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5/8/12

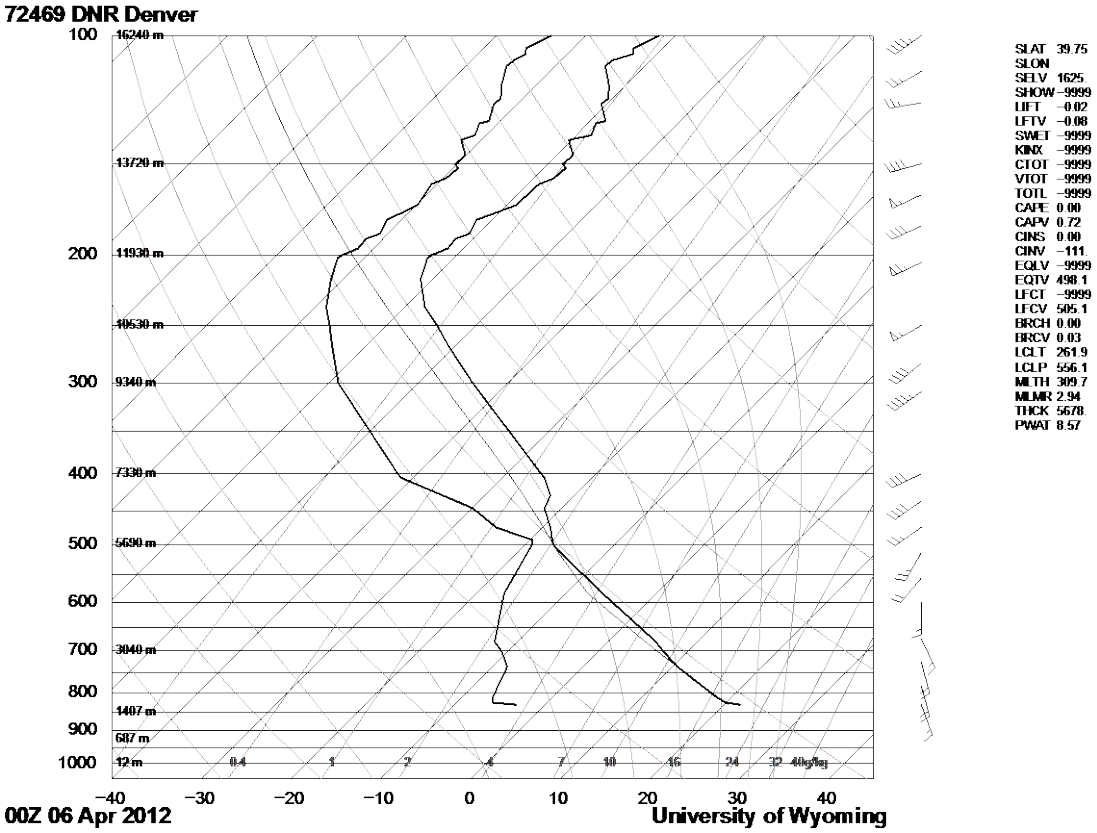
FILM 4200

Clouds 2

This image was taken for the second clouds assignment for the Flow Visualization course. I wanted to capture a clouds image that stood out from the rest of the group, and the idea came to me to capture clouds at night during a full moon. I had been observing clouds at night for several weeks, waiting for the appropriate conditions, and on the day before the full moon I was lucky enough to have cloud formations that did not dominate the skyline, but were plentiful enough to photograph. As it happened, the night of the full moon was cloudless, so it was quite fortuitous that I decided to shoot on the night prior. I took nearly a hundred photographs, but settled on this one because I liked the composition so much, with the moon partially veiled by clouds, and stars visible in the background.

This image was taken on the night of the 5th of April, at approximately 8:05 pm. It was taken about 1 mile up Flagstaff Rd. at a lookout point, facing East, with the mountains to my back and looking out over the valley. The camera was angled about 15° vertical so that the horizon line was in the bottom 10% of the image.

The clouds shown in the image are what I believe to be altocumulus because they are not very dense, but still have a puffy quality to them. The clouds also had a very even layering to them, and seemed to be fairly high altitude because they were well above the peaks of the mountains. The skew-T graph below seems to confirm this,



as the deviations in the black lines come together at about 5700m, which represents the dew point nearing the temperature of the atmosphere, which indicates cloud formation. The CAPE is at 0.00, which means that the atmosphere was fairly stable, and the wind was not too high. Since Boulder is a mile above sea level, and I was approx. 500 ft. above boulder in the mountains, I would say that the clouds were about 11,400 ft above me.

The focal length was about 36mm, with an f-stop of 8, at ISO 400, with an exposure time of 13 seconds. The image was captured on a DSLR (Canon Rebel XS). The original image was 3888 x 2592 px., but was cropped to 3825 x 2510 px. I chose to do this because I had to rotate the image to correct the horizon line, but I liked the composition and amount of space otherwise, so I decided no to downsize it. In post-

production, I lowered to temperature so that more of the blues came out, and heightened the contrast and vividness so that the sky could be seen more behind the clouds. I also increased the sharpness so that the moon had a more defined shape behind the clouds.

I like the way that my image turned out because I feel that this kind of depiction of clouds is rarely seen. I think that the post-production work that I did made this photo look really close to the way that it actually looks at night, and considering the difficulty that I have had in the past with night photography, I am very satisfied with this. I did not expect for so many colors to come out in this photograph, and it was a pleasant surprise to see the way it turned out.

Works Cited

- "Atmospheric Soundings." *Wyoming Weather Web*. University of Wyoming, 6 Apr. 2012. Web. 29 Apr. 2012. <http://weather.uwyo.edu/cgi-bin/sounding?region=naconf&TYPE=PDF%3ASKEWT&YEAR=2012&MONTH=04&FROM=0600&TO=0600&STNM=72469>.

  The data for my cloud analysis was collected at station 72469 at 00Z on 4/6/12.