

To harvest or not?

# Seminar evaluates old forests

A conference to discuss the fate of the remaining old-growth Douglas fir forests in Oregon and Washington will be held at Eugene's Valley River Inn Feb. 12-14.

Sponsored by the University's Bureau of Governmental Research and Service and the League of Women Voters of Central Lane County, the program will feature a luncheon presentation by Jeff Sirmon, U.S. Forest Service regional forester for Oregon and Washington. He will speak on management of old-growth forests in his keynote address Saturday, Feb. 13.

"The conference will bring together experts on both sides of the issue to provide a balanced perspective," says Laurie Power, conference committee chair and member of the League of Women Voters. According to Power, only a small percentage of the old growth stands of Douglas fir in Oregon and Washington is still standing.

She says forest managers are now at a "crossroads," and must decide whether to preserve or harvest the remaining trees.

In sessions throughout the day, on Saturday, other speakers will examine the ecological, sociological and economic impact of any decisions made about old growth stands.

Jerry Franklin, a forest researcher with the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station at Corvallis, will discuss forest ecology.

Richard Gale, a University sociology professor, will speak on the social and aesthetic values of old growth forests.

Dave Cox of Mason, Bruce and Girard, Portland consulting foresters, and Randal O'Toole, a forest economist with Cascade Holistic Economic Consultants of Eugene, will discuss the economic aspects of forest management.

Following each of the main talks, response panels of forestry experts will analyze and discuss each presentation. At the close of the Saturday sessions, University journalism professor emeritus Charles Duncan will summarize the day's events.

The conference opens with registration at 7 p.m. Friday. That evening, a free film, "Natural Timber Country" by Eugene filmmaker Ron Finne, will be shown. Throughout the weekend, an exhibit of drawings and photographs of Northwest forests will be on display.

Sunday, optional field trips will take participants on short hikes to old-growth stands containing trees up to 400 years old.

Cost of the trips is an additional \$2 per person, or \$5 per family. Registration must be completed by noon Saturday.

The conference is being held in cooperation with a number of state and federal agencies,

timber industry representatives and environmental groups.

Cost of the conference is \$10 for the general public and \$6 for students, which includes the price of lunch.

For registration information, contact the Bureau of Governmental Research and Service at the University, P.O. Box 3177, 97403 or call 686-5232.

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