

August 18, 2008 - Denver's Mountains

"I am the Eagle...I live in High Country", are the words in one of John Denver's songs about his native Rocky Mountains. Well, this is certainly "high country".

I arrived at Parker, CO. on Saturday afternoon, during some torrental storms and downpours which called for flash flood advisories. Because of poor road conditions and flooding at the campground that I had planned to stay at, and at the small private airport that I had planned to fly out of, I had to consider some changes. I put in a call to Roger Stout, a fellow Highlander builder that I had met two years ago at an EAA workshop right here in the Denver area. Roger and I began to communicate via e-mail with regard to our building progress, and I had mentioned to him that I would be in his area while on my trip. When I spoke to him about my problem with the impending weather conditions, he said, "No problem", and invited me to bring the motor home to their 5 acre spread which was located way up on high ground, mentioning that he had plenty of room for both the bus and my trailer. He was correct and I spent a delightful weekend with him and his family, and today, Monday, we finally did some flying.

Since the small private strip that I was planning to base out of still had problems with the dirt roads leading up to the airport, we decided to do our flying at Centennial Airport. This larger field, with over 10,000 foot long runways is located just 8 miles from the Stout's home, and is a field that Roger still does some flight instruction work at. In addition to being a Certified Flight Instructor, Roger used to own and operate his own airport and has been around aircraft for much of his life. It was good having him accompany me on this first flight in the Denver area, since much of the ground that we were going to fly over is **really high**. Centennial Airport is at 5,800 feet elevation but the surrounding terrain goes well above 14,000. After our departure we flew to the West, just below the Class "B" controlled airspace that surrounds the Denver area. We were soon in "high country", and while we didn't see any eagles, we did see a hawk. Our flight lasted for almost two hours and reached 10,500 feet. Roger handled the controls, while I concentrated on taking some photos of the surrounding terrain. Upon landing, we tied down the airplane and brought the trailer back to his home. While I have some bus maintenance scheduled for Tuesday, I hope to get back in the air later in the day, or for sure on Wednesday, for some more flying in John Denver's "high country".



Roger Stout is almost ready to begin bolting his Rotax engine to his recently painted Highlander.



Denver was very hazy this day, which is quite unusual. Perhaps it will clear up later this week.



As we started into the mountains, these were some of the views that we encountered.



While heavy rain covered the area this weekend, in the high country, it was August snow.



This is the view that we had as we flew further west into the higher mountains.



Gold mines dot many of the hillsides in this section of the Rocky Mountains



This is the "Glory Hole" mine, which produced a lot of gold from its deep shaft under the hills



This is "Casino Row", which has 4 gambling casinos within a one mile stretch of highway



Believe it or not, this is a private home, located only 7 miles from the Centennial Airport



The town of Castle Rock is named for this large rock formation located on a high hill



Unusual rock formations were found all along our route. This "rock garden" is typical.



Red Rock formations such as these are another geological phenomena that we flew over



This is a close-up photo of those "red rocks"