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Environmentalists denounce Reagan's pick

By **LESLIE FARRIS**
and **MIKE RUST**
Of the Emerald

Local environmentalists aren't mincing words — in their opinion, James Watt is "the worst possible choice" for secretary of the interior.

"Confirmation of Watt is probably the most dangerous thing that could happen to our country's environment and our country's natural resources," says Survival Center Director Dave Daikh.

"His appointment by (Pres.-elect Ronald) Reagan more than confirms the fears of environmentalists about Reagan's election as president — fears that he would not see to it that the environment was protected, that he would compromise our land and our natural resources to satisfy big business concerns — timber, oil, coal as well as large agricultural concerns."

One of the more moderate local assessments of Watt comes from John Baldwin, a long-time environmental activist and professor in the University's Department of Urban Planning. Baldwin points out that as of now, most people don't know much more about Watt than what they have learned in recent weeks from the media and that the confirmation hearings are still going on.

However, he laughingly admits to being "very skeptical" as to the wisdom of the appointment.

As interior secretary, the 42-year old conservative Denver attorney will oversee management of the nation's public lands and national resources. Watt just finished two days of testifying before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Senate committees are expected to complete confirmation hearings on all of Reagan's cabinet nominees by Jan. 20, Inauguration Day. Despite widespread opposition to both Watt and Secretary of State designate Alexander Haig, Jr., committee members indicate that all nominees will be approved.

Prior to the hearings, environmental groups worked diligently to defeat Watt's nomination. They



chiefly attacked Watt's past as head of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, a group funded by ranchers, miners and developers. The group frequently has challenged Interior Department land management policies.

It has also participated in 47 lawsuits opposing environmental groups on grounds they hinder growth and development.

Earlier this week during the hearings, Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., described Watt's involvement with the group as a "phony issue." Domenici told the Senate that criticism of Watt on this point implied that those who seek to influence public policy through the courts are "somehow unfit for public office."

Daikh, however, says that Watt's work for "this so-called public interest group" indicates that he would support special business interests over the interests of the public.

"He has fought actively against many of the programs that were started by the Interior Department under Carter, which he is now supposedly going to run," Daikh says. "He's worked actively in supporting grazing of cattle, owned by private agricultural corporations, on public land."

"He has proven to be a radical opponent to wilderness of any kind, he continues. "He doesn't support preservation of any more forestland for future generations — he doesn't even favor maintenance of the wilderness system that we do have."

During his confirmation hearings, Watt said he would disqualify himself from any court or administrative proceedings involving the Mountain States Legal Foundation. He told committee members his record showed he had "the balanced perspective necessary to manage America's resources."

However, Steve Kramer of the Survival Center warns that "Watt thinks the best preservation of natural resources is to use them. Miners are just ecstatic right now."

"The situation in Oregon is critical now because of the wilderness review of the BLM (Bureau of Land Management)," Kramer says. "If Watt is confirmed, we'll see a lot less land make it into wilderness with no chance of appeal."

BLM is the Interior Department's chief agency for managing public lands. A group of Oregon Republicans have endorsed Curry County Commissioner Mike Fitzgerald for BLM director.

"Watt's appointment as secretary of the interior would very likely be a big help to Fitzgerald in getting the BLM job," Daikh says, "because they're the same breed of dog, except that Fitzgerald's a puppy next to Watt."

During Fitzgerald's recent campaign for Congress, he strongly opposed Oregon's land-use planning program and federal limitations on lumber industry access to public forests.

Andy Kerr, associate director of the Oregon Wilderness Coalition, says Watt is unqualified to be interior secretary because "he's so biased against the very principles of what the department was established for."

Kerr says Watt's appointment may have been a payoff to Reagan supporters, specifically Sen. Paul Laxalt, R-Nev., who was Reagan's campaign chairman.

"Laxalt, Reagan and Watt are all in favor of taking publicly owned lands and giving them to the states," he says. Kerr calls it a "transparent attempt to place lands in public ownership."

University, faculty can acquire power in Salem through union

By **MARIAN GREEN**
Of the Emerald

University faculty members may find the power to make their requests heard at the Legislature by joining organized labor, a California faculty union president said Friday.

Warren Kessler, president of United California Professors, told a United Oregon Professors-sponsored forum that unions provide the "best of two worlds" for faculty members.

"We are completely autonomous in our policy-making. I've never received a letter from Al Shanker or George Meany ordering us to do anything," he said.

"But at the Legislature, they (the AFL-CIO) are there. And when we want autonomy, it is there."

The UCP, a 4,100-member American Federation of Teachers union made up of faculty members from California's 19 state college and universities, will hold its first collective bargaining election this spring.

Kessler said faculty members often shy away from unionization because they fear a loss of collegiality.

"You can have the most collegial relationship with the president, dean or department, but that doesn't necessarily mean you'll get a nickel more in Salem," he argued.

UCP advocates a kind of "contractual collegiality" in which "co-equals work out their differences in a fair manner," he said.

Kessler said California professors decided to unionize after two years without pay increases at a time when inflation increased 14 percent in one year.

"We're organizing because of a commitment to defense of the profession."

Kessler described the AFL-CIO, with which the AFT is affiliated, as a "progressive organization" in its politics, and he said non-unionized faculty are "excluding themselves from a tremendous source of strength."

The AFT provides the UCP with 13 full-time staff members, according to Kessler.

"The AFT's willingness to provide resources is partly a reflection of (the Labor group's) own commitment," he said.

To receive support from labor organizations before and after reaching the bargaining table, faculties must demonstrate "as much solidarity as possible," Kessler said.

But he cautioned that an "academic freedom" clause should be built into every faculty contract.

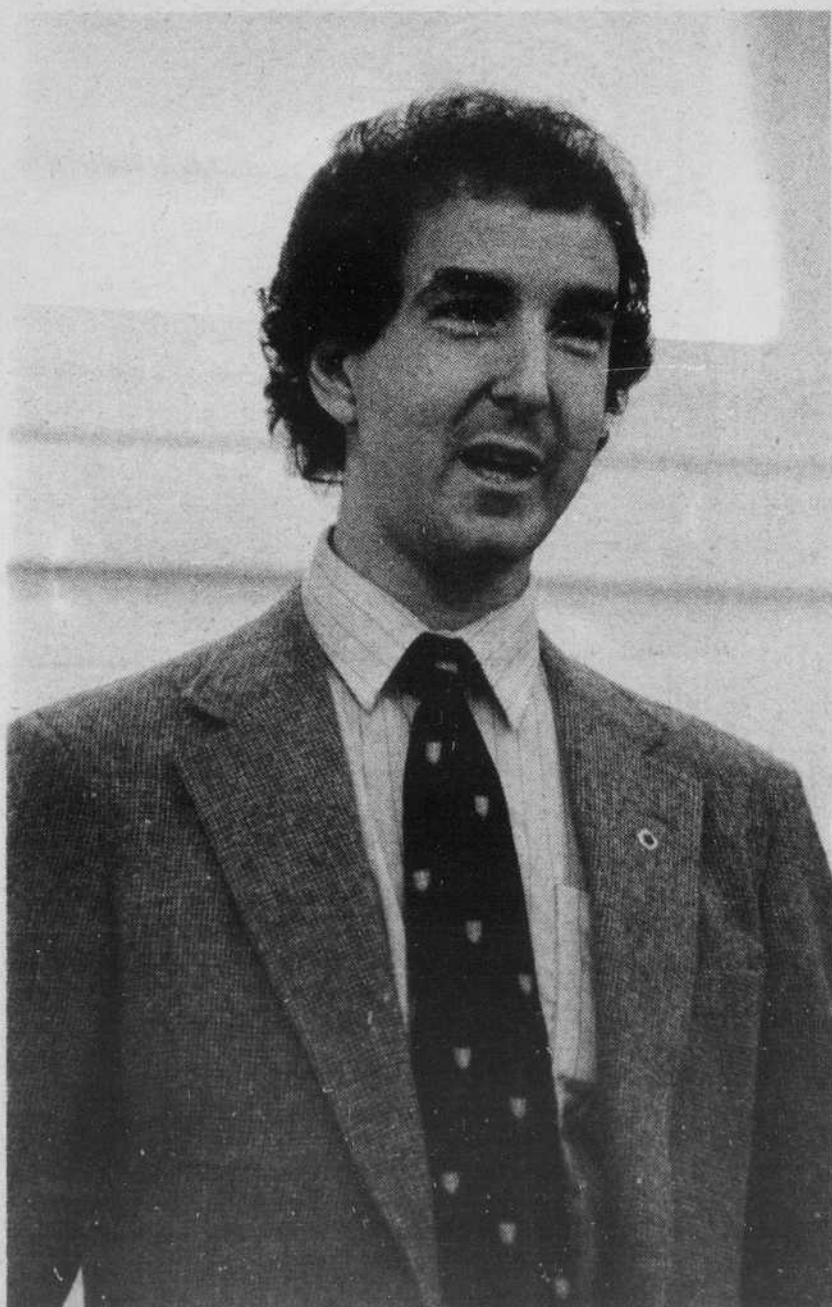
"You don't want the union to be an obstacle to your academic freedom."

United Oregon Professors President Nat Teich told the forum University faculty members must organize and work hand-in-hand with the administration to counteract the "lack of aggressiveness that has characterized the chancellor's office in the past."

"We're just talking about getting an honest slice out of the state and getting more clout in the state, and if we want more clout we're going to need a union."

Irv Fletcher, another forum participant and secretary-treasurer of the Lane County Labor Council, cited the creation of the Labor Education and Research Center during the Legislature's 1977 biennium as an example of organized labor's clout.

And in 1979, the LERC was one of only two University programs that received budget increases.



Warren Kessler

Photo by Martha Stanton