

Thursday, June 04, 2009 (file cac218)

To: Dan Breedon

Fr: Ed Miller

Subj: Sprawl, water wars, Outback living and vegetable gardening.

Ref A: D. Hayden, A Field Guide to Sprawl, W. Norton 2004

Ref B: D. Ward, Water Wars: Drought, flood, folly, and the Politics of Thirst, Riverhead Books/Penguin Putnam 2002

Ref C: L. Stuart, Nurtured by Nature, Mother Earth News Dec/Jan 09, pp 79-84

Ref D: B. Pleasant, Guide to Organic Pest Control, Mother Earth News, Aug/Sept 08, pp 35-38

Ref E: J. Heriteau, Ortho's Complete Guide to Vegetables, Monsanto 1997, Butte Lib 635 H

Background: Sustainable living in the outback of Butte County is driven by social and economic forces that need to be recognized. The following references deal with many of the factors pushing development into the mixed conifer regions of Butte County.

1. Ref A provides a vocabulary and vision of sprawl that is helpful in identifying trends associated with characteristics such as income stratification, privatopia (gated communities), water features, leapfrog developments, and septic-tank/sitcom suburbs. Clustered zoning to preserve open space is differentiated from tight cul-de-sac or pod layouts. Trends associated with support services, industrial activity and power grids are also shown.
2. Ref B points up the world wide mal-distribution of water that has the potential for generating massive social/political pressures. Subsidies for creation of infrastructures for water storage/distribution pose special problems that can affect Butte County are discussed in detail.
3. Ref C models an ideal remote family residence/cluster development that could readily appeal to a substantial segment of future DIY stakeholders. The use of composting toilets is debatable. When well maintained, they can be superior to neglected septic tank/leach field systems. Note that the legislature is now considering a bill to require septic tank inspection/cleaning on a 5 year cycle.
4. Ref D documents methods of pest control using relatively benign techniques. These approaches are similar to minimal cost soil management techniques previously described.
5. Ref E Provides a basic guide to vegetable gardening. For stakeholders in the mixed conifer areas, the growing season can be as short as 4 months. Note that the maximum elevation angle to achieve a nominal minimum sun duration of 6 hours/day (spring and fall solstices) that reasonably define the growing season for warm soil vegetables for our area is 50 deg (90-latitude).