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For Release Sunday June 8, 1969Joint Hail Research Project Begins

Boulder, Colorado---The 1969 Joint Hail Research Project, aimed at learning more about hailstorms and testing techniques that may eventually be used to reduce their destructive power, will get under-way this week in the high plains of northeast Colorado.

The Joint Hail Research Project is a cooperative effort by Colorado State University (CSU), the Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA), and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR).

The project is directed by a three-man steering committee of scientists from the three participating organizations: Dr. Peter Sinclair, assistant professor of atmospheric science at CSU; Dr. Helmut Weickmann, who heads the Atmospheric Physics and Chemistry Laboratory of the ESSA Research Laboratories; and Dr. Guy Goyer, program scientist for atmospheric physics at NCAR.

For the past few weeks, research teams and equipment have been moving into the field from CSU's Fort Collins campus and from the ESSA and NCAR facilities in Boulder. Field operations will begin around June 10.

Project headquarters will be at Greeley, where the Colorado Air National Guard has made radar facilities available for the hail project. Field operations will be centered around the town of Raymer, at the edge of the Pawnee National Grassland in the northeast corner of Colorado.

The researchers will probe hailstorms with radar to study their growth and structure. Research aircraft will fly around the storms to measure updrafts and to map the hailswath, the band of hail left on the ground.

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A network of rain and hail gauges on the ground will measure the precipitation that falls from the storms. Mobile ground crews, in radio-dispatched trucks, will follow the storms to map hailswaths and to collect hailstones for laboratory analysis.

The most intensive field research will be conducted in a circular area with a radius of about 30 miles, centered on Raymer. More general information on hailstorms will be gathered from a much larger region, extending west to the Rockies, east into Kansas, north into Nebraska and Wyoming, and south to the Denver area.

The hail researchers have sent packets of postcards to residents of this area, asking them to use the cards to report hailstorm information. People living in the area may also receive telephone calls from project scientists, asking for information about hailstorms that the radar has detected in their neighborhood.

According to NCAR's Dr. Goyer, who will serve as one of the field directors for the Joint Hail Research Project, the people who live in the area will make one of the most important contributions to the project.

"We do not have enough people and equipment to gather all the information that we need on hailstorms that pass over this vast area," Dr. Goyer says. "We hope that the people who live here, and who know from personal experience how destructive hail can be, will share our interest in learning more about hailstorms and what we may be able to do to reduce their destructive power."

Funds for the 1969 Joint Hail Research Project, which will continue until the middle of August, are being provided largely by the National Science Foundation.