

Clouds 2
Painted Sky

Shawn Noland

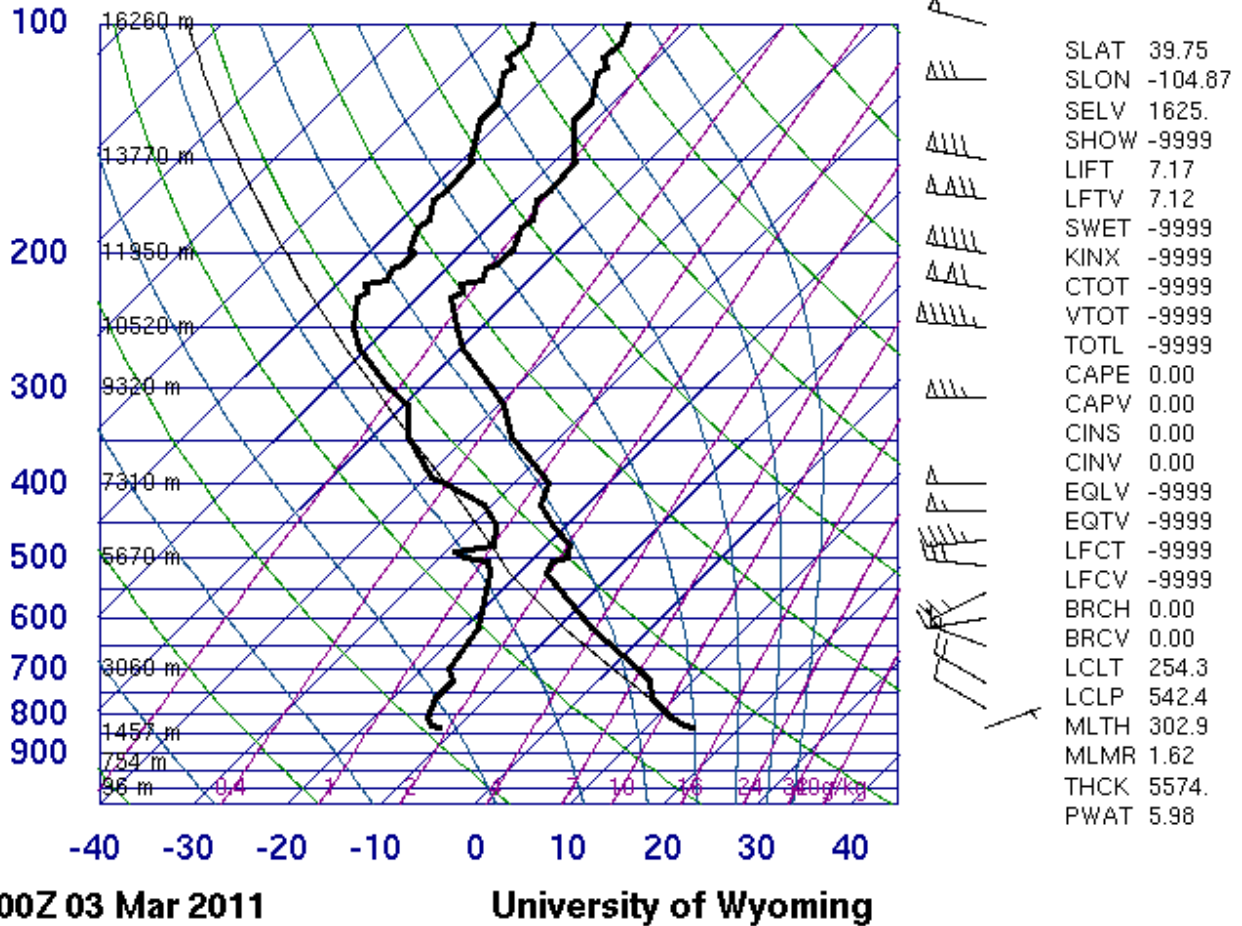
4/18/2011

This image is my second attempt at cloud photography. When I had originally started looking for this image I decided that I wanted to find a type of cloud that you don't frequently see in Boulder Colorado. Fortunately I happened across a very chaotic weather pattern. On March 2, (the day I took the image) the number and types clouds in the sky varied significantly which is what originally caught my interest. I grabbed my camera and started taking pictures and then ultimately found a picture that looked almost surreal.

Neither the day before nor the day after resulted in any rain. The image was taken from the intersection of 30th and Baseline in Boulder Colorado. The image was taken pointing almost exactly straight upward (90 degree angle). I estimated that the cloud in question were about 30,000 feet up. They Cirrocumulus in the image were in any case. The cumulus in the lower right-hand corner of the image was at a significantly lower elevation (probably only about a mile up). The image was taken on March 2, at roughly 5:30 p.m.

As I mentioned earlier the cloud in the sky overall were very chaotic that day. A layer of cumulous clouds were passing through relatively close to the ground which were dark with rain. Above the cumulous clouds were intermittent layers of cirrus and cirrocumulus clouds (Only the cirrocumulus of which were visible in this image). The winds had picked up periodically throughout the day with brief lulls in-between gusts. I estimate that the wind speed was mostly 5-10 miles per hour that day. The atmosphere was very unstable. The cumulous clouds that were present are by their very nature unstable (hence the poofyness) but the chaos that was present in the sky overall indicated that a lot of motion must have been going on up there. Cirrocumulus are composed of highly supercooled water droplets which result in the small regularly repeating cloud patterns in the sky. They form by shallow convection inside of layers of air.

72469 DNR Denver



Cloud field of view of this image was roughly 1 km. The cloud continued further in both directions however and occupied a large portion of the sky that day. The day itself was very bright which gave me the opportunity to use a very low ISO setting (only 80). The image was taken with a Canon SX130 Powershot point and shoot camera and was originally at 4000x3000. The image was taken with a moderate exposure time (1/50 s). The clouds were moving in the wind that day and so I used the short exposure time to reduce motion blur. I later took other images with a longer exposure time that did also turn out well however their overall composition was not as good. I used an f/8 fstop. The post process of the image included was mostly me increasing the contrast in gimp. I increased it to the point that it is clearly shopped though I do not believe that it detracts from the image at all. I actually rather like the way that it makes the image look artificial. The original image was simply a picture of some rather unimpressive clouds but the editing in gimp makes the clouds look as if they are a painting.

I've really enjoyed this image. Rather than my usual project which involve toiling away till all hours in the engineering center I spent a very pleasant evening looking at clouds pass into sunset. I really enjoy that I was able to take what was possibly my least favorite image of the day and turn it into something that I enjoy via gimp. I even like that I have a little bit of the cumulous clouds in the lower corner of the image. I was a bit disappointed that the image was so very blue though. The sunset that was visible everywhere else in the sky gave a lot of nice pinks and yellows but my clouds were high enough in the sky that they were still completely blue.