

Woodridge green space must be preserved

Woodridge continues its battle with District 99 to "Keep Our Green Space Green." These 45 acres of forested and grassy land are nestled in the middle of the most beautiful park area in Woodridge, and certainly one of the most beautiful park areas in DuPage County.

I see District 99 playing a poker game with Woodridge. "There's high stakes on these 45 acres, and if we play our cards right and sell to a developer, we could win us a mighty big sum," sounds like what they're thinking.

"Vacant land, open land." These words are being used repeatedly to describe any area of land without a strip mall, townhomes, parking lot or office complex. A natural, undeveloped piece of land with grasses, trees, bushes, deer, birds, butterflies, raccoons, possums and the rest of all "God's creatures, great and small." Earth that hasn't been taken hostage by a developer -- yet -- and held captive for a high ransom profit. Who else benefits in the long run from the sale of our scant and dwindling "vacant land"? Is there any real long-lasting profit that benefits the Earth and our community?

Mother Nature sure doesn't profit. She dies, suffocated in concrete. Her wildlife lose their natural habitat of food and shelter. Their population diminishes until it eventually just dies off or manages to move somewhere far enough away to survive. The coyotes are reported to be eating out of peoples' garbage cans in Bolingbrook now. I talked to a man at the DuPage River Park one day while walking my dog there who said he had coyotes in his backyard eating out of his garbage cans. They're hungry, and although it is very unnatural for coyotes to come close to man out of their instinct for survival, they are hungry enough to risk it.

Every day there's some new development going up somewhere in DuPage, and every day there's traffic congestion, a sea of cars, because of it. Channel 11 had a program on not long ago called "Save Our Land. Save Our Towns." It is a study done on the effect of "urban sprawl," and states that every car takes up a certain amount of calculated space as it moves along the roads, causing less space for people to access outside of their car.

What about our health and safety? Do we as a community profit in these areas? There has been a dramatic increase in allergies and breathing disorders with the increase of car emissions in DuPage. I was on my way heading east down Route 83 to Oakbrook Shopping Center three years ago and I couldn't see Oak Brook. I was close enough to see it but there was a kind of fog in the air that day that obscured my vision. I couldn't figure what it was. It wasn't a rainy or cloudy day. What I saw was "haze," a euphemism for smog, caused mainly by vehicle emissions.

But there is another issue: flooding. The covering of the earth with concrete prevents the earth from absorbing the water. So when it rains, the water just keeps running down all the concrete and has no place to settle into. It ends up accumulating in large amounts and causes flooding.

There's another effect that overdevelopment and overpopulation have on a limited area: power shortages. We just can't keep up the electricity with the population. This has caused the need for more power plants to go up, which has caused a lot of concern with people in the areas they're going up in. These people are worried about the effect on the health these plants can have, especially on their children.

The more people there are, the more garbage there is. And the more sewage there is. We already had to build one mountain of garbage because we didn't know what else to do with it. I don't know how we are managing all the sewage now. Not sure I even want to know. One million people. That's a lot of sewage.

I sure can't see any profit for us, only loss for the people here. The developers are the only real profiteers, and at our expense. We pay for their profit with our health, our safety and our quality of life.

How much more land will we let the developers devour? When will we get on the warpath to Save Our Land and Keep (what's left of) Our Green Space Green in DuPage County? How much more do we have to lose? When will we say enough is enough?

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