

Autumn Colors - a day trip into the foothills, 30 September 2023, by Dr. Ed Holroyd

For decades the Thomson family at First Baptist Church, Golden, Colorado, has organized an early Autumn trip into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains to view the golden color of the aspen trees. Participants are the American drivers of the vans and international students from Colorado School of Mines, a fine quality engineering university with a strong international reputation. The route recently has been to drive I-70 to Idaho Springs, then up the valley to Echo Lake, returning along a high ridge eastward, and back to Golden, with four stops along the way to enjoy the scenery and walks in the woods. I took fewer photos this year, so I will insert representative photos from previous years. Our skies were cloudy with scattered showers this year, so the substitutes may differ.



Our first stop was at a secluded narrow and steep mountain stream with large boulders, tall and fallen trees, and rushing water. (These are 2019 photos.) It definitely provides a big contrast from any urban environment. We always warn that no one should drink any of that water because all mountain streams are contaminated by bacteria that

cause a bad intestinal disease.

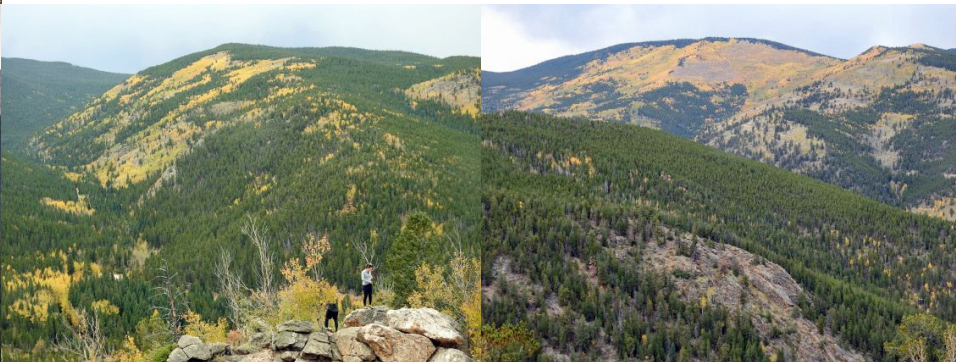


This year we had three vans with five local American adults. Other nationalities, mostly students, were: three from France, one from Denmark, one from Iran, one and both parents from Pakistan, one from Malaysia, one and mother from Indonesia, two from Saudi Arabia. Three American men, including myself, are not in my group photo.

There is a good view of the mountains and aspen colors from this second stop. We always stop here and take photos of the group and scenery.



Renamed Mt. Blue Sky with snow, to S View to southwest



View to northwest



The third stop was Echo Lake, near the road turn off to the summit of the former Mt. Evans, now Mt. Blue Sky. These photos are from 2015 and 2019 aspen viewing trips.



2019 view towards Denver

The fourth stop was at an overlook of the valley east of Echo Lake. These older photos are from our usual view point. This year we went to the top of the rocks at the left edge of the left photo and got a special treat. Below our usual viewing spot were two white mountain goats that would have been difficult to see from above.



2017 view looking down



The birds that I saw at Echo Lake were a flock of Mallard ducks close to the lakeshore, Ravens flying high above, and two Jay species which like any crumbs on tables.



Steller's Jay



Canada Jay

About half way back to Golden are some open meadows near Bergen Park. Occasionally we see Elk there. This time it was the largest Elk herd that I have seen. The male elks were challenging each other and making calls.



Close viewing