



Mountain Studies Institute

SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS, COLORADO



November 2009 News

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Donations

MSI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and a State of Colorado Enterprise Zone Project. All donations are eligible for a federal tax deduction. Donations of \$200 or more are eligible for 25% Colorado State Tax Credit.

Dear Friend of MSI,

It might be a "shoulder season" in the San Juans but MSI is as busy as ever. Read below about progress in securing a permanent field station, a collaborative project to study the American Pika, new publications in top-notch journals, and more.

A hearty San Juan "thank you" goes out to all of you who have supported MSI with a donation (see list on left side bar). As the holiday season approaches, we hope you will remember MSI in your gift-giving. You can help us make sure that science has a place at the table.

Wishing you a happy and safe Thanksgiving,

Koren Nydick, Executive Director,
and the staff and board of directors at MSI



*To see photos, right click and select "download photos".

[SUPPORT MSI!](#)

MSI in the News

Silverton Standard

**Tour of MSI
campus** [by Mark
Esper](#)

-

**MSI wins
tentative support
for the campus** [by
Mark Esper](#) - -

**How is nitrogen
air pollution
affecting
mountain lakes?** [by
Mark Esper](#)

Durango Herald

**Mountain Studies
eyes Silverton
site** [by Dale
Rodebaugh](#)

-

**Matching
donations to help
institute with
effort to buy,
develop research
center** [by Dale
Rodebaugh](#)

MSI Field Station

We are halfway there!!!

MSI recently hosted an open house at the Field Station during which we gave property tours, design presentations, and a chance to chat about the planned use and concerns. We had a great turn-out!



A great big thanks to Mel at Elevated Fine Foods for the donated snacks!

We are halfway to our funding goal, but still need your help on the other half. Please consider a donation to MSI's Field Station Acquisition fund. All donations will be matched 100% by a generous anonymous donor up to \$100,000. So whatever you give will end up being twice as much!

Also, check out all the recent press MSI has received concerning the Field Station on the left-hand column of this newsletter.

[READ ON!](#)

Scientist Spotlight

MSI Collaboration with CU graduate student aims to have hikers studying pika

Is climate changing in the Four Corners Region and how will it affect us here in the San Juan Mountains? What are the impacts of those changes? These are some of the questions that the Mountain Studies Institute is working to address. These also happen to be some of the questions that Liesl Peterson is hoping to answer with her research on the American Pika. Cousins to rabbits, pika are small furry mammals that live in alpine talus habitat in western North America.

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Thanks to all of
our 2009
Members and
Donors:

Beverly Rich
Thurman Wilson
Brian Fowler
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Sander Nydick
Koren Nydick
Kenneth Wright
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H. Creswell Fleming
Charlie Smith
Matt Lanning
Matt Janowiak
David Swanson
Robert Delves
Emily & Brandon Vogt
Thurman Wilson
Bruce & Sandy Kowalski
Bill Borgers
Katrina Blair
Luann Andrew
Wendi & Rich Weinstein
Dave Rich
Bruce and Olga Howard
Art Goodtimes

Liesl is a graduate student at the University of Colorado at Boulder. By studying the movement of pika populations, as well as comparing historical records, Liesl hopes to use these furry little creatures to provide insight on global climate change and how it affects the high-elevations. Liesl had a limited amount of funding to choose



monitoring sites, all of which would have been closer to her base in Boulder. She was worried that these sites would not be representative enough for her study. After learning about her predicament, MSI decided to help Liesl through a mini-grant.

With help from this MSI program, Liesl received enough money to extend her research to sites in the San Juan Mountains. At an invitation from MSI, Liesl was able to share her preliminary findings with the community in southwest Colorado by presenting a seminar as part of MSI's Moving Mountains Education Series. MSI also connected her with our local media, and the public was able to learn about her study in the Durango Herald. Liesl is now collaborating with MSI to develop a citizen science monitoring initiative. The new program, called PikaNET, will train volunteers to collect data about the pika and its habitat. Michael Costello, a recent college graduate who is serving MSI as an OSM/VISTA Americorps volunteer, is coordinating the development of PikaNET and writing grant proposals to secure more funds. Thanks to a collaboration with MSI, Liesl and other scientists and natural resource managers will get more information on pika than they ever could on their own. And, everyday hikers will now be able to add an education component to their recreation.

How is nitrogen air pollution affecting mountain lakes?

MSI co-authors two new articles in top-notch science journals.

MSI contributed to two new scientific papers published Nov. 6 in *Science* and *Ecology* that explain how extra nitrogen deposited in undisturbed lakes is changing the nutrient balance available to algae, the small aquatic plants at the base of the food chain. Dr. Koren Nydick, MSI's executive director is co-author on both articles.

Lead researcher James Elser and others used the MSI Field Station as a base camp while studying nearby lakes in 2006 and 2008.

More information on these publications can be found at:

Dave Wood and the Citizens
State Bank of Ouray

Ken Sulinski

John Bregar

Bruce Curtis

Joan Schugel

Douglas Brew

Scott Fetchenhier

Janet Hebert

James Manning

John Poole

Brian Kimmel

Sallie and Mike Barney

William Grant

Dominic and Carol Rende

Greg and Pam Swanson

Ed and Patti Zink

Also thanks to:

Gates Family Foundation -
\$45,000 challenge grant
towards the purchase of the
MSI Field Station

LPEA Round-Up Foundation -
\$2,000 towards the "My Water
Comes From the San Juan
Mountains" Education project

What else has MSI published?

[Check out our
publication page](#)

[Mountain Studies Website](#)

[Nitrogen News](#) (recommended)

[National Science Foundation Website](#)

[EurekaAlert!](#)

[Colorado State University Website](#)

Report on the San Juan Fen Partnership Meeting



Despite the snowstorm that kept several people away, we did have a good San Juan Fen Partnership meeting. Thanks to all who were able to make it.

Presentations were made on the history of the SJ Fen Partnership (it's been 5 years!), our progress to date (including fen inventory, assessment, restoration, and education), and future plans, including climate change studies. The Partnership started in San Miguel County, but has since expanded across SW Colorado. We had a thoughtful discussion on balancing the local versus regional nature of this group. [Read more.](#)

Photo includes, from left to right: Amy Laubenstein (Telluride Ski and Golf Resort), Warren Young (US Forest Service, GMUG), Koren Nydick (Mountain Studies Institute), Kay Zillich (US Forest Service, SJPLC), Aaron Kimple (Mountain Studies Institute), Linda Miller (Sheep Mountain Alliance), Karen Gugliemone (Town of Telluride), Art Goodtimes (San Miguel County), Yvette Henson (CSU Extension), Beth McCormick (San Miguel County resident), and Charles Harter (San Miguel County resident).

[Learn more about Fens here.](#)

As always, thank you for your continued interest and support for Mountain Studies Institute.

Sincerely,

Koren Nydick and the MSI Staff

Newsletter developed by: Kathryn Rende OSM/VISTA, Mountain Studies Institute

