Glaciers Away!

Materials

A large pan
A book or large block
Sand or sandy soil
A block of ice
Small pebbles

Procedure

1. Pack damp sand about half full into the pan, heaping part of it into a large "hill" toward the center.

2. Set the pan up on the book or block, so that it is tilted. Lightly push about three of the smallest pebbles into the top of the "hill" and set your ice block on top of those. (An ice block can be made by filling a plastic container with water and freezing, then dipping the bottom into hot water to release the block)

3. Balance the rest of the pebbles onto the top of the ice block (if you made your own ice block, the best thing to do is put pebbles into the bottom of the plastic container so they are frozen in).

4. Now let your ice melt, checking on it occasionally to see the progress it makes. Notice any spots of erosion made by the ice "glacier" or the force of the ice pushing on the rocks. Where do the pebbles on top of the ice end up?

Glaciers are like rivers of ice slowly advancing down a valley. Sometimes they create their own valleys, and many landmarks were created by the erosive force of glaciers. Even our Great Lakes were carved out long ago by glaciers. In Michigan, we find many areas such as moraines that are attributed to the land-altering power of these long-extinct masses of ice.