

Field Notes

A photographic journey



Luminescence of Nature Press

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Preface

I started Luminescence of Nature in 2004 as an outlet for my photographic hobby. Since then, I've dedicated myself to not only photographing the outdoors, but also to sharing what I've learned with others. While technical proficiency in the field and in the digital darkroom are important elements of digital photography, the process and mindset of a photographer can sometimes be overlooked. It's easy to say "fix it in post," but the best photographs look good the moment they're captured. My philosophy has always been to use post-processing techniques to improve otherwise excellent images. As a photographer, I feel that it's my job to never stop learning, whether it's a new digital processing technique, or better ways to compose images.

With this book, I've chosen to share some of my favorite images. Some of these images I've shared before, either in my eBooks or in my online galleries. Others are being presented here for the first time. While every image tells its own story, these are the stories behind the images that I enjoy the most. Along with each image, I present the technical (camera/lens) and processing (effects, software) details that I used to create it. More importantly, I tried to present my mindset and the small tidbits of knowledge that I've come across over the years as I turned my hobby into a full-time endeavor. My goal with this book is to present to you images that you will hopefully enjoy, along with techniques and best practices that you can incorporate into your own photographs. I believe that photography is about learning and inspiration, hopefully this book will accomplish both.

At the end of this book, I provide maps and links to the locations where I captured these images, along with some shooting tips and gear recommendations. Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in white ink, reading "Jason P. Bell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.

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Exploration through a lens

On a pristine autumn morning in Rocky Mountain National Park, our photography workshop stopped at Bear Lake to photograph Hallett Peak at first light. We set up around the shore, and waited for sunrise. I'd started with the typical super-wide shots, and I quickly ran out of compositions. Rather than move on to a new location, I switched to my 70-200mm zoom lens instead. The wind was calm that morning, and the fall foliage was reflecting brightly in Bear Lake. I started scanning the lake for interesting reflections. After several minutes of just looking around the lake through the viewfinder, this branch caught my eye. I used a long exposure (1s) to remove the slight ripples in the background and render it smoothly. The color and subject isolation that I got with this shot made for a very pleasing composition. The initial exposure came out very nice, to the point where I needed minimal adjustments in post to produce the final image, which I printed at 16x24".



Pine branch and fall reflections, Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado (2009)

Technical Notes

Nikon D3 with 70-200mm f/2.8 AFS G VR zoom lens; 1s @f/16, tripod

Processing Notes

RAW image processed in Nikon's Capture NX2 software

Colorado

Rocky Mountain National Park

If you're looking for diverse landscape and wildlife opportunities in Colorado, then Rocky Mountain National Park is a great place to start. The nearest town is Estes Park; about a two hour drive from the Denver area. Be warned that in summer, lodging fills up fast, so it's best to book early. In the fall, the elk rut is in full swing, and you can easily get frame-filling shots of these animals with a 300mm lens. In summer, the wildlife will be at higher elevations, and you may need longer focal lengths to photograph them. Some of my favorite spots are Bear Lake, Sprague Lake, and the overlook at Rainbow Curve along Trail Ridge Road.

Recommended Gear

- *DSLR Body*
- *Super-wide zoom lens (16-35mm or similar)*
- *Standard zoom (24-70 or similar)*
- *Telephoto zoom (70-200 or similar)*
- *Long telephoto lens (300mm or longer) for wildlife*
- *Teleconverter*
- *Tripod*
- *Remote Release*
- *Polarizing Filter(s)*

