

TCEA News

Tarrant Coalition for Environmental Awareness

September 2007

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1. FROM THE PREZ

Summer has passed and the "real work" begins. First the excellent news. Marilyn Sallee came to our mixer last June, joined us, and volunteered to be our webmaster. If you have not visited the website (<http://www.tceaonline.org>) please do. Check our the master calendar for environmental activities in Tarrant County! We are trying to get a representative from each member organization approved to add their events to the calendar. We are also adding events that come our way. If we are missing one, PLEASE, let me or Marilyn know. The other exciting feature is a "breaking news" box. This is for those activities that come up that are time sensitive and need our awareness and participation - now. The fate of the "colonial" trees is a breaking news item.

TCEA is also going to participate in several awareness activities this fall. We hope that you look through the upcoming activities and jump in as an individual - or even better, sign up your organization! We have some good news to report and I hope you keep scanning down the newsletter to see the scoop on the State Parks Funding and then seriously consider the request for everyone to send a comment to Austin supporting the EPA plans to make the ozone standard even more rigorous.

Our meeting is September 22 at 1PM - 2:30. We will start with a demonstration of the Water Testing Kits that we hope all your organizations purchase and use and end with a legislative wrap-up on the environment by our member legislator, Representative Lon Burnam.

Finally, fall festivals will be starting soon. If you know of opportunities for TCEA to set up a booth so that all of us can be there, please let me know. Stay cool - enjoy the shade and creeks of what is left of our natural environment!

2. UPCOMING EVENTS

Save Trinity Trees Picnic

September 3, 11 AM - 2 PM. Along the Trinity Trail by the grove of old oak trees. Go to <http://www.trinitytrees.org> to see a map and learn more!

Tarrant Regional Water District Public Hearing

Sept 7, Tarrant Regional Water District Board, 800 E. North Side Drive, FW. Public hearing is on the proposed budget which includes money for water conservation programs, development of Eagle Mountain Lake Park, and land aquisition for Trinity Uptown project.

Transportation Hearings

September 10. 6:30 AM, Hurst City Hall, 1505 Precinct Line Road, Hurst, 76054

September 11, 10:30 AM, Transportation Council Room, NCTCOG Offices 616 Six Flags Drive, Arlington, 76011 <http://www.nctcog.org/trans/outreach/meetings> for more information

World Water Monitoring Day

September 18. World Water Monitoring Day is the kick-off to a month of water testing that ends on October 18, the 35th anniversary of the US Clean Water Act. We urge all member organizations to sign up and pick a body of water of interest. Our September meeting will have a demonstration of the testing kit. Kits cost \$20 or \$15 each if more than 10 are ordered at the same time. Each kit has enough supplies for 50 measurements, but only one set of the "hardware." If you sign up, or want to use the TCEA kit to measure a favorite creek, lake or river near you let Marilyn know so that she can add your organization and site name to our website list. We'll have a sign up sheet for locations at our meeting on the 22nd. Here is the web site:

<http://www.worldwatermonitoringday.org/>

September TCEA Environmental meeting...

September 22. 1 - 2:30 PM. Westside Unitarian Universalist Church, 901 Page Ave., FW 76133 Come meet like minded people and get re-energized! We're going to kick it off with hands on demonstrations of the kit so that you can sign up for a location of your choice and go out to measure its pH, temperature, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen with confidence. Then, we'll sit back and let Representative Lon Burnam tell us what happened when environmental issues came up in the 2007 legislature. We'll have snacks and drinks. For more information see www.tceaonline.org or call Bonnie at 817-266-8569.

TCEA Board meeting

October 6, 1 PM, Tin Cup, 1025 West Abram, Arlington.

Step It Up - 2007

November 3, 12 - 3 PM. Healthy Approach Market in Colleyville. A national day to raise awareness on the urgency of global warming. There are booth opportunities on the day of the event.

Healthy Approach Market is on the north access road of 121 between the Glade Road exit and the Hall-Johnson Exit. For more information on Step It Up go to <http://www.StepItUp2007.org>. For more information on how you can help and participate, contact Bonnie (bfbg@tx.rr.com) or Terry (dgl@dfwnetmall.com).

Vision North Texas

NCTCOG has launched an online Speakers' Bureau request form. You can sign up for a presentation on the anti-sprawl and greenlining efforts behind this effort on the Speakers' Bureau page at <http://www.nctcog.org/envir/SEEDevEx/speakers.asp>.

Car Free for a Day?

Join me to go CarFree for a day every week for a month. (I'm waiting for a bit of a cooldown!) We all know the facts:

- Per person, the United States puts more climate changing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than any other nation. Motor vehicles are responsible for almost 25% of those emissions.
- For every 100 American households that take this action, we'll achieve carbon cuts equivalent to taking more than 30 cars off the road.

For those of you that are prize oriented there are some very nice bike focussed prizes for those who can recruit the most people to sign on at Carbon Conscious Consumer (C3), a national climate campaign sponsored by the Center for a New American Dream that challenges individuals to establish climate-friendly daily habits and inspire their friends to do the same. More information is available at <http://c3.newdream.org>. Let us know your success and we'll post some brags on the TCEA website!

3. UPDATE ON STATE PARKS

One of our priorities last year was funding for our state parks. By now everyone has heard the good news that significant funding was provided for parks by the 80th legislature. Texans for State Parks has a good article wrapping up the legislation around this funding and you can find the full article at www.Texansforstateparks.org. Some highlights are:

* The legislation includes little funding for new acquisitions, and results in the transfer of 18 Historic Sites and the Texas State Railroad out of the State Park system.

* HB 12 requires TPWD to practice certain park management-related provisions. TPWD must submit by January 15 of each legislative session, a Management Plan and Priorities List which must include a prioritized list of TPWD facilities in need of repair, renovation, expansion, or maintenance; an itemized list explaining additional funding requested to accomplish a project on the prioritized list; and the results of the annual Equipment Review, Maintenance Provider Review, and Facility Reservation System Evaluation.

* HB 12 provides for TPWD to promote visits and enhance revenues; establish and operate staff concessions on park sites; purchase products for profitable resale or rental; and enter into leased concession contracts as necessary, as well as to establish criteria for determining the eligibility of land that was donated for inclusion in the state parks

* In HB 1, Texas state and local parks were granted \$182 million in additional funding for the 2008-09 biennium when all was said and done. Following are some ballpark figures from HB 1, to show what TPWD was appropriated in '07 vs. what they will get in '08:

	'07	'08
Salaries/Operating	\$53 million	\$68.5 million
Equipment	\$0.25 million	\$4.8 million
Capital Repair	\$18 million in bonds	\$68 million in bonds
Land Acquisition	\$2.1 million	\$16 million
Local Parks	\$5.7 million	\$38.3 million

* HB 12 requires 94 percent of sporting good sales tax collections each biennium to be credited to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and 6 percent to the Texas Historical Commission, in conformity with Tax Code, sec. 151.801

* HB 12 calls for a joint legislative task force to study the use of the sales tax on sporting goods. The task force will be composed of 8 members, 4 from the House of Representatives and 4 from the Senate. The task force shall:

- review the items that are included in the definition of “sporting goods”
- determine the amount of sales tax revenue that must be generated from the sale of “sporting goods” to fund at a minimum, the appropriations of the 80th Legislature regarding state parks, local parks, historic sites, coastal management programs, and water planning.
- prepare and present to the legislature a report of their findings by December 15, 2008.

* Senate Bill 2033 and Senate Joint Resolution 65 as passed and enacted, calls for the issuance of an amount not to exceed \$1 billion in general obligation bonds should Texas voters approve the measure on November 6, 2007. The Legislature intends to use \$52 million of the bonds for park maintenance, improvement, repair and construction.

4. ACTION REQUEST FROM DOWNWINDERS AT RISK

Dear Fellow Downwinders -

Next week, on September 5th, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be hosting one of only five national hearings in Houston on whether or not to establish a new, more protective ozone air quality standard.

The Agency's own Science Advisory Committee has concluded that *the current 8-hour standard of 80 parts per billion (often "rounded up" by local and state officials to 85ppb) is not protective of public health and should be lowered.* The Advisory Committee did not recommend a specific new standard but said it should fall in the 60-75 ppb range.

As all of you know, DFW is nowhere near meeting the current standard, much less a new standard that is lower. Nevertheless, public health groups like Downwinders at Risk are pushing for a lower number based on the current science and the fact that the Clean Air Act says that only public health impacts can be considered when determining a new air quality standard.

There has been a lot of grousing among some officials in the DFW area that a lower standard would be impossible to ever meet. Take it from us, that's what's always been said about such standards. *The way the system works is that the new standard is set and then the marketplace responds with a host of technologies and options to meet it that weren't there before the new standard.* Then it's just a matter of the political will of local and state officials to implement these measures-something we've seen a severe shortage of here in Texas.

This has been a very mild summer and our ozone "red days" have not been as frequent as in the past. This year's unprecedented rainfall should not give the impression that we don't have a serious problem. *In fact, our technical advisor, Dr. Al Armendariz of SMU, published a widely publicized report this summer that made it clear the DFW area is trending up in ozone pollution levels - especially in Tarrant, Denton, and Parker Counties.*

Downwinders' Field Organizer Jim Schermbeck will be attending the Houston hearing and giving testimony in person. But you don't have to go to Houston to make your feelings known on the issue. *You can submit written comments to EPA.*

E-MAIL comments to:

a-and-r-Docket@epa.gov

Re: EPA docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2005-0172

FAX comments to:

202-566-1741

Re: EPA docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2005-0172

SNAIL MAIL comments to:

EPA docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2005-0172

Mail code 6102T

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20460

(Please include a total of 2 copies)

You have until October 9th to submit your comments, but the sooner the better.

5. MEMBERSHIP

You are always welcome to join or renew your membership in TCEA. We have a lot of challenges to our environment and hope that all of you will return as members and supporters and recruit other organizations and individuals who don't yet know about us. We hope that members of all our member organizations consider themselves a part of TCEA, participate with us, and we hope that we can facilitate participation with each other when interests overlap. If you or your organization are not members and would like to join TCEA, please visit <http://www.tceonline.org/join.htm>. There you will find a .pdf form to download and mail to our membership chair, Bob Scott.

Here are a few websites of TCEA member organizations. Please visit these sites to find out about the upcoming events and activities sponsored by each of these organizations. (If your organization is a member of TCEA and is NOT listed below, my apologies. Please let me know and we'll have you included in all future newsletters. Thanks. Bonnie)

Arlington Conservation Council <http://www.arlingtonconservationcouncil.org/>

Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club <http://texas.sierraclub.org/fortworth/>

Fort Worth Audubon Society <http://www.fwas.org/>

League of Women Voters of Tarrant County <http://www.lwvtarrantcounty.org/>

League of Women Voters of Arlington <http://www.lwvarlington-tx.org/>

Blue Skies Alliance <http://www.blueskiesalliance.org/>

Friends of the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge <http://www.naturecenterfriends.org/>

Westside Unitarian Universalist Church <http://www.westsideuu.org/>

Great Plains Restoration Council <http://www.gprc.org/>

Unity Church of Fort Worth <http://www.unityfortworth.org>

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“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where Nature may heal and cheer and give strength to body and soul.” John Muir