

Calaveras Enterprise

Letter to the Editor

Sustainability means being responsible

Bud Hoekstra | Posted: Tuesday, April 3, 2012 9:28 am

Human life on this planet exists because there are four inches of healthy topsoil and because it rains once in a while. Without soil and water, the White House, Wall Street, the price of a barrel of crude, the modern army, the thriving dollar, even the Calaveras General Plan – are dominoes which fall. Were one so powerful as to strip the bit of soil from the earth's crust and stop the rains, human civilization would collapse.

Sustainability – the knowledge of how to protect, preserve and perpetuate that layer of soil and mist of rain – is a priority. To be sustainable means to observe the earth's bottom line – the watersheds, the croplands, the forests, the genetic resources, the climate. Sustainability is a life-or-death matter, because no state, no nation, no county can operate for long in the biological red.

The ideals of sustainability burgeoned over 100 years ago when Teddy Roosevelt pinned it down to one statement: "The world is never more than a year from starvation." His dictum for survival was: Use, Do Not Use Up. "Let this be the slogan for every farmer, of all who dwell in the open, of all who love nature and who wish to see our natural resources preserved for the perpetual use of our people."

Today's standard of practice is to rob the children of future generations by unplanned development and its wasteful use of resources. Child abuse – in the form of this generation abusing the next – is the middle finger of our prosperity.

The watchwords of sustainability are ecology and economy. Teddy Roosevelt remarked on it: "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired in value." Some people see this act of planning as an attack on individual liberties, if it restrains the market forces of greed and consumption.

Teddy Roosevelt stood before detractors, answering them with this answer – an answer we would all do well to mind – "May the God of justice and mercy have you in His keeping."

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San Andreas

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