

Panel lauds creationism

By SALLY HODGKINSON
Of the Emerald

Citizens who advocate that scientific creationism be taught with evolution in public schools should start at the beginning — the local school board, agreed a panel of creationist experts Friday night.

The panel, held at the campus Koinonia Center, was part of a statewide "summit conference" on scientific creationism sponsored by the Eugene-based Citizens Recommending Educational Alternatives to Evolutionary Doctrine.

Although all five panelists are Christians, they downplayed the religious aspects of creationism and emphasized scientific arguments.

"When we're dealing with scientific creationism, we're not dealing with religion," said Tom Kindell, a resource specialist for the Oregon Moral Majority.

"I can't look at my car and determine who the mechanics were who put it together... but I can say there was an intelligent designer behind it," he said.

One hurdle to the educational endorsement of scientific creationism is that sometimes creationist advocates don't even know what they're talking about, Kindell said.

"All they know is that it sounds good. It's important to know what you believe and be able to discuss it intelligently."



Photo by Bill Wack

Panelists Rolf Hemmerick and Dean Griffeth, along with three other panelists, spoke in favor of scientific creationism Friday at the Koinonia Center.

Creationism is a strong scientific theory that can hold its own against evolution, said Ken Evans, a science teacher for Rex Putnam High School near Milwaukie.

"If what we believe can't stand up against opposing views, it doesn't deserve to be taught," Evans said, adding that he would "fight to the death" for everyone's right to express their views.

But evolution and creationism are theories that can't be proven scientifically because they both come down to philosophical questions about how life began, Evans said.

"You don't prove a world view, you choose it," Evans said. "There's definite religious undertones on both sides," Kindell agreed.

Evans said most students in his high school biology class

are hostile to creationism because they've been taught that evolution is the truth.

"We just need equal opportunity, not equal time," Evans said, adding that students should be exposed to both views and be allowed to decide which theory the facts support best.

Creationists generally are limiting their fight to elementary and secondary schools and leaving state-funded universities and colleges alone, Kindell said.

"If you attack the problem at its root, the university will take care of itself."

Kindell advocated a 1982 initiative referendum on creationism, saying the studies show a that 70 to 80 percent of the public favor teaching both evolution and scientific creationism in public schools.

Weaver offers plan for Watt's removal

By STEVE KNIGHT
Of the Emerald

Oregon Congressman Jim Weaver is petitioning the U.S. House of Representatives with a plan he believes will help save the West from environmental degradation.

Weaver wants Interior Secretary James Watt replaced.

In a news release last week, Weaver accused Watt of trying to destroy "our environmental heritage" by "using the mandate President Reagan received as an excuse to gut the land and ruin our air and water."

Weaver currently is circulating a congressional petition on Capitol Hill urging Reagan to fire Watt. Twelve congressmen have signed the petition, including Oregon Rep. Ron Wyden.

As Interior Secretary, Watt is responsible for the management of millions of acres of public land, which in the West is mostly national park and Bureau of Land Management lands.

Dave Dix, Weaver's press aide, says one of the main reasons behind the petition drive is Weaver's concern over Watt's renewed interest in a "primitive" mining practice which literally "blows the top off a mountain to reach the minerals inside."

The Rocky Mountains would be destroyed in a generation if this mining technique is used, Dix says.

Dix says Weaver also is dis-

turbed over Watt's recent decision to lease Northern California off-shore waters to oil companies for drilling.

Geological studies have shown no more than 12 days of oil off the California coast, Dix says.

"Those (off-shore) leases shocked industry people as well as environmentalists. There's plenty of leases available on land — it's not like we've run out of oil on land and now are forced to drill off the coast of California."

Dix says an oil spill, coupled with northbound winds and currents could ruin Oregon's fishing and tourist industry.

Dix admits, though, that Weaver's anti-Watt campaign can't, in itself, keep the 20-story oil platforms out of California waters or force Watt out of his appointed position.

"But what the petition can do is send a message to Reagan telling him clearly that people didn't vote to have the environmental movement's gains over the past two decades destroyed overnight," Dix says.

And if Reagan doesn't get the message, a bill recently introduced by Weaver might force the president and Watt to reconsider the oil leases.

Weaver's bill — The National Security and Gas Reserve Act — would set aside areas such as the waters off the coast of California for emergency and national security purposes, Dix explains.



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