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## OPINION AND COMMENTARY

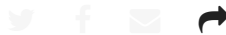
Editorials and other Opinion content offer perspectives on issues important to our community and are independent from the work of our newsroom reporters.

OPINION

## *Alan Cover: Why would anyone want to pave over my home?*

BY ALAN COVER

DECEMBER 30, 2013 9:20 PM



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My grandfather and his siblings settled in Wood Colony in 1903. They were part of a group of pioneers who came to west Modesto to farm and raise their families. Their values and strong character were such that many had leadership roles and were prominent in the development of early Modesto.

Many descendants of these early settlers still reside in the Wood Colony area today. They made a choice to stay, but it took lots of sacrifice and hard work to do so. Along with them, many new families are beginning new traditions.

Just what makes Wood Colony such a special place?

For a farmer, soil is arguably the main factor. The alluvial deposits of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne rivers are some of the best anywhere in the world. Wood Colony grows a variety of crops that feed man and animals.

These crop and livestock commodities provide many economic and environmental benefits for Modesto. Farmers and agriculture businesses buy locally, hire locally, pay taxes, are electric ratepayers and support local schools, churches, charities and organizations.

#### TOP VIDEOS



See giant solar project under construction near Patterson

Modesto Irrigation District water used by Wood Colony farmers, and water from their private wells, replenish the groundwater table. The watered soil and crops it produces helps to cool the city air during the hot summer months, reducing energy costs for city residents. To help our city even more, Wood Colony crops release pure oxygen into our air, helping diminish pollution caused by emissions.

Paving over this soil with asphalt will remove all the above-mentioned benefits.

Finally, a slow drive through the Wood Colony area will show well-kept farms, friendly people, fine schools and a plainly beautiful agricultural setting. I hope you agree it should stay that way.

When I heard the Modesto City Council would like to annex part of Wood Colony, I wondered why.

Why can they move to annex land that belongs to citizens who cannot vote for them at election time? Why would the council take something that is producing tax revenue and jobs, supporting industry and businesses in Modesto; that provides environmental benefits, has a low demand on law enforcement, and put it out of commission or change it?

Council members who support annexation need a better reason than “we need to create more jobs.” Do these new businesses even exist? If businesses wanted to come to Modesto, they would be filling in the vacant offices and buildings that currently are for rent or for sale in northwest Modesto and Salida.

Finally, council members need a real good reason for wanting to begin the destruction of a productive, historical, beautiful, family-orientated community.

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