

OPINIONS

Hyperbole and false statements have no place in Nedsbar debate

BY KEN CHAPMAN

With increasing irritation, I read Chant Thomas' article "Here we go again" [*Applegater* Fall 2013] opposing the proposed Nedsbar timber sale. In at least seven instances, he presumed to speak for "locals," e.g., "locals are concerned," "locals are perplexed," "locals will be watching." Having been a "local" for 43 years, occupying land adjacent to public lands, I can assure Mr. Thomas that some locals would be pleased if the aggressive logging of the 60s through the 80s was resumed. Some locals oppose most proposed logging sales, and a lot of us are on the spectrum somewhere in between.

Behind his presumption that he speaks for "locals," Mr. Thomas makes assertions that I find to be either false or overly broad. He states flatly that logging will increase fire danger without knowing if and how many large trees will be cut or the amount and kind of slash treatment that will be done. He also seems to minimize the sort of fire danger that comes from a second-growth forest that is shielded from either fire, logging or thinning. Most surprising is the statement that a fire in a closed-canopy forest is preferable to one in a more open forest. Having spent my college summers with the US Forest Service, I heard from experienced firefighters that a canopy fire moving through a second-growth forest was the worst, most damaging and most dangerous sort of fire.

Interestingly, in another article in the same issue of the *Applegater*, Jakob Shockey talked about contemporary Applegate forests being "a product of human tinkering." That would seem to include the Nedsbar area. He further stated that historically, forests were more open: "While our forests may still look natural, they are the product of human fire-suppression."

Mr. Thomas' claims are, however,

moderate when compared with those made by Klamath-Siskiyou Wild and the Williams Community Forest Project on their websites. Those organizations claim that the proposed logging sale will "destroy the forest," and further state that the Nedsbar area is the "last, best older forest." Really? Destroy the "last, best older forest"? False and apocalyptic rhetoric may bring the faithful to their feet, but it is a poor way to make rational decisions about the use of public resources.

Also mentioned by both groups was the damage to scenery from Buncom. The logging on a north slope of the Pilot Joe project was accomplished with almost no visual evidence. If that is the sort of logging proposed on the north slope in the Little Applegate drainage, can anyone reasonably talk about "damaging scenic values"? Unless those concerned with the "scenic value" of that north slope are willing to leave it open to wildfire, they might look at Mr. Shockey's article and put their scenic view in historical perspective.

After reading Mr. Thomas' article and the other anti-Nedsbar websites, I read the Bureau of Land Management's website about the logging proposal. While I have numerous questions still—volume taken, large vs. smaller trees, amount of road to be built, slash treatment, etc.—I found their information to at least be factual and lacking the sort of histrionics present in the anti-Nedsbar information.

Perhaps there will be good reason to oppose Nedsbar in the future. Reason, however, seems to have little to do with the arguments presented against Nedsbar. I look forward to reading about the proposed logging sale in more detail. I will continue to read both sides of the argument. As a rule of thumb, however, the side using the hyperbole is the side I dismiss.

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See revised Opinion Piece policy on page 21.
This policy is effective with the next issue of the *Applegater*.

Climate change disagreements

BY ALAN JOURNET

I congratulate Alan Voetsch for expressing his views in the Fall *Applegater*, but disagree with many of his comments.

Mr. Voetsch has a different view of the residents of the Rogue Valley than I do. My sense is that if local folks were asked whether they would like to pass on to future generations a planet that is able to support them in the same way it has supported us, at least 75 percent would agree. This is all environmentalists are trying to achieve; I applaud the effort. Mr. Voetsch argues that the percentage is not 75 and then rejects climate science, calling the entire discipline "crap."

In substantiating this claim, Mr. Voetsch reports his experience as an amateur astronomer, presumably thinking this gives him credentials to argue the credibility of climate science. However, his view of science is naïvely simplistic. Contrary to Mr. Voetsch's assertion, the essence of science is testing hypotheses by collecting data from the real world. By his incorrect definition of science, much of astronomy would be disqualified.

To substantiate his attack on climate science, Mr. Voetsch recommends we read the writings of Senator James Inhofe, a politician with zero credentials and zero credibility in any scientific arena. Interestingly, even Inhofe acknowledged that initially he accepted the science of climate change, but reversed his position when he found out that addressing it might cost money. This is like accepting a serious medical diagnosis, then rejecting it when we find potentially uncomfortable treatment is required. It is stunningly flawed reasoning. Since Inhofe now relies on fossil-fuel corporations for his campaign funds, his antiscience position has become more strident. The general advice to "follow the money" is always worthwhile. In the case of James Inhofe and the climate deniers in and out of Congress, following the money leads directly to coal, oil, and natural gas corporate sources.

An inconvenient truth is that over 97 percent of practicing climate scientists

fully agree with the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the planet is warming and that human emissions of gases are contributing. I challenge Mr. Voetsch to find an astronomy or medical opinion he would reject that is accepted by 97 percent of the experts. Maybe Mr. Voetsch thinks that thousands of climate scientists around the world are conspiring with the international professional scientific societies and National Academies of Science who also accept these conclusions.

What Mr. Voetsch ignores in his commentary is the relative costs of addressing climate change versus the cost of not addressing it. Study after economic study has concluded that failing to address global warming and its climate chaos consequence will cost far more than not addressing it. The most recent such study, *A Climate Risk Assessment for the United States*, was promoted by Republican Treasury Secretaries (Paulson under Bush and Schultz under Reagan). This confirms that global warming is not a partisan issue.

Anyone living in southern Oregon knows the local costs of reduced snowfall, increased drought, and wildfire. These kinds of weather-related disasters will only increase if we fail to address the cause. We are already paying billions of taxpayer dollars to manage national climate-induced crises that have compromised agriculture (raising food prices), devastated coastal regions through storms amid rising sea levels, and destroyed communities through floods and wildfire. These events are costing all of us money—not to mention costing the lives of many of those directly involved.

It is time for all of us, including our elected officials at all levels of government, to understand the issue and take steps to address it. Our grandchildren can afford no less.

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Applegate Dam hydroelectric project terminated by FERC

BY SUZIE SAVOIE

The tale of the proposed hydropower generation facility on the Applegate Dam is one of corporate mergers, joint ventures and acquisitions, and less about actually generating electricity.

Symbiotics LLC originally obtained the license and permit from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in 2009. Then later AG Hydro LLC took over the license. Symbiotics and AG Hydro are now both subsidiaries of Riverbank Power Corporation. Based in Toronto, Canada, Riverbank Power is a developer, constructor and operator of hydropower generation facilities in North and South America, with offices in Toronto, Oregon, Utah, Idaho, and Lima, Peru.

After all the efforts of the federal government, after all the corporate financing poured into the project, after all the energy of local Applegaters to attend public meetings and write public comments about the proposal, and after more than a decade, the project has been

officially terminated by FERC. The reason is stated in FERC's Order Terminating License issued October 16, 2014: "We find that project construction did not timely commence, and we terminate the license as required by section 13 of the Federal Power Act (FPA)."

However, after reading this Order it appears to me that AG Hydro just completely dropped the ball. The Order is an interesting read, and if you are curious you can read it at <https://www.ferc.gov/whats-new/comm-meet/2014/101614/H-8.pdf>.

Some of the reasons stated for the termination of the project within the Order are:

- AG Hydro filed drawings stamped "Not for Construction."
- AG Hydro failed to submit a formal project financing plan.
- AG Hydro's steel liner design was considered unacceptable and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) asked for major modifications to the project

design, but AG Hydro did not file an amendment application to address the issues.

- AG Hydro did not meet the deadline to start project construction on December 17, 2011, and, after being granted a two-year extension, they didn't meet the final deadline to start project construction on December, 17, 2013.
- AG Hydro submitted inadequate documentation to prove manufacturing of turbine components at its manufacturing facility in China.
- AG Hydro submitted photos of blueprints that were illegible and in Chinese, and the only dates on the drawings referenced 2006, predating the FERC license.
- AG Hydro failed to complete other pre-construction requirements.
- AG Hydro ordered turbines differing from those authorized in the license.



Applegate Dam photo by Suzie Savoie.

It's clear that it was in the best interest of Applegate Valley residents, the Applegate River and public coffers that this project was terminated by FERC. Despite being told by Symbiotics at public meetings here in the valley that they wanted to "work with the community," it appears that Symbiotics/AG Hydro didn't even want to work with the agency, let alone the community, and they completely mismanaged this project.

Unfortunately, we are still left with

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