

## ISSW HISTORY AND FUTURE AND THE ISSW STEERING COMMITTEE

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**ABSTRACT:** The International Snow Science Workshop has its roots in meetings held informally in the 50s and early 60's when practitioners realized the importance of interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and experiences. The first meeting that brought together government agencies, industries, and users dedicated both to snow and avalanche science was held in April, 1960 at Santa Fe, New Mexico following the 28th Annual Meeting of the Western Snow Conference. About 30 participants spent two days discussing avalanche control methods led in part by Monty Atwater. In 1969, the Snow and Ice Subcommittee of the Associate Committee on Geotechnical Research of the National Research Council of Canada added a meeting on avalanches to one of its periodic conferences attracting 188 participants and 12 papers. In 1971, Dr. Ed LaChapelle organized an informal gathering in Seattle that encouraged exchanges between researchers and practitioners. This led to a number of meetings in the US and Canada in the 70s, including Workshops in Banff and Vancouver that were increasingly formal.

In 1982, the snow study group at Montana State University organized a meeting that emphasized the importance of interaction and exchanges between practitioners and researchers. This group was chaired by John Montagne who used special invitations to bring together scientists and practical workers in snow and avalanches. This group created the title "International Snow Science Workshop." In addition, they coined the motto of the Workshop "The Merging of Theory with Practice," which continues to this day. Two years later, in Aspen, Colorado, the next ISSW was presented. At this meeting the ISSW Steering Committee was created to provide guidance for future ISSW's. A biennial rotation of the Workshop through the western North American mountain region was established with every 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Canada. Two representatives were appointed from each of four US regions and two Canadian regions. Subsequently, the Chairman of each ISSW has become chairman of the Steering Committee at the next ISSW and then remained a voting member, thereafter.

The Steering Committee has maintained an informal organization, meeting only at ISSW's, primarily to consider bids from future host sites. Over the years the attendance has grown from 220 people including ten foreign participants in Bozeman to almost 700 people representing 18 countries in Penticton, BC in 2002. The Steering Committee has evolved a series of requirements for future hosts and hosting sites including affordability, minimum capacity of facilities, and the necessity to encourage the participation of practitioners in the presentations. The Steering Committee decided in 2002 to try to increase its profile at ISSW's and on the Internet to encourage a continuing interest from future hosting sites and to provide a permanent link to past ISSW's and past ISSW presentations.

In addition, the Committee attempts to have sites scheduled approximately 4 years in advance. In 2002, the Steering Committee approved the current site in Jackson Hole for the 2004 Workshop and gave tentative approval to Telluride, Colorado for the 2006 Workshop. A back up site at Aspen/Snowmass has also been offered. The Steering Committee is looking for bids from Canadian sites for 2008.

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