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# Wyoming Launches Cloud-Seeding Project

**By Bob Moen, Associated Press**

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CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) —Wyoming is embarking on an \$8.8 million, five-year cloud-seeding project that aims to bolster mountain snowpack, and possibly yield proof of whether cloud seeding actually works.

"Hopefully in Wyoming, we'll find evidence for that to be a viable tool in water resource management," said Dan Breed, project scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, a federally funded research center based in Boulder, Colo.

The state is paying the center \$1.9 million to monitor and evaluate the Wyoming project.

"In a lot of the other programs, the evaluation part has been more ad hoc or not planned into it," Breed said. In addition, he said, the Wyoming project will last for five years, while most others are conducted year to year.

"The Wyoming program is very unique with the amount of science that's being employed," said project manager Barry Lawrence of the Wyoming Water Development Commission. "The scientists are involved throughout the process."

Millions of dollars is already being spent, especially in the West, to spew silver iodide into storm clouds in order to coax more rain and snow to fall.

Breed said most of the water in the West comes from mountains, where the snowpack acts essentially like a reservoir. The Colorado River Basin, fed mainly by water from the mountains, is a major water supply for seven states. But increasing demand for water has water managers fearing shortages in the future.

If more snow can be produced in the mountains by cloud seeding, it would mean more water for cities, towns and farms.

However, whether cloud seeding actually works has been the subject of debate among the scientific community. In 2003, the National Academy of Sciences questioned the science behind cloud seeding and called for national research into the practice.

The Wyoming project seeks to determine whether cloud seeding can increase runoff from three mountain ranges —the Wind River, Medicine Bow and Sierra Madre. The project is in its early stages, and no cloud seeding is expected to begin until next year.

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