

MSI NEWS, FEBRUARY 2003

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[Courtesy of the Silverton Standard and The Miner]

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The Red Mountain Project is slated to receive \$4 million and \$500,000 was appropriated for the Silverton-based Mountain Studies Institute (MSI). The funds were included in the appropriations package approved by both houses of Congress last Thursday. The President must still sign the bill, but he is expected to do so shortly.

Representative Scott McInnis (R-Grand Junction) and Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-Colo) have been credited with fighting for this region's interests and pushing the local appropriations through their respective houses.

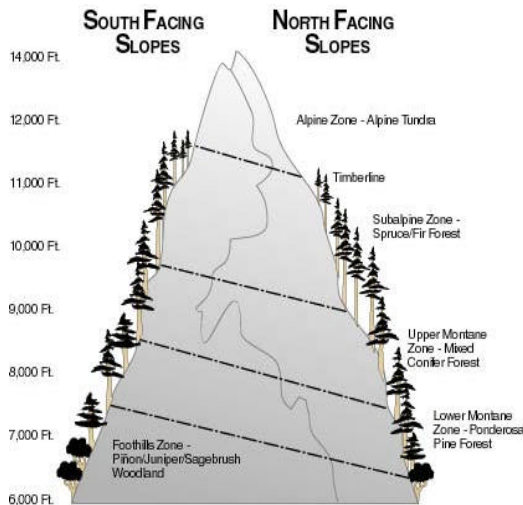
The Red Mountain funding will go towards the purchase of the area from willing sellers as part of the third phase of the 11,000-acre historical and recreational project.

McInnis, who serves as the Chairman of the Resources Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, designated the Red Mountain Historic District as a top funding priority for this cycle.

Campbell, in the meantime, took the MSI request to Congress and fought for its inclusion in the bill. The money is earmarked for MSI's operations and programs, not capital improvements or acquisition.

MSI Executive Director Ellen Stein was "thrilled" by the news, but said this won't change our immediate plans, it will just help us carry them out. It is going to ensure that we meet our 2003 budget. Without the federal funding, MSI's financial future was far from secure.

Short-term plans for the fledgling organization include hiring two new staff members--a full-time educational coordinator and a half- to full-time operations director--both of whom will be based out of Silverton. Stein hopes to have at least one of the new staff members on board sometime this spring.



Also in MSI's future, and possible directions for the new funding include:

- ✍ half day and one and a half day educational programs, the subjects of which include science, arts, and culture of the San Juans, to be offered in Silverton to the general public this summer;
- ✍ Innovative Month program for college and university students with credit offered by Fort Lewis College (FLC). The program will be field-based and will focus on the ecology, mining heritage, social interactions, and other aspects of the San Juan Mountains [see program highlight];
- ✍ cooperating with FLC's Center for Southwest Studies on developing an Mining Heritage Educational Program;
- ✍ partnering with the San Juan Mountains Association and federal land agencies to establish a San Juan Mountains Education Center in a shared space in Silverton;
- ✍ a portion of the Congressional funds will go toward exhibits at Silverton's Mining Heritage Museum, currently under construction;
- ✍ organization of a second annual conference, slated for August, on science and research in the San Juan Mountains; and
- ✍ MSI will work with FLC to offer a Minor in Mountain Studies, slated to be available to FLC students in the fall of 2004.

Program Highlight...

**THE NATURAL HISTORY &
GEOGRAPHY OF THE SAN JUAN
MOUNTAINS
JUNE 9 - JULY 3, 2003**

This program is a joint venture between the Mountain Studies Institute and the Extended Studies Program at Fort Lewis College.

The purpose is to explore with students feedback loops between identified natural systems operating in the San Juan Mountains. Some of the systems to be addressed include energy input, the hydrologic cycle, climate and weather systems, stratified ecosystems, geology, alpine ecology, mining, recreation and economic sustainability.

This course will not use an ordinary classroom format, but is field-based. The operating concept is that to better understand a system one should dwell and be part of the energy cycle. Thus feeling solar heat, walking in streams, being blasted by the wind, touching and smelling the flora, hefting the stones and listening to the concerns of local residents is the key to a deeper understanding.

The field format is tied with selected readings, lectures principally in the field. The student will leave with specific knowledge about mountain geography and a greater sense of why mountains contribute to maintaining the health of the global ecosystem.

- Week 1: Geology & Climate
- Week 2: Alpine Ecology
- Week 3: Human Interactions
- Week 4: Integration and Final Reports

Mountain Summit 2003!

Due to the overwhelming success of MSI's Inaugural Mountain Summit last September, MSI is already responding to the expectation another Summit is being planned. Indeed it is!

"SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS SCIENCE AND RESEARCH: LINKING RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS" is planned for August 21-23, 2003 in Silverton. A special symposium designed to present student, faculty, and natural resource agency research conducted in the San Juan Mountains.

Join emerging and established researchers in Silverton for two days of presentations on climate, ecology, fire, geology, history, forestry, snow, geography, anthropology, and more.

This conference is also a unique opportunity to connect local government, public land management agencies and non-profit representatives with researchers to identify and meet regional applied research needs.

**MSI Plans Summer/Fall 2003
Educational Programs for
College & University
Students & the Public**

The Mountain Studies Institute's Education Committee has been busy this winter planning its summer and fall offerings. Half- and one and a half-day programs will be offered to the general public, specifically the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad riders as packages sold through Gateway Reservations in Durango. "Walk-Ins" will also be able to sign up for the following Silverton-based program offerings:

- ☞Alpine Ecology: Flora and Fauna
- ☞Mining Heritage: Boomtowns, Bordellos and the Hillside Cemetery
- ☞Natural History and Geography of the San Juan Mountains
- ☞Mountain Arts and Culture: Live Theatre, Museum Tour and Gallery Walk
- ☞Mountain Photography
- ☞Mining, Milling, and Geology Tour

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**San Juan Mountains—A Living
Laboratory and Natural
Classroom**

The San Juan Mountains are an ideal setting for mountain studies because of the diversity found not only in its geology but also in the ecology. Over one and a half billion years of geologic history are recorded in its rocks.

The San Juan Mountains are considered by some to be the largest single distinct mountain system in the U.S. They encompass about 10,000 square miles an area about the size of Vermont. No other mountain province in the lower forty-eight states encloses as much land above 10,000 feet (3050 m).

Furthermore, the San Juan Mountains support the last known location of certain arctic mosses that are relics of the last ice age, and host the largest concentration of mid-latitude ice cored rock glaciers.

The lowlands to the south and west are the home of five Native American cultures that are dependent on the San Juan Mountains for their water resources, sacred places and traditional cultural uses.

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