

UCSD's Muir College celebrates 30 years with a symposium on San Diego's environmental issues

April 10, 1998

Media Contact: Mario Aguilera, (619) 534-7572, mcaguilera@ucsd.edu

UCSD'S MUIR COLLEGE CELEBRATES 30 YEARS WITH A SYMPOSIUM ON SAN DIEGO'S ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

What is the present condition of San Diego County's biologically diverse, yet sensitive, ecosystem? What problems arise from the pressures of urban development? How are these environmental issues communicated among scientists, legislators, the media, and the citizens of San Diego County?

These and other topics will be addressed April 24th at the University of California, San Diego as part of a commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of UCSD's John Muir College. "Environmental Visions for San Diego County: A Celebration of John Muir College" will pool biological researchers, urban planning experts, members of the media, endangered species officials, environmental health advocates and others during a day-long conference.

One of the topics that will be addressed is the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP), a comprehensive habitat conservation planning program that targets nearly 172,000 acres of land for conservation within a 900-square-mile area in southwest San Diego County.

"We felt it was appropriate and timely for the university to play a role in informing the citizens of San Diego about some of the environmental issues surrounding us," said Patrick Ledden, provost of Muir College. "This is where we live. This is our nest. The significance of these issues is especially striking when you realize that we have the most biologically diverse county in the United States."

Environmental Visions is being held to mark the founding of Muir College, which has grown from a handful of students 30 years ago to more than 3,000 today. College namesake John Muir was an early champion of natural environment preservation and one of the founders of the American Conservation Movement.

The conference will be split into three panel discussions: local biodiversity issues, the environment and the media and local environmental policy. The event also will present winners of a competition in which local high school students developed Internet webpages featuring content on local biodiversity and environmental issues.

"It's our hope that this event will be an efficient way to learn about the issues and how to stay more informed," said Ledden. "There's a broad range of people, from the County Board of Supervisors to the city councils to citizens in the area that are all dealing with these issues."

Featured speakers include Ted Case, biology professor at UCSD; Robert Gottlieb, the Henry R. Luce Professor of Urban Environmental Studies at Occidental College; Dale Jamieson, philosophy professor at the University of Colorado; Scott LaFee, staff writer for the San Diego Union-Tribune; Duncan McFetridge, co-founder of Save our Forests and Ranchlands; Oliver Ryder of the Zoological Society of San Diego's Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species; Michael Soule, president of the Wildlands Project and research associate

at the University of Colorado; Diane Takvorian of the Environmental Health Coalition; and Douglas Wheeler, secretary for resources for the State of California.

The April 24th event, which begins with a continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m. at UCSD's Price Center Ballroom, is free and open to the public. More information about the conference is available at <http://www-muir30.ucsd.edu> or by calling Nancy Hatch at (619) 534-3589.

(April 10, 1998)