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A tribute to earth's WORTH

April 20 marks an opportunity for students to honor the planet and raise ecological awareness

BY EVA SYLWESTER
NEWS REPORTER

University students marked the 35th annual observance of Earth Day with informational displays and live music in the EMU amphitheater Wednesday afternoon.

The idea for Earth Day began during the 1960s when U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson became frustrated with the lack of attention given to environmental concerns in politics. In spring 1970, Nelson organized a nationwide grassroots demonstration on behalf of the environment.

"We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and local communities that participated," Nelson said on The Wilderness Society's Web site. "That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself."

University sophomore Megan Debates said she and the rest of the ASUO's Earth Day coalition began organizing Wednesday's event in late January.

Campus and community organizations that set up booths included Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society, UO Outdoor Program, Aprovecho Research Center, Campus Recycling, Computer Reuse & Recycling Center, Cascadia Wildlands Project, International Student Association, Pacific Green Party, Eugene Water and Electric Board and Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

The EMU amphitheater has also been the site of many International Week events throughout this week. On Wednesday, International Student Association volunteers staffed a table with information about environmental issues around the world.

"When we found out International Week was the same week, we decided to team up with them," Debates said.

Many people running booths at the event said environmental conservation efforts are part of their lives year-round.

"Every day is Earth Day at Aprovecho," said internship coordinator Price Sheppy of



KATE HORTON AND TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHERS
(Left) Daisy Arriola adds bottle caps to an Earth Day mosaic in the EMU Amphitheater on Wednesday. (Top Right) The mosaic spells out the reason for celebration. (Bottom Right) Students gather to learn about environmental issues at the outdoor Earth Day fair.

Aprovecho Research Center. The center is a sustainable living research campus located five miles outside Cottage Grove where people work with sustainable forestry and technology such as solar panels and biodiesel, as well as design fuel-efficient stoves for Third World countries.

Sheppy said he came to Wednesday's event because the University's environmental science department gives students credit for participating in the non-profit organization's program.

Erin Coppinger, a fifth-year chemistry student representing the Student Affiliates of the American Chemical Society, said the organization works to advocate for ethical design and production of materials in the chemistry lab, including environmentally safe household cleaners.

"We're just trying to raise awareness about it," Coppinger said.

"Earth Day is really about everyday choices that we make," University Recycling Coordinator Robyn Hathcock said. She emphasized that even choosing to buy shampoo bottles and notebooks made from recycled materials and turning off the lights when leaving a room can make a difference.

Campus Earth Day events will continue throughout the week. Today there will be a panel discussion on global warming at 6 p.m. in 150 Columbia. On Friday at 7 p.m., the Earth First! Round River Rendezvous Road Show will present a slide show, discussions, and spoken word and live musical performances in the EMU Fir Room. At 6 p.m. Friday, Land, Air and Water will present the film "Oil on Ice" in 184 Knight Law Center.

A community Earth Day celebration will happen Saturday, April 23, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the EWEB River Edge Plaza on 500 E. Fourth Ave. The event will feature educational activity booths, alternative vehicles, entertainment, a Procession of All Species, free raft trips, and an Earth Day Art Sale.

At the same time, the John H. Baldwin Film and Lecture Series, honoring the late University professor's work in environmental education, will take place in the EWEB training room in EWEB's north building. There will be a free shuttle from the downtown LTD station to this event.

evasylwester@dailyemerald.com

Child care center to improve screening

Volunteers as well as employees will now receive background checks for work with children

BY EMILY SMITH
NEWS REPORTER

In an attempt to keep potential sex offenders from coming into contact with children at the University Child Care and Development Centers, the University will soon require background checks on anyone wanting to work with children at the sites, including parents.

The new precautions are a result of concerns that arose after Stephen Dale Jackson, 31, charged with aggravated incest in Louisiana, was allowed into both the Moss Street Children's Center and the Westmoreland Children's Center to take pictures of the children last November. Jackson was the partner of an enrolled child's parent at the time the photographs were taken, Reynolds said.

University officials met with parents in February to propose possible changes in volunteer policies and practices, Vice President for Student Affairs Anne Leavitt said.

CCDC Coordinator Dennis Reynolds said the changes in policy are expected to be implemented by fall 2005, but first the University's legal council needs to give them final review.

A mandatory background check is already a statutory requirement for anyone who wants to work as a regular employee, Reynolds said, adding that the University's new policy is in line with policies at public schools.

The additional background checks will not have a significant financial impact or cause any extra hassle, Reynolds said.

Nancy deRonde, director of the child-care centers at Oregon State University, told the Emerald in January that criminal

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EMU adopts sustainable wind energy

Students voted 1,150 - 277 in favor of the bill that supports using turbine-driven electricity, despite the potential 60 cent fee increase

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

The electricity streaming through the EMU isn't different, but Wednesday the source of that power changed. The building became fully powered by wind energy on Earth Day after University officials signed a contract with the Eugene Water and Electric Board to purchase the power, Campus Operations Director George Hecht said.

Students will pay a maximum of 60 cents per term in additional energy fees to establish a fund to finance the wind power and other sustainability projects on campus, University Sustainability Coordinator Steve Mital said.

Students voted 1,150-277 on Ballot Measure 21 in the ASUO primary election two weeks ago, showing support for paying up to \$2 to fund sustainability projects.

Hecht said provost John Moseley authorized the purchase using current energy fee money after the ballot measure demonstrated students'

support. But the fee increases must still be approved by the State Board of Higher Education before next year's fee can be raised. Moseley could not be reached for comment.

Hecht said that the purchase is a "tradeoff," saying Moseley wanted to ensure students' support for paying higher fees because some students already struggle to pay for school.

About \$11,000 of fee money will be needed to provide the wind power, although around \$40,000 might be raised by the fee increase, Hecht said. He said EWEB provided the best rates from several potential suppliers and the University has a history of collaborating with the company.

He added that the president and chancellor's houses have been powered by wind energy for about two or three years.

Although "electrons are indistinguishable from each other ... we have the right to claim that we have that power because we're buying it," Hecht said, referring to the renewable energy EWEB's

turbine facility in Wyoming provides.

Details of how the fund will be spent are still unclear, Mital said. But he said a panel of students and administrators will likely choose projects to finance.

"I think it's fantastic," he said. "The University of Oregon is an environmental leader nationwide and so it's fantastic that on Earth Day we were able to make a bold new initiative," he said.

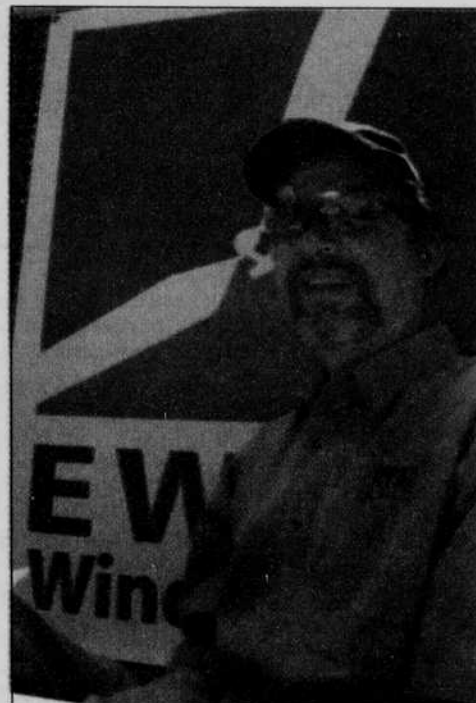
Student Megan Edgar, who participated in a study the Environmental Studies Program conducted last year on the University's energy use, said the project "sort of all fell together" after EMU Board members Yoko Silk and Stephanie Erickson used their knowledge of the ASUO to implement it.

She said the wind energy partially symbolizes students' commitment to the environment, but added that the University's "pretty substantial purchase" of the power will help increase overall demand for wind power.

Silk said she was excited about the results of the year-long process.

"It feels really good to come to some sort of completion with that," she said.

parkerhowell@dailyemerald.com



TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Energy management specialist Mark Grediagin manages a table promoting wind energy at the EMU's amphitheater for Earth Day on Wednesday.