

Rousing the Restless

PIELC begins Thursday at UO.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Michael Moore won't be speaking at the Public Interest Environmental Law Conference (PIELC) this year — both demanded six-figure fees and Gorbachev wanted a private jet for his entourage of six — but nearly a dozen other internationally known heavyweights in environmental action and politics will be there for the big conference that begins Thursday, March 4 and runs through the weekend.

A dedicated group of UO law students have spent the last couple of months losing sleep organizing a gathering that is expected to draw more than 3,000 lawyers, environmentalists and activists to the UO campus for four days of workshops, panel discussions and keynote speakers. The theme this year is "Rousing the Restless Majority." The entire event is sponsored by Land Air Water.

Events will be held all over campus, but primarily at the Law School, the Erb Memorial Union and the new Lillis Business Complex. Moveable walls in the "river rooms" at the EMU will be taken down to provide more space following complaints about crowding last year.

The U.S. "war on terror" claimed one scheduled keynote speaker this year. Maria Elena Foronda Farro, a \$125,000 Goldman Environmental Prize winner of 2003, was denied a visa this week, reportedly because she was temporarily on a U.S. terrorism suspect list five years ago.

Bush administration policies will figure into many of the discussions at the PIELC this year. "We've seen an unprecedented regression of environmental protections in the past few years," says professor Mary Wood of the Law School. "For many of those in power, these protections are viewed as obstacles to development. Their perception betrays a profound lack of understanding of the land and communities of the West that highlights the need for informed gatherings such as the conference."

"The conference provides fertile ground for the germination of ideas and strategies to protect our fundamental right to a healthy, balanced world," says Greg Costello, executive director of the Western Environmental Law Center, a non-profit public interest environmental law firm and key participant at the conference.

Topics at PIELC range from the right to clean drinking water, free-flowing rivers, endangered species protection, restoration of deserts, forests, grasslands, and watersheds, Indian tribal issues, labor, human rights, globalization and free trade. "Anarchy in the Environmental Movement" with John Zerzan is on the docket, along with discussion of Jeffrey "Free" Luers' imprisonment, political strategies for the upcoming elections, and Oregon Coast development.

One of the organizers, Jeremy Arling, says the group is highly organized this year, but he expects the unexpected. A minor "disaster" last year was the Rev. Al Sharpton not showing up for his keynote talk. A couple of



PIELC organizers this year include (from left) Meghan Pedden, Max Wall, Joe Jenkins, Jed Barden, Mike Gustafson, Jeremy Arling, Jason Hartz and Bill Dickens. Not shown are Naomi Melver and Jason Flanders.

years ago, Julia Butterfly Hill was heckled and interrupted during her keynote speech. Women activists in the past have protested male-dominated keynoters and paternalism in the environmental movement.

Keynote talks are free and open to the public. Keynote speakers this year include: **Bev Harris**, author of *Black Box Voting: Ballot-Tampering in the 21st Century*, a book that investigates the manufacture and use of electronic voting machines. **Mike Brune** is executive director of the Rainforest Action Network. RAN works to protect both the Earth's rainforests and the rights of rainforest inhabitants through education, grassroots organizing, and nonviolent direct action.

Richard Drury is former director of Communities for a Better Environment, and currently a lobbyist for several major labor unions in California. **The Rev. Robert Jeffrey** is pastor of Seattle's New Hope Baptist Church and a strong supporter of the environmental justice movement and an opponent of the social and environmental effects of globalization. **Dune Lankard** is director and spokesperson of the Eyak Preservation Council, and co-founder of the Native Conservancy and Redzone, all in Alaska.

Betsy Loyless is vice president for policy and lobbying for the League of Conservation Voters, which is devoted full-time to shaping a pro-environment Congress and White House. **Ed Marston** is former editor of *High Country News* for 20 years and now HCN's senior journalist. **Ingrid Newkirk** is cofounder and president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

Chief Evon Peter is chief of the Neetsaii Gwich'in from the town of Arctic Village in northeastern Alaska, as well as chairman of the Native Movement. His work with the Native Energy Campaign seeks to educate tribal leaders about renewable energy. **Jane Roberts** is co-founder of 34 Million Friends of the United Nations Population Fund, has worked in women's issues, reproductive health and international family planning for 30 years.

Registration information and a complete schedule of events are available at www.pielc.org/ or at the Law School during the conference.

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