Mono Basin Landscape & Night Photography

August 19–21, 2022 ● Jeff Sullivan

$310 per person / $295 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 10 participants

Summer is a great season for afternoon cumulus cloud formations for sunset color, typically then yielding clear skies for Milky Way night photography. Accomplished local photographer Jeff Sullivan will teach you some of his favorite techniques and show you some of his favorite spots for landscape and night photography in the Mono Basin.

This seminar will cover:

• How to anticipate and plan for great sunrise and sunset shots.
• How to use composition and light for greater impact.
• How to manage focus, noise, and sky movement in night shots.
• How to align the moon with a landscape landmark.
• How to capture a sunset on a clear, blue-sky day.
• Tools and settings you will need in order to maximize your in-camera results.
• Why post-processing is not a substitute for in-camera results.
• Which practices common in film photography are counterproductive for digital.
• When to use a circular polarizing filter.
• How to eliminate DSLR sensor dust spots with little or no post-processing.
• Best methods for creating star trail images.
• When multiple exposures (exposure bracketing) can be useful.
Jeff Sullivan is a landscape photography and astrophotography workshop instructor, and author of the landscape photography guidebook *Photographing California Vol. 2–South*. His photography is licensed for use in magazines, books, websites, calendars, and his time-lapse videos have been featured in commercials and documentaries. Jeff’s astrophotography won the “People and Space” special prize in the 2011 Astronomy Photographer of the Year contest, conducted by the Royal Observatory, Greenwich in London, home of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and the Prime Meridian (zero degrees longitude).

**ITINERARY**

**Friday, August 19 at 4:30pm:** After checking in to your lodging at 4:00pm, meet at the Lee Vining Community Center (296 Mattly Avenue in Lee Vining). We’ll head to dinner as a group at a local restaurant before heading out to shoot golden hour, sunset, then the Milky Way and star trails. The session will conclude around 11:30pm. (*sunset 7:43pm, full darkness 9:20pm*)

**Saturday, August 20:** With our late nights, sunrise will be optional and self-directed (*sunrise 6:17am, best light 5:40–6:10am*). In the morning, please back up your photos from the night before from memory cards to your laptop, and review your photos before the afternoon post-processing session.

**11:30am:** Meet for lunch (optional; location TBD). Around 12:30pm we’ll reconvene for a post-processing discussion and demonstration at the Lee Vining Community Center. We will continue with a mixture of classroom and field work. We’ll break for dinner at 5:00pm, before heading out to shoot golden hour, sunset, then Milky Way, and star trails, again ending around 11:30pm. (*sunset 7:41pm, full darkness 9:16pm*)

**Sunday, August 21 at 9:00am:** Meet post-breakfast at the Lee Vining Community Center. We will continue with a mixture of field work and classroom session. We’ll break for lunch at a convenient time and wrap up around 3:00pm so you can commute back home, or head to your choice of location for sunset (I’ll be happy to provide location suggestions based on current sunset forecast and your direction of travel home).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Successful landscape photography requires anticipation of, and reaction to, changing local weather conditions, so the itinerary is subject to change during the workshop.

**ACTIVITY LEVEL: MODERATE**

This seminar’s activity level: *moderate*. We will be walking up to two miles a day at a leisurely pace, some of which will be over uneven terrain, off trail, and may include stepping up and over obstacles. Finding stable footing can be difficult at night. Participants will need to carry their camera equipment from the cars to field locations and back. We will be standing for several hours at a time while out in the field; some of that time may be in the sun without much shade.
WEATHER & ALTITUDE
Weather conditions will be warm to hot summer days and cool evenings and nights. Afternoon thunderstorms are possible, and the wind can come up at any time (it’s most common in the afternoon through sunset). Bring lightweight layers and a waterproof jacket. Average temperatures in August in Lee Vining are 83°F (max) and 52°F (min), but bring a warmer layer in case we go up in altitude at night where temperatures may be in the 40s.

Most of the weekend will find us at close to 6,400 feet above sea level, but we could visit areas as high as nearly 10,000 feet above sea level. Those with a history of heart, ear, or respiratory problems should consult their doctors before attending. Anyone restricted to lower elevations should not enroll. *Note: If you have residual respiratory effects from having Covid-19, activities at altitude may be particularly difficult for you.

Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is intense at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

MEALS
We will decide by consensus when to break for meals and where to go to eat; participants are encouraged to take meals together and non-photographer partners are welcome to join us. Meals are not included in the tuition. Please be sure to bring plenty of snacks to eat in the field in case stunning conditions delay a meal.

FEES
• South Tufa fee: the $3-per-person entrance fee to South Tufa is good for a week; 80% of it stays at Mono Lake for improvements to interpretive/educational activities. A National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass, annual or senior, is accepted here when displayed on your dashboard.
• Old Marina fee: the $3-per-car-per-day fee enables Mono Lake’s state park to stay open. An annual California State Park day use pass is accepted here.

TO BRING
• digital SLR or mirrorless camera capable or shooting up to ISO 6400 (no point-and-shoot digital cameras please)
• lenses, especially wide angle and ultra-wide, f/2.8 or faster advised for the night photography. Mid-range and telephoto zoom lenses may be useful for daylight landscapes.
• tripod
• interval timer (intervalometer), built-in or external, for star trail and meteor shower shooting
• memory cards and spares, more than you might expect!
• fully charged batteries, extra batteries and battery charger
• owner’s manual for your camera
• laptop with card reader and image editing software: Lightroom 6 or CC Classic (desktop) will be used for demonstrations (free trial can be downloaded before the seminar)
• headlamp to navigate terrain in the dark (white please, not red)
• warm clothing—dress in layers, be prepared for variable weather
• sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, insect repellent
• snacks for evenings in the field
• plenty of water: hydration is key to minimizing the effects of altitude

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
Although we will be going over some basic features and adjustments of your camera, you should be familiar with the following basic concepts, which we will review the first class meeting:
• how to shoot in Manual Mode and independently adjust your aperture (f/stop) and shutter speed
• how to change your ISO settings (you will not be using auto-ISO)
• the relationship between f/stop, shutter-speeds and ISO settings
• how to get the same exposure with different combinations of f/stop, shutter-speeds and ISO settings
• how to turn Long Exposure Noise Reduction off and on
• how to turn on automatic exposure bracketing (AEB) off and on
• how to use your interval timer (internal or external) if you’d like to try star trails

If you have any questions about the specifics of the workshop, please contact Jeff by email at info@jeffsullivanphotography.com. For any other questions, please contact Elin Ljung at the Mono Lake Committee (elin@monolake.org).

COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS FOR 2022
All participants and instructors must be fully vaccinated and boosted. Proof of vaccination will be required after you register for a seminar.

Please minimize your exposure to Covid in the time leading up to your seminar. We recommend obtaining a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.* If your PCR test comes back positive for Covid, you must cancel your registration and stay home. If you begin to feel sick in the days leading up to your seminar, you must cancel your registration and stay home. You will receive a full refund in either case.

*Depending on the regional Covid situation we may need to require a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.

During the seminars masks will be required indoors and in carpool/Mono Lake Committee van in accordance with Mono County requirements (N95 or KN95 masks offer the best protection). If Mono County has lifted the mask requirement, masks will not be required indoors and in vehicles during the seminars. (You may wear a mask at any time if you wish to.)

If you begin to feel ill with Covid symptoms at any time during the seminar, you must immediately notify the instructor or staff member accompanying the group and leave the seminar.

Please keep in mind that conditions may change at any time and we may have to change our procedures in order to provide the opportunity for everyone involved with the Field Seminars to safely participate. Depending on the Covid
situation in the weeks leading up to your seminar, we may have to plan to hold the seminar completely outdoors. Mask requirements may change. There’s a chance we may have to cancel seminars altogether. We will communicate with you about any of these changes, and you can always get in touch with us if you have questions or need more clarification about specific circumstances, by emailing fieldseminars@monolake.org or by calling (760) 647-6595.

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Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars
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