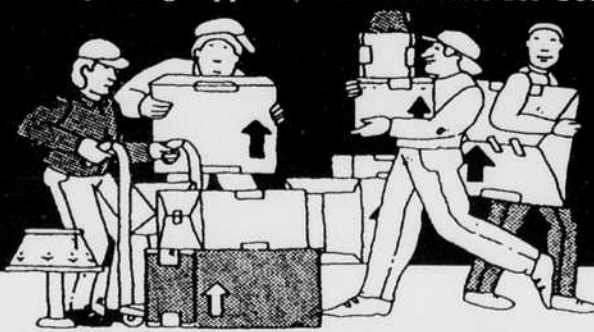


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# Panelists debate forestry, logging

*Panel members voiced differing opinions on forestry management in the next century*

By Kristin Gibb  
Freelance Reporter

Environmentalist Tim Hermach remembers his childhood in Eugene, a time when the city was home to only 15,000 people and the forests were untouched by the logging industry.

"You could chase salmon and the biggest obstacle to catching one was that there were too many to focus on," he recalled.

"Those days are gone."

Currently working as executive director of the National Forest Council, Hermach is also the founder of a movement that promotes the idea that timber harvesters should leave all public forests untouched.

Hermach joined representatives from the forestry industry, environmental activist groups and the Oregon Department of Forestry on Tuesday morning for the second annual panel discussion, "Forest Practices for the 21st Century," sponsored by the international studies department.

Gillette Hall, a visiting professor in international studies and economics, organized the panel for a class titled "Cooperation, Conflict and Global Resources" to demonstrate the difficulties of reaching consensus among a group of individuals with diverse, passionate opinions.

Hall said that after studying resource allocation around the world, a discussion of Oregon's forests provided a striking local example of political dissonance.

"It really helps for this class to bring up an issue that is more home-based," Hall said. "The

panelists represent decision-makers from all perspectives."

Panelists shared five-minute commentaries, refuted the ideological views of their opponents, and offered solutions to current forest management debates.

Anne Hanus, assistant state forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry, shared a quick history of land management policy. "If we go back a century or more, the explorers and settlers saw a real forest in Oregon," Hanus said.

She said that a series of forest fires and unrestricted logging rapidly destroyed trees in the Northwest until the early 1900s, when President Theodore Roosevelt established a two-million-acre national forest that stretched across the United States.

Hanus outlined the protective legislation that followed Roosevelt's declaration and defined the boundaries separating forest preservationists and industry harvesters.

As a lobbyist for the Northwest Forestry Logging Association, Jim Guisinger addressed legislative history and current forestry policy from an economic viewpoint.

Guisinger said that if Oregon fails to meet the current demand for wood products, consumers may purchase substitutes from countries with no forestry conservation efforts.

"The national forest supplies 4 percent of our wood products, but it has 50 percent of the national softwood resource," he said. "I would say that's not a proper balance."

He said that industrial techniques are carefully regulated, allowing companies to harvest timber without damaging the environment.

Oregon Forest Industries

Council lobbyist Ward Armstrong agreed: "We're growing more than we're harvesting today," he said. "The industry is concerned that we know what we're doing."

Roy Keene, a forest management consultant and proponent of sustainable logging practices, argued that forestry issues extend beyond economic concerns. "Forestry is the art and science of keeping and developing the forest, not just the business of removing wood fiber," he said.

Keene challenged the audience to consider how these industrial policies impact them directly. "You are associated with the forest and we have a responsibility to maintain our local unique quality of life," he said.

Keene also cautioned students to listen carefully to lobbyists claiming that a healthy logging industry and diverse forest environments can coexist.

"We hear a lot of talk about letting the experts manage the forest," he said. "Examine the evidence for yourself. We have logged too many large trees; we have logged too many acres; we have logged too many creeks down to the bedrock."

Rachel Astrella, an international studies major who attended the debate, said she was "grateful to hear from the other side." Astrella said she grew up in an Oregon timber town where her father had a successful logging career, and her opinions about forestry are often overlooked. "All you hear about is the environmentalists saying, 'Stop!'"

Marion McLean, also an international studies major, said, "I identify with the environmental viewpoint, with the caveat that I see certain points in the timber industry point of view."

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