

# Mono Basin Landscape & Night Photography



**September 15–17, 2023 • 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, September 15 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, and the Milky Way and star trails. The session will conclude around 11:15pm. (*sunset 7:04pm, full darkness 8:33pm*)

**Saturday, September 16:** With our late nights, sunrise will be optional and self-directed (*sunrise 6:39am, best light 6:00–6:30am*). 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 11:15pm. (*sunset 7:02pm, full darkness 8:31pm*)

**Sunday, September 17 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 September in Lee Vining are 76°F (max) and 45°F (min), but bring a warmer layer in case we go up in altitude at night where temperatures may be in the low 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.

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 of 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 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 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/stops, shutter-speeds and ISO settings
- how to get the same exposure with different combinations of f/stops, 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](mailto:info@jeffsullivanphotography.com). For any other questions, please contact the Mono Lake Committee at [fieldseminars@monolake.org](mailto:fieldseminars@monolake.org).



**Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars**

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • [monolake.org/seminars](http://monolake.org/seminars)