



US Starts Cloud Seeding Experiments

Scientists from the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) have been examining the effect of seeding clouds with silver iodide in the US. The 8 million dollar controversial project has shown to increase snowfall in the skies of Wyoming Sierra Madre and Window River mountains.

A twin-engine airplane injects flares of silver iodide and acetone into the cloud. The particles have structures that resemble ice and will attract the liquid water from the clouds. Snow is formed once enough water molecules have clustered around the silver iodide.



Should every cloud have a silver lining?

NCAR has business partners, such as the private company Weather Modification

Incorporation, that are involved in the observations. Western states spend millions of dollars on the studies every year. The measurements have provided no conclusive results. Other funding has been provided by the Wyoming Water Development program that aims to provide low-cost fresh water to the population of Wyoming. A water commission report claims the simulated snow would provide between \$2.4 and \$4.9 million worth of water each spring. These numbers do not include other financial benefits in the generation of more hydroelectric power and improving recreation and tourism.

Research throughout the years has provided scientists with better techniques and skills for making the program effective. Western North America is optimistic that this project would solve the drought the area has been suffering from.

This drought is thought to have been increased even more over the years by human air pollution. According to a project scientist, we should be more concerned about how chemical particles and pollutants are affecting the clouds. Cloud seeding could not only help reduce the natural drought cycle, but may also "help counteract the effects of air pollution as well."

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