Media advisory, three-day international workshop on managing landscapes and preserving biodiversity to be held Jan. 21 at San Diego Supercomputer Center and Jan. 23 at Solis Hall

December 21, 1992

MEDIA ADVISORY

EVENT: Managing landscapes and preserving biodiversity-- from California's coastal sage scrub to Oregon's timberlands and Florida's everglades and beyond-- will be the subject of a three-day international workshop sponsored by UCSD, the San Diego Supercomputer Center and the Environmental Affairs Office of Southern California Edison.

DATES: Thursday, January 21--Saturday, January 23

LOCATIONS: Conference Room, San Diego Supercomputer Center (January 21, 22); Solis Hall, Rm. 107 (January 23)

BACKGROUND: Ways to predict and control the effect of human activity on the fate of other living creatures in our shared environment are now being studied by computational scientists using high-performance workstations and supercomputers.

For the first time, researchers from around the world are gathering to share information on how computational models of spatially extended systems are helping scientists and government officials develop rational plans to help protect species from extinction.

Michael Gilpin, UCSD professor of population biology and one of the meeting's hosts, is using computational methods to determine how a particular species--the desert tortoise--survives as its surroundings change over time. Similarly, Southern California Edison is interested in how hydroelectric power generation affects the viability of fish populations in the San Joaquin drainage.

Frank Davis, of UC Santa Barbara, is developing a dynamic model for the coastal sage scrub habitat of Southern California, designed to predict which species should be preserved, how much land is needed, where it should be located, and so on.

Other notable speakers include:

*Ted Case, chairman of the biology department at UCSD, who will discuss the application of mathematical models toward the design of protected reserves;

*D.L. DeAngelis, W.F. Wolff and D.M. Fleming, of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, who have been studying the causes for the decline of successful nesting among wading birds in the Florida everglades;

*A.T. Lombarb, of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, who is developing a new national strategy for maximizing biodiversity in South Africa's reserves;

*Kevin S. McKelvey and Barry Noon, of the Redwood Sciences Laboratory, who are developing a series of models to simulate impacts of potential environmental changes--such as fire, timber harvest, urbanization and conversion to agricultural land--on the population of the northern spotted owl in western Oregon.

*Peter Brussard, of the University of Nevada, Reno and president of the Society of Conservation Biologists, who is studying reserve habitats for the western Mojave desert tortoise;

*Michael E. Soule, author of "The Science of Scarcity and Diversity" who is considered the "father of conservation biology."

Members of the press are cordially invited to attend all sessions of this workshop. The conference should offer excellent opportunities for news stories and features.

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(December 21, 1992)