

Rocks, Moon, and Flood

On Friday (13) and Sunday (15) afternoon I helped at the annual Denver Gem and Mineral Show.



These are photos from last year. We demonstrated interesting properties of various rocks and minerals. On Saturday (14) I was again at Dinosaur Ridge at the plant fossil site.



The full moon on September 19 marks the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. This year my view of the moon was mostly cloudy. This evening (21) I will attend the Denver celebration with the Friday night group from Golden. Moon cakes are a traditional food then and come in many varieties. This photo comes from my new friend Jin in Tianjin. It is also a time for families to gather together.

Rains!

You may have heard about the major floods here in Colorado. The rain started Monday, September 9 and finally ended the following Sunday night (15). My usual volunteer work at Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge on that Tuesday was cancelled. At our home we received 4.55 inches (11.56 cm) of rain, much less than many other areas to the north. Our home is on a ridge above the Van Bibber Valley and cannot be flooded. In the valley the creek overflowed its banks to a greater extent than I have seen since we moved here. Here are two photos at a small rock-lined dam across the creek with water normally flowing through the large pipe. The pipe image is from 2008. On Friday (13) morning the water was flowing over the top and did so for several days. The water only removed a small section of dirt from the top of the dam.





Longmont, Colorado, suffered some major flood damage. The upper left image is supplied by a DigitalGlobe satellite. The brown area shows the muddy flood water on Friday (13) when the clouds cleared enough for a view.

The yellow dot shows where I did volunteer work on Friday (20). (That is only 2.3 miles, 3.6 km, north of the DigitalGlobe headquarters building, so some of their employees were affected.) The lower left image is a Google Earth image of the neighborhood around that yellow dot in 2012. The upper right image is an enlargement of part of Hayden Court (in the 2012 image) where we helped with flood relief efforts. I worked at the house beside the “1” and took basement and outside photos beside the “2”.



Though there are many flood relief teams and contractors, I decided to work with Samaritan's Purse, known worldwide for excellent disaster relief work using volunteer labor and donations. They set up their three trailers (2 black, 1 white) at Rocky Mountain Christian Church in Niwot. Some of their supplies are stored in the rear building. We were given orange shirts for team identification. Some volunteers were given boots and gloves. Tools and equipment were in team leader trucks.



In our work neighborhood all basements were flooded. Everything in them was contaminated and had to be removed and discarded to the street. Sentimental items could be saved only if they could be dried and cleaned. Every home had large piles of debris of furniture and wall coverings outside. The flood coming down the street even ripped up a large slab of asphalt (about 4 by 3 meters or yards in size, 10 cm or 4 inches thick) and floated it mostly unbroken down the street from what I marked as “repaved” on the previous page to the location of home “1”, now partly shown on the right side in this upper right photo. Its weight must be in the tons.



Large front-end loaders were needed to remove the piles of trash, assisted by a smaller Bobcat (its white arms showing above the trash) pushing the debris into the bucket of the larger machine. Large trucks then were filled with the debris and carried it away to some landfill site.



Only the wall frames remained in the basements (shown here for home “2”). The height of the water is shown by the darkened walls. Wood and floors had to be scraped clean of the mud and disinfected. In the afternoon I washed the garage floor and driveway of this home. At the end of the work Samaritan’s Purse typically presents to the home owner a Bible signed by the workers.



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