

Tree planters hold protest in Eugene

Weaver joins rally in criticizing government policy

By KIRK KNIGHTON
Of the Emerald

Oregon tree planters who claim they're losing jobs to illegal aliens rallied at the Eugene Federal Building on Friday.

sociation, was aimed at both the federal government — particularly the U. S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management — and the contractors who employ illegal aliens.

The protesters, bearing pick-

— them.

The problem hurts both American workers and the aliens, the protesters said.

The NFWFA claims Oregonians will lose hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars because

"The Mexicans are getting screwed royally," one protestor said. "We have all the sympathy in the world for them."

Almost 200 tree planters protested government policies that allow illegal aliens to work in Oregon's forests. The protest, organized by members of the Northwest Forest Workers As-

et signs such as "American Jobs for Americans," were quick to say their gripes weren't aimed at the alien workers themselves, but at the contractors employing — and exploiting

the government fails to adequately restrict the exploitation of reforestation workers.

Local tree planters said this has forced them into an adversary role against the illegal aliens, a position most of them find awkward.

"The Mexicans are getting screwed royally," one protestor said. "We have all the sympathy in the world for them."

"But we have to look out for our jobs — our livelihoods — before anything else. Those Mexicans have the jobs that we should have."

By law, the forest service and the BLM must award reforestation contracts to the lowest bidders. Contractors who employ illegal aliens can underbid those employing local workers because aliens are usually paid less than minimum wage.

And so a majority of the contracts — 57 percent this year — are awarded to contractors who employ illegal aliens, the tree planters claimed. But the government is indifferent to the problem, they added.

"Their only concern is with awarding the lowest-priced contract. After that they could



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

200 tree planters gathered Friday to protest U.S. policies allowing illegal aliens to work.

care less what happens," one protestor said.

The forest service and the BLM have inserted warnings into their contracts that warn of the consequences of employing illegal aliens, but the tree planters said these warnings "have no teeth to them."

The Immigration and Naturalization Service is all but powerless to enforce its own laws in this case, they claimed.

"We don't want the INS to harass any worker, Mexican or American. We want them to get on the backs of the contractors,

who are making a fortune from human slavery."

NFWFA endorses more active enforcement of the Service Contract Wage Act requirements, especially against contractors who exploit undocumented workers.

Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., made a brief appearance at the protest and promised to work for solutions to the problem.

"I won't quit my job until you all have your jobs back," Weaver shouted to the cheering protesters.

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Glyphs, a literary magazine sponsored by the University Honors College, is accepting submissions from students and area residents for its 1981 edition.

"We have a feeling that there are people out there who don't

fit into the other literary magazines but who we can publish," says Glyphs' co-editor Kim McCrea.

Poetry and prose submissions for the 4-year-old magazine must be written or typed legibly on 8½ by 11 inch paper. Drawings, lithographs, block prints or photographs must be black and white. All submitted material should include the submitter's name,

phone number and address. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should accompany material the writer wishes returned.

Deadline for submissions is March 15. Persons whose material is selected will be notified spring term. The magazine should go on sale in late May.

Copies of last year's magazine are available free at the Honors College office on the third floor of Chapman Hall.

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