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Event to educate about eco-racism

■ The environmental justice conference will focus on raising awareness of environmental inequalities

By Adam Jude
Oregon Daily Emerald

The University Coalition Against Environmental Racism (CAER) kicks off its annual environmental justice conference tonight with a keynote address by University Law Professor Robin Morris-Collin.

The two-day conference — supported by various campus groups including the Multicultural Center and Women's Studies Department — will serve as a forum to raise awareness about environmental inequalities such as toxic dumping in low-income communities (otherwise known as environmental racism), sweatshop labor and free trade said co-coordinator Matthew Peckham, a junior environmental studies

major.

"It's important to educate people about environmental justice issues and let them know that their actions have an effect on the environment," said co-coordinator Joy Dilday, a senior general science and environmental studies major.

The coordinators said the conference will serve as an opportunity for students and community members to learn about environmental justice and to establish

Environmental Justice Conference Schedule

Today:
7 p.m. to 10 p.m. 177 Lawrence Hall: Keynote speakers Robin Morris-Collin and Damu Smith

Saturday:
9 a.m. to 10 a.m. 180 Prince Lucien Campbell Hall: Opening Address

Panel Session 1:
10:15 a.m. to 12 p.m. 110 Willamette: Mountain Top Removal; 123 Pacific: Women and Sweatshop Labor; 100 Willamette: Urban Environmental Justice; 115 Lawrence: Government and Environmental Justice

Panel Session 2:
1:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. 123 Pacific: Dine'h Navajo Relocation; 100 Willamette: Free Trade: Affecting the Global Community; Pesticides and Farmworkers

Workshops:
3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. 110 Willamette: Slide Show; 100 Willamette: Caucasian Privilege; 123 Pacific: Environmental Multicultural Education

7 p.m. to 9 p.m. 150 Columbia: Keynote Speaker Running Grass of Three Circles Center

new coalitions and networks with other activists. In particular, Dilday said conference attendees will have the opportunity to join organizations that are concerned about issues in the Pacific Northwest.

Brenda Tincher, a journalism and environmental studies double-major who supports CAER, said that environmental justice is an important issue that connects human rights, sexism and other various social problems.

"The conference is an excellent way to get an in-depth look at some important issues," Tincher said. "It gets to the root of the problems that are in our society."

Damu Smith, a toxic waste specialist for Greenpeace, is also scheduled to talk tonight on the impact of environmental racism.


Smith "is an excellent person to hear speak," Tincher said. "He is one of the most influential people in this arena."

The conference offers several panel-oriented sessions on Saturday, including a forum on the Dine'h Navajo a Native American tribe that is being evicted from its land in Arizona, a talk on women and sweatshop labor issues, and one session titled "Caucasian Privilege."

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