

Open space our most valuable resource

Jerry Cunningham's comical letter ["Three easy steps to saving the planet!", *Connecticut Post*, July 25] was an amusing twist on a very complicated and serious problem. Unfortunately, he assumes that pollution is the main reason for global warming and that warming/cooling trends in the past are comparable to what we are experiencing today.

Scientists all over the world agree that the main reason for global warming is not so much the pollution, but the destruction of open space. It's just easier to legislate controls on emissions than it is to dictate what property owners can and cannot do with their land. We must understand that the trees and brush of open spaces filter the pollutants from our air, absorb vast amounts of carbon dioxide (the most damaging pollutant) and regulate the Earth's surface temperature. The "Inconvenient Truth" is that we continue to pour pollutants into our air while at the same time we are reducing the amount of open space needed to balance the quality of our environment. Simply stated,

HAVE YOUR SAY

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we are releasing more pollution (including carbon dioxide) than our remaining open spaces can absorb. And I'm not just talking about the rain forests of faraway kinds — I'm talking about the destruction right here in Stratford, along Broadbridge Avenue, Highland Avenue, Hawley Lane, etc.

In great jeopardy at this time is Remington Woods, which spans over 400 acres in Stratford and Bridgeport. The owner of the property, DuPont, is planning a massive development project on this essential woodland. If allowed to happen, our air will become dirtier and our immediate environment will become hotter. The Seaview Avenue Project, proposed to gain access to the Remington Woods development, would also destroy a potentially gorgeous setting for new uses of the old General Electric

property [Woods development won't aid city residents, *Connecticut Post*, July 26].

About the past heating and cooling of the Earth: I've said it before, and I'll say it again, and I'll continue to say it until global warming doubters understand: The Earth has indeed endured many heating and cooling periods before. *But* (and this is a very important "But") it has never in the Earth's researchable history happened so fast, or so unrelentingly, or so intensively as it has over the last 10 years or so. All of the other heating/cooling periods took place over hundreds, thousands and even millions of years - *never* in so short a time as has happened to the Earth now. The speed at which this disaster is approaching even astounds today's researchers. In spite of all our emission control legislation, global warming is getting worse at a much faster rate than anybody expected.

We need to stop destroying open space and start restoring it immediately if we are going to save ourselves and our children.

Unfortunately, this is a problem. As I stated earlier, people don't like being told what they can and cannot do with their property. We have rights that guarantee us this freedom. So the only solution I can think of is to pass legislation (permits, fees, etc.) that makes it more difficult and expensive for developers to target open space, and easier, more desirable and more lucrative for them to redevelop brownfields (i.e., already developed sites). If we increase taxes on developed property and decrease or eliminate taxes on open space it would encourage developers and landowners alike to clean up blighted areas, leaving open space to do what it does best - clean the air and cool the planet.

Kudos to those who opt to leave their property as open space, and/or create backyard habitats, for they may some day be saluted as life-saving, planet-saving heroes!

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