




Eastman Camera Club – Feb. 21, 2008

# PHOTOGRAPHING WATER

**Taking pictures of lakes, rivers, streams, and waterfalls.**



# Some Questions to Consider When Photographing Water

## Artistic Questions

- Do you want to blur or freeze the water?
- Do you want reflections or to see through the water?
- Do you want a smooth surface or ripples?
- When is the best time of day to get the shot you want?



## Technical Questions

- What equipment do you need?

# Some Equipment You May Want

- A camera that lets you manually set the shutter speed – most cameras today have this capability.
- A tripod or monopod – a must have for those long exposure shots.
- A polarizing filter – may not be an option for compact or point-n-shoot cameras.
- A neutral density filter – may not be an option for compact or point-n-shoot cameras.
- An alarm Clock.

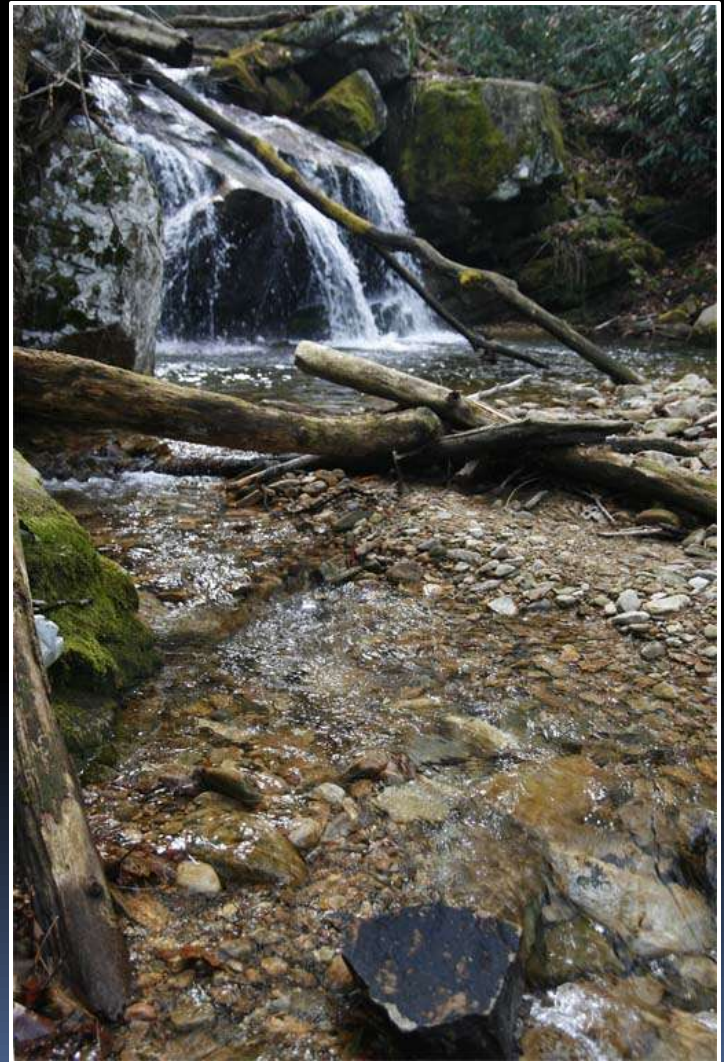
# Blur or Freeze the Water?

- You can change the appearance of flowing water by changing the shutter speed.
  - A fast shutter ( $> 1/500$  second) will capture individual water drops and freeze the action.
  - A slow shutter speed ( $< 1/4$  second) will make the water appear to blur or flow. It can look like it was painted on.
  - Varying the shutter speed between these two extremes will vary the effect.

# Examples – Blur or Freeze?



1/4 Sec., f20, ISO 400



1/125 Sec., f3.5, ISO 400

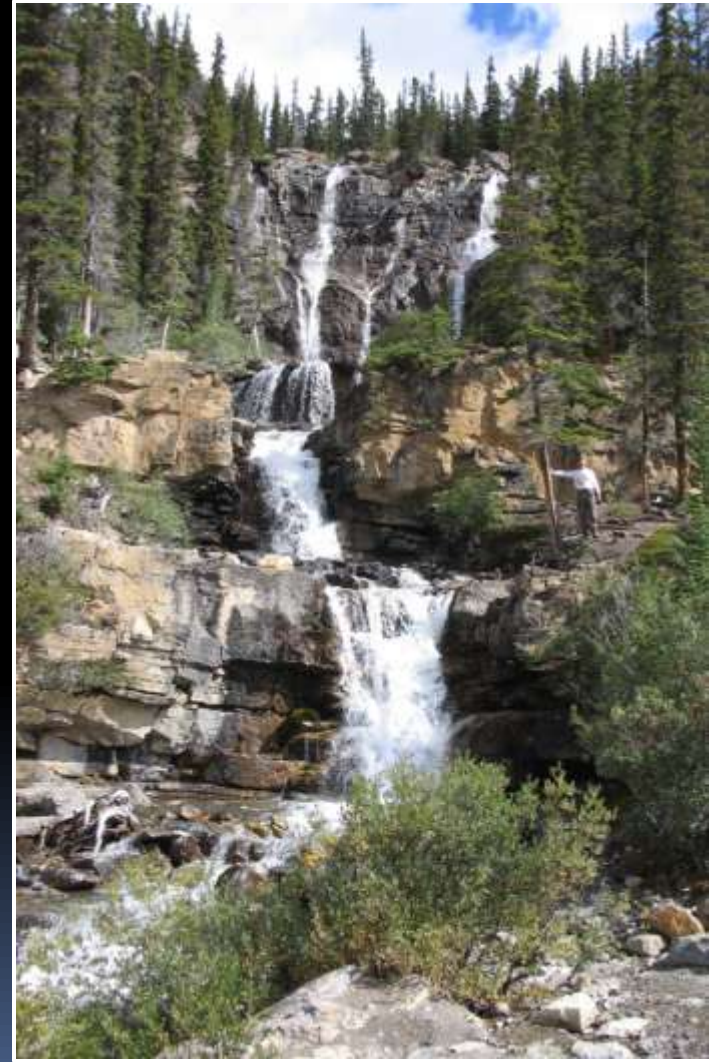
# Blur or Freeze the Water?

- To get the blurred effect:
  - Use your camera's manual settings to set the shutter speed to  $1/4$  second or slower. This is often called shutter priority.
  - You'll need to use a tripod or monopod to keep the camera steady and avoid "the shakes". If you're without one you can put the camera on a nearby object to steady it.
  - If it's a bright day you may not be able to slow the shutter down enough without over exposing your picture. You can use neutral density filters to reduce the amount of light entering through the lens.
  - Many compact or point-n-shoot cameras do not support using filters.

# Examples – Blur or Freeze?



1/2 Sec., f/32 with Neutral Density Filter



1/500 Sec., f/4.0

# Examples – Blur or Freeze?



1/2 Sec., f/32, ISO 100



1/400 Sec., f/7.1, ISO 800



# Example Using Neutral Density Filters



Hooker Falls, DuPont State Forest, NC

This was taken on a sunny day. I had to use a very small aperture (f 32) and two Neutral Density Filters stacked together to get a 4 second exposure.

# Don't Forget To Look For The Details



1 1/3 Sec., f/16, ISO 200

# Or People



0.6 Sec., f/9, ISO 100

# Reflections or See Through?

- Depending on the picture you may want to see reflections in the surface of the water or see through the water to what's underneath.
- A circular polarizer filter allows you to adjust the reflection and take out the glare on the water.
- Always use a circular polarizer on digital cameras.
- Many compact or point-n-shoot cameras do not support adding filters.

# Examples – Reflections or See Through?

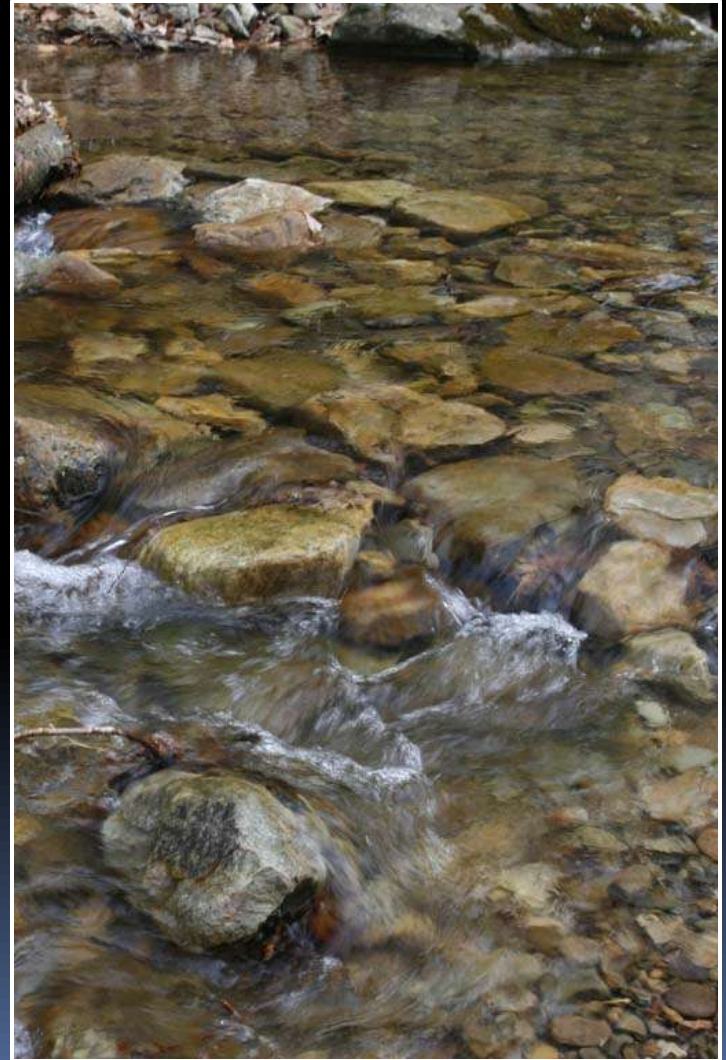
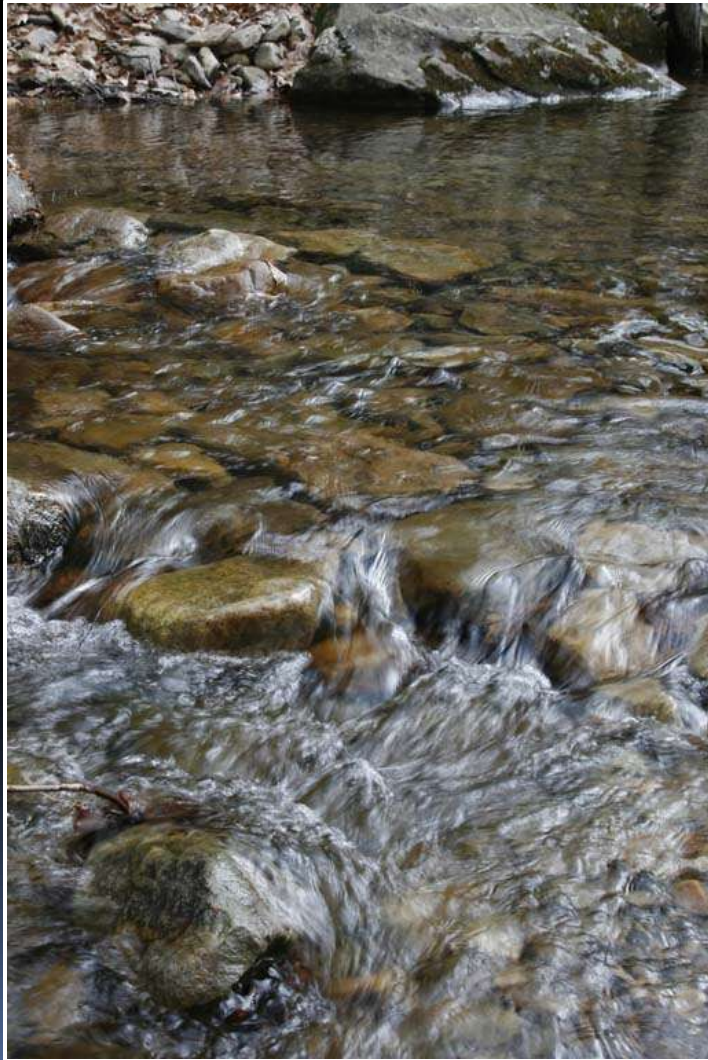


Polarizer turned to not  
remove reflections



Polarizer turned to remove  
reflections

# More Examples – Reflections or See Through?



# Smooth or Ripples?

- To get that mirror like reflection from the surface of a lake or pond you need to be there when there are no ripples.
- The best time to avoid the ripples is dawn (which explains the alarm clock).
- A polarizer filter can be used to change the amount of the reflection.
- You want something interesting in the reflections – mountains, clouds, boats, or rocks all add interest to the picture.

# Combining Smooth and Reflections



To get that mirrored look you need a smooth surface and either don't use a polarizer or adjust it to get the reflections you want. A polarizer can make the reflections "disappear".

f/11, 1/8 Sec. Aperture Priority  
ISO 200  
17 mm



# Time of Day

To get the glass smooth surface on a lake you have to get up early and be there at sunrise.



f/11, 1/3 Sec. Aperture Priority, ISO 200, 17 mm

# Waiting for The Sunrise



f/11,  
1/15 sec.  
ISO 200

Pyramid Mountain in Lake Beauvert, Jasper, Alberta

# Ripples Can Be A Neat Effect

Taken from the bridge at Warriors Path State Park just before sunset.

Sunset provides great light, but the water may not be very smooth.

f/4, 1/320 Sec. , ISO 400, 77 mm



# Foreground, Middle & Background

To make the picture more interesting, include something in the foreground, middle ground, and background.

To keep it all in focus, use a large f-stop value (small aperture).



Notice how a polarizer filter has been used to make the bottom of the lake visible.

1/3 Sec.  
f/ 11

# Foreground, Middle & Background

A polarizer has been used to remove much of the reflection so the bottom of the pond is visible.

A small aperture makes everything from the boards to the mountains in focus.

1/13 Sec.  
f/32, ISO 200

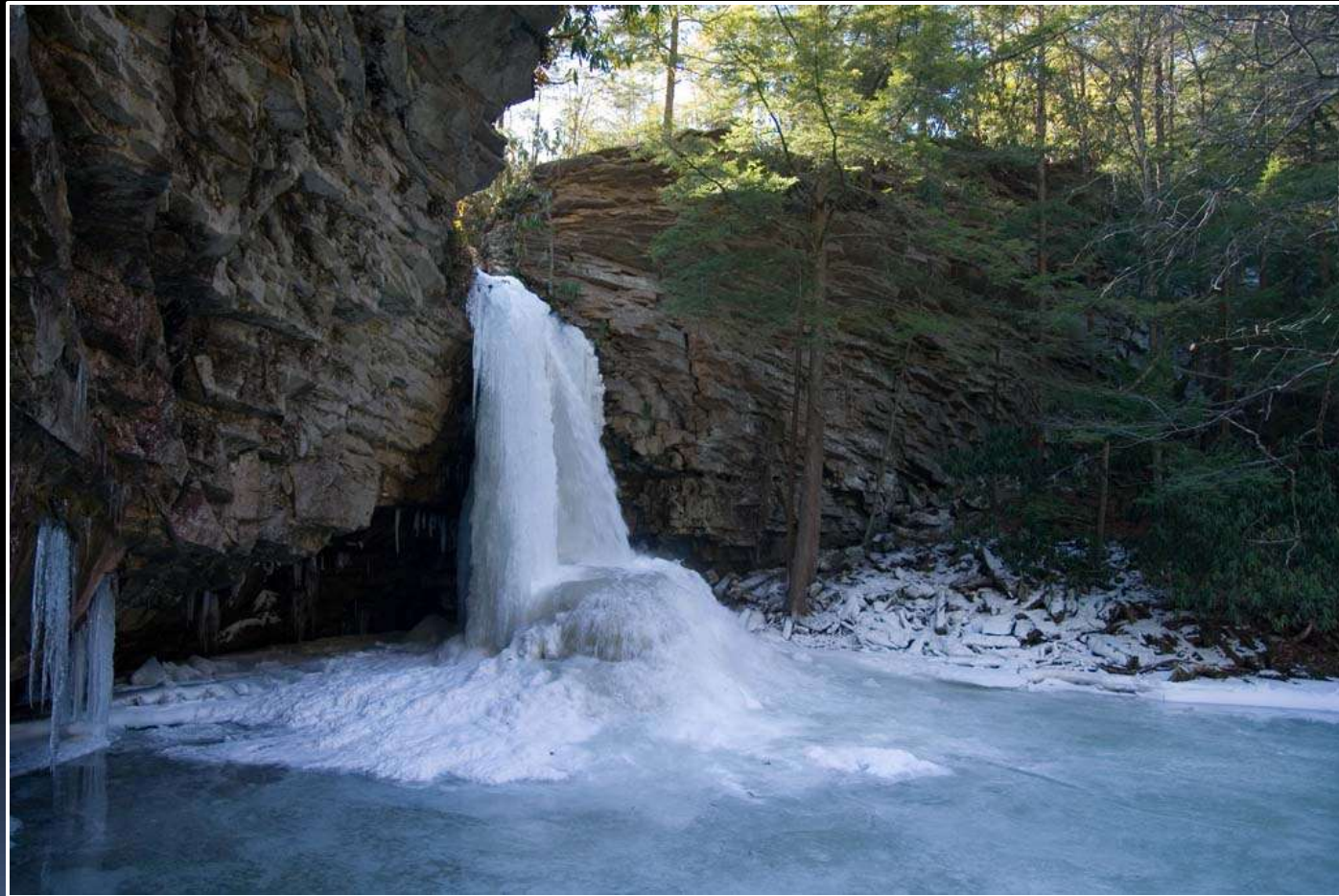


# Reflections of Clouds Can Be Interesting



f/11, 1/6 Sec. Aperture Priority, ISO 200, 17 mm

# Capturing Frozen Water



Upper Falls, Little Stony Creek, Jefferson National Forest  
Feb. 10, 2007



# Thank You

- For allowing me share some of my pictures.
- For more examples visit:

[www.thesiggins.net](http://www.thesiggins.net)

