RECLAMATION AWARDS TWO CONTRACTS FOR PROJECT SKYWATER

Award of two contracts for research in cloud seeding evaluation and avalanche forecasting under the Bureau of Reclamation's Project Skywater was announced today by the Department of the Interior.

Commissioner of Reclamation Gilbert G. Stamm said the awards include:

--A $32,557 contract with the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research for continuation of an avalanche research program in the San Juan Mountains of Southwest Colorado.

--A $20,000 contract with the Utah Division of Water Resources for development of techniques to evaluate cloud seeding projects.

The avalanche research project is one of several investigations under the Colorado River Basin Pilot Project, a major scientific program to determine the feasibility of increasing winter snowpacks through cloud seeding. The contract provides a one-year extension of the avalanche project, which is now approaching its fourth winter season.

Researchers are developing methods of forecasting avalanche occurrence and discovering their causes. Scientists analyzing the data believe they are approaching a technique which may be used in predicting the massive snow slides and, as a result, reduce their threat to life and property.

The cloud seeding evaluation study will be conducted jointly by scientists at the Utah Division of Water Resources and the Utah Water Research Laboratory in Logan.

The objectives of the study are to identify and develop evaluation techniques with successively increased levels of statistical reliability; determine the cost and time period of operation required to identify the effects of seeding projects; establish ranges of benefits for varying conditions and locations; and summarize and relate the results of the information gathered from those studies.

The Bureau's Division of Atmospheric Water Resources Management is responsible for Project Skywater, the nation's research program exploring the feasibility of weather modification to help meet the nation's increasing demand for clean water.