



dallas sierra club news

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December General Meeting Program - December 8, 7:00 pm

See This Year's "Grandest" Program

You'll have a Grand time at our December General Meeting when we visit the Grand Canyon with two of your favorite trip leaders. You'll see a two part program that will take you down one of the most popular trails in the park and then visit a special area that few visitors see.

The first part of our program will feature Bill Greer's Rim-to-Rim trip on the North Kaibab and Bright Angle Trails. Bill's group spent 5 nights in the canyon. Starting from the North Rim, they descended to Cottonwood Campground for their first night. They then went down to the river and spent two nights at the Bright Angle Campground. From there, it was out to the South Rim with a two-night stop at Indian Garden Campground. Bill is currently Chair of the Dallas Sierra Club's Outings Committee. He also serves on the Group's Executive Committee. Bill has been leading hikes for the Dallas Sierra Club for many years.





In the second part of our program, Arthur Kuehne will take you to Thunder River, one of the most spectacular places in the canyon. Arthur's group, led by David Van Winkle, past Dallas outing's committee chair, spend 5 nights/6 days exploring the canyon. Their trip also started from the North Rim, but a bit to the west of where Bill started. After descending part way into the canyon, they explored the area around Thunder River. This short river starts as a spectacular spring that shoots right out from the face of a cliff to make a thunderous waterfall. From there, the group descended Tapeats Creek down to a campsite on the Colorado River. Hiking downstream along the river, the

group visited the amazing canyon and waterfall at Deer Creek. After that it was a two day hike back to the cars. Arthur is past chair of the Outings Committee and of the Dallas Group. He has also led Dallas Sierra Club outings for many years

Don't miss this fantastic slide show. There is no better way to cap off a great year with the Dallas Sierra Club.

[Visit our website](#) for complete information about our General Meeting, including a map.

Dallas Sierra Club Annual Holiday Party, Sunday December 13, 6:00 pm

 All Sierra Club members and their guests are invited to our annual holiday party at Winfrey Point located on White Rock Lake. This year's party will feature a wine tasting contest, dinner, music, and prizes. Everyone is invited to bring either their favorite bottle of wine for the wine tasting. The dinner is pot luck, so bring a covered dish to share. Also help us save on paper plates and plastic cups by bringing your own plate, glass (and wine glass), silverware and napkin. Great prizes (well, maybe pretty good prizes) will be awarded to those bringing the best organic wine, the bottle with the most original holiday label, and other surprise categories. Tickets are \$8 per person at the door. Need directions? [Here](#) is a Google map. 

Outings Highlights

Taos Bus Trip, February 18-22

There's already snow on Taos Mountain - Save the date! Want to play in the snow but can't get away over the holidays? Mark your calendars now for our fun bus trip to Taos, New Mexico leaving after work Feb. 18 and returning early morning, Monday, Feb. 22. Complete trip details, price and reservation information will be available through our outings page beginning in mid-December. To receive notification when reservations open, send an email with your name to Liz@dallassierraclub.org.

For a complete list of our outings, [visit our outings page](#).

REI Giving Trees for Inner City Outings

Want to give a little and still make a huge impact? Starting next week the Dallas and Plano REI stores will have Giving Trees displayed and will be accepting monetary donations for Inner City Outings ("ICO"), our outreach program. ICO volunteers provide free wilderness experiences for Dallas area disadvantaged youth. 100% of the donations will be used toward our outing expenses and equipment needs. This all volunteer program is self financed and donations allow us to reach as many kids as possible. For more information or to send a donation directly, please contact ico@dallassierraclub.org or 214-368-2306. And a huge thank you to REI for your continued support of our program.

Sierra Club Gift Wrapping at REI



During this busy holiday season, who has time to wrap gifts? So, it's time for the Sierra Club's annual holiday gift wrap fundraiser at the Dallas REI store. REI is located on the north side of LBJ/I-635, between Midway Road and Welch Road in North Dallas. Easy and fun! You can sign up [online](#) or contact [Carol Nash](#) for more information.

New Northwest Earth Institute Discussion Course, Starting in January or February

We are starting a Northwest Earth Institute discussion group on its newest course: **Sustainable Systems at Work**.

Sustainable Systems at Work is a five session course designed to help people address pressing environmental challenges through companywide best practices. It uses information, education, and discourse to encourage participants to take more sustainable action, and is designed to bolster employee engagement and increase sustainable actions within a company.

The discussion group will consist of 6-12 people who meet once a week for five weeks. The format of this group is similar to a book club. Everybody reads that week's chapter (about one hour of advance reading each week) and comes prepared to discuss it. Group members take turns facilitating the discussion using questions provided in the reading materials.

Click [here](#) for more information.

The Outings Corner

It's More than Dinosaur Tracks

by Mark Stein

Looking for a destination where you can hike five or ten miles on unpaved loop trails within 90 minutes of Dallas and enjoy a Hill Country landscape? Check out the backcountry of Dinosaur Valley State Park.



First-time visitors to this park on FM Road 205 near Glen Rose generally come to see the footprints of dinosaurs—really big dinosaurs—the Paluxy River is constantly exposing in its limestone bed. When the Paluxy is running clear and not too high, one can see two types of prints from this little river's bluffs. Or you can wade into another reach of the Paluxy and put your own feet or hands inside them. The most famous of the tracks found here is now in the Museum of Natural History on Central Park West in New York City, but you can see a cast of the Museum's track where big carnivores and herbivores crossed paths and you may find other tracks preserved and recently exposed in the limestone river ledge. But phone before you come if you want to be sure some tracks are visible that day.

This park has an attractive tent camping loop, too, with hot water showers. All 46 sites were occupied on the October Saturday I visited, but in midweek, site availability is good.

Most visitors don't make it into the backcountry trails, though, which is more reason why you should visit this treasure of a park. The park's exhibits and campground sit in a green horseshoe bend of the Paluxy, but the backcountry trails wind into the steep hills ACROSS the river. To reach the trails from the park, you must wade the river, using one of two limestone fords. This adds to the adventure and trims hiker volume.

In dry weeks, the river's only a trickle and you can cross in your boots. The day I visited was sunny, but because it had been a rainy month, two feet of water rushed over the limestone fords, with enough sediment to obscure the bottom. It takes faith to cross what you can't see, but it can be worth the effort. Phone ahead to inquire about water depth. These are my tips if more than a few inches cover the ford:

1. Wear water shoes. They sell them in the park store for \$10. A park ranger told me she slips on the slick bottom every time she tries crossing barefoot.
2. Use one or two poles to feel for the bottom and steady yourself. Or find a stout pole in the woods, as I did.
3. Face upstream as you cross, sidestepping. I found it easier to keep balance facing the current, also knew I could see debris that might be coming my way.
4. Zip sensitive gear into watertight bags.
5. Don't try this if the water's higher than two feet or if you can't spot the ford by its riffles.

Once across the Paluxy, more treats await, particularly if the water was high. Springs in the underlying and outcropping limestone feed Denio and Buckeye Creeks. I discovered a source of Buckeye Creek

when I heard water gushing from the ground, dropping three feet to a clear pool beneath a semi-circular fall.

There are backcountry camping areas. Sites 1 and 2 near Denio Creek looked good. Avoid campsites on the ridge at the east edge of the park only because you'll hear vehicles on SH 56 at night.

Most of the park trails don't appear on USGS topo maps. Be sure to take the trail map issued with your \$5 park use fee. It's not to scale, but it shows all the trail junctions (marked by letters on the ground and on the map), the blaze colors of each trail and backcountry campsite locations. Trails into the north end of the park run off the park map, making that area interesting to explore with your navigation tools and skills. You can find the trails map, a park phone number and a link for campsite reservations by checking www.tpwd.state.tx.us and navigating to the Dinosaur Valley pages.

Before or after your hike, Downtown Glen Rose is worth time to explore. Buildings around its quaint square are constructed of local stone. Get out of your car and explore Big Rocks Park on the Paluxy River (SH 144 between US 67 and downtown).

Or discover the other reason I chose Dinosaur Valley for hiking: the Loco Coyote for a barbecue fix and a cold beer. This shack is in the middle of nowhere, but it draws crowds and long waits unless you arrive mid-afternoon as I did. Go eight miles southwest of Glen Rose on US 67, then right on County Road 1004 for 3/4 mile. The Coyote has sawdust on its floor and an outdoor deck. It's open only Thursday and Friday nights, Saturday from 12 to 9 and Sunday from 11 to 3. Portions are obscenely huge, so consider splitting an order of ribs or a dessert.

Recycling Round-Up

by Rita Raccoon

Recent Recycling News - December 2009

Council of Governments Panel Approves 21 Grant Proposals

The Resource Conservation Council (RCC) of the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) approved 21 grants totaling over \$1.4 million from area cities, counties and other entities. Grant proposals were approved addressing three overall goals: assuring capacity, stopping illegal dumping and supporting recycling.

Three grants address the problem of illegal dumping. While it may be tempting to just throw those old tires or other items out of the back of your truck on a lonely country road, illegal dumping like this can have long-term effects. Grants were approved for the City of Arlington, Kaufman County and Collin County.

Ever visit a soccer or baseball field and see mounds of discarded water bottles? So did three of our grant recipients. The cities of Allen, Ft. Worth and Coppell will address recycling in their city fields and sports complexes.

Four grants will address household hazardous waste: where to take those paint cans, batteries, toxic cleaners and more. The cities of Anna/Melissa (a joint grant), Bridgeport, Greenville/Hunt County and Frisco will hold events or provide drop-offs for hazardous waste.

Other funded grants:

A Second Chance Swap and Reuse Event - in Plano

Single-Stream Workplace Recycling - Garland

Natural recycling (Dallas) and Mulch and Sludge Technical Study (Cleburne)

Additional grants were received by Mesquite, Forney, Wylie, DeSoto, Cleburne

Fort Worth gets \$22 million in federal stimulus to build recycled-wastewater pipeline

Construction will begin in February on a long-planned pipeline that will ship recycled wastewater to golf courses and other users thanks to a \$22 million grant from the federal stimulus program. Fort Worth has been planning to build the system for several years but never had the funding. The line will run about nine miles, from the Village Creek Wastewater plant in east Fort Worth to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. It should be operational by the end of 2010. The water is basically sewage that has been treated so it's safe for some uses, like irrigation or cooling air-conditioning systems. It's far cheaper to treat water to that level than to drinkable standards. The water could be used for golf courses in Arlington and Euless, for cooling towers or to fracture natural gas wells at D/FW. "Recycled water is pretty much going to be part of our water system," Water Director Frank Crumb said during a recent presentation to the City Council's infrastructure committee.

In a separate system, Hillwood Development has formed a company, Independence Water, to sell recycled water for landscaping and other uses around Alliance Airport. Plans call for Independence to buy treated wastewater from the Trinity River Authority's treatment plant in southeast Denton County. Hillwood developed Alliance Airport and many of the Fort Worth neighborhoods in far north Tarrant County and southern Denton County. Negotiations continue, but the plans call for the recycled water to be piped to Alliance for landscaping, industrial use and natural gas drilling, Hillwood Senior Vice President Russell Laughlin told the City Council recently. Laughlin said it makes sense from a business perspective -- it's becoming more likely that drinking water will be rationed during a drought. Having a drought-proof source of water would prevent disruptions. "We're interested in protecting our investments up here, and that means also being sensible users of water," Laughlin said.

Water systems in North Texas have generally lagged behind those in other parts of the country when it comes to recycling water. San Antonio and El Paso have miles of "purple pipe" systems that move treated wastewater to big users. States like Florida and California are far ahead. Florida recycles 44 percent of its wastewater: 240 billion gallons a year. More than half of the recycled water goes to irrigation, including to 262,000 homes that have separate systems for drinking water and irrigation. In California, a few cities in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas are even experimenting with desalinating ocean water. The federal stimulus plan emphasizes water reuse projects, particularly in the West. The Interior Department set aside \$135 million of its stimulus funding for recycled water projects, said Zachary Dorsey, a spokesman for the WateReuse Association, a trade group. Most of that money went to California.

The Environmental Protection Agency included reuse projects in its \$4 billion stimulus program aimed at water projects. And on Oct. 5, President Barack Obama signed an executive order telling federal agencies to use recycled water at their facilities. "That was very promising because it says at the highest levels of government that this is an important thing for preserving and protecting the environment," Dorsey said. Fort Worth's system is projected to pump 429,000 gallons its first year, and the flow could increase to 1 million gallons a year within 10 years. If the projections hold, the system could break even by 2017, Crumb said.

Environmental Happenings Make a Happy 2009 for Planet Earth

By Terry Jensen

More Food Gardening - Findings from the National Gardening Association's (NGA) new survey, "The Impact of Home and Community Gardening in America," show food gardening in the U.S. is increasing

rapidly. There was a 10 percent growth in vegetable gardening from 2007 to 2008 and an anticipated 19 percent growth in 2009.

Cash for Clunkers - Consumers turned in thousands of gas-guzzlers for more fuel-efficient transportation in the "Cash for Clunkers" federal program.. According to the U. S. Department of Transportation, Texans spent over \$176,000,000 on more energy-efficient automobiles. Nationwide, there was a 60 percent improvement in fuel economy between the trade-ins and the new cars purchased.

Smaller Homes - New home sizes are shrinking, too. Small homes generally require fewer resources to build than large homes, require less energy to operate when completed, and even have lower emissions during construction. According to the U.S. Census Bureau the average size of homes started in the third quarter of 2008 was about 200 square feet smaller than in the second quarter. Builders are listening. A survey by the National Association of Home Builders found that 88 percent of builders are "building or planning to build a larger share of smaller homes." Kermit Baker, chief economist of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), reports that even high-end buyers are showing more interest in buying and/or building smaller, better-crafted homes.

"Fixing Up" Existing Homes - Not only are we building smaller new homes, we are increasingly "fixing up" existing homes. There are over 100,000, 000 existing homes in America. Most need energy-efficient updates but people are doing that, also, as they take advantage of tax credits offered by Uncle Sam.

Renewable Energy - Renewable energy is also adding green jobs to our economy. Large amounts of new silicon production are increasing silicon feedstocks causing solar Photovoltaic prices to fall. The government tax credit of 30% and other rebates have pushed renewable energy installations up and this trend is expected to continue.

Solar Megawatts - Although the utility companies of North Texas are promoting the dark side of nuclear and coal electricity production for this area, that is not true everywhere, even in fossil-fuel oriented Texas. Austin is building a 30 megawatt solar facility and San Antonio is building a 14 megawatt solar facility. Texas leads in wind production. Renewable energy is a bright future!

Less Red Meat - Production of red meat and dairy is energy intensive and extremely polluting. By its very nature animal agriculture uses more energy, more fresh water, more land, and pollutes more air than the production of staple foods such as potatoes, rice, fruits and vegetables. Americans are finally eating less meat and occasionally even passing up the cheese. Cultivate Research, a market research company, reports that 26 percent of Americans are now eating less meat than in the past.

Less Cattle Production = More Wildlife Habitat - Less cattle production in America means that more land can return to growing trees and native vegetation. This not only slows global warming, it also builds wildlife habitat.

Fossil Fuel Consumption Down - The Energy Information Administration (EIA), the statistics arm of the Department of Energy, said in its August report, "The economic downturn, combined with natural gas displacing some coal as a source of electricity generation, is projected to lead to a 5 percent decline in fossil-fuel based (carbon dioxide) emissions in 2009."


Sensible Consumption - The consumption that continues makes more sustainable sense. For example, in the first four months of 2009, more bicycles were sold in the U.S. than cars and trucks put together--over 2.55 million bicycles were purchased, compared to fewer than 2.4 million cars and trucks.


More Green Homes Built - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached a milestone for the Energy Star program in November by passing the 1 millionth Energy Star qualified home mark. Green building activity has sustained impressive growth during 2009 amid a brutal construction market that has decimated other segments of the construction marketplace, according to the "2009 Green Building Market & Impact Report" published by GreenerBuildings.com.


Calendar


Here is our calendar through January. For complete listings, visit us at www.dallassierraclub.org.


 **DEC 6 (SUN) SUNDAY LUNCHEON BUFFET** Sustainable Sunday Lunch every first Sunday at Papaya Garden, 1201 W. Airport Frwy #100, 817 684-9378, Euless on the corner of Airport Fwy (Hwy 183) and Industrial (FM157). Thai, plant-based, and all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Larger restaurant means more room for families and other groups. Ask for Sierra Club table at the door. Organizer: Terry Jensen 972 251-1532(W)

 **DEC 7 (MON) MONTHLY SIERRA SINGLES DINNER, 6:30 PM** This month our regular Sierra Singles casual dinner is at Mumtaz, 216 W Campbell Rd, Richardson TX 75080, Phone: 214-575-2100. This is on the north side of Campbell just west of Central Expressway. They have a bar. The buffet of Indian food is only \$5.99 on Mondays and it includes vegetarian choices. For our monthly dinners no RSVP needed, just show up and pay your own individual check. See www.mumtazrestaurant.com for map and additional details. Contact: [Ginger Bradley](mailto:Ginger.Bradley@sierraclub.org) 469-223-7902(C) and [Paul Heller](mailto:Paul.Heller@sierraclub.org) 972-620-1703(H)

 **DEC 8 (TUE) SIERRA CLUB GENERAL MEETING.** You'll have a Grand time at our December General Meeting when we visit the Grand Canyon with two of your favorite trip leaders. You'll see a two part program that will take you down one of the most popular trails in the park and then visit a special area that few visitors see. See [above](#) for details.


 **DEC 12 (SAT) WHITE ROCK LAKE CLEANUP.** Walk and talk while helping to pick up trash and recyclables at the Sierra Club's adopted section of White Rock Lake Park. Meet at 8:15 AM at the Love of the Lake office on the Northeast corner of Garland Rd. and Buckner Blvd. Look for a crowd of people drinking free juice and coffee. Gloves, trash bags, etc. provided. Our area includes one of the wonderful prairie restoration areas, so there are always birds and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards. Leader: [Carol Nash](mailto:Carol.Nash@sierraclub.org) 214-824-0244(H)


 **DEC 12 (SAT) DAY HIKE ON THE NORTH SHORE OF GRAPEVINE LAKE** Hike five to six miles on a dirt trail along the north shore of Grapevine Lake. No reservations required, just show up. Please, no pets. Take water and snacks. Also, take spare shoes for after the hike in case the trail is muddy. Meet at 9:00am at Rockledge Park in Grapevine at the parking lot near the restrooms at the northern part of the park. Note that the City of Grapevine is now charging \$5 per car to enter the park. After the hike, you may join us for lunch. Directions: From Hwy 121, exit at Bass Pro Road and go west. Turn left (southwest) on Hwy 26 toward Grapevine. Drive about ¼ mile to Fairway Drive and turn right (north). Continue to drive across the dam and past the spillway. Turn left on the first driveway after the spillway to Rockledge Park. At the park, veer right to Park Rd. Three, and drive to the north parking lot. Leader: [Marcos Jorge](mailto:Marcos.Jorge@sierraclub.org) 972-394-2546(H)


 **DEC 22 (TUE) YOUNG SIERRANS HH/DINNER - *TBD* - DALLAS** Please join us for a Happy Hour/Dinner at *TBD* on Tuesday, December 22nd! Arrive anytime after 6:00p for happy hour; dinner at 7:00p. Please RSVP by noon on 12/22 to the Pingg invitation or the


youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org email address so we have a rough estimate for seating. All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. **Address:
** Contact: [Candace Weinberg](#)

 **JAN 3 (SUN) SUNDAY LUNCHEON BUFFET** Sustainable Sunday Lunch every first Sunday at Papaya Garden, 1201 W.Airport Frwy #100, 817 684-9378, Euless on the corner of Airport Fwy (Hwy 183) and Industrial (FM157). Thai, plant-based, and all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Larger restaurant means more room for families and other groups. Ask for Sierra Club table at the door. Organizer: Terry Jensen 972 251-1532(W)

 **JAN 6 (WED) SIERRA CLUB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING** The Executive Committee (or Excom) is the elected governing body of the Dallas Sierra Club and meets at REI, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Farmers Branch, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch) at 6:30 pm. Contact the [Dallas Group Chair](#) for more information.

 **JAN 7 (THU) YOUNG SIERRANS HH/DINNER - *TBD* - ADDISON/DALLAS** Please join us for a Happy Hour/Dinner at *TBD* on Thursday, January 7th! Arrive anytime after 6:00p for happy hour; dinner at 7:00p. Please RSVP by noon on 1/7 to the Pingg invitation or the youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org email address so we have a rough estimate for seating. All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. **Address:
** Contact: [Candace Weinberg](#)

 **JAN 23 (SAT) YOUNG SIERRANS 2009 POST-HOLIDAY PARTY - UPTOWN DALLAS** Tired of having so many holiday party options in December, then having a wide open calendar in January? Please join us for our 1st Annual Young Sierrans Post-Holiday Party! We will have games, music and good times for all! Same holiday cheer, only without the holi-daze. Location: Candace's Place. Time: 6:30p-?? Details: BYOB and bring a dish to share - local/organic ingredients encouraged! More info to come! All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. Please RSVP by 1/22. Contact: [Peter Wilson](#)

 **JAN 23 (SAT) SATURDAY MORNING BICYCLE RIDE AT WHITE ROCK LAKE** Let's ride around White Rock Lake. Meet at 9:30 AM at the Stone Tables near Lake Highlands Drive and Buckner Blvd. This will be a leisurely trip of 9 miles in about 1-1/2 hours. Any bike and any body is welcome. All participants in Sierra Club bike rides must wear an approved helmet. The trip will be canceled if it is raining at White Rock Lake. Optional brunch afterwards. Leader: [Mark Adams](#) 972-658-1281(C)

The *Dallas Sierra Club News* e-newsletter, sent monthly, keeps you up-to-date on meetings, activities, issues and special events.

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