

History shows presidents haven't lingered in Oregon

Portland's a great place to visit, right? So why is it U.S. presidents never stay very long?

Bill Clinton is the 18th president to come to Oregon, and it appears he'll be the first to spend more than one night in the Rose City during a visit.

A check of Oregon Historical Society files reveals that some presidents spent more than one night in Oregon. Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, came to the state to dedicate Timberline Lodge and look over other public works projects on a multiday trip in 1937.

Before the age of air travel, of course, presidents had to spend more time in Oregon.

Since presidents joined the jet set, they stop in Portland more often. But nowadays their stays are measured in hours, not days.

— Steve Mayes

Department, Nike ante up for costs of forest parley

So what did it cost to put on a Northwest Forest Conference?

Here are a few examples of expenses involved and the party footing the bill:

Renting space in Oregon Convention Center for one day: \$2,700, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Meals for those attending the daylong meeting: \$10,000, Nike Inc.

— Steve Mayes

By JEFF MAPES
of The Oregonian staff

Stories of human suffering dominated the opening panel at the Northwest Forest Conference on Friday as a variety of panelists described the wrenching economic changes facing the region's timber towns.

The panel — "Who is Affected and How" — began with Seattle's Catholic archbishop, Thomas Murphy, describing a local millworker forced to live in his pickup after he lost his job. And it included stories of rural communities hit with high unem-

ployment of government inaction and contradiction," said Mike Draper of the Western Council of Industrial Workers.

Draper showed the president a photo of Coburg, Ore., residents Roger and Theresa Williams and their two children. Both parents lost their jobs when a veneer mill closed, and the "Williams family is on the brink of a personal tragedy few of us will ever know," Draper said. He also showed a photograph of a homeless woman living with her three children after losing her mill job in Dillard.

Phyllis Strauger, the mayor of Ho-

Peninsula to diversify its economy. "All we have to market is an empty log truck and a rusty spar pole," she said.

At the same time, President Clinton and other members of his administration also expressed interest in some of the comments made by those advocating more environmentally sensitive forestry.

Labor Secretary Robert Reich closely questioned Meca Wawona, a Ukiah, Calif., woman who has a company that specializes in what she called "sustainable forestry" that has a lighter impact on the environment. Reich seemed particular-

Ecology and economy: Common ground found

■ A panel of experts agree on the problems facing Northwest foresters and environmentalists as the president soaks it in

By KATHIE DURBIN
of The Oregonian staff

Scientists and economists found a lot of common ground during a seminar on forest ecology and timber economics held Friday during President Clinton's Northwest Forest Conference.

At an afternoon session, a panel of experts generally agreed that the logging practices of the past had damaged forest ecosystems and that the Northwest was in the throes of an economic and ecological transition.

It was familiar stuff for many Northwesterners, but President Clinton and Vice President Gore listened attentively.

Charles Meslow, director of the

Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at Oregon State University, offered a primer on the fragmentation of forests by logging and the conversion of natural forests to tree plantations.

"The problem in forest management in the Northwest is not that we've grown out of trees," he said. "What is becoming scarce is the forests — especially the old forests."

Lorin Hicks, a biologist for Seattle-based Plum Creek Timber Co., said his company was working with Jerry Franklin, a University of Washington forest ecologist, to develop a timber sale that would preserve spotted owl habitat after logging.

Franklin, regarded as the father of "new forestry" techniques that leave a lighter impact on the land, said scientists were looking hard for ways to manage lands for timber and wildlife at the same time.

But he added, "This is not to suggest we have techniques to grow old-

growth forests. We can grow structurally complex forests, we can probably grow spotted owl habitat, but old-growth forests are just too complex."

Rick Brown, a forester for the National Wildlife Federation, urged that permanent old-growth reserves be created "as a hedge against our own monumental ignorance" about the ecological values embodied in old-growth forests.

"Fully protected, permanent reserves must be a part of the picture," he said. "The best place for practicing new forestry is in new forests."

Those reserves must be on lands east of the Cascades as well as on the west side, he said, because salmon and other species do not distinguish artificial boundaries in "the seamless tapestry" of the forest ecosystem.

Jim Sedell, a Forest Service fisheries biologist, sounded a note of caution about proposals to conduct ag-

gressive thinning sales in pristine watersheds needed by wild salmon. "Protection of the best habitat we have left is going to be critical," he said.

John Gordon, dean of the Yale University School of Forestry, offered a bit of history, noting that the Society of American Foresters urged the creation of old-growth forest reserves as early as 1984. The report was "resoundingly ignored" at the time and logging continued at a rapid pace throughout the decade, he said.

"The question is, 'Do you want to save or cut real trees or theoretical trees?'" Gordon asked. "Two-thirds of the old growth we talked about in that report is gone. Maybe it's time to bite the bullet."

Economists offered views of the region's transition and its effect on rural areas.

Brian Greber of Oregon State University said the Northwest has less than a year's supply of federal tim-

ber left. "We are at a point where we're going to see some severe supply pressures" in the region, he said.

Ann Hanus, economist for the Oregon Department of Forestry, said Oregon's under-managed small woodlands could provide up to 1 billion board feet of timber annually for about five years to help ease the log shortage — if the government would provide incentives for these small-scale operations to invest in such techniques as tree-thinning and reforestation.

Louise Fortmann of the University of California at Berkeley said national environmental groups and multinational corporations alike have shown little concern for the fate of timber-dependent communities. She urged support for locally based programs that bring people together to work on watershed protection and economic development.

"We need healthy forest communities that can take responsibility for their own destiny," she said.

Where do we go now? Quick solution called for

■ President Clinton tells forest conference panelists that there is a lot of commonality in their appeals, even in disagreement

By JOAN LAATZ
of The Oregonian staff

Northwesterners gave President Clinton lots of ideas Friday on how to solve the region's forest crisis, but they agreed on one thing: A solution must come quickly.

"When I go into the forest . . . I see people living there, they have no homes, no running water, no power," said Jim Coates, vice president of International Woodworkers of American Local 3-2. "I would hope, Mr. President, that when we leave here today I can provide some sense

to those people that they can survive."

The president wrapped up the day with a third roundtable titled, "Where do we go from here?" and he must have left with plenty of ideas. He heard about innovative mill processes that use less timber, watershed restoration programs that create jobs, and food and fragrance products created from forest products.

Panelists associated with the timber industry and government tried to impress upon him the dire straits the region's timber economy is in. And while the ever-popular phrase "ecosystem management" crossed their lips, they continued to press for more public forest land to be opened up for logging.

"We must be managing our for-

est," said Linn County Commissioner Dave Schmidt, "not locking it up." He urged the president to "open up some right away," then study a long-term plan.

But environmentalists gave little indication of budging from their save-the-forest position, with Andy Kerr, conservation director of the Oregon Natural Resources Council, saying, "Environmentalists can't compromise any more. . . . The forest has been compromised all it can stand."

His tone turned more conciliatory a moment later, when he promised that environmentalists would "increase our compassion."

"We stand ready to embrace programs that will take these timber communities into the 20th century," he said. "We can't leave these com-

munities behind, it would be impractical and unjust."

The president told the panelists he sensed commonality in their appeals.

"Even when you were disagreeing, every one of you was a voice for change," Clinton said.

Charles Ollivier, a Northern California longshoreman, urged the president to fund a retraining program for displaced timber workers. He won a round of laughter and applause when he remarked, "When you close the door, you open a window."

But retraining people who have worked with their hands out in the woods isn't that easy, vocational counselor Roslyn Heffner told the president. Sitting in a classroom, taking exams, she said, "is not their forte."

Bob Doppelt, executive director of Pacific Rivers Council, said his group had a plan that would put thousands of people to work restoring forest watersheds and fish habitat. The full program would cost \$720 million, Doppelt said, but considering the jobs it would create and the fish it would save, "it's a bargain."

The bottom line was summed up best by Ted Strong, the last speaker of the day, who told Clinton that the status quo was "completely unacceptable."

"You've been chosen to write one page of American history," said Strong, executive director of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission. "American Indians hope that the pen you yield will be guided by the creator of all beings."