Statement could be written. [http://texas.sierraclub.org/press/news\\_releases/20090211.asp](http://texas.sierraclub.org/press/news_releases/20090211.asp)

Here is the EPA site on PCBs: <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/hazard/tsd/pcbs/index.htm>

And the EPA's fully approved set of alternative PCB treatment technologies: <http://www.epa.gov/osw/hazard/tsd/pcbs/pubs/stordisp.htm>.

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## -Toxic emissions could be reduced 90% under new EPA standards

Continued from Page 1

lence to these obsolete kilns because it means they'll have to add new pollution controls or become candidates for replacement. But the rules also mean that even the more modern "dry kilns" will be required to update their equipment in some cases.

Emissions of Mercury, Particulate Matter/Soot, Total Hydrocarbons, and Hydrochloric Acid could be reduced by as much as 70 to 90% or more under the EPA's new emission standards, which would take effect in 2013. It would be the first time cement plants would be subject to federal Mercury limits.

According to EPA, this translates into 600 to 1600 saved lives annually, and \$4 to \$11 billion in health-care costs and other benefits.

EPA and Texas Commission On Environmental Quality studies have shown that the Midlothian cement plants can have a big impact on air pollution levels in DFW. Combined, they account for half of all industrial pollution in North Texas. Last year, a report by students at the University of North Texas concluded that the Midlothian cement plants plus an adjacent steel mill had reported releasing approximately one billion pounds of air pollution from 1990 to 2006, including 10,000 pounds of Mercury, 21 million pounds of Total Hydrocarbons, 35 million pounds of Particulate Matter, and 400 million pounds of Sulfur Dioxide – a chemical closely associated with Hydrochloric Acid.

According to leading scientists, as little as 1/24th of an ounce of Mercury can contaminate a 20-acre lake and all the fish in it. Using this measuring stick, the 10,000 pounds of Mercury released by the Midlothian cement plants and steel mill is enough to contaminate over 133 million 20-acre lakes. Joe Pool Lake is within five miles of all the Midlothian cement plants.

EPA's proposed rules are the latest chapter in a legal saga going back to the George H.W. Bush Administration. Mercury regulations for cement plants were ordered in 1990 as part of an amendment to the Clean Air Act. The order gave the EPA until 1997 to adopt regulations.

The agency missed the deadline and there has been a series of legal challenges ever since. Downwinders' At

Risk began joining those efforts in the late 1990's, coordinated by national group EarthJustice. In 2006 the EPA set emission standards for new plants but refused to do so for existing plants, forcing another round of lawsuits that ended with the release of these new rules on April 21 of this year.

"We've fought for nearly a decade to protect communities plagued by pollution from these kilns," said Earthjustice attorney Jim Pew. "We're heartened by EPA's commitment to cleaning up these pollution sources and we hope the cement industry will do the right thing and abide by these new rules."

## TP&W commission to hold its regular and annual meetings here August 26-27

Continuing an effort to increase public input and transparency in government as exemplified by last year's meeting in Houston, the TP&W Commission will hold its August meeting and the department's annual public hearing August 26-27 in Fort Worth.

The meetings will take place at the Amon G. Carter, Jr. Exhibit Hall in the Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3401 W. Lancaster in central Fort Worth in the city's cultural district.

Starting at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 26, the regulations, conservation, and finance committees of the commission will meet, followed at noon by lunch and executive session business. Then at 2 p.m. the commission will commence the annual public hearing.

At 9 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, the full commission will meet. The department executive office will be working with various divisions to invite stakeholders in the Dallas/Fort Worth area to the meeting.

Anyone interested in the state parks and their governing body, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, is welcome to attend.

# Upcoming Sierra Club Events

## July 5, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch every first Sunday at new location: Papaya Garden, 1201 W. Airport Freeway #100, 817-684-9378, Eules on the corner of Airport Fwy. (Hwy 183) & Industrial (FM157). Thai, plant-based, and all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Larger restaurant means more room for families and other groups. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140.

## July 7, Tuesday

Sierra Club Executive Committee (Excom) Meeting, 6 p.m. Luby's Cafeteria, 2800 8th Ave, Fort Worth, just north of 8th Ave and Berry St. All Sierra Club members and interested parties are invited to attend this meeting and help shape the policies and events of the Fort Worth Sierra Club.

## July 11, Saturday

Day hike at Fort Worth Nature Center. Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the Hardwicke Interpretative Visitors Center Parking lot at Fort Worth Nature Center. After you enter the refuge pay your entrance fee and follow signs to Hardwicke. The park opens its gates at 7 a.m. so be there promptly. We will hike a 4-5 mile section of trails. Bring water, snacks, and raingear. Nature Center is located in NW Tarrant County on Lake Worth. Take Highway 199 exit west toward Azle off 820 West on western edge of Fort Worth. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242. For more information on Nature Center, visit [www.fwnature-center.org](http://www.fwnature-center.org). In the event of rain, hike is cancelled. No dogs please.

## July 12, Sunday

Outings meeting. Share your ideas for outdoor adventures with other club members and outings leaders as we plan club outings for upcoming months. We need your ideas and your help to lead or participate in outings. 3 p.m., Backwoods Store, 2727 W. 7th Street, Fort Worth. For more information call Nancy McVean, 817-596-5209, [nancymcvean@gmail.com](mailto:nancymcvean@gmail.com)

## July 15, Wednesday

General Meeting of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, 7 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by speaker, Lucy Harrell of Arlington, Texas Certified

*This is an all-inclusive list of activities of the Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club. Check the group website for updates. Most activities are free and open to all. 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 pre-registration with the trip leader. A donation of \$5 per person to the Fort Worth Sierra Club is requested for all overnight trips.*

Nursery Professional and expert on Texas landscapes and organic gardening specialist. Looking to reduce your water bill and not be a slave to your yard? She will tell us how to reduce our yard watering needs to every 10 days and use the right plants for the right place. Location: Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Moncrief Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30.

**NOTE:** There will be no Mid-Suburban Sierra Club meetings during the summer months. Have a great summer!

## August 2, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch every first Sunday at: Papaya Garden, 1201 W. Airport Freeway #100, 817-684-9378, Eules on the corner of Airport Fwy. (Hwy 183) & Industrial (FM 157). Thai, plant-based, and all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2 p.m. Larger restaurant means more room for families and other groups. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140

## August 4, Tuesday

Sierra Club Executive Committee (Excom) Meeting, 6 p.m. Luby's Cafeteria, 2800 8th Ave, Fort Worth, just north of 8th Ave and Berry St. All Sierra Club members and interested parties are invited to attend this meeting and help shape the policies and events of the Fort Worth Sierra Club.

## August 15, Saturday

Day hike at Fort Worth Nature Center. Meet at 7:15 a.m. at the Hardwicke Interpretative Visitors Center Parking lot at Fort Worth Nature Center. After you enter the refuge pay your entrance fee and follow signs to Hardwicke. The park opens its gates at 7 a.m. so be there promptly. We will hike a 4-5 mile section of trails. Bring water, snacks, and raingear. Nature Center is located in NW Tarrant County on Lake Worth. Take Highway 199 exit west toward Azle off 820 West on western edge of

Fort Worth. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242. For more information on Nature Center, visit [www.fwnature-center.org](http://www.fwnature-center.org). In the event of rain, hike is cancelled. No dogs please.

## August 13-16, Thursday-Sunday

Camping and hiking in Davis Mtns State Park. Need a break from the summer heat during the dog days of summer? No need to go to Colorado since we have our own mountains right here in Texas. We will be hiking in the Nature Conservancy land in this area, attending a star party at the McDonald Observatory, and observing the Marfa lights. We will camp at Davis Mountains State Park so reserve your campsite online at [www.tpwd.state.tx](http://www.tpwd.state.tx) or by calling 512-389-8900. Lodging option is available at the Indian Lodge at the state park as well. You need to contact trip leader to sign-up prior to making your camping reservation. Trip leader: Nancy McVean, 817-596-5209, [nancymcvean@gmail.com](mailto:nancymcvean@gmail.com)

## August 19, Wednesday

General Meeting of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, 7 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by speaker. J. D. Granger, the executive director of the Trinity River Vision Authority, will give a presentation on the Trinity River Vision – the effort to combine recreational opportunities with flood control and environmental enhancements to greatly improve public utilization of the river. His presentation will cover different components of the project, the status of construction and the overall impact it will have on North Texas. This subject will be of interest to all members due to the scope of the project. Location: Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Moncrief Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30.

**NOTE:** There will be no Mid-Suburban Sierra Club meetings during the summer months. Have a great summer!

## August 25, Tuesday

Newsletter Folding Party at 6 p.m. Braum's Restaurant, 6770 Bridge St at Loop 820, Fort Worth. Have a few minutes to donate your time to the club to label newsletters? No skill required, just a willingness to help.

*Please see MORE, Page 4*

## **-More Outings**

*Continued from Page 2*

### **October 23-25, Friday-Sunday**

Sierra Celebration, Martin Dyes Jr. State Park in the Piney Woods of East Texas. Join Sierra Club members from across the state at our annual campout. This state park is on the Neches River with a beautiful cypress covered lake and is between Woodville and Jasper in SE Texas. There is canoeing, birding, cycling, fishing, and hiking in and near the park. Canoe rentals are available. Watch for more details on the state Sierra Club website <http://lonestar.sierraclub.org> or in the newsletter. Reserve your campsite now in the state park at [www.tpwd.state.tx](http://www.tpwd.state.tx) or by calling 512/389-8900. Contact person: Tolbert Greenwood, [Tolbert@greentol.com](mailto:Tolbert@greentol.com) or 817-737-8698.

### **October 30-November 1, Friday-Sunday**

Halloween campout and canoeing at Caddo Lake. We will canoe approximately 1 mile to Goat Island at Caddo Lake to camp for the weekend. This lake is near Marshall, about 3-4 hours from Fort Worth and is the only natural lake in our state. It is a beautiful cypress covered lake which adds to the spooky feeling for Halloween. Canoe rentals are available but contact trip leader for more details. Potluck dinner on Sat. night complete with witch's brew. State park is nearby for showers. This lake requires no canoe experience and is a great adventure for families and new campers. Leader: Marilyn Turnage, 214-533-2481 (leave message) or [marilynturnage@att.net](mailto:marilynturnage@att.net).

### **November 11-15, Wednesday-Sunday**

Join your friends and other Sierra Club members again this fall for our annual trip to Big Bend National Park. We will have a base camp option located in the Chisos Basin with a variety of day hikes throughout the park and a backpacking option on the Marufo Vega trail (one of the most beautiful trails in the park). We will be traveling by 15-passenger van leaving early Wednesday morning and returning late Sunday evening. The cost of the trip will be \$175. For more information contact Todd Nichols (817-937-5217) or James Moody (817-688-3656).

## **Climate science report underscores the need for a clean energy jobs plan**

The Obama administration's U.S. Global Change Research Program unveiled a dramatic new scientific assessment of the likely impacts of global warming on the United States. The report, "Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States," warns of longer, more severe droughts, increasingly severe heat waves, rising sea levels, and many other negative impacts as a result of unchecked global warming. The Sierra Club offered the following comments of Carl Pope, Sierra Club Executive Director, in response.

"This report confirms much of what we already knew, that there is an overwhelming scientific consensus that global warming is real, is happening now, and will have severe consequences if left unchecked. What is new, is that it explains in exhaustive detail how runaway global warming will impact us and our children right here in

the United States if we fail to act.

"This report is also further proof of this administration's commitment to putting science first, something that stands in marked contrast to its predecessor.

"In view of this new and troubling assessment of the challenge we face, it is essential that Congress move without delay to pass a strong clean energy jobs plan. Such a plan will not only rebuild our economy with millions of new clean energy jobs and break our dependence on oil and coal, it will help us avert the most catastrophic impacts described in this report.

"Congress has the opportunity to solve both today's economic crisis and the looming environmental calamity we face by passing a strong, comprehensive clean energy and climate bill that is up to the task before us. We urge them to do so as soon as possible."

## **Thousands support Big Picture solutions**

As the Environmental Protection Agency's comment period comes to a close almost 42,000 comments supporting strong action on global warming were submitted through the Sierra Club's Big Picture campaign. The comments and testimony were collected through more than 70 house parties across the country, massive turnout and rallies at EPA hearings, and online outreach efforts.

After weeks of gathering public input, including more than 150,000 comments from the environmental community, the EPA will begin finalizing its finding that carbon dioxide and other global warming pollution present a danger to public health and welfare. This "endangerment finding" is the first step toward regulating global warming pollution from coal plants, cars, and other major polluters.

"It's clear from the huge volume of public input and turnout at hearings that Americans think it's important for EPA to clean up dirty energy, especially coal plants," said Mary Anne Hitt, Deputy Director of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign. "We have an opportunity now to make a clean energy future a reality; we cannot afford to let the coal industry hold us back by blocking clean up efforts and the transi-

tion to renewable energy."

There are already close to 600 existing coal plants covering the U.S. Many of these aging plants have operated for decades without updating their pollution controls for soot, smog and mercury; none of the existing plants have any type of controls to limit global warming pollution.

"Existing coal plants alone account for more than 30% of the nation's global warming pollution. We can not solve the climate and energy puzzle without addressing this major source of pollution," continued Hitt. "It is absolutely essential that EPA use all the tools at its disposal to clean up these dirty coal plants."

Other rules and standards by EPA are already in the works to make big polluters report their global warming emissions and implement renewable fuel standards. The EPA is also expected to issue California the waiver it needs to implement standards to clean up the nation's cars and light trucks.

The Big Picture campaign will continue engaging the public in these important decisions by the Obama administration, as well as forthcoming standards on issues ranging from toxic coal ash disposal to emissions of mercury, soot, and smog from coal plants.

# Water treasure is in our own backyard

By **TERRY JENSEN**

We North Texans take pride in our beautiful, green yards. We do this in an area that would not produce even one green yard without a tremendous amount of water. In fact, we use more water per capita than any other area of the state.

We read that we are running out of water in North Texas. We don't worry about this too much because we also read this can be mitigated by building more reservoirs. That is what we have done in the past.

A funny thing has happened on the way to the future, though.

The areas where we have built reservoirs, like East Texas, are saying, "No more reservoirs in our backyard. We're keeping our land for us."

They are fighting us when we come to take their land. And winning. As Sierrans, we are normally glad for their victory, but as residents of North Texas we have cause to worry.

Yet, we have the answer to many of

our water problems, now and in the future, on our rooftops: Renewable water.

The average rainfall in North Texas is 33 inches a year. If that rain fell evenly throughout the year, there would be little-to-no reason to ever water a yard.

Unfortunately the bulk of our rain falls in a few months. Municipalities often encourage developers and builders to get that water off residential properties as quickly as possible. Pronto, it is in the Trinity River on the way to the gulf, never to see North Texas again.

Maybe its time for a change!

Maybe its time for a change because it is becoming more expensive to water our yards and keep our pools filled.

Maybe it is time for a change because the use of water is restricted in some communities.

Maybe it is time for a change because it is the environmentally re-

sponsible thing to do.

And maybe it is time for a change because water is fast becoming one of our most valuable commodities. This value can only increase.

## LEGALITIES

The water that falls in your yard is legally yours in the State of Texas. You can use it to water your yard or garden and, properly processed, even to shower or wash clothes. With another processing step, admittedly probably too much for most of us, your legally-owned rainwater can be used for your family to drink.

However, once that water leaves your yard, you are no longer the legal owner of it. Hold on to that thought because it is going to be important to you in the future — probably the very near future.

## HARVESTING

Rainwater harvesting is a simple process and relatively inexpensive addition to your property. It is certainly

*Please see RAINWATER, Page 6*

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**Membership**

Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed

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Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Individual (\$39)  Joint (\$49)  Senior/Student (\$25)

Annual dues include subscription to Sierra (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1.00). Dues are not tax deductible.

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Mail to Sierra Club Member Services, 85 Second St.  
 2nd Floor, San Francisco, Calif. 94105-3441

### Mission statement

The purposes of the Sierra 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.

# -Rainwater to become valuable commodity Continued from Page 5

a job that is in the realm of people who are "handy."

For those of use who are not, however, there are several companies in the Metroplex you can call for bids. My simple Internet search produced one in Denton and one in Arlington. I could probably dig deeper and find more.

More information can be found at <http://dfwnetmall.com/energy/>

### SUMMARY

As Sierrans, we might harvest rainwater because it is the right thing to do for the environment. But for everyone, environmentalist of not, rainwater will become more valuable with time.

Remember rainwater is legally yours. You don't want to lose it just as you might not want to lose the natural gas under your land.

In some parts of the Untied States, it is already illegal to add rainwater harvesting equipment to a property. Municipalities or states want or need it for drinking and agriculture.

Maybe that will never happen here.

And maybe if it does, people who already harvest rainwater will be allowed to continue.

They will be "grandfathered in" like many other situations in Texas

## Going 'batty' for James River Bat Preserve

Ten Sierra Club campers escaped the heat and flurry of the Metroplex by visiting South Llano State Park in Junction June 13-14.

When we were not tubing the mild current of the South Llano River inside the park, we could be found watching an Indigo Bunting in the wonderful bird blind in the park or hiking the trails.

The highlight of the weekend was a visit to the Nature Conservancy's James River Bat Preserve on Saturday night near Mason, an hour from the state park.

This area contains one of the largest habitats in the world for Mexican freetail bats. They migrate to the caves, have their babies in early June, and move on. Over 3.2 million

history.

In the meantime, all you have to lose is money if you allow rainwater to leave your property unharvested and unused.

bats will inhabit these caves after the babies are born. We witnessed the emergence of millions of bats around 8 p.m. Saturday night as they formed their vortex of flight.

Both the bats and the 10 Sierra Club members were photographed by a National Geographic magazine photographer who is writing an article for the magazine about the migration of species. The article and photographs will appear in a Spring 2010 issue of the magazine.

Also present was a large western diamondback rattler who stationed himself inside a ledge of the cave to capture any bat that got too close.

This outing is a annual trip for the Fort Worth group each June and was led by Marilyn Turnage.