

NewsTrack

Weather, not hotels, affect Niagara Falls

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y., April 17 (UPI) -- U.S. scientists say they've ruled out high-rise hotels as the cause of increased mist at Niagara Falls.

The Niagara Parks Commission suggested that possibility in 2004, saying such buildings might be altering airflow patterns, contributing to a higher, thicker mist plume.

But University at Buffalo geologists have now determined high-rise hotels are probably not to blame.

"According to our findings, it is unlikely that the buildings at the falls enhance the mist," said Marcus Bursik, professor of geology, who led the study with colleagues. "Rather, our data show that it's air and water temperature that control the amount of mist.

"It turns out that the bigger the temperature difference between the air and the water, the higher and more substantial is the mist plume and the thicker is the mist at the Falls, he said."

Bursik, a volcanologist, says the perception that there have been more misty days in recent years since the high-rise hotel were built may just be related to temperature trends.

The researchers will present their findings Friday, during UB's annual Environment and Society Institute Colloquium.

© Copyright 2006 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved