

Letters needed on state park land

If TP&W sells the land, Tarrant County will remain with no state park

One thing about undeveloped land – they're just not making it anymore.

Or have you read an article recently about someone tearing up an urban subdivision to make a wildlife refuge?

In Tarrant County – one of the largest urban counties in the state – there's subdivisions galore, but nary a single state park. And now the land that was once purchased for that stated purpose is threatened with a sale for yet another subdivision.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department recently gave a two-month deferral for a decision on selling to developers the 400 acres of undeveloped park land on the east side of Eagle Mountain Lake.

Local officials have been trying to find donations to fund \$5 million for procurement of the land from the state. Status at midpoint of the extension indicates that progress toward that end has not been made. So the best bet may be a deluge of letters to TPWD requesting that the land be retained by the State as a park.

Please write letters urging that this 400-acre park land be retained as public land and not dispositioned to private industry for development. Tell them that the 400-acre Eagle Mountain Lake Park should be retained as a natural area. If you have already sent letters, send them again. Timing is critical.

You can fax a letter to (512) 479-0083 or (512) 389-4814 to the attention of Chairman Katherine Armstrong.

A sample letter follows:

"Honorable Katharine Armstrong
Chairman, Parks & Wildlife

Commission
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, Texas 78744
Re: Eagle Mountain Lake State Park
Property

Dear Chairman Armstrong:

GFWSC's Bob Scott is winner of Environmental Excellence Award

Bob Scott has been chosen to receive the 2003 Excellence in Environmental Awareness Award (EEAA) in the Individual Category from the League of Women Voters of Texas. He was chosen by a panel of League members and environmentalists. Individuals and organizations are selected for their contributions to protecting and preserving the natural resources and environment of the state with the EEAA Award.

At its annual State Convention in April, the League will honor Bob with his award in the individual category. Recipients in five other EEAA categories, such as business and news media, will also be recognized.

Bob has been a constant voice for conservation locally, statewide and nationally. He has worked on conservation issues for the Sierra Club as well as for several other organizations such as Audubon, the LWV and TCEA.

His technical background leads Bob to carefully research the issues. He has become a reliable resource on environmental issues for many organizations,

I urge you to retain the 400-acre Eagle Mountain Lake State Park as state public land. This land is too valuable as a natural area to be sold to private industry for development. Tarrant County should have its own state park.

Sincerely, Name, Address

local and statewide. Government agencies and officials accept him as a reliable member for his many committee assignments because of his reasonable approach to conservation.

"Bob Scott is very deserving of this EEAA recognition and honor by the LWV," commented Earl Burnam, who co-chairs the conservation committee with Scott.

Say What?

"Another part of me wants to go camp out on Padre Island and resist the bulldozers that are going to drill for gas on that island now that George Bush has given them permission. I want to resist."

--Ann Richards in *Texas Monthly*, February 2003

See Page 2 to find out what the ex-governor is talking about!

Program
Notes

March Program: Terry Hibbitts, a teacher at Rockwall High School, will present a program on a Earthwatch research program in Costa Rica. See Page 4 for the time and site of the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club general meetings as well as committee meetings.

The *Sierra Club Crier* is published monthly by the

Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club

P.O. Box 1925, Fort Worth, TX 76101

817/588-1167

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Sierra Club National Hotline 202-675-2394

Web Pages

Fort Worth Group <http://sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/fortworth/index.html>

National, Lone www.sierraclub.org

Lone Star Chapter www.texas.sierraclub.org

The Planet www.sierraclub.org/planet

Join the Sierra Club 'Camp-In' to protest gas drilling on Padre Island

The Sierra Club is engaged in a fight to stop gas drilling on Padre Island National Seashore, and needs your help to send a message that is loud and clear to the Bush Administration: Don't mess with our public lands!

On March 29-31, hundreds of people who treasure this great national park and the critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles that nest there will head for the beach in opposition to new drilling that will take place in the park and has been approved by the Bush Administration.

Incredibly, BNP Petroleum has embarked on what it calls an "aggressive drilling campaign" in the park that could last 30 years! This spring, while critically endangered turtles are coming ashore to nest, BNP plans on having 18-wheeler trucks driving up and down the beach up to 200 times a week where the turtles lay their eggs!

In order to protest this callous destruction of our seashore and raise national awareness of the Administration's reckless agenda for our public lands, the Sierra Club is sponsoring a Camp-In and Sea-Turtle Sand Castle Contest along the beach route used by BNP's trucks.

We'll use the event to call for a federal buy-out of the oil and gas rights underneath the park, like the buy-out that the Administration has proposed for a national park in the Florida Everglades.

Schedule of Events:

For all events, park in the Malaquite Beach Parking Lot (across the bridge and about 20 miles south of Corpus Christi). A Sierra Club information and registration tent will be set up there. Bring your own food, water, and sup-

plies. No pets allowed on the seashore. All activities are free and open to the public. Children are encouraged to participate.

March 29 Beach Clean Up

At 3:00, Sierra Club will lead a beach clean-up on the north end of the national seashore. Trash bags will be provided. Bring heavy gloves and good shoes.

March 30 Sea Turtle Sand Castle Contest

The Sand Castle contest will open at 10 a.m. Participants will be assigned a plot on the beach to build their own unique and creative sea turtle sand castle. You may register for a plot as an individual, family, or organization. Judging will begin at 1:00 and the awards ceremony will begin at 2:00. Water and light snacks will be provided. Bring your own picnic lunch.

Sunday, March 30 Camp-In

You are encouraged to pitch your tent and stay overnight on the beach. There is a good chance that the BNP Petroleum trucks will be running early in the morning on Monday, and we'd like to be there to greet them and witness the destruction of the turtle sand castles. (You are also welcome to camp on the beach on Saturday night). The Sierra Club will offer instructions on no-impact camping, which means leaving no trace when we leave. Be sure to bring enough food and water for yourself and your family.

Background: What's at Stake

The seashore is home to 17 endangered or threatened species, including five kinds of sea turtles, foremost among them the Kemp's ridley, the

Please see SEND, Page 2

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Greater Fort Worth Group Sierra Club Outings

Fort Worth Sierra Club outings are open to members and nonmembers. Trip leaders serve in a volunteer capacity and assume no responsibility above that of organizing the trip. If you have special needs or medical requirements, notify the leader prior to the trip. All outings officially begin at the trailhead. Leaders cannot assign carpools, but may help coordinate ride sharing. Many outings require advance reservations at the trip designation as well as from the participant. Notify the trip leader promptly if you must cancel. Donations of \$3 per person and \$5/family are requested for overnight trips to be used for conservation efforts of the club. Any park and/or camping fees are the responsibility of the participant. In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms> or call 415-977-5630.

March, 15, Saturday

Join other Sierrans in a docent led tour of the new Eliot Porter exhibit, the Color of Wildness at the Amon Carter Museum. Porter, a world renown nature photographer, was a prominent leader in the Sierra Club during the 1960's and published several books in conjunction with the club to publicize preservation of our natural areas. Meet at 10:50 AM at the entrance to the gift shop inside the museum so that tour can begin promptly at 11:00 AM. Carter Museum is located at 3501 Camp Bowie Blvd, Fort Worth 76107.

March 28-30 , Friday-Sunday

Car camp and kayak the Lighthouse Lakes Trail near Aransas Pass, TX. This is a new trip for the Sierra Club to explore a kayak trail on the Texas coast near Port Aransas, TX on Sat. March 29. The trip requires use of a GPS and good navigational skills. Must be good swimmer and skilled kayaker or canoeist for trip. The Lighthouse Lake Trail is approximately 6 miles and winds through bay and mangrove areas. Kayak rental will be handled through Capt. Sally's Rockport Kayak Outfitters (rockportkayakoutfi@sbcglobal.net or (361) 729-1505 and should be made in advance by individual trip participant. Kayak rental is \$50 per day for single kayak and \$60 per day for double kayak. These are open cockpit sea kayaks. Shuttle fee to Lighthouse Trail will be \$25.00 for group. To make reservation,, please identify yourself as part of the Fort Worth Sierra Club group. Camping will be at Goose Island State Park and requires a fee. You must make your own campsite reservations by contacting the Texas Parks and Wildlife

March 2003

(www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park) or calling their office at 512/389-8900. Sunday will be reserved for a whooping crane tour and visits to other nearby coastal natural areas. Participation requires prior approval of leader due to navigational and aquatic skills required. Leader: Marilyn Sumner (Turnage), 817-491-2382 or marilynturnage@msn.com.

April 11-13, Friday-Sunday

2nd annual Caprock Canyon State Park and Trailway We'll travel to Caprock Canyon on Friday night and establish base camp at Little Red Tent Camping area. Saturday's bike trip will be approx 25 miles from the west end of the trail riding back toward the state park. The trailway is a converted rail trail, and the west to east trek is mostly downhill, though the grade is very gentle. It is extremely scenic, traversing red rock canyons over several railway trestles and through the Clarity Tunnel with its population of Brazilian Free-tailed bats. Fat tired bikes are necessary for this trip due to conditions of the railbed. Number of bikers limited to 12 persons. Sunday morning will be optional bike rides or hikes within the park. Cost of the trip will be \$10.00 per person to include campground reservations and trail fees. Leader: Dan Smith, 817 410-2955, or email RiverdogDan@aol.com.

April 11-13, (Friday-Sunday

Backpack trip to Caney Creek/Buckeye Mountain. . Enjoy a spring backpack trip in western Arkansas. This is a favorite of the Sierra Club. We'll backpack a total of about 9 miles. The hike to camp is on a ridge and offers excellent views of the Caney Creek Wilderness. We'll set up camp near a waterfall. Friday night camp will be at Shady Oaks Campground nearby. Leaders: Marcos Jorge (972) 394-2546 (mjorge@ustgolfshaft.com) and Faith Mauk.

May 8-11, Thursday-Sunday

Canoe a section of the Buffalo National River in central Arkansas on Friday and Saturday for a total distance of less than 20 miles on this national wild and scenic river. This river is crystal clear and surrounded by beautiful cliffs and trees. Camp each night at Tyler Bend Park in Arkansas which is located at the midpoint of the canoe trail. You must leave on Thursday afternoon 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. The number of canoes available is very limited. The website is www.gilbertsstore.com. No shuttles are provided by the canoe outfitter for personal craft. This trip is open to experienced canoeists and requires approval of trip leader. This is not a technical river, but there is a current and basic canoeing skills are needed. Leader: Marilyn Sumner (Turnage) , 817-491-2382 (email marilynturnage@msn.com) or Claudia Blalock, 817- 924-6242 email cpblalock@msn.com

September 7-12, Sunday-Friday

High Sierra Fly fishing. The search of the elusive California golden trout requires a strenuous backpack of about 35 miles in the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Brookies, rainbows and browns will also be sought. This fly fishing trip is from Devil Post Pile to Tuolumne Meadows on the John Muir Trail. The trip is rated as strenuous and is only for those who have had extended backpack trips in bear country. Bear resistant canisters are required for food storage. A California nonresident fishing license and trout stamp is required for angling. There is a nonrefundable fee of \$5 for the wilderness permit. The check must be received by Feb. 21, to meet the permit deadline. The trip is limited to 6 experienced backpackers. Contact the leaders who will determine if you qualify for the trip. Leaders: Marcos Jorge 972-394-2546 (mjorge@ustgolfshaft.com) and Steve Longley, 972-394-2546.

Sierra Singles Events

On Saturday, March 15 join other Sierrans in a docent led tour of the new Eliot Porter photography exhibit, the Color of Wildness at the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth. Meet at 11 a.m. at the entrance to the gift shop inside the museum. See more details above under "Upcoming Events." For more information, see Carter's website at www.cartermuseum.org

On Sunday, March 16 learn about wines at a wine tasting just for Sierrans at Tony's Wine Warehouse in Dallas at 2904 Oak Lawn (214-520-9463) 2:45 - 4:30 p.m. Additional information for this event is also listed above under

Please see SINGLES, Page. 5

Coming Events

March 4 & April 1, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
Fort Worth Sierra Club ExCom Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at a new site beginning March 4. Meet at BJ Keefers at 909 W. Magnolia. For more information, contact Dan Smith, 410-2955.

March 19, Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Fort Worth Sierra Club General Meeting.

Newsletter deadline. Submit articles, ads, letters, or other information in writing. Articles may be submitted by mail, email, or on Iomega Zip disks accompanied by hard copy. B&W or color nature photos and electronic images (150dpi or greater) will be accepted (prints returned if submitted with SASE). Photographs of outings or other club activities are particularly encouraged. Identify subject of photo and state photographer's name. Please do

General Meeting Wednesday, March 19

Program: See Pg. 1 for information on March program.

7:00 Main Auditorium, University of North Texas Health Science Center, Camp Bowie at Montgomery (exit Montgomery off I-30, go north about a mile to Camp Bowie).

not write on the back of photos. Mail submissions to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1925, Fort Worth 76101, bring to the ExCom meeting, the general meeting, or email jmoody166@aol.com.

Conservation Committee Meeting

The Conservation Committee normally meets the last Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m., at the University of North Texas Health Science Center, Library Building, Room 306. Contact: Earl Burnam, 244-2328 or Bob Scott, 282-1372, to verify location and date.

March 31, Monday

Newsletter folding party, Smoky's Ribs, 6 p.m., 5300 E. Lancaster. Eat, or have the beverage of your choice, while working with other Sierrans to prepare the newsletter for mailing. Call Steve Turner, 457-7131.

April 1, Tuesday

Outings Committee Meeting, 5:45 p.m., at BJ Keefers, just prior to the February ExCom meeting. Contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

March 16, Sunday

Learn about wines at a wine tasting just for Sierrans at Tony's Wine Warehouse in Dallas at 2904 Oak Lawn (214-520-9463) 2:45 - 4:30 PM This is fund raiser for the Sierra Club. You will taste approximately 15 different wines and champagne and learn about their characteristics. You must sign-up and pay in advance by March 10. Please mail checks for \$20 per person to Claudia Blalock, 2905 Benbrook Blvd, Fort Worth, TX 76109 (phone 817-924-6242)

Send a message to the nation from Texas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

most critically endangered sea turtle in the world. It is one of the most visited recreation area in Texas, drawing 800,000 visitors a year. Padre Island is the longest unbroken barrier beach in the U.S., and the longest undeveloped barrier beach in the world.

BNP Petroleum drilled a well last spring that took four months to complete and resulted in thousands of trucks driving up and down the beach during turtle nesting season. The company has received another permit to drill two more wells. The permit allows up to 40 heavy truck trips a day for the new wells. Bulldozers will plow a clearing through the fragile dunes to provide access to the well site, which will be visible from miles away. The drilling will create an intense amount of noise and result in the destruction of wetlands.

The official "Sea Turtle Recovery Plan" for the Kemp's states that undue vibration of turtle eggs should be avoided because vibrations increase the likelihood of embryonic damage or mortality. BNPs 18-wheelers, which produce such vibrations, are a menace to the turtles. Despite intensifying efforts by turtle patrols to find every nesting event as it occurs, about half the ridleys nest and crawl back before the turtle patrols or the public come along, and an unknown number of nests are never detected at all. Three nests were

not found in 2002 until hatching took place, and one of these was about a mile south of BNP's first gas well. Years of continual noise and vibrations from the trucks could make Padre Island inhospitable to sea turtles and undermine 25 years of work to establish a breeding population of Kemp's ridley there.

Sierra Club Legal Efforts

After BNP began drilling its first well in February 2002, the Sierra Club went to court to stop it. We filed suit against Interior Secretary Gail Norton in April, and the case will be heard in federal court this spring.

The Solution

We want the Bush Administration to provide the same protection to Padre National Seashore and the turtles as it does Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida. In May the Bush Administration proposed a \$120 million buy-out of privately held oil and gas rights below Big Cypress. Texans have every right to request that Padre Island receives that kind of protection as well.

Get Involved!

At times over the past two years it has been easy to get discouraged by the wholesale environmental destruction that the Bush Administration has gotten away with. But we have to remember that the vast majority of the American public strongly supports environmental protection.

It's up to us to raise our voices and be heard, and show the country that even here in Texas, Bush is out of step with the public's values on the environment. We can protect this national treasure and majestic piece of Texas' natural heritage. So come on down to Padre Island and make your voice heard!

For more information about the camp-in, to sign up for volunteer activities (like distributing posters announcing the event or helping out at the event itself), obtain a power-point presentation to give to groups you are affiliated with, or to register for the camp-in and contest, contact the Lone Star Sierra Club at 512-477-1729, or email fred.richardson@sierraclub.org.

WHAT: Camp-in and Sea Turtle Sand castle Building Contest at Padre Island National Seashore

WHEN: 3 p.m. Saturday, March 29 – Beach Clean-up

10 am-2 p.m. Sunday, March 30 – Sea Turtle Sand Castle Contest

4 p.m., March 30, Campfire Sing-a-Long

WHY: Save the Turtles and Protest the Bush Administration's Reckless Destruction of our National Parks and Public Lands

REGISTER BY MARCH 21!

To register, call 512-477-1729 or go to the Lone Star Chapter web site at www.texas.sierraclub.org

The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club

Sierra Celebration for 2003 slated for Oct. 17-19

Initial planning has been completed for this year's Sierra Celebration at Bassett State Park, Oct. 17-19.

Cabins, bunkhouses, campsites, and "the great fire ring" have been reserved for the weekend. This is a wonderful site for a celebration with loblolly pines surrounding all, and plenty of hiking trails and hills. There is plenty of room to spread out, both at campsites and in

bunkhouses in order to have a relaxed time.

In addition, there are 3 cabins reserved (3-5 occupants per cabin) which will be held until 60 days prior to the celebration for those who would like to enjoy one of the more unique experiences of Texas state parks.

Activities, meals, and entertainment plans are in progress and any suggestions are more than welcome. At this point we have environmental singer/musicians and entertainers Bill Oliver

and Frank Meyer scheduled for Saturday evening for our featured entertainment.

In addition plans are being made for outings events, including hikes, "casual" orienteering sessions, and "naturalist" hikes as well as social events.

Early notice will be going in the "Lone Star Sierran" and full details and registration forms will be available by June. This early notice is to prompt suggestions, group planning and awareness for our great fall event.

Singles CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Upcoming Events."

On Monday, March 17 at 7 p.m. join us for dinner at I Fratelli restaurant, located at 7750 N. MacArthur Blvd. in Irving. Contact: Jenny Lehman.

Just a reminder that all events officially begin at the event site/trailhead. You may just show up at an event unless specifically told to RSVP. The general rule is that you may show up for day hikes and dinners, and you need to RSVP for weekend camping trips.

Contact for Sierra Singles information: Jenny Lehman, (817) 263-1357 or lehje30@hotmail.com.

Membership

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Phone (optional) _____

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Mission statement

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

... dedicated to the conservation and appreciation of our natural world.

New Fort Worth garbage rates encourage recycling

Fort Worth City Council approved new garbage rates that could lead to lower bills for residents who learn to recycle and reduce the amount of garbage they throw away. The new rates take effect after June 30, when once-a-week garbage service in carts begins.

Currently, all residents pay the same amount for curbside garbage service – \$13.75 per month. New pay-as-you-throw rates will be based on the size garbage cart a resident chooses:

A 32-gallon garbage cart is \$8 per month; a 64-gallon garbage cart is \$13 per month; and a 96-gallon garbage cart is \$18 per month.

Before choosing a garbage cart size in April and May, each household will receive a recycling cart and information about how to recycle more trash. Residents who recycle more will have less garbage and, therefore, need a smaller size garbage cart. A recycling cart will be delivered to each household in February or March at no additional charge.

Blue Recycling Carts

Beginning March 31, residents will

put recyclables in the 64-gallon blue recycling cart instead of the rectangular, green recycling bin. Not only does the cart hold more than the bin, it's also easier to take to the curb because it has wheels.

Also beginning March 31, many more items can be recycled. The city's new recycling program will accept glass and ceramics of all colors and more types of paper – including cereal boxes, dry food packaging and soda and beer cartons. Also added to the recycling list: rigid plastic containers with Nos. 1 through 7 recycling symbols on the bottom and even the plastic or metal lids to most containers. Residents will find they have much less trash to throw in the garbage, if they recycle everything on the new list.

Recycle Yard Trimmings

In addition to recycling more household items, Fort Worth will begin recycling yard trimmings on March 31. Residents will put leaves, grass clippings and other small garden trimmings in paper yard bags instead of plastic bags. Paper yard bags, available soon

in retail stores, are made of a special 2-ply, heavy-duty paper that resists tearing and holds up even wet. But most important, paper yard bags can be composted – plastic bags cannot. When residents fill paper yard bags and set them at the curb on their recycling day, they'll be collected and turned into gardening mulch and compost – not taken to a landfill.

Residents may continue to set out bundles of limbs and small brush, tied with twine or string, as long as bundles are no more than four feet long and less than 18 inches in diameter. Place bundles at the curb on your recycling day; they will also be turned into mulch.

Big Trash and Brush

For larger limbs and other items too big for garbage and recycling crews to handle, the city will continue to offer special pickups. However, beginning March 31, residents will simply call 817-392-EASY to request a pickup.

Items will be picked up within three to seven days, and residents will get up to four free pickups per household per year.

The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club