

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2006

Ellen Stein, Mountain Studies Institute executive director, 970.387.5161 (office) or 970.749.8327 (mobile)

Climate Change in the San Juans

*Mountain Studies and Fort Lewis College Look at
Climate Change Impact on the San Juan Mountains*

Twenty or fifty years from now when global climate change has pushed up the average annual temperature of Four Corners area several degrees will the columbine still bloom in late July? Will the marmots still live at 10,000 feet, or will they move to 13,000 feet and higher? And what will happen to the snowpack? More? Less? Wetter? Drier? What will happen to the regional water supply?

To look at these and a myriad of other questions, Mountain Studies Institute and Fort Lewis College invite the public to the “Climate Variability & Change in the San Juan Mountains: A Stakeholder – Scientist Dialogue” conference. The conference, which will give scientists and local stakeholders the opportunity to meet and discuss the implications of climate change in the San Juans, will be held October 11-12 in the Fort Lewis College Ballroom, and October 13 in Silverton.

In addition to exploring the impact of climate change on regional natural resources, such as air and water quality, and the impact on economic interests, such as ranching, agriculture and tourism, the conference will initiate the development of the San Juan Mountain Climate Initiative, a stakeholder-driven climate research, outreach and partnership program.

As part of the conference professional scientists, faculty, and students will give a poster presentation, as well as a free public reception and keynote address by Jonathan Overpeck, director of the Institute for the Study of Planet Earth, professor at the University of Arizona, and vice-president of the Mountain Studies Institute.

On Friday, October 13 participants will take a hike and tour of the Swamp Angel study area near Silverton. The day will also feature a presentation on historic and current research being conducted in the Silverton area and the San Juan Mountains, as well as a tour of the Mountain Studies Institute headquarters at the historic Avon Hotel. Friday afternoon Congressman John Salazar will be at the Avon at 3 p.m. for a ribbon cutting ceremony and to discuss the future of renewable energy resources in Southern Colorado.

Additional sponsors of the event include the University of Arizona, the University of Colorado, Western Water Assessment, CIRES, NOAA, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, the Town of Silverton, San Juan County and the Environmental Center at Fort Lewis

College.

Registration is free. Register by October 6 and obtain a free lunch and parking pass. To learn more about the conference, register, or become a sponsor, visit www.mountainstudies.org/conference, email info@mountainstudies.org, or call 970-387-5161 or 970-426-8863.