

Lyons Flood

This last Tuesday I again volunteered for flood relief with Samaritan's Purse. This time, a month after the flood, I was assigned to Lyons, Colorado, where the sand and mud were much deeper. This small community is at the base of the mountains where two forks of the river join. Both forks flooded and then went downstream to Longmont where I worked previously. Here are two Google Earth satellite photos from a year ago, diagonally offset and overlapping.



The yellow circles show where I worked in the morning (1) and afternoon (2).



This is a French (Pleiades) satellite image of Lyons when the skies cleared after the flood. The brown ground from the upper left to lower right is covered in mud and sand. At the lower right edge of this view the river ate away some of the main highway. The circle shows where I worked in the morning. Some of the damage scenes below were photographed along the road extending east from the circle. The river cut some new channels in the middle of this scene.



These are morning scenes. Above is part of a fence that was partly buried by flood as it created a new channel between houses. The picnic table was moved here by the flood. I removed a fine wire and reed fence and dirt that was above the chain-link fence. Other workers removed the damaged sections of the chain-link fence. My white van is in the upper right of the photo.



On the right the top photo shows dirt piled at an intersection a block east of where I worked. Beyond that the flood cut a major new channel between houses (middle photo), cut through the street and front yard on the south side and undermined part of a garage (bottom photo), before continuing through the neighborhood.



Vehicles were carried away by the flood and partly buried. The red truck hit the pole hard enough to tilt it and dent the side of the truck. The green X on the windows was painted there by rescuers to indicate that no one was trapped inside the vehicle. The Mercedes was partly buried in rocks, sand, fence panels, and large logs. Behind it is a mud-covered field.

I helped dig out the two trucks at the garage and workshop at the afternoon site. The owner has the white shirt at the right. His kids did the painting of the condemned building that had about a half meter (yard) of dirt in it, covering many of his tools and motorcycle.

This is his living room and kitchen after most of the mud had been removed. Notice the mud came half way up the white cabinets and appliances. His house was also condemned and will be torn down after he rescues a few more things that were not damaged. Big piles of dirt remained in his workshop building as we finished cleaning his tall tool box. At the end of our work we presented to him (white shirt) a Bible signed by each of us volunteers. He called the flood an “act of nature” but the volunteer help an “act of God.”