

Don't look now, but more nuclear plants may loom on the horizon

Low-key approach to public input seems to be strategy for approval of two plants planned at Comanche Peak

By NITA O'NEAL

Two new nuclear power plants are proposed to be built at Comanche Peak.

You hadn't heard? Well, Luminant didn't want to have it known until it was too late! It held a small meeting in Glen Rose on January 6, with very little notice.

What are some of the things the company didn't want you to hear about?

1) The reactor design the company is rushing to get a license to build has not yet been approved by the NRC, and has never been built anywhere else in the world.

2) If Luminant gets a license to build, it can begin without NRC approval for that reactor design, in the hope the design gets approval prior to when the plants will be ready to operate.

3) Texas statutes (written since the building of the first two plants at Comanche Peak) allow a utility to begin charging ratepayers an increased rate to cover building costs as soon as construction begins.

4) While Luminant's efforts to have Federal loan guarantees written into the Stimulus Bill by the Senate were stripped from the final bill, the company is now trying to have nuclear power declared a "Renewable Energy Source" that could obtain funding from the proposed Renewable Portfolio Standard bill (which is scheduled to be reviewed in March).

That means that if the NRC does not approve that new reactor design – or even if Luminant decides to stop construction – Luminant still recoups its

construction losses at taxpayer cost.

(By the way, only about half the nuclear plants that started construction in the U.S. ever produced electricity. Would you give a home contractor with a record like that a construction loan?)

That seems to be a win-win situation for Luminant, and a lose-lose one for ratepayers/taxpayers – US.

Oh, and one other point Luminant hopes you don't hear: Electric power conservation plans already mandated by both Federal and Texas state legislation will, over the next 10 years (the time frame it took the first plant at Comanche Peak to come online) more than cover increased usage by the estimated population growth in the area.

A new organization "True Cost of Nukes" (TCN) has recently been formed to inform the public as quickly as possible about the huge financial cost to ratepayers and taxpayers of these proposed plants.

There is an extremely limited time period (less than 60 days as of mid-February) for the public to speak. We

Tandy Hills Prairie Fest set for April 25

Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area announces the 4th Annual Prairie Fest from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. on April 25.

Prairie Fest is one of the most distinctive outdoor festivals in North Texas and celebrates our connection to the natural world through music, art, dance, environmental stewardship and wildflower tours.

Activities take place at 3400 View St., Fort Worth. Tandy Hills Natural Area is adjacent to I-30 and less than 5 minutes from downtown Fort Worth.

For information on Sierra Club involvement, including the Sierra Singles, look in the Upcoming Sierra

are also asking for a hearing to be held in Fort Worth in the evening to allow the majority of the population in the affected area to speak.

Please contact your state senator and representatives and make your opinion known. Most of them have direct email links from their sites, so you can do so very quickly and easily.

If you aren't sure who your elected officials are, you can look them up at the Texas League of Women Voters web site by entering your address at the bottom or at the right of the page.

For Texas senators: <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/Members.htm>.

For Texas representatives: <http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/welcome.php>

Please watch the GFW Sierra Club web site for further announcements of public meetings regarding the proposed nuclear plants. If you would also like to assist TCN in getting out the word, we have information and handouts to assist you. You may contact me at nita.oneal1@yahoo.com.

Club Events on Page 3.

The one-day festival is free and open to the public. For more information about the natural area and or Prairie Fest visit www.tandyhills.org.

Each year, Prairie Fest draws hundreds of people throughout North Texas to see first hand what a native, backland prairie looks, smells and feels like.

Environmentally conscientious businesses and community organizations promote sustainable and healthy living. Master naturalists lead tours in the best place in the Metroplex to

Please see TANDY, Page 4

Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club

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<http://sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/fortworth/index.html>
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More outings, events Continued from Page 3

Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30, Fort Worth.

April 17, Friday

Arlington Sierra Club daytime meeting is an informal discussion on various environmental issues among like-minded people over a cup of coffee or tea. Latecomers welcome. Location: Tin Cup, 1025 W Abram, Arlington. 1 – 2:30 p.m. For more info, contact tceaprez@yahoo.com.

April 19, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Plant-based, all-you-can-eat buffet from 12 noon until 2 p.m. Regularly \$9, \$1 off for Sierra Club. New Start Veg, 2330 Royal Lane, ste 900, Dallas. Just west of I-35 on the south side of Royal. Organizer: James Bisby 469-371-1938

April 25, Saturday

Prairie Fest Spring Festival. Sierra Club has a booth here. We would like to invite all Sierra Singles to this event at the Tandy Hills Natural Area. This gathering is an outdoor festival to celebrate our connection to the natural world.. Please see story on Page 1 and the website for more details and directions. www.tandyhills.org/prairiefest.html. Your favorite Sierra Singles leader, Ginger, will be there from about 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. I will start out at the Nature Center Booth at 3:00, and will wait for fellow Sierrans about 15 minutes. Then I will take a walk on the Wildflower trails and absorb the flora and fauna. There are plenty of booths to check out, loads of environmental info, and of course beer. At 6:00, my favorite band from Denton is playing, Brave Combo. I will be there for that. I'll have on a green bandanna, and look forward to seeing all of you. Carpooling encouraged! Call Ginger with questions or suggestions. Organizer: Ginger Bradley 469-223-7902(C)

April 27, Monday

Mid-Suburban Sierra Club at 7 p.m. "Renewable Energy: It's Time Has Come" by John Mann of Sunrise Solar. We all want it and we all know we need it. But renewable energy remains somewhat of a mystery to many of us. John Mann has been involved with renewable energy (solar electric, solar hot water, solar pool, and wind) since 2000 when he added solar to his home. He will not only explain the technolo-

gies, he will also give us rough estimates of costs, tell us which technologies are best for certain situations, and explain rebates and tax credits in layman's language. Get your renewable energy questions answered by an expert. Meet in second floor community room in the Sunflower Shoppe (formerly Healthy Approach Market), 5100 St Hwy 121, Colleyville, on the west side of the freeway between Hall-Johnson and Glade roads. Exit Hall-Johnson and go south on the Hwy 121 access road. Turn right into the Sunflower parking lot immediately after passing the restaurants Rio Mambo and Mac's. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817 545-0140. Free.

April 28, 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.

May 3, Monday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch every first Sunday. Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140.

May 14-17, Thursday-Sunday

Canoe a section of the Buffalo 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 Saturday night and a potluck 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 7-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. Number of canoes available is very limited. Website is www.gilbertstore.com. Shuttles for personal canoes may be provided by the contacting the canoe outfitter. Trip is open to experienced canoeists and requires approval of trip leader. This is not a technical river, but there is a current and prior canoeing skills are needed. Leader: Marchilyn Turnage, 214-533-2481 or Marchilynturnage@att.net or Tolbert Greenwood, 817-737-8698 or tol@greentol.com.

Upcoming Sierra Club Events

March 11, Wednesday

Conservation Meeting & Discussion Group 6:30 p.m. Grab something to eat and meet us in the Cafe on the Run where we will cover any conservation business and then discuss topics of interest. Central Market, 4651 West Freeway, Fort Worth.

March 15, Sunday

Hike the area's newest park with other Sierrans at Eagle Mountain Park in NW Tarrant Co. Meet in front of the Apple Computer Store on University Drive in Fort Worth in the University Park Village Shopping Center (1612 S University) at 1 p.m. to carpool. Will hike 4-5 miles. If you prefer to meet us at the trailhead at approximately 1:45 p.m., take 820 West and exit Azle Ave/Hwy 199 exit at Lake Worth. Take Azle Ave portion heading west. At next light (intersection of Azle Ave and Boat Club Road), turn right onto Boat Club Road. You will go approximately 14-15 miles on Boat Club Road to the park, passing the Harbor One Marina on your left at about 11 miles from the Azle Ave intersection. The park is on your left. No dogs please. Hike cancelled in the event of rain. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242

March 15, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch. Plant-based, all-you-can-eat buffet from 12 noon until 2 p.m. Regularly \$9, \$1 off for Sierra Club. New Start Veg, 2330 Royal Lane, Ste. 900, Dallas. Just west of I-35 on the south side of Royal. Organizer: James Bisby 469-371-1938

March 18, Wednesday

General Meeting of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, 7 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by speaker. Bonnie Bradshaw, Vice President of WildCare Wildlife Rehabilitation, will present "Urban Wild Life Situations & Solutions." Find out why coyotes, raccoons, foxes, bobcats, and opossums are thriving in residential neighborhoods. Discover effective, humane solutions to common wildlife problems...and much more! Location: Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Moncrief Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30, Fort Worth.

March 20, Friday

Arlington Sierra Club daytime meeting is an informal discussion on various en-

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.

vironmental issues among like-minded people over a cup of coffee or tea. Latecomers welcome. Location: Tin Cup, 1025 W Abram, Arlington, 2:30 - 4 pm. For more info or to be added to email notification for this group, contact tceaprez@yahoo.com.

March 23, Monday

Mid-Suburban Sierra Club at 7 p.m. "Geothermal" by Dale Walker. He will give us the fine points of geothermal heating/air-conditioning for your home and geothermal power as renewable energy that produces no greenhouse gases or toxic radioactive wastes. In addition, there are new technologies that make geothermal more attractive now than ever for both a new home and for a remodel to your existing home. Use the earth's natural heat to keep you comfortable. Note alternate location: Hurst Library, public meeting room off foyer, 901 Precinct Line Rd, Hurst. Go south from Airport Freeway on Precinct Line Road. Library will be on the west side of the street, south of Bedford-Eules Rd. and north of Pipeline Rd. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140. Free

March 27-29, Friday-Sunday

Camp at Huntsville State Park Fri and Sat nights and dayhike 8 miles on Sat and 3 miles on Sunday on trails in the park located approximately 200 miles southeast of Fort Worth in the beautiful hardwood forests of SE Texas. Need to sign-up with trip leader prior to reserving your campsite. Park also has 210-acre lake. Call Texas State Park Reservations at 512-389-8900 or email www.tpwd.state.tx.us to reserve your campsite. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242 and Martha Ohlson.

April 5, Sunday

Dayhike at Fort Worth Nature Center. Work off extra winter pounds by hiking 3-5 miles on trails in the Nature Center. Meet at Hardwick Interpretative Center at 2 p.m. In the event of rain, hike is cancelled. Bring water and appropriate

clothing for weather, including rain gear. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

April 5, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday Lunch every first Sunday. Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2 p.m. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140.

April 8, Wednesday

Conservation Meeting & Discussion Group 6:30 p.m. Grab something to eat and meet us in the Cafe on the Run where we will cover any conservation business and then discuss topics of interest. Central Market, 4651 West Freeway, Fort Worth.

April 28, 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.

April 10-12, Friday-Sunday

Eagle Rock Loop Easter Backpack. Join me on a three-day backpack on the longest loop trail (26.8 miles) in Arkansas: a combination of parts of the Little Missouri, Athens-Big Fork, and Viles Branch trails. The Loop Trail crosses the Little Missouri River nine times and travels over nine mountains. Points of interest include Little Missouri Falls, Spirit Rock Vista, Eagle Rock Vista, and Winding Stairs. Participants should have some backpacking experience. Trip rating: Strenuous (due to elevation changes of the Athens-Big Fork Trail) Leader: Mark Adams 972-658-1281(H) or adamsmad@gmail.com

April 15, Wednesday

General Meeting of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, 7 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by speaker. Jim Duncan, President of North Texas Renewable Energy, Inc. will discuss developments in the solar energy industry. Duncan has been involved in this industry since 1993 and his company is the exclusive solar photovoltaic design and installation company in North Texas. Come to learn about this exciting technology. Location: Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Moncrief

Please see MORE, Page 2

Keeping in touch with the GFW Sierra Club

Wonder what's going on in the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club?

Want to share some of your wisdom with the leaders?

Do you get your print newsletter?

Terry Jensen and Bonnie Bowman have agreed to update and improve communications through the use of the internet. Communication changes will be introduced in the Sierra Sentinel. By the time this newsletter reaches you, the email lists will be active.

Terry administers the list LONESTAR-FTW-NEWS. This list sends a current activity calendar, additional activities of special interest, and some links to pertinent news 1-2X per month.

It primarily targets people who want to minimize the number of emails they receive, but still want to know what is going on.

Subscribe online (www.texas.sierraclub.org/fortworth/) or by sending name, email address, and zip code, please, to lists@dfwnetmall.com

LONESTAR-FTW-CONS-FORUM is also being activated. Bonnie will moderate this discussion list where

-Tandy Hills Prairie Fest

Continued from Page 1

view wildflowers and historic, native grasses. Arts and special children's activities take place throughout the day.

Performers include: Brave Combo, the Ackermans, Trigger Fish, Darrin Kobetich, Blackland River Devils, The Butterfly Connection, Kerri Arista, Mimi Kal-Vaughan, Walking Contradictions and the TCU String Ensemble.

Tandy Hills Natural Area (THNA) is a 160-acre indigenous remnant of Fort Worth prairie located in the heart of Fort Worth. Designated a "natural area" in 1987, the prairie park is managed by the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge and CFW Parks & Community Services Department.

Noted for its unusually complete collection of prairie flora, THNA contains more than 500 native plant species with a stunning springtime show of wildflowers unsurpassed in the Metroplex.

Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and pro-

list members (sign up free online or to the address listed below) can post announcements or updates on legislation or local issues, ask conservation questions, and have input into the club.

Links and original opinions/reminders are welcome on the discussion lists, but please do not forward other email letters that people can subscribe to online.

Subscribe online (www.texas.sierraclub.org/fortworth/) or by sending name, email address, and zip code, please, to bfbg@tx.rr.com

Future plans include:

—Setting up a local group on Facebook.

—Setting up a blog for the people who

Sustainable electric power is here

Texas has the renewable resources to show the world how energy needs can be met with technology that will reduce the need to use nuclear and coal power plants without environmental impacts. Heat generated deep within the Earth by the decay of naturally occurring isotopes has the potential to supply a tremendous amount of electrical power, if we just tap into it. MIT engineers call this "universal geothermal" energy because the geothermal power plants can be located where needed, such as in/near cities, reducing the need for expensive, unsightly transmission lines and the loss of energy, the loss of land and the destruction of millions of trees.

Geothermal energy has been discussed for at least 30 years, and power plants in California have been continuously running since the 1960s. It is in our best interest to revisit this renewable energy source considering the advances in technology developed by subsurface engineering. New oil-field stimulation technology, developed for extracting oil and gas from sources such as shale, makes it possible to harvest much more of this energy by allowing engineers to create artificial geothermal reservoirs deep underground.

Geothermal plants have the advantages of being able to expand as the economy needs. Geothermal does not have to wait for the sun to shine, or the wind to blow, or the vegetation to grow. The Earth is always generating heat and when we tap into it, the technology does not produce any CO₂ or NO_x and yet can produce adequate

prefer not to be on the discussion list, but want updates often.

The website is always a good place to go between newsletters: www.texas.sierraclub.org/fortworth. Professional companies often contract to do internet updates weekly, Dewayne Quetermous, our group volunteer webmaster, will do his best to keep our site updated regularly.

We hope to make the Sierra Club more relevant at the local level. So, please, head to the website and sign up for the email forums or send one of us your contact information.

We look forward to the conversation!

and constant electricity for the coming electric cars.

Electrical power plants are not the only practical use of the geothermal resource. Homes, schools, shopping centers, and manufacturing plants can harness this energy and reduce their energy use today. It is used directly with absorption technology for air conditioning large spaces and with geothermal heat pumps for cooling and heating buildings and preheating hot water. Thousands of homes and many school districts are already using this technology today in Texas because it is cost effective and energy efficient. With the mechanical parts inside of buildings, they are not subject to the extremes of weather or vandalism and thus require very little maintenance.

We in Texas have an advantage of direct access to the Southern Methodist University Geothermal Laboratory which has been researching geothermal resources for 40 years. UTPB Center for Energy and Economic Development in Odessa and the UT Bureau of Economic Geology have written hundreds of papers on geothermal that we can use as building blocks.

SMU has received a grant from the Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) for geothermal outreach and networking, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Energy "GeoPowering the West" program. The goal of this program is to increase geothermal awareness among Texas citizens and development of additional geothermal projects in Texas.

Permaculture: It's like permafrost, only different - a whole lot different

By **TERRY JENSEN**

What is Permaculture?

Permaculture is

–Gardening without pesticides or artificial fertilizers.

–Edible landscapes incorporated into beautiful yards.

–Working with nature rather than against her.

–The sustainable use of land, water, and plants at home or on the farm.

Permaculture combines age-old wisdom with new insights that have emerged from sustainability movements around the world.

It has grown and matured from its 1970s beginnings on an Australian farm to become a sustainable way to garden and farm for both city and rural land around the world.

Permaculture is based on the following three ethical principles that parallel those of the Sierra Club:

–Care of the earth.

–Care of its inhabitants.

–Sharing the surplus.

The goal of urban Permaculture could well be to garden from a hammock while watching nature do the work.

We just need the knowledge and the plan.

For almost three years I have been trying to lure Dick Pierce from Austin to teach a DFW Permaculture week-end. This experienced Permaculture teacher is finally coming here either the first or second weekend of April.

This is a hands-on class. For example, Dick has enough rock delivered to the classroom site so students can actually build an herb spiral under his tutelage.

Although we will have complete details by the time you get your publication, at press time, we know:

–There will be a free introduction on Friday night.

–Class hours are from 9:00 - 6:00, on Saturday and 9:00 - 4:30 on Sunday.

–Portions of class will be outdoors. Lecture portions will be indoors.

–Cost of class is \$120.

–\$20 of each fee is used to provide scholarships.

–\$20 of each fee will be split between the Dallas and Fort Worth Sierra Clubs.

At press time, we do not know:

–Which weekend we will have the class but it will be the first or second week-end in April.

–Location of the class.

For date, location, and advance registration (which is required), call Terry Jensen, 972-251-1532 or 817-545-0140.

Space will be limited. Call now to ensure a spot in this class.

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F94QT19002
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Entity Code

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.

Sierra youth leadership training opportunities

Students at high schools and on college campuses around the country have been busy. Last fall, they collected 350,000 pledges from their peers, committing to civic engagement around building a clean energy economy. In February, they gathered in record numbers (10,000 strong!) in our nation's capitol for Power Shift '09 (www.powershift09.org), prepared to deliver a message to our leaders: we need bold

climate action now!

Youth are also active at the local level, passing green fees to purchase renewable energy and retrofit old buildings, passing policies that require new buildings to meet LEED certification standards, converting vehicle fleets to bio-diesel, getting their schools to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to zero over the next couple decades, and demanding national lead-

ers follow their lead.

How did they do it? Many attended one of the Sierra Student Coalition's Summer Environmental Leadership Training programs. In 2009, the SSC will run 9 programs across the country (see www.ssc.org/sprog for dates and locations). The demand for these trainings has grown exponentially in recent years. We trained twice as many youth as in 2007.

Participants learn from some of the top youth organizers in the nation in these peer-to-peer training programs.

Past participants have gone on to become National Director of the SSC, sit on the Sierra Club's National Board of Directors, land jobs working for the Sierra Club, SSC and other environmental groups and dozens of other prominent leadership positions on national and local levels.

If you'd like to make a donation in support of these programs, you can send a check to Sierra Student Coalition, 408 C St. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002, payable to "Sierra Student Coalition."

B'day celebraton honors Burnam

Please join Rep. Lon Burnam and family in celebrating the 80th birthday of the late Earl Burnam

Donations will be accepted for the Earl and Alma Burnam Environmental Education Fund.

Refreshments are provided.

This event honoring a long-time environmental leader will be Sunday, March 22, from 3-5 p.m. at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge Service Center Building, 4601 Broadview Drive, Fort Worth.

(Please note that this event is being held at the SERVICE CENTER, not at the visitors center which is under renovation.)

The Earl and Alma Burnam Environmental Education Fund provides scholarships for Fort Worth children to attend programs at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge.