



## ***Support Smart Growth in Galt Oppose Northwest Expansion***



Galt is engaged in a General Plan update to determine development priorities for the next twenty years. Galt has enough land inside its current boundaries and its eastern sphere of influence for 20 to 30 years worth of growth. But the Guttridge Family that owns land north of Twin Cities Road — between the Cosumnes River Preserve and the Galt sewer treatment plant — wants this land to be developed in the short term. Your help is needed to persuade the City Council of Galt that the community does not want expansion in this direction. This issue paper describes the reasons why **allowing growth in a peninsula northwest of the City's northwest boundary is a bad idea for the environment and a bad idea for Galt residents.**

### ***Northwest Expansion Was Rightly Rejected in 1995***

In its 1989-2005 Galt General Plan, the City sought to establish a Sphere of Influence land use policy including north and west and eastward expansion. The analysis of that proposed change showed significant environmental impacts. The final Environmental Review Report contained mitigation measures to exclude the territory to the north of Twin Cities Road. The Local Agency Formation Commission [LAFCO] approved the eastward expansion, with the mitigation measure of excluding the Guttridge property from the Sphere of Influence. Sierra Club and Friends of the Swainson's Hawk believe that mitigation means forever, not just for ten years.

The Sierra Club presented information to LAFCO that approving northward expansion would violate LAFCO policies and state requirements on LAFCO in approving changes in City Spheres of Influence. LAFCO staff found that it would be “very difficult to justify expanding the Sphere of Influence into this area because there are sufficient alternative areas for Galt to grow.” (August 1994)

In the mid-nineties, the Guttridge family again attempted to get the Sphere of Influence changed to allow them to develop a 1,000 acre senior residential complex between Twin Cities Road and Laguna Creek. That effort failed. Nevertheless **the Guttridge Family has now engaged the attention of Del Webb to consider their property as a site for a retirement living development.** Del Webb has told the City of Galt that it is interested in pursuing the project.

### **Reasons for Rejecting Northward Expansion Are Abundant and Clear:**

- Impacts on the Galt Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations, Provision of Sewer Services to Growth within the Current City Growth Area, Cost of Future Sewer Service to Galt Residents
- Impacts to Wildlife, Riparian Habitat and Open Space, Agriculture, Archaeological and Cultural Resources
- Impacts to Regional Air Quality and Traffic Congestion on 99
- Violation of LAFCO Policy.

These impacts are discussed in more detail below. The fact is, however, that many of these impacts were fully evaluated in 1994. The reasons for rejecting northwest expansion are even more compelling today than they



*The site proposed for senior housing abuts the Cosumnes River Preserve on the west and the sewer treatment plant to the east, forming a peninsula extending north and west of the current Galt western and northern boundaries.*

were in the early ninties. It is a waste of public funds to go back and revisit these issues by including northwest expansion into the current General Plan alternatives analysis.

### ***Reasons for Rejecting Northwest Expansion Are Abundant and Clear:***

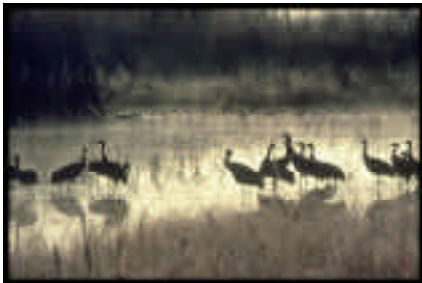
#### **• Impacts on the Sewer Treatment Plant Operations, Provision of Sewer Services to Growth within the Current City Growth Area, and Cost of Future Sewer Service to Galt Residents Dictate Maintaining Current Northern Boundary to the City.**

1. To reduce impacts to sanitation services, the 1995 Sphere of Influence approval by LAFCo included a mitigation measures to reduce land use incompatibility with future sewer plant expansion. These included excluding the Guttridge property from the SOI for future development.
2. Increasingly stringent wastewater treatment requirements to protect water quality mean that Galt will have more difficulty in the future meeting sewer needs and keeping costs down. Allowing development near the wastewater treatment plan reduces options and flexibility for dealing with sewage treatment.
3. Limits on treatment plant capacity and the regional permit mean that growth to the north of the present City will take up capacity and leave areas presently expected to grow in the next 20 years undevelopable. This is a classic definition of urban sprawl, a wasteful consumption of valuable agriculture and habitat lands that leaves vacant urban lands of no value for either urban or rural use.
4. Residents' sewer fees and costs for sanitation services will rise if development is not carefully orchestrated to match sewer treatment capability. Hook up fees to regional sanitation district would affect every household if Galt is unable to manage its own sewer treatment.

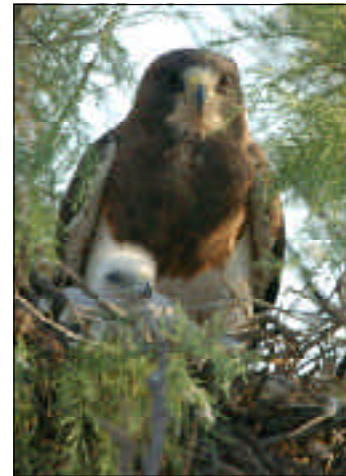
#### **• Impacts to Wildlife, Riparian Habitat and Open Space, Agriculture, Archaeological and Cultural Resources**

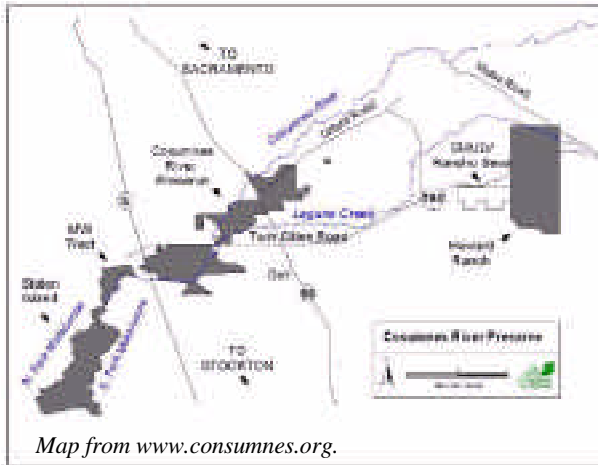
Galt is favorably located in a beautiful area bounded by rivers and streams, oak woodlands, grasslands, floodplains, agricultural lands and wildlife habitat including species listed under federal and state endangered species statutes. The Cosumnes River Preserve is located immediately west to northeast of Galt, crossing Highway 99 just north of Galt at Dillard Road. The Guttridge property is located between Laguna Creek and Twin Cities Road, at Christensen Road,

and if developed would have significant impacts on the Laguna Creek riparian zone, Cosumnes River Preserve, and lands of equivalent habitat value on and adjacent to the Guttridge property. This is an area known to provide valuable habitat for threatened species including the Swainson's Hawk, Giant Garter Snake and Greater Sandhill Crane.



*Photo left, Sandhill Cranes, The Nature Conservancy, Preserve Staff.  
Photo above, Swainson's Hawk and chick. George Robertson.*





There would also be significant impacts to agriculture and archaeological and cultural resources. These impacts were amply documented in the 1994 EIR for the SOI expansion. **To mitigate impacts of the 1995 SOI change, the Final EIR modified the boundary to exclude the territory to the west of Galt's Sewer treatment plant and north of Twin Cities Road; this includes the Guttridge property.** Sierra Club and Friends of the Swainson's Hawk believe the exclusion of this area from the 1995 SOI is a mitigation measure that cannot be changed by the City of Galt.

- **Impacts to Regional Air Quality and Traffic Congestion on 99**

Some facts have changed since Galt received its Sphere of Influence approval from LAFCo in 1995. The traffic congestion future for Highway 99 has gotten remarkably worse. The Sacramento Blueprint Project demonstrated that only through careful placement of growth, and the use of much higher density infill growth patterns, could traffic congestion on 99 be made tolerable in the future. Also of greater concern for the future is air quality because since 1995, the public health standard for ozone has become about 25 percent more stringent. Since 70 percent or more of the pollution that forms ozone comes from on and off-road vehicles, there is a need to plan and place development to reduce vehicle trips. Allowing development to leap present boundaries undermines the effort to reduce vehicle pollution.

- **Violation of LAFCo Policy.**

Taking the annexation of the area north of Twin Cities and West of the wastewater treatment plant to LAFCo after its rejection of this annexation in 1995 makes no sense. None of the facts or policies that dictated not developing in this area have changed. If anything, LAFCo has a stronger mandate to protect natural resources than it did in 1995. For the City to reinitiate this issue with LAFCo is a waste of time and taxpayer money.



*Photo left, Oak Woodland at the Cosumnes River Preserve, The Nature Conservancy, Joe Watson.*

*For more information about the Cosumnes River Preserve, go to [www.cosumnes.org](http://www.cosumnes.org).*

**What You Can Do To Help. . . .** The City of Galt has a great future without developing north of Twin Cities Road. Please reaffirm the City's northern boundary and reject the bid to move urbanization north and west of the City. In particular oppose development between the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Cosumnes River Preserve.

• **write or call Galt's Mayor and City Council members** to let them know you do not support adding growth north of Twin Cities and West of the Sewer Treatment Plant to the General Plan: **Address and phone and fax numbers for City Hall:** City Hall, 380 Civic Drive, Galt, Ca. 95632; 209-366-7130; fax is 209-745-3373

- Mayor Darryl Clare (dclare@ci.galt.ca.us)
- Vice Mayor Randy Shelton (clerk@ci.galt.ca.us)
- Councilmember Tom Malson (tmalson@ci.galt.ca.us)
- Councilmember Tim Raboy (clerk@ci.galt.ca.us)
- Councilmember Rick Stancil (clerk@ci.galt.ca.us)

• **stay connected** and attend relevant City Council meetings . . . .

• join the email action alert list by emailing [contact@swainsonshawk.org](mailto:contact@swainsonshawk.org) so you can get email alerts regarding protecting wildlife in the Galt General Plan update process.

- visit the Sierra Club web site at [www.motherlode.sierraclub.org](http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org).
- visit the Friends of the Swainson's Hawk web site at [www.swainsonshawk.org](http://www.swainsonshawk.org)
- check the City of Galt web site for updates on General Plan at [www.ci.galt.ca.us](http://www.ci.galt.ca.us)
- write letters to the editor to the *Galt Herald*, *Lodi News Sentinel* and the *Sacramento Bee*.

• **educate your friends** and neighbors about Galt's future, the General Plan and shaping growth for Galt that protects the environment around Galt.

• a pdf copy of this briefing document can be found at [www.motherlode.sierraclub.org](http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org) and [www.swainsonshawk.org](http://www.swainsonshawk.org).

**Thank you for your help in protecting wildlife in our region.**

*An Issue Paper prepared by Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter and the Friends of the Swainson's Hawk, May 9, 2004*



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