

Siberia plans 'institute to study yetis'

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Skiers sit on a chairlift in a village outside the Siberian town of Kemerovo. Officials in a Siberian region have announced plans to open a scientific institute for researchers to study yetis, despite opposition from academics.

Officials in a Siberian region on Wednesday announced plans to open a scientific institute for researchers to study yetis, despite opposition from academics.

"Organising an institute or a scientific centre would be a logical continuation of research into the yeti," the administration of the Russian coal-mining region of Kemerovo in western Siberia said.

The region will announce its final decision after hosting an international conference on yetis later this year, the statement said, citing the regional government's education and science department.

"The town of Tashtagol will host an international conference with leading experts into [hominids](#). Based on its results, we will take a decision on opening a scientific research institute to study the yeti."

Yetis, or Abominable Snowmen, are hairy ape-like creatures of popular myth, that are generally held to inhabit the Himalayas.

But some believe Russia also holds a population of yetis, which it calls Snow Men, in remote areas of Siberia such as the mountains in the southern part of Kemerovo around Tashtagol.

Kemerovo officials cited yeti researcher Igor Burtsev as saying that around 30 Russian scientists are studying yetis and could work together at the planned institute.

"We think that the yeti is a separate branch of [human evolution](#). It lives in harmony with nature," Burtsev was quoted as saying.

Burtsev earlier told the ITAR-TASS news agency that the institute was planned to open as part of the region's state university.

The university swiftly denied the claim in a statement, saying that "studying yetis is not among the research interests of the scientific teams at Kemerovo State University".

The Kemerovo region has used its reputation for sightings of yetis to promote tourism. It holds an annual Yeti Day and this year it will run an ice sculpture competition called "In the World of the Yeti".

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