



History

The natural scenic beauty of the PARI campus is partly responsible for its importance as a scientific resource. Located in the half-million acre Pisgah National Forest, the campus is protected for generations to come from man-made light pollution and radio interference. During the early days of the nation's space program, NASA recognized the intrinsic value of the location when it was conducting a worldwide search for sites to host its network of satellite tracking and data collection stations. At the current PARI site in 1962, NASA built the Rosman Research Station to be the nation's primary east coast satellite-tracking facility.

In 1981, the Rosman Research Station was transferred to the Department of Defense (DOD) and used for satellite data collection. At its peak, about 350 people were employed at the Rosman facility. During the years of active operation, it is estimated that the government invested several hundred million dollars in the site.

In 1995, the facility was closed and DOD operations were consolidated elsewhere. Of the 23 antennae, 19 were moved to other locations and most of the instrumentation and electronics were removed from the site. However, the bulk of the infrastructure remained and was maintained by the USDA Forest Service.

After several years of inactivity at the site, the government decided to dismantle the facility and let it return to the forest. Recognizing the tremendous value and potential for the site, Don and Jo Cline decided to step in. The Clines reside in Greensboro and have been active for many years in supporting astronomy and science programs at several colleges, universities and museums. A not-for-profit foundation was established in September 1998. In January 1999, the Clines acquired the site and gifted it to the foundation. The Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute was born: a 200-acre infant with a proud heritage, untapped potential and vast needs.

Of the government investment over the years, it is estimated that what was left at the PARI campus represents a value of about \$200 million. Much of the initial work at PARI was oriented to restoring the facility and its instruments to the level necessary for scientific and educational purposes. For example, PARI invested more than a million dollars to upgrade the electronic drives and computer controls for the two 26 meter radio telescopes. Overall, the private monetary investment in the facility is more than \$20 million and the time investment by literally hundreds of people is beyond calculation. Today, PARI has a fulltime salaried staff, a network of consultants and an active roster of several dozen volunteer workers.