

Partnership Forms Mountain Studies Institute for Research and Education



Partnership

Snapshot: Mountain Studies Institute

The Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) is a non-profit research institution and high-elevation field station. Founders include the San Juan National Forest, Fort Lewis College, San Juan County, and the Town of Silverton, Colorado. The institute conducts mountain research projects and educational offerings that contribute to the understanding and sustainable use of the San Juan Mountains.

Program Highlights

Highlights of MSI's accomplishments during 2006:

- Over 300 researchers and educators stayed at MSI's facility to work on topics such as climate variability and change, air and water quality, and snow and avalanche studies.
- MSI sponsored two workshops on fens (a type of wetland that accumulates peat deposits), including ecology, hydrology, and protection methods.
- With support from the US Environmental Protection Agency, MSI produced a 24-page booklet to help landowners, community leaders, and others learn about wetland values and protection methods.

- MSI led a stakeholder conference on "Climate Change and Variability in the San Juan Mountains."
- MSI installed a Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments (GLORIA) site in the San Juan Mountains, joining a network of about 30 sites in the world's highest mountain ranges.
- The field station is serving as a demonstration site for a new heating system that uses pinion pine pellets that can be a product of fire mitigation projects.
- Fort Lewis College instituted a Mountain Studies minor in partnership with MSI. The Forest is working with the college to provide internships required in the course of study.

Benefits for Mountain Landscapes and Land Managers

MSI's focus on applied research is helpful to land managers while education efforts have provided benefits to agency staff, partners, and the public. In addition, MSI helped boost the economies of Silverton and San Juan County are boosted by attracting researchers, educators, and students who spend time and money in the area.

State: Colorado
Forest: San Juan National Forest
Partners: San Juan National Forest, Fort Lewis College, San Juan County, and the Town of Silverton
FS Funds Used: \$207,897
Partner Funds: \$151,615



Kyle Skaggs, MSI field technician, monitors a high-elevation lake for pollution impacts.

Colorado