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Sierra Sentinel

The Greater
Fort Worth
Group of the
Sierra Club
Sept-Oct
2009

The Wilderness Act is now 45 years old, but who's counting?

The US Senate today overwhelmingly adopted a resolution commemorating the 45th anniversary of the Wilderness Act – the tool by which citizens can work with Congress to add shared public land to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

“As the nation celebrates this important milestone in our conservation history, it’s also time to note how well served the American public has been by all the excellent work by Congress and various Presidents over the past four-and-a-half decades to protect our common ground,” said Mike Matz, executive director of the Campaign for America’s Wilderness. “The National Wilderness Preservation System is now 109 million acres strong and still growing, and that’s a wonderful gift to pass along to future generations.”

Offered by Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), and cosponsored by Democrats, Republicans and Independents, the resolution honors the role played by conservation champions of all backgrounds and political stripes, and notes the critical support for the passage of the landmark legislation 45 years ago by three Senators still serving today, Robert Byrd, (D-WV), Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Ted Kennedy (D-MA).

“Setting aside public land as wilderness provides space for plants and wildlife to adapt to changing climate and other impacts from global warming,” said Myke Bybee, wilderness campaigns coordinator for the Sierra Club. “Wilderness designation in particular provides numerous benefits for wildlife by protecting vital habitat from encroaching development, oil and gas drilling, mining, and illegal off-road vehicle abuse.”

“As our nation strives to find the key to national health care legislation, the

National Wilderness Preservation System has been promoting and sustaining

The Sierra Club, other conservation groups cheer renewed push for land protection initiatives

the health and well-being of all Americans since 1964,” said Bill Meadows, President of The Wilderness Society. “Congress established the System ‘for the good of the whole people,’ and 45 years later we continue to reap the benefits wilderness provides like clear air, clean water and opportunities to

retreat from the stress of our everyday lives.”

“With the passage of two wilderness bills in Utah in the last five years after such a long period without, we appreciate the vision of the first wilderness advocates in Congress and hope to realize that vision in our state,” said Richard Peterson-Cremer, Legislative Director of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. “As recognition and appreciation for wilderness quality lands increases in Utah and around the country, Americans owe a great debt to these wilderness visionaries of 45 years ago and those in Congress today who cosponsored Sen. Feingold’s

Please see WILDERNESS, Page 2

Do you want to read what you're holding in your hand on your computer screen?

What’s your opinion of a paperless GFWSC newsletter?

Would you be just as happy reading an electronic version of *The Sentinel* as the hard copy of the group newsletter you’re holding in your hand?

The Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club ExCom has periodically investigated the cost savings and other benefits of getting away from the printed page and is once again considering the possibility of making the newsletter paperless.

We need your input.

Postage is increasing in price and mailing requirements becoming more difficult. To be good stewards of our earth, we need to also consider the high ecological price of a paper newsletter. Not just trees, but a great deal of water (processing) and petroleum (transport) are used in its production.

“Pre-cycling” is better than recycling,

so let’s consider the pros and cons of an online newsletter:

Pros

- Timely information delivery
- Convenience
- Cost Effective
- Environmentally Sound

Cons

- Webmaster is required
- Not everyone is computer savvy and readership could decline
- Can’t post articles on the refrigerator door

Please email or mail your opinion about an online newsletter to the ExCom: fw.sierra.chair@gmail.com.

Also, if you have Webmaster skills and time to donate to the GFWSC, we need you and your opinion! However you feel about this important decision of your local group, please contact Chairman Don Young and let him know your thoughts.

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Greater Fort Worth

Sierra Club

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-Wilderness Act provides opportunity to walk on the wild side

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resolution."

The resolution praises the Wilderness Act for ensuring a natural legacy for future generations and cites the many benefits of protected pristine land as a source of clean air and water and as "healthy, biologically diverse ecosystems that will better withstand the effects of global warming."

David Jenkins, Vice President for Government and Political Affairs at Republicans for Environmental Protection said, "It is fitting that this resolution, like the Wilderness Act itself, is the product of a bi-partisan love of—and commitment to—wilderness. This is as it should be, because the American wilderness experience forged the ethic of responsibility, hard work and faith that comprises our character and underpins our resilience as a people and as a nation."

"At 45 years old, the Wilderness Act still succeeds in allowing Americans

to take walks on the wild side of their public lands," said Marty Hayden, Vice President for Policy & Legislation at Earthjustice. "As our nation's population has become more and more urban, having true wildlands where Americans can go reconnect with nature has become more priceless than ever."

When the Wilderness Act was signed into law on September 3, 1964, it immediately protected nine million acres, including such wild icons as the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico, the Bob Marshall in Montana, and the John Muir Wilderness in California. Since that time, more than a hundred million additional acres of protected land have been added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Still, this remains less than five percent of the nation's landmass. Today, efforts continue from coast to coast to protect more of our last remaining wild places as a gift for future generations.

Fort Worth Sierra Club meeting time changes in October

There's another time change to remember in October in addition to the change from daylight savings time. And if you're always late to meetings, you're really going to be late to that and future meetings. Meetings of the Fort Worth Sierra Club will change by 30 minutes, from 7 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. until further notice.

Sierra Club releases report analyzing green rebuilding of New Orleans after Katrina

To mark the fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina on August 29, the Sierra Club has released a new report analyzing the green rebuilding efforts under way in New Orleans.

The devastation of Hurricane Katrina has provided the city of New Orleans with a unique opportunity to develop a national model for rebuilding green.

This "New Orleans Green Building Assessment" examines the current and former green building efforts in New Orleans, noting partnerships and potential strategies for improvement throughout. Download a copy of the report at <http://www.sierraclub.org/ej/downloads/2009-06-nola.pdf>

"This assessment documents and merges the disparate green building efforts into one central location and successfully fulfilled its stated goals," said Sierra Club environmental jus-

tice organizer Darryl Malek-Wiley at a press conference held recently in New Orleans to release the report.

"Moving forward, this document provides a foundation for the city to develop a "best practices" model for rebuilding green, focusing on the city's existing and emerging partnerships," he said.

The report's five goals are to profile key agencies; to catalog current and former green building projects; to evaluate the capacity and needs of each business and organization; to assess the current green building situation; and to develop a directory of local green building service providers.

The report was assembled with help from graduate candidates at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Kristin McKee and Shawn Dillard, with help from the Sierra Club-Delta Chapter (New Orleans).

Upcoming Sierra Club Events

September 6, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday: Vegan Buffet every first Sunday, Papaya Garden, 1201 W. Airport Frwy #100, 817-684-9378, Eules on the corner of Airport Fwy (Hwy 183) and Industrial (FM157 also known as Collins in Arlington). 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. Ask for Terry at the door to meet/converse with an interesting group of people. Or sit with your friends and family. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140 or 972-251-1532.

September 12, Saturday

Day hike at Fort Worth Nature Center. Meet at 8 a.m. at the Hardwicke Interpretative Visitors Center Parking lot. 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. In the event of rain, hike is cancelled. No dogs please.

September 16, Wednesday

General Meeting of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, 7 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by speaker. Pete McKone, Certified Wildlife Biologist; Director of Environmental Services for Dunaway Associates and an adjunct professor at TCU, will give a presentation on a variety of topics pertaining to urban development. Topics will include watershed management, stream and wetland restoration, natural resource planning and government/developer interface. This is a key component of sustainable development and will likely generate a number of thoughtful questions. Location: Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Moncrief Garden Center, 817-871-7686, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30.

September 28, Monday

Mid-Suburban meeting. After not

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.

meeting during the summer, the Mid-Suburban Sierra Club will have a "reorganizational" meeting at 7 p.m. at Sunflower Shoppe (formerly Healthy Approach), 817-399-9100, 5100 Hwy 121, Colleyville. This will be an informal meeting to get to know other Sierrans in the area around DFW Airport and to discuss plans and ideas for continuing this satellite group. Please come and bring your ideas and, hopefully, plans to help. After the meeting those who wish will walk over to Rio Mambo's to imbibe and eat. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-040 or 972-251-1532.

October 1, Thursday

Almost TGIF Hike along the Trinity Trail. End the work week with a hike on a paved portion of the Trinity Trail near the Fort Worth Zoo for approximately 3-4 miles. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the parking lot just south of the Hoffbrau Steak House on University Drive in Fort Worth approximately 1 mile south of I-30. Bring water for yourself and wear appropriate clothing. Optional meal/libations after hike. In the event of rain, hike will be cancelled. Please no dogs. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

October 2-3, Friday-Saturday

Camp at Bear Creek Ranch located between Fort Worth and Weatherford. Beautiful ranch dedicated to environmentalists - star gazing, easy hiking, family friendly. Features 2,500 acres of beautiful Texas rolling prairie. Call Nancy Mcvean for directions to ranch. 817-596 5209 or nancymcvean@gmail.com.

October 4, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday: Vegan Buffet every first Sunday, Papaya Garden, 1201 W. Airport Frwy #100, 817-684-9378, Eules on the corner of Airport Fwy (Hwy 183) and Industrial (FM157 also known as Collins in Arlington). 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. Ask for Terry at the door to meet/converse with an interesting group of people. Or sit with your friends and family. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140 or 972-251-1532.

October 6, Tuesday

Sierra Club Executive Committee (Execom) 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.

October 21, Wednesday

General Meeting of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club. Note Time Change: 6:30 p.m. Brief business meeting followed by speaker. Wendel Withrow, Dallas Sierra Club Chapter Chair, will discuss his recently published book entitled: *The Best in Tent Camping-Texas*. With a sub-title of "A Guide for Car Campers Who Hate RVs, Concrete Slabs and Loud Portable Stereos," the author will discuss and cuss his research and rating system for the 50 best tent campgrounds in Texas. He will share photographs of some of his favorites and answer questions from the audience (sure to be large, of course). Location: Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, Moncrief Garden Center, 817-871-7686, 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard at University, north of I-30, Fort Worth.

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 or by calling 512-389-8900. The Lone Star Chapter has

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-More events and outings of the GFWSC

Continued from Page 3

reserved 10 water only sites for Friday, October 23 and Saturday, October 24, which can be reserved by calling Jerome Collins at the Chapter. 512-477-1729, or completing the registration form on the Chapter website. Contact person: Tolbert Greenwood, Tolbert@greentol.com or 817-737-8698.

October 26, Monday

Mid-Suburban meeting based on plans made at Sep 28 meeting. 7 pm for meeting followed by optional food and refreshments at Rio Mambo next door. Sunflower Shoppe (formerly Healthy Approach), 817 399-9100, 5100 Hwy 121, Colleyville. Organizer: Terry Jensen 817 545-040 or 972 251-1532.

October 27, Tuesday

Newsletter Folding Party at 6 pm., 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.

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.

November 1, Sunday

Sustainable Sunday: Vegan Buffet every first Sunday, Papaya Garden, 1201 W. Airport Frwy #100, 817-684-9378, Eules on the corner of Airport Fwy (Hwy 183) and Industrial (FM157 also known as Collins in Arlington). 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. Ask for Terry at the door to meet/converse with an interesting group of people. Or sit with your friends and family.

Organizer: Terry Jensen 817-545-0140 or 972-251-1532.

November 3, Tuesday

Sierra Club Executive Committee (Ex-com) 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.

November 11-15, Wednesday-Sunday

Join your friends and other Sierra Club

Once more with feeling – Mid-Suburban Group will resume meetings Sept. 28

After having the summer off, the Mid-Suburban satellite group of the Sierra Club will have an organizational meeting on Monday, Sept. 28, at 7 p.m., in the Sunflower Shoppe Community Room, 5100 Hwy. 121, Colleyville.

This will be an informal meeting to discuss what we can do as a club in the communities surrounding DFW Airport. Possibilities include:

1. Monthly or quarterly educational meetings with speakers.
2. Socials.
3. Movie nights with documentaries.
4. Family events with plans for children.
5. Dayhikes in some of our many local nature areas and parks.
6. Cool Cities--Sierra campaign for local municipalities.
7. Involvement with (healthy and environmentally friendly) school lunches.
8. Energy meetings.
9. Book discussion groups like we had a few years ago --Choices for Sustainable Living was one.
10. Your suggestions.

There will be leaders from both the Dallas and Fort Worth Sierra Club to answer your questions and help us plan.

Please bring your ideas and, hopefully, your willingness to help this area's club expand and flourish. We need something like this in our part of the Metroplex but it is not some-

thing that can be planned or implemented by two or three people. I really want to see you on September 28. If you have questions or suggestions about the meeting or the area, please call me, Terry Jensen, at 817-545-0140 or 972-251-1532.

Cash for clunkers working

Consumers clearly got the message on increasing fuel economy during the first round of Cash for Clunkers. The Department of Transportation reporting the following statistics:

–The average fuel efficiency of trade-ins was 15.8 mpg
–The average fuel efficiency of new vehicles purchased was 25.4 mpg
–Trade-ins and purchases equaled a 61% increase in fuel efficiency
–83% of the trade-ins were trucks
–60% of the new vehicles purchased were cars

Cash for clunkers working

“The Cash for Clunkers program is only as good as we consumers allow it to be,” said Ann Mesnikoff, Director of Sierra Club's Green Transportation Campaign. “We are excited to continue helping consumers choose a vehicle that gives a boost to both the economy and our environment. Choosing the right new vehicle will save money at the pump, cut dependence on oil, reduce carbon emissions, and help the auto industry.”

Check out the Sierra Club cash for clunkers guide: <http://www.sierraclub.org/transportation/clunkers/>.

Solar hot water could save you cool cash

By **TERRY JENSEN**

In the past I felt sorry for me and my fellow Sierrans who live in all-electric abodes. We have a brief interlude of lower (note I said lower, not low) utility bills in the fall, followed by winter energy costs almost as high as our summer bills.

And 12 months of the year we pay dearly to heat water with electricity. In fact, the State of Texas Conservation Office says 25% of our power consumption is for hot water. That is a burden.

Or is it? Could our electric hot water be an opportunity in disguise?

Actually, those of us with electric hot water could, with very little expense, get most of our hot water free from the sun.

The technology for solar hot water is not only the most effective solar application, it is also the cheapest and smallest in size.

The best solar hot water system for North Texas consists of two (some-

times one, but usually two), flatbed solar panels that look like skylights, a small drainback tank, and your current hot water heater as storage. It is a simple retrofit that should cost \$5000 or less to install and offers 85%-to-95% of your hot water free as a gift from the sun. There is a 30% tax credit from the feds to help you pay for the system.

Solar hot water pays for itself in 6-7 years, or less. This means it has a return on investment of 14.5% to 17%. Unlike profits, savings are not taxed. This adds an even higher return to your investment.

How does it work?

Very simply. Distilled water is pumped from the drainback tank to the solar panels on your roof. The heated water returns to the drainback tank. Your cold city water is pumped into the drainback tank and is heated there with heat exchangers. The distilled water and the city water never mix. Once your city water

is hot, it returns to the storage tank (your present hot water tank) and remains in storage until you need hot water.

What happens at night?

The water remains hot all night-losing only about ten degrees overnight.

What happens when the sun does not shine?

Thermal solar panels, unlike PV panels, not only heat water through direct sunlight but also heat through reflected light. However, after a few overcast or rainy days, the electricity in your hot water storage tank kicks in so you always have hot water. You don't know the difference: Hot water free from the sun or hot water charged to you by Big Brown.

What happens if it the water gets too hot?

You have controls to set the temperature of the water. When it reaches that temperature, the distilled

Please see SOLAR Page 6

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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.

-Solar panels tougher than your roof is

*Continued from
 Page 5*

water drains into the the drainback tank. It remains there until you need that water heated again.

What happens to my roof when it freezes?

At a preset temperature, the water returns to the drainback tank with no frozen pipes on your roof – ever. This is what makes a system suitable for North Texas rather than suitable

for tropical areas.

What happens when it hails?

Solar panels are tough. Often the roof around the panels is destroyed; the panels are intact. However, once panels are installed on your roof, they become part of your real property and are covered by your homeowners' insurance. If they break, labor and materials are covered. If the

roof is destroyed and the panels are fine, the insurance company pays for a crew to remove them while the roof is replaced, then reinstall them on the new roof. In the meantime, Big Brown heats your water.

What a boon to your pocket book and what a relief to Planet Earth.

Eat your heart out, you poor natural gas dudes!

Federal appeals court upholds roadless area protections

A decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed protection for over 40 million acres of wild national forests and grasslands from new road building, logging, and development and puts an end to the Bush administration's efforts to open these last great natural areas to development. The ruling protects the majority of national forest roadless areas in the country. The Sierra Club and other plaintiffs were represented by Earthjustice in the suit.

Statement of Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope:

This decision is a victory for campers, hikers, hunters, anglers, and all Americans who enjoy the wild forests that make our nation unique. Now the Obama administration has an opportunity to take the steps necessary to provide protections for all of our nation's remaining roadless areas, including the Tongass National Forest. By unequivocally rejecting the Bush administration's attempts to remove protections for roadless areas, today's decision paves the way for President Obama to uphold and defend the 2001 Roadless Rule.

The outpouring of public support for upholding the Roadless Rule has been staggering. Millions of Americans weighed in on this issue, and now their voices have finally been heard. Deep public support for roadless area protection and hard fought battles helped us keep the majority of our roadless areas safe despite attacks from the Bush administration. We are proud that only seven miles of roads were built and 535 acres of trees logged in roadless areas since 2001. We now look forward to securing permanent protections.