

3,000 leaders will discuss law and environment at UO

■ **EVENT:** The conference will bring environmental-law leaders from around the world to the University

By Autumn De Poe
Student Activities Reporter

Over 3,000 of the world's environmental leaders as well as concerned citizens will converge upon the University this Thursday for the 15th annual Public Interest Environmental Law Conference. The conference, the largest of its kind in the world, will be broadcast live over the Internet to a possible audience of over 100 million people, according to Andrew Yorra, media and publicity coordinator for the conference.

"This is an unparalleled educational opportunity within such a short time period," conference co-director Bob Chandler said. The conference, which will take place Thursday through Sunday, is sponsored by Land Air Water (LAW) and Friends of Land Air Water (FLAW).

"We have more speakers this year than we have ever had before," Chandler said. Approx-

mately 60 international participants from countries such as Hungary, Chile, Bulgaria and Kenya will speak as well as participate in panels and workshops. "I don't know if there is anything bigger that happens at the U of O campus," he said.

"People will be introduced to ideas that I don't think they would otherwise be introduced to, other than through reading," conference co-director Angel Gambino said. "They will have the personal experience to meet people from other countries."

There will be over 100 panel discussions on issues ranging from logging on public lands and Native American rights to legalizing hemp and marijuana as an alternative fuel and fiber source. Panels such as "Indigenous Rights and the Environment," "Ethical Problems in Environmental Litigation" and "Environmental Causes of Cancer in Women" will feature doctors, international experts and local and international activists. Gambino said the panel speakers hold diverse ideas and many sides of political spectrums may be heard.

Over a dozen keynote speakers

will attend the conference, including David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth and Earth Island Institute and former executive director of the Sierra Club; Dr. Owens Wiwa, physician and activist who was forced to flee Nigeria days after the military regime executed his brother and who witnessed first-hand Shell Oil's devastation of the Ogoni people's homelands; and Albena Simeonova of Bulgaria, considered one of the top 25 "Women in Leadership" by the United Nations Environmental Programme and winner of the 1996 Goldman Environmental Prize.

A number of films and slide shows featuring topics such as land-right conflicts, rehabilitation projects, management plans and pet theft will also be highlighted. Students may also learn about career opportunities and internships at the conference.

For the first time in the conference's 15-year history, a "Kids Conference" will take place Saturday. The "Kids Conference" will feature a performance of Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax," a fun presentation entitled "Reduce, Reuse & Recycle...The 3 Rs of

Earth Care" and a "Re-Use It Art" workshop where children can create art projects from recycled materials.

Outdoor activities are also on the agenda. Nature walks will be offered Friday and Saturday to explore the trees on campus and Spencer Butte and along the Willamette River. Walks will be led by botanists Dave Wagner and Beth Stein. A Green Action Run will take place at 9 a.m. on Sunday. The run will help sponsor law students who participate in unpaid public interest jobs. Prizes will also be rewarded.

A book signing will be held at the University Bookstore from 4 to 5 p.m. and will feature authors Carol Adams, David Brower, Kathie Durbin, Gary Francione and Sandra Steingraber.

The conference is free for all University students. A sign-up table will be set up in front of the Law School each day so students may register before attending the events. Students and community members who attend the conference may also participate in the meals and celebrations taking place Friday and Saturday nights

in Agate Hall. Music will be provided by Hummingfish, Point 08 (the University faculty band), Lorelei, Dana Lyons and the Peter Wilde Band. Friday night will feature "all you can drink micro brews" for a \$5 admission fee.

Food will be provided by the Erb Memorial Union. Although LAW recognizes diverse beliefs and diets, no meat will be served in order to emphasize human consumption habits and the impact they have on the environment, according to the updated LAW addendum.

Keynote addresses will be available on the world wide web at <http://piele.uoregon.edu>.

Students with brochures may retrieve an updated addendum at the registration booth. Any changes in conference events will be posted at the Law School. In addition, disposable cups will not be provided so conference participants are asked to bring their own reusable cup or be prepared to purchase one.

For more information on the conference, LAW can be reached at 346-3878 or at l-a-w@law.uoregon.edu



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