

Commissioners: You have heard the story of a group of blind men describing an elephant after each touches one part of the animal. The man who touches the tail says an elephant is like a rope. The one who touches the leg says an elephant is a pillar. The man touching the side says it's like a wall.

The sequel to that story is playing out in Clatsop County with the promoters of Bradwood Landing using teams of lawyers to cherry-pick through laws, plans, policies and regulations, preparing an application designed to keep us all in the dark.

This technique of obfuscation results in a document that narrows the question of size only to acreage, and only to acreage used for certain purposes in certain places. This blinds us to the actual impact of the project - the dredging, the damage to fisheries, the armed escorts and exclusion zones on the river, the disruption of existing business, the dangers to population.

Similarly, the promoters' legal team has assembled an environmental "protection" scheme composed of a hodgepodge of disconnected techniques that no one, anywhere, has ever pulled off with success. And who is to make sure this complicated scheme is actually implemented? Who is to measure the results?

It is worth remembering that Pacific Seafood Group dumped their illegal pollutants into the Skipanon for decades with no response from regulatory agencies until some private citizens conducted measurements and forced action. The Bradwood-written response to the Land Use Board of Appeals will not save or shield the Columbia from loss, destruction, or injury. At best it will distract or excuse the people who have promised to "hold LNG accountable" until the promoters get the financial bonanza they are after.

Those blind men touching the elephant ignored the input of others, much as the commission has ignored the community and the voters, and insisted on their own stubborn interpretation of what an elephant was.

I respectfully ask the county commission to transcend obstinacy, to put the river and its people first and to reject these Bradwood-written proposed findings, which will not protect salmon or other wildlife and which disguise a huge project as "small to medium."

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