

My Passion – Landscape Photography
aka

Secrets of Landscape Photography

(Revealed Confidentially to the)

Dallas Camera Club

Dennis Fritsche

October 22, 2024

Key Points

- Great landscapes are generally accessible – you don't have to hike into the deepest mountains
- Our national parks and monuments and state parks offer almost endless opportunities.
- Get there at the right time of day and right time of year.
- Be patient at sunset – it's not over until it's over.
- The sun doesn't have to be up – moonlight, twilight
- Do your research.
- Prepare for the weather.
- Have the right gear and know how to use it.
- Use a variety of focal lengths.
- Two best investments are a first-class tripod and head and at least one great lens.
- Your image capture should support your final vision – it is not the final image.
- Revisit your work as your post capture skills get better and your sensibilities change.
- Infrared for bad time of day
- Turn Around
- There is no "Landscape formula"
- Study landscape photography – *Elements Magazine* is great.

Secret #1

Go to Pretty Places

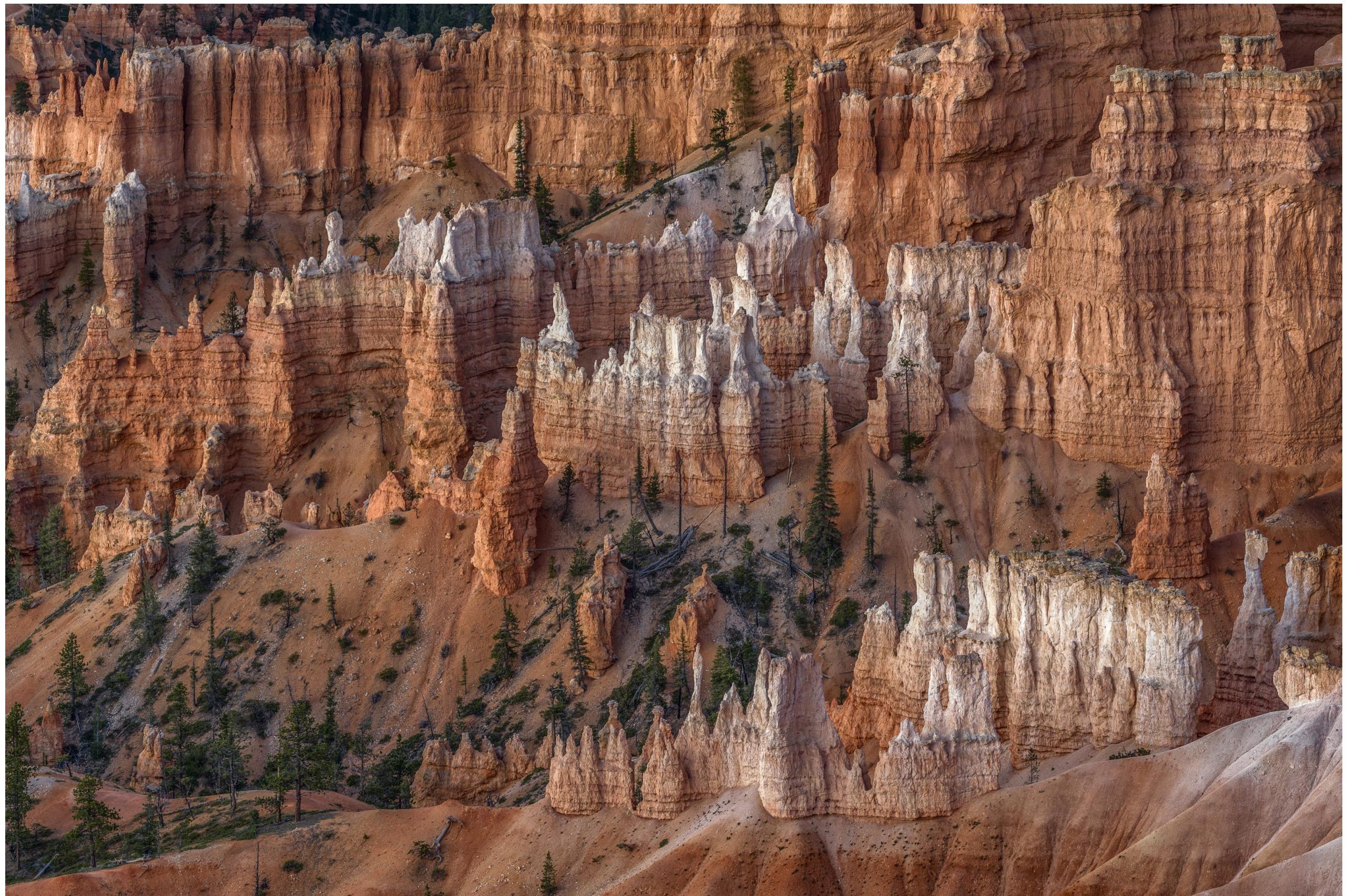
I'm not a hiker.

Wonderful scenes are easily accessible.

The vast majority of my favorites are within 200 yards of the car.

National and State parks offer an endless array of locales and subjects.

Plan your trip.



Bryce Canyon, Utah



Monument Valley, Utah/Arizona



Trona Pinnacles, California



Chisos Mountains, Big Bend National Park, Texas



Monument Valley Utah/Arizona

Secret #1

Go to Pretty Places
and

Turn Around!



Monument Valley Utah/Arizona



Monument Valley Utah/Arizona

Secret #2

It's not all about the light

But it sure helps!



Monument Valley, Utah/Arizona



Galveston Island, Texas



Dead Horse Point, Canyon Lands, Utah

Secret #2

It's not all about the light, But it sure helps!

Be Early – Golden Light doesn't Last Long



8:37:39 Near Cuba New Mexico



8:38:36 Near Cuba New Mexico



8:39:10 Near Cuba New Mexico



8:41:58 Near Cuba New Mexico

Secret #2

It's not all about the light, But it sure helps!

Be Early – Golden Light doesn't Last Long

Don't Give Up on the Sunset



Mojave Natural Preserve, California



Caddo Lake, Texas



Mono Lake, California

Secret #2

It's not all about the light, But it sure helps!

Be Early – Golden Light doesn't Last Long

Don't Give Up on the Sunset

The Sun went down? So What?



“Weston’s Lake”, Yosemite National Park, California



Near Mono Lake, California



Sedona, Arizona



White Sands National Monument, New Mexico



Secret #3

Essential Gear

Just about any modern camera

Substantial Tripod and Head

At least one really good lens

My Gear

- Cameras: Nikon Z72, Z8, and iPhone 15 Pro
- Tripods: Gitzo Mountaineer, Really Right Stuff 24L
- Heads: Arca Swiss D4, RRS BH55, Wimberly Gimbal
- Monopod: Really Right Stuff and RRS Head
- Lens: uhhh... Not really enough space here.
- Essential: Nikon Z 24-120, 100 – 400, 13 – 30, 20 f/1.8
- Filters: Circular Polarizer, Variable and Fixed Neutral Density
- Bags: Think Tank Rolling, Garu Gear, Lowepro Backpack and Sling
- Batteries, memory cards, cleaning supplies, lamps, hex keys

Lens Choices for Landscape Photography

- I have never subscribed to the “landscapes mean wide angle” philosophy.
- The choice of lenses is driven by your subject, how close you are, and how you want to compose that subject for maximum impact.
- On trips in 2022, 2023, and 2024 I consider primarily landscape oriented, I used:
- I usually carry two cameras one with 24-120 and the other with the 100-400.
- One on a shoulder slide and one in the camera sling.

Camera		Lens	
All (13 Cameras)	5514	All (9 Lenses)	4848
iPhone 12 Pro Max	13	0.0 mm f/0.0	48
iPhone 13 Pro	1	NIKKOR Z 14-30mm f/4 S	74
iPhone 14 Pro	4	NIKKOR Z 20mm f/1.8 S	50
iPhone 15 Pro	18	NIKKOR Z 24-70mm f/2.8 S	928
iPhone XS	561	NIKKOR Z 24-120mm f/4 S	1832
iPhone14,6 iOS 15.4.1	1	NIKKOR Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S	1889
motorola one 5G ace	1	NIKKOR Z 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6 VR S Z TC-1.4x	1
NIKON D850	20	NIKKOR Z 600mm f/6.3 VR S	20
NIKON Z 7	1638	VR 70-200mm f/2.8E	6
NIKON Z 7_2	2059		
NIKON Z 8	1151		
OM-1	12		
Unknown Camera	35		



14mm



24 mm



20 mm



35mm



50mm



70 mm



100 mm



150 mm



120 mm



100 mm



200 mm



250 mm



300 mm



350 mm



400 mm



Even 600mm

Secret Number #4

Focusing and Aperture

- Generally, stop down for greater depth of field. My usual range is f/9 to f/13 depending on the distance to the subject.
 - More distant subjects f/8 or f/9
 - Closer subjects stop down more.

f / 4.0	153
f / 4.5	20
f / 4.8	11
f / 5.0	71
f / 5.3	20
f / 5.6	200
f / 6.3	161
f / 7.1	134
f / 8.0	885
f / 9.0	590
f / 10	720
f / 11	674
f / 13	616
f / 14	147
f / 16	115
f / 18	98
f / 20	57
f / 22	48

Secret Number #4

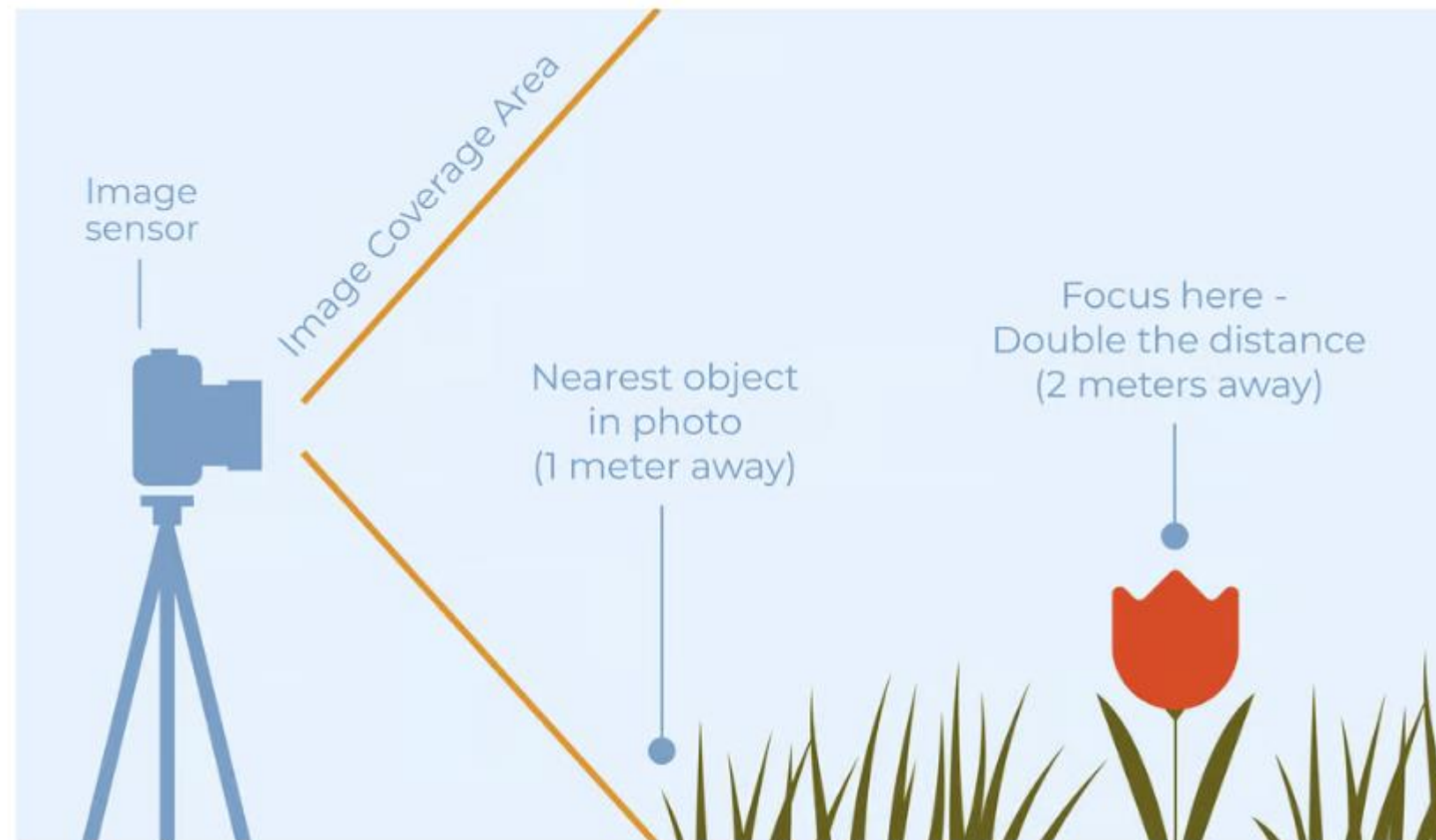
Focusing and Aperture

- At f/16 and higher you can lose acuity due to lens diffraction (and dust spots show up more.)
- To maximize depth of field,
 1. Stop down
 2. Use hyperfocus distance
 3. Use focus stacking

2024-02-20 - Dennis Fritsche [PDF VIDEO](#) (Cleaning Tripod, Stock Photos, Depth of Field and Hyperfocal Distance, UV Filters, Dennis' Editing Workflow)

Rule of Thumb 1

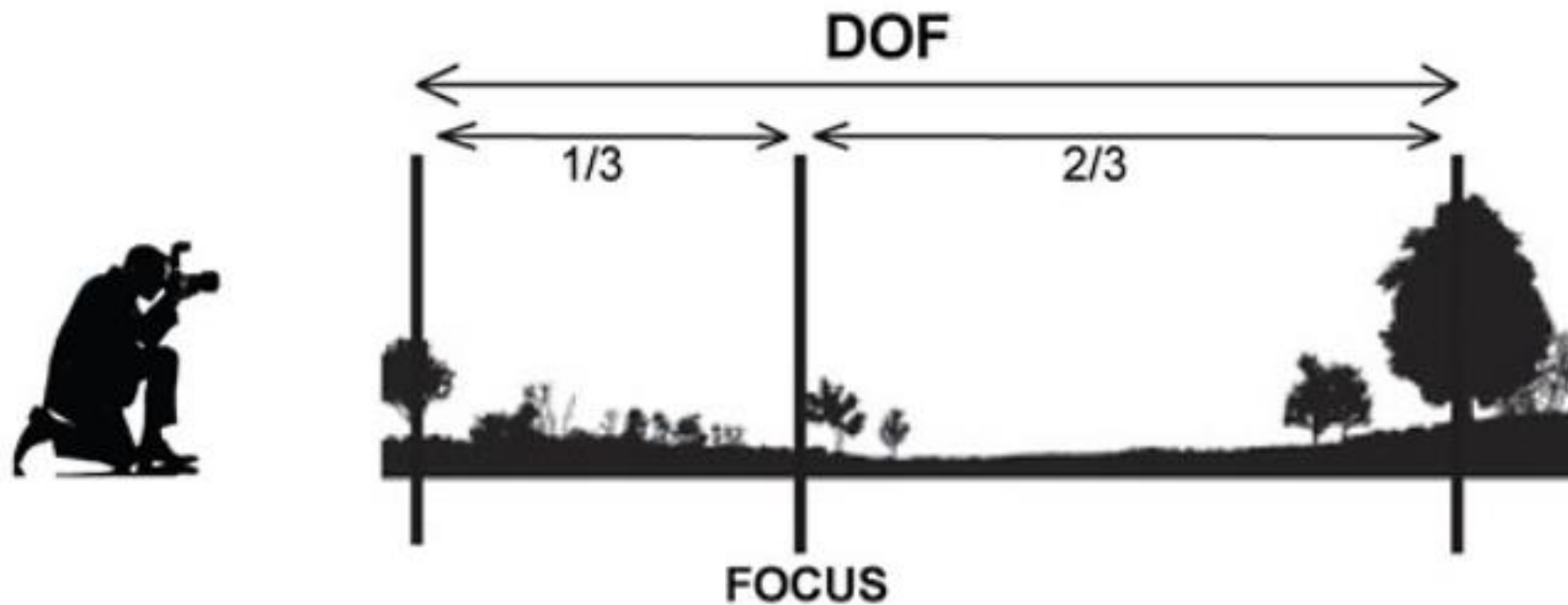
- If you have a close object, focus at twice the distance to the closest object.



From Photographylife.com

Rule of Thumb 2

- For distant subjects, focus 1/3 of the way into the scene.



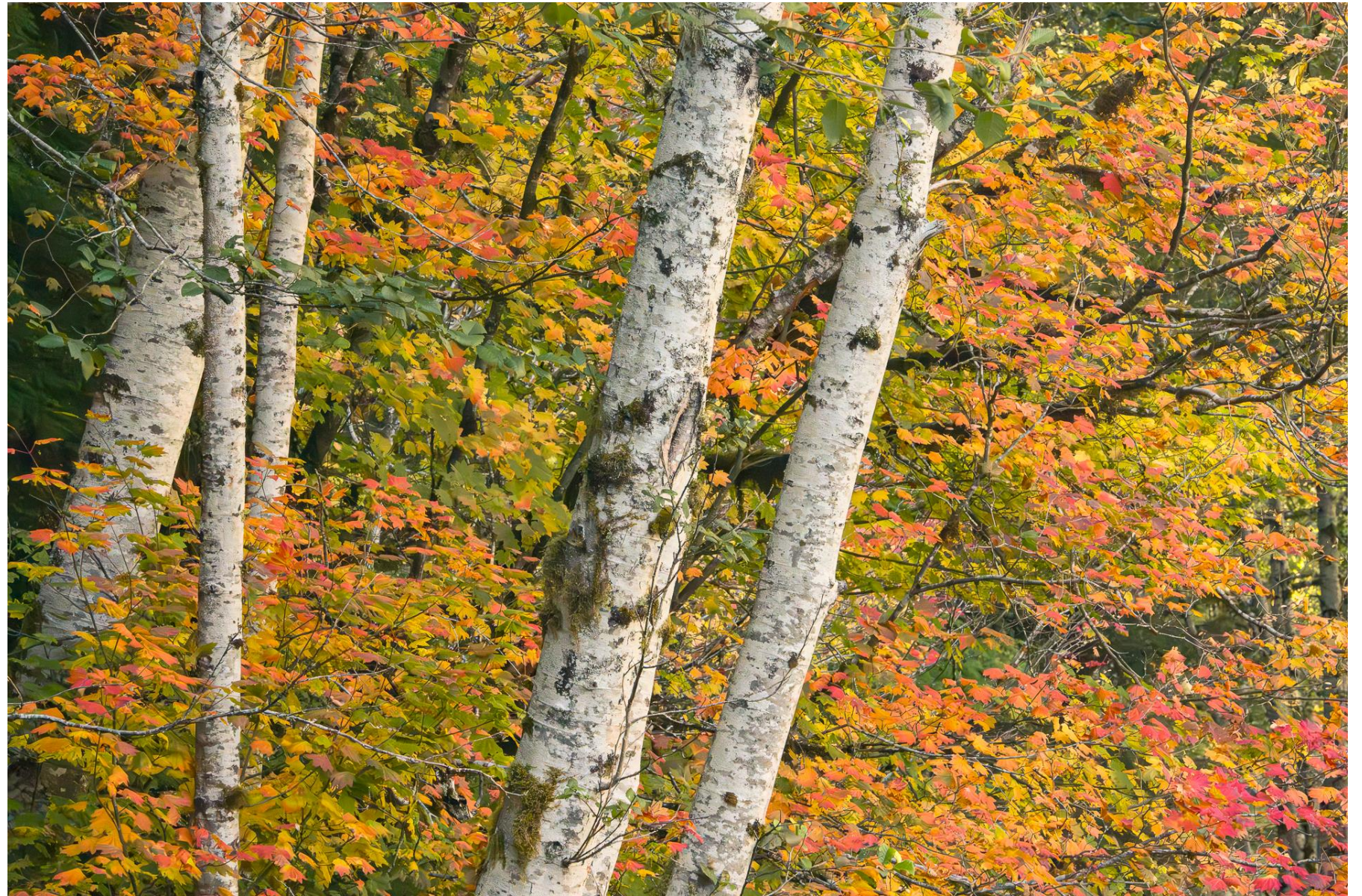
Fall Foliage - considerations

- When the sun is shining on the colorful leaves, they can act like mirrors.
 - Use a circular polarizer to knock down the reflections.
 - Check the RGB histogram and make sure no color is blown out. Reds can get away from you.
- If it's windy, up your shutter speed.
- Photograph the wide expanses of color hills, but also look for the little details and isolated trees.
- Backlit leaves are beautiful. Underexpose to keep from blowing out.

The Expansive Shot



The Trees



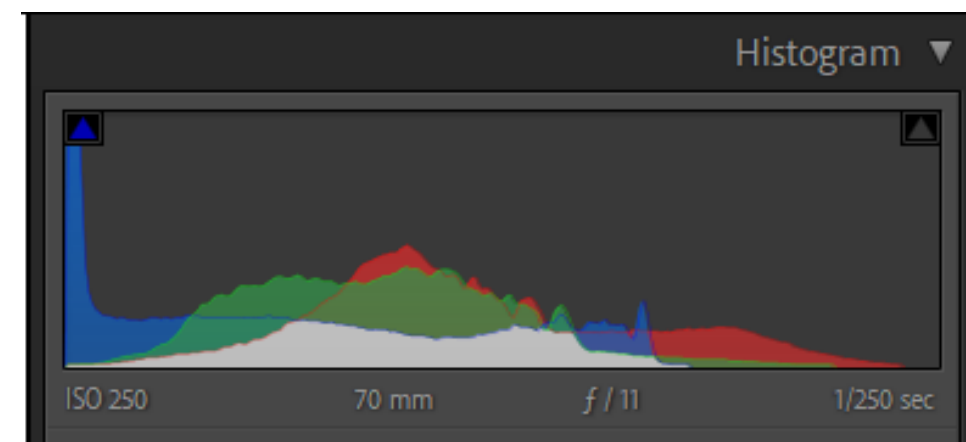
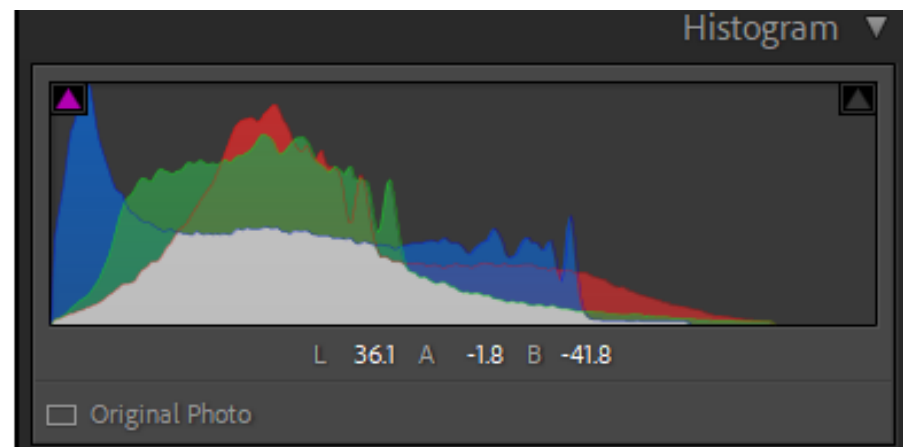
Intimate Shots



Backlit Maple Leaf



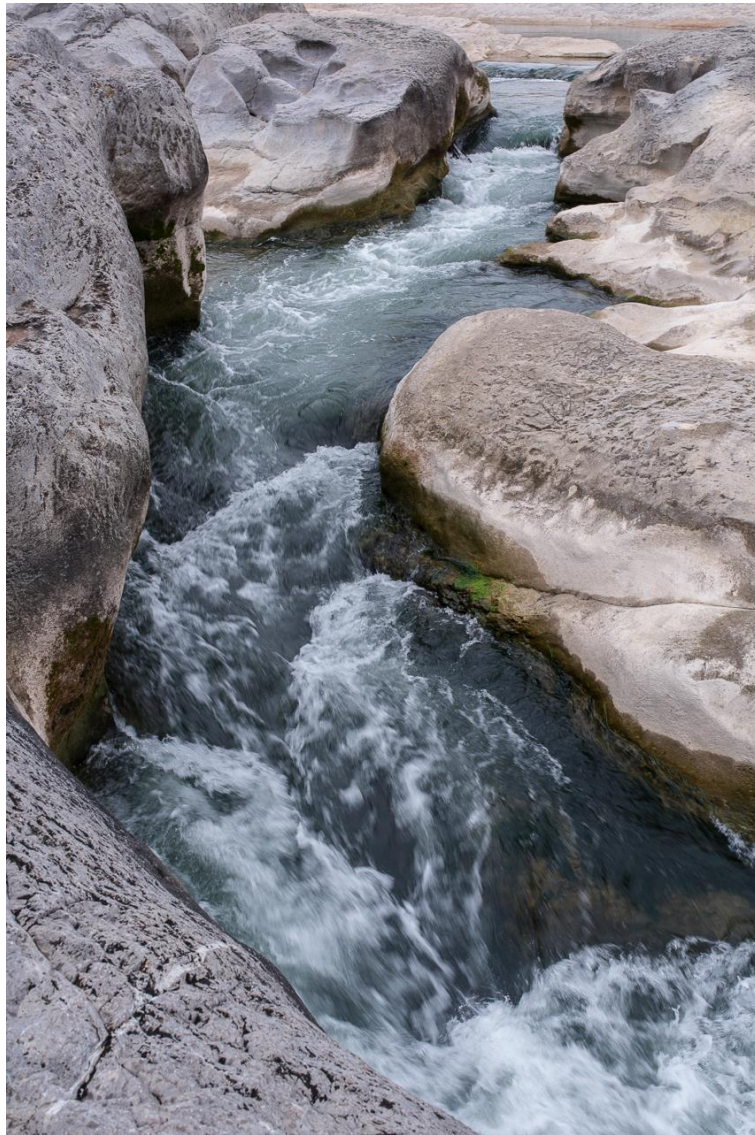
Underexpose Backlit Leaves



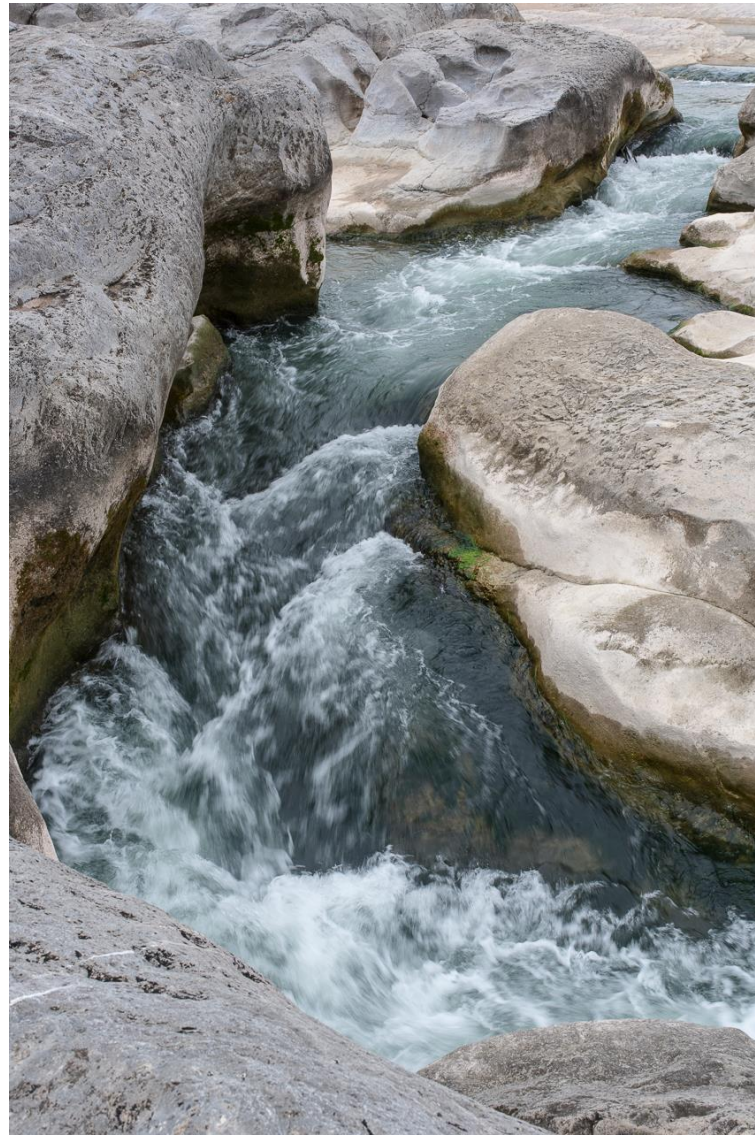
Waterfalls and Moving Water

- It's all about shutter speed and your artistic intent.
- Slow shutter speeds blur the movement and faster shutter speeds freeze the motion.
- The effect will vary greatly based on the speed of the water – you have to experiment.

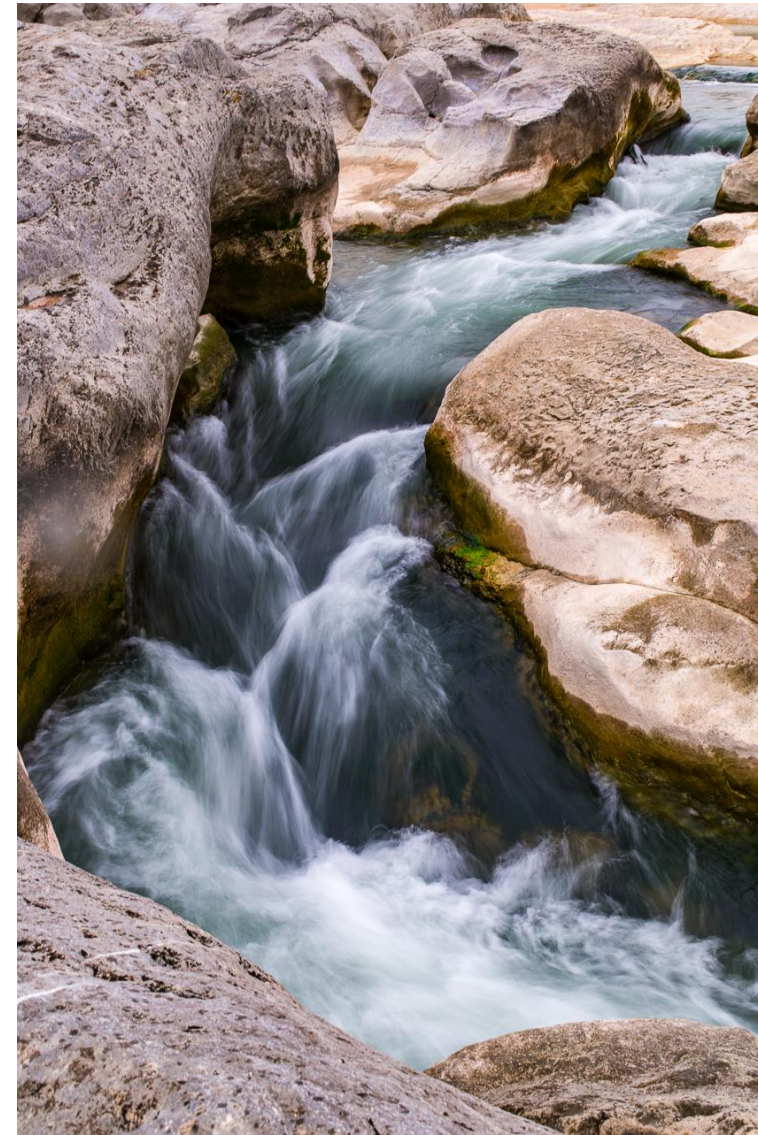
Varying Shutter Speed – Slow Water



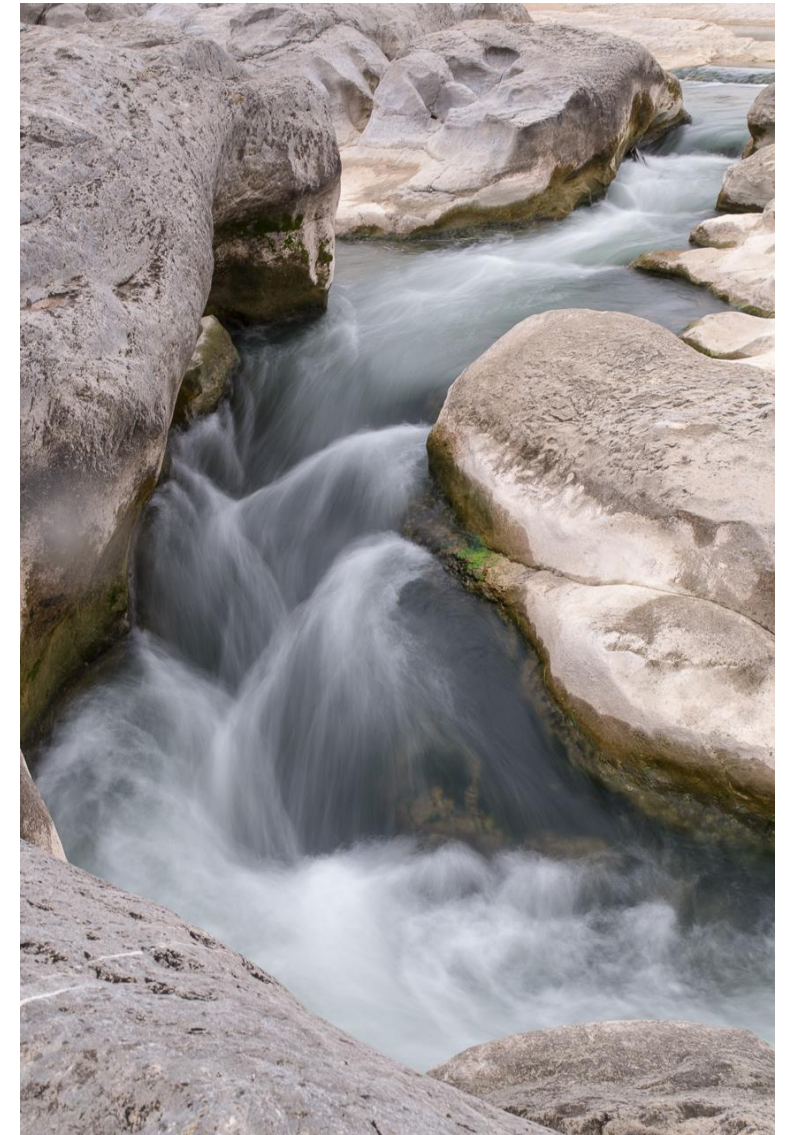
1/40 Second



1/25 Second



1/3 Second



1 Second

Varying Shutter Speed Fast Water



1/30 Second



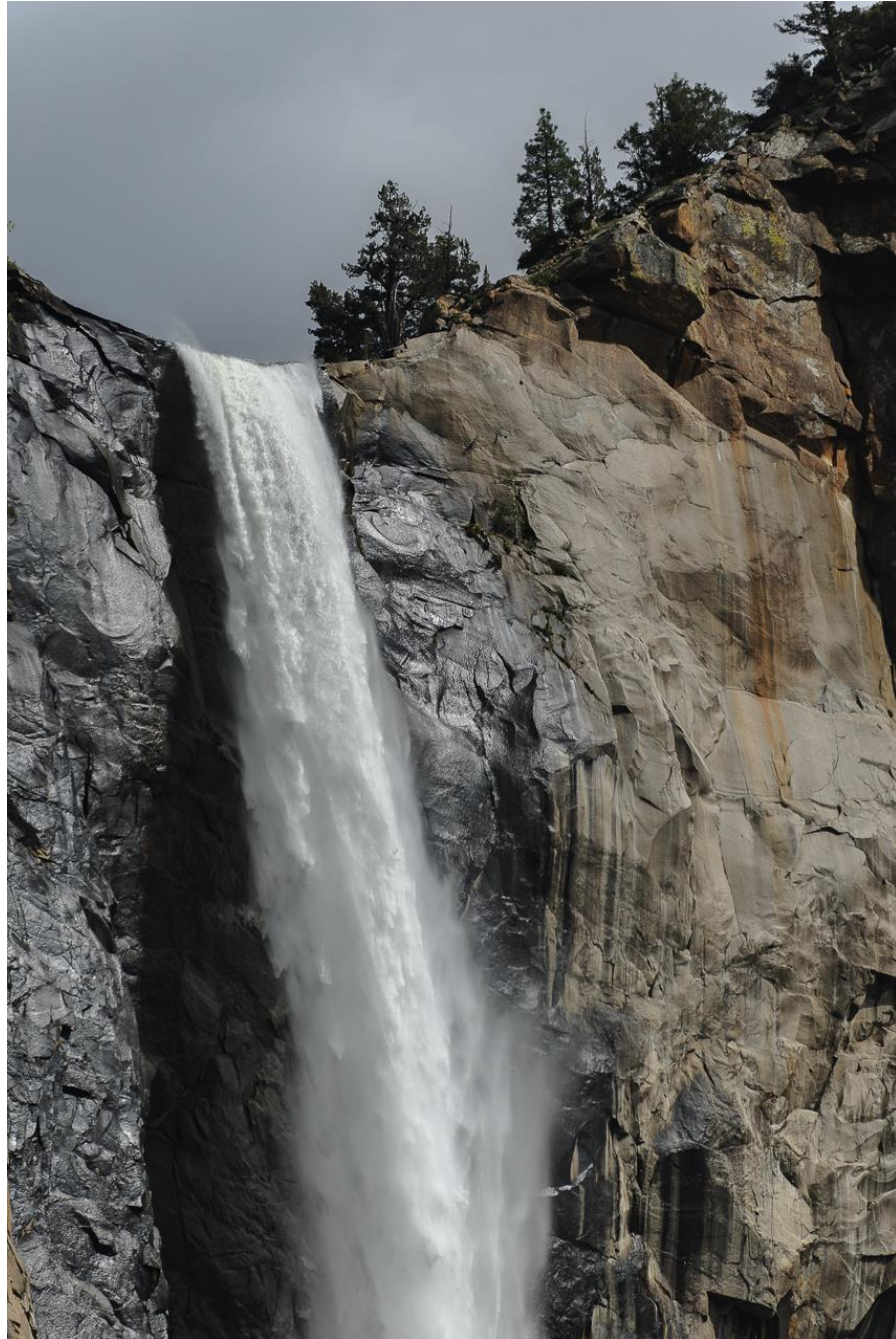
1 Second

Watch the Light



- When the water is churning there will be “white water”
- Take care not to blow these out.
- Overcast skies and shade are preferred.

Changing Patterns



- Water flow is not constant.
- Patterns change in interesting ways.
- Especially in the wind.

Controlling the Shutter Speed

- My starting point for waterfalls and running water is 1/8, 1/15, and 1/30 second. Adjust from there.
- Time of day. Early or late if possible.
- Stop down and use low ISO.
- Circular polarizer and neutral density filters.
- Fixed neutral density filters
 - 6 stops is a good all-around choice. 3 stops can be stacked with the 6.
 - Rarely need 10 stop.
- Variable neutral density filters.
 - 1 to 5 or 1 to 8 stop is a good choice.
 - Find one with stops
 - Good quality otherwise color issues
 - [Amazon.com : B+W 77mm XS-Pro Digital Vario ND with Multi-Resistant Nano Coating : Electronics](#)

Gear and Technique

- Gear
 - Sturdy tripod and head.
 - Neutral density and circular polarizing filters.
 - Lens of choice.
- My Technique
 - Variable ND filter.
 - Aperture priority.
 - ISO 64 (or lowest).
 - Adjust ND to get the time I want.
 - If it is really bright, I might add a fixed ND.
 - Look at the display and adjust to taste.
- Post processing
 - Local use of Dehaze gives life to the water. May need to brighten shadows.

References

- *My Passion*
Moving Water - Alan Whiteside, June
11,2024 [PDF](#)
- *Photographing Water* with Alan Whiteside
Part 1 [PDF](#) [VIDEO](#)
Part 2 [PDF](#) [VIDEO](#)

Secret #5

Exposure and Post Processing

- Learn to separate the best exposure from the final result.
- Ansel Adams called this “visualization”.
- Capture the image in camera with the best information to realize your vision.
- In the days of large format black and white, photographers “exposed for the shadows and developed for the highlights”.
- In the digital world, we “expose for the highlights and develop for the shadows”
- Master one post processing program. I recommend Lightroom.
- Go back and look at older photographs and reprocess with your latest skills and sensibilities.



Raw Capture (Nikon D3X)



2011 Processing (Probably with NIK plug in)



2018 Processing (with Lightroom Classic CC)



2023 Processing (with Lightroom Classic CC)

Secret #5

Print Your Photographs

You don't know what you have until you make a print!

No more Secrets

Thank You