

MEDIA RELEASE

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Banff Centre Hosts Global Mountain Network

Beginning this week, The Banff Centre is the new North American home of a worldwide mountain network linking over 2,700 individuals and 170 organizations in more than 100 countries. On December 1, Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre assumed responsibility for the North American arm of the international Mountain Forum. The forum is a web-based network of individuals and organizations concerned with mountain communities, environments, and sustainable development.

“Mountain people all over the world share common concerns,” says Mountain Culture associate director Leslie Taylor. “Free membership in the forum allows them to share solutions to those concerns regardless of international borders and economic barriers. By hosting the North American network, we hope to encourage more Canadians, Americans and Mexicans to join this dialogue.”

Mountain Culture’s responsibilities includes encouraging North American membership and participation, developing a library of mountain-specific resources and moderating the North American electronic discussion list.

The Mountain Forum was established in 1995 in response to the identification of mountain issues as a key concern at the Rio Earth Summit. Membership is free. The forum works through a decentralized network, with regional offices located in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Until now, The Mountain Institute in Harrisonburg, Virginia has coordinated the North American Mountain Forum.

Mountain Forum maintains a searchable on-line library with over 7000 documents, e-mail discussion groups, focussed electronic conferencing, a searchable list of members, and a calendar of mountain events. Members use it as a virtual meeting place — any member can ask a question of all other members, let people know about an upcoming event, or mobilize support for an emerging environmental or social issue.

For more information on the Mountain Forum go to: www.mtnforum.org or www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture.

Mountain Culture is a program of The Banff Centre, Canada's centre for creative excellence in the arts, leadership development, mountain culture, and conferences. Mountain Culture activities include the Banff Mountain Film and Book Festivals, Banff Mountain Summits, Banff Mountain Photography Competition, Banff Mountain Speakers’ Bureau, Mountain Communities conferences, Banff Mountain Grants, and mountain exhibitions.

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