Waves in the Sky

Nature Note Cloud Observation by: Eddie Plumlee and Lane McAlister
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On January 4th 2023 at 11:00am, we were outside during recess when we noticed some really wavy looking clouds up in the sky. We went over to the GLOBE Weather Station on the Alpena Elementary/Middle School Playground*, in north west Arkansas. The wind was really blowing 3.8 to 4.6mps and temperature was cold, 7.2°C, and felt even colder because of the wind chill. Even though there were not any leaves on the trees, we could hear the wind blowing through the limbs.*

We recorded weather data and made a cloud observation using the GLOBE Cloud Protocol. Total cloud coverage was isolated (10-25%) with blue sky and clear visibility. No contrails, but observed a few cirrus and cirrocumulus clouds. The really interesting thing we saw was a lot of really wavy altocumulus clouds. They were all lined up, stretching across the sky from east to west. They looked live wavy ripples left in the muddy sand down at the creek. They also looked like the waves in the sand along the ocean shore where the waves have been going in and out.

We first thought that the clouds might be contrails that the wind was moving around, but after looking at the Flight Radar-24 app we knew that that there had not been that many aircraft pass overhead that could have made that many contrails. We looked at the GLOBE Cloud chart to try and identify the type of clouds. We got background information on the NOAA cloud photo library and found out that the clouds are called "Undulatus" clouds. From the NOAA website, we also learned that sometimes, these types of clouds are seen 20 hours or so before an overcast sky or rainy weather. We wondered if we would get rainy weather the next day. We checked the weather forecast on the local TV station, KY-3, website, and conducted a cloud observation the next day. We had a clear blue sky. We were surprised to not at least find some clouds in the sky based on what we had read on the NOAA website.

Atmospheric data was collected and the Cloud observation was conducted using the GLOBE Observer App. The GLOBE Cloud Identification sheet was used to help identify the clouds. (GLOBE.gov)
Further cloud identification was done using the NOAA Cloud Photo Library found at:
https://photolib.noaa.gov/Collections/National-Weather-Service/Weather-Wonders/Cloudy-Days/emodule/658/eitem/2505

West

East

Up

South