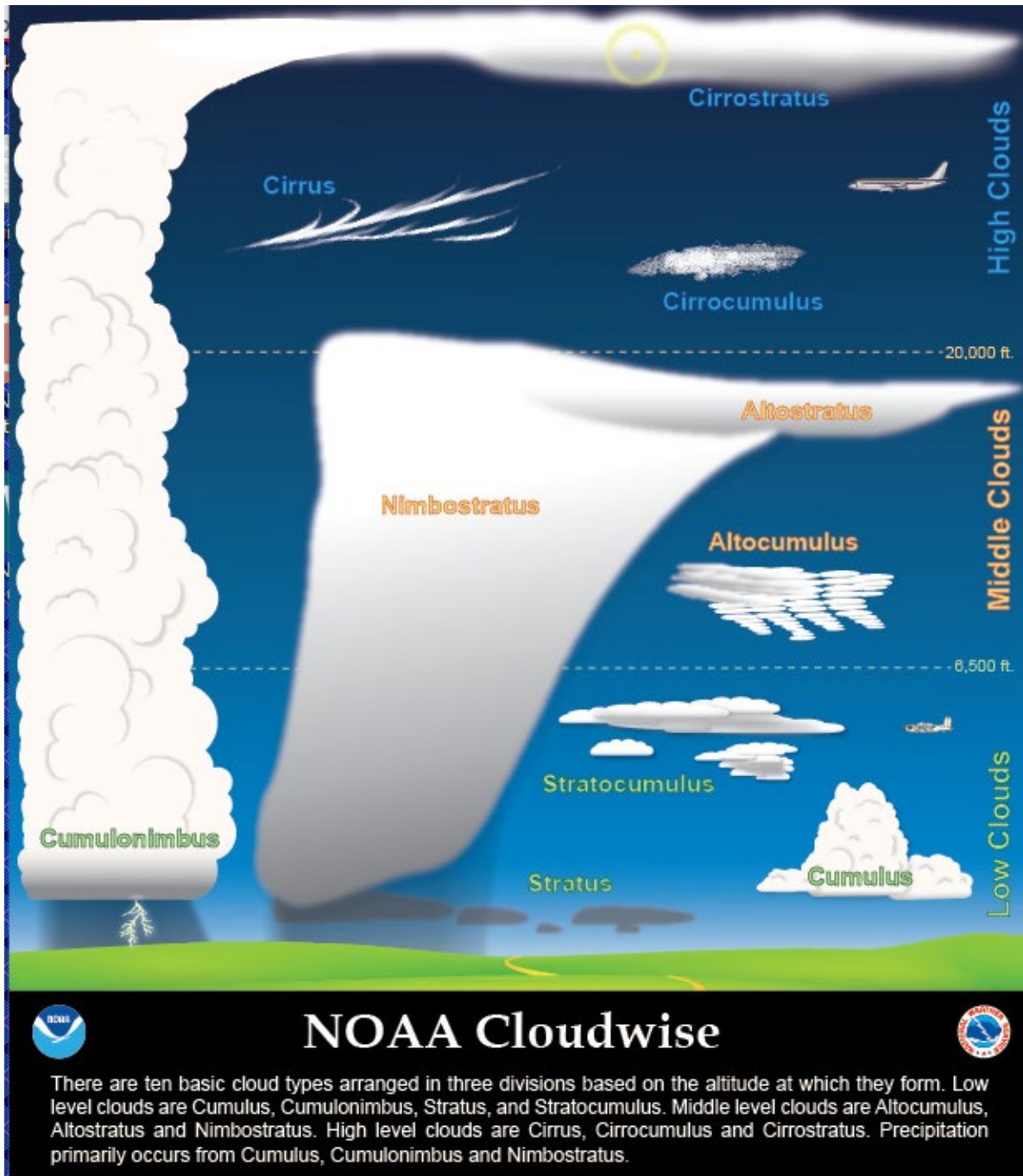


Cloud References

Deirdre Kann



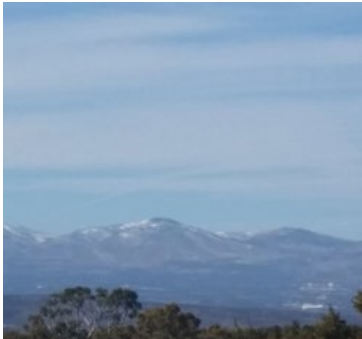
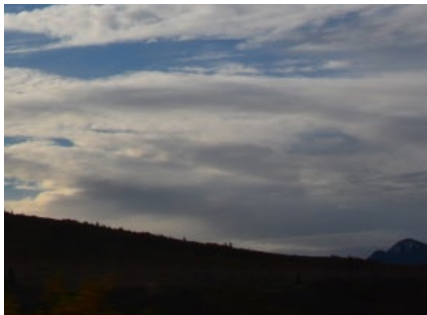
<https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-03/cloudchart-front.jpg>

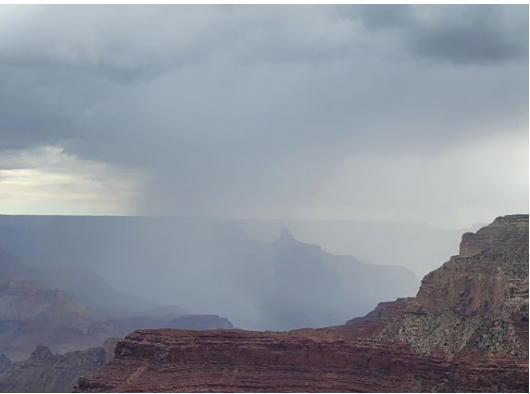
NOAA Jetstream: <https://www.noaa.gov/jetstream/clouds>

International Cloud Atlas: <https://cloudatlas.wmo.int/>

The Cloud Appreciation Society: <https://cloudappreciationsociety.org/>

The Ten Main Cloud Types

	cirrus	Ice crystals Detached, thin, wispy, streaky clouds spread into long fibrous streamers: mares' tails, wide variety of patterns Stretched out because of the winds Illuminated yellow, pink or red both before and after other clouds
	cirrostratus	Ice crystals Thin transparent sheets cover large portions of the sky Can't look at sun through cirrostratus, and if you can see your shadow – cirrus Halo around sun or moon
	cirrocumulus	Ice crystals Thin sheets with heaps, small rounded puffs Most common in winter Often obvious at sunrise and sunset
	Altostratus	White to gray Water droplets or ice crystals Sun is dimly visible (watery sun) in thin layer, but obscured in thick layer Sometimes virga is evident below altostratus
	Altocumulus	Fish scales, flock of sheep, hot coal during a sunset, mackerel sky Water droplets or ice crystals Often more than one layer Extend hand – if cloud is the size of thumb probably altocumulus

	Stratocumulus	Low, often gray, but puffy/heapy Sometimes in rows with clearing between To distinguish between stratocumulus and altocumulus – extend arm, stratocumulus is about the width of a fist
	Cumulus	Water and ice Clouds of vertical growth Sharp edges with a cauliflower form Generally a flat base
	Stratus	Low and gray (fog often morphs into stratus as it lifts) Often cover entire sky Water or Ice
	Nimbostratus	Whitish to dark gray sheets from thickening altostratus, very extensive at times Ice or water depending on temperature Falling rain or snow, often continuous Light to moderate precipitation It can be thick enough to completely block the sun
	cumulonimbus	Thunderstorms that develop from cumulus Bright white to gray Extreme vertical growth and extent Cauliflower form Anvil top at times Rain, snow, hail, lightning, thunder, tornados and gusty outflows

Some interesting clouds to look for in New Mexico:

	Alto cumulus lenticular	Distinctive lens shape clouds, often in stacks or in downstream sites Develop when airflow moves over terrain Tend to remain in place
	Pileus	An accessory cloud that forms over the top of cumulus and cumulonimbus clouds
	Pyrocumulus	Cumulus cloud that forms above forest fires (or volcanic eruptions) Burning vegetation can supply moisture
	Contrails	Long, straight clouds formed in the wake of aircraft exhaust Atmospheric conditions determine the length of time they can persist and the change in shape
	Floccus or Kelvin-Helmholtz Waves	A sign of two layers of different densities and wind speeds Generally short lived, a minute or two Can develop at all levels and with several cloud types including stratocumulus, alto cumulus, cirrus, lenticular