

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

In late July, I returned to the Arctic Refuge to float a north slope river with five friends. Fran Mauer, retired Arctic Refuge wildlife biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I planned the trip. Fran and I have journeyed together to the Refuge and the Canadian arctic before.



10:30pm View Upriver

We chose to begin our visit at the end of July partly because by then, the populations of flying bugs have normally begun to taper off from their peak summer abundance. However, Alaska was drenched by rain this summer which may have been the reason for the legions of mosquitoes that became our near constant 'companions'. Below, is a photo of me taken by fellow traveler, Rick Martinson. On the left, I'm in the process of shooting a panoramic scene; on the right is a closer view of my shoulder and ubiquitous mosquitoes. Headnets and DEET were our close friends.



It's a buggy life. photo: © 2014 Rick Martinson

Nature offers beautiful views but sometimes, serves up major obstacles to photoing them.

My tripod mounted camera was pointed into the light breeze coming from the direction of the scene I wanted to photo. Mosquitoes being poor flyers in a breeze, congregated in the shelter of my back, the downwind side of my body, and away from my lens. Had there been no breeze, the bugs would have swarmed all over my camera and me. And an image shot under those circumstances would have contained the fuzzy spots of airborne mosquitoes. On this trip, mosquitoes proved to be a huge impediment to my photoing. But in this case with the bugs at my back, I was able to capture the top image (10:30pm View Upriver) while Rick snapped my picture. Rick, Andria Truax and I had walked to this knoll to capture the evening light (all of our backs were covered in bugs). One of the aspects of the Refuge that I love is the long sweeping bones of the earth so common in the landscape and visible on the left and right of this image. These slopes, the river and valley disappearing behind the right side slope, the partially hidden sunlit ridges in the distance, the forward taper of the knoll we're standing on-all of these invite us to journey upstream; to come and explore. What a wonderful invitation! And the Refuge offers it again and again and again...

In addition to bugs, rain, and vast, beautiful landscapes, group members witnessed wildlife on the move. These sightings included grizzly, caribou, wolves, foxes, dall sheep, bald and golden eagles, merlins, arctic terns and ptarmigan. One evening, Sally Bolger and I walked up a mountainside to watch in silence the low angled sunlight slowly glide across the valley. After awhile, three wolves (one black) entered the scene a couple hundred feet below us on a wide tundra bench. As the group ambled towards us, the lead and largest wolf, began sniffing the air. This leader (which could have been male or female) must have picked up our scent-we were upwind-because it altered course and cautiously walked uphill in our direction with the other two wolves following at a distance. Even though we remained motionless, the lead wolf frequently looked right at us on its ascent. Eventually, it turned around and led the group downhill and back out onto the bench. Sally and I watched them as they crossed the bench and disappeared into the willows out on the riverbed. The Arctic Refuge is a truly wild place and a powerful experience. Read Sally's humorous and moving recount of the trip on [her blog](#).



Rising Fog that came from the Coastal Plain into the Valley Overnight



The Beginning of Fall Color in the Brooks Mountains, aerial photo

Oregon

In late June, I joined a volunteer work party (organized by the Oregon Natural Desert Association) headed to the Pine Creek Conservation Area in the John Day Basin in eastern Oregon, a spacious and beautiful region. The trip's mission was to put into practice a new technique for eliminating western junipers. My part was to photo the area and document some of the volunteer efforts.



Hillside Flowers I, Pine Creek Conservation Area



Pine Creek Conservation Area I

A few weeks after our time at Pine Creek, a lightning-started fire burned much of the surrounding area, but not the volunteer work site. Fortunately, none their efforts went up in smoke! (All of my images in this newsletter are not quite finished, so you won't find them on my website, yet.)

Wilderness Act Exhibits

The Wildling Museum has extended my exhibit, '[Preserving Santa Barbara's Wild Lands](#)' through January 5, 2015. This exhibit is comprised of some of my work of the San Raphael Wilderness. '[The Voices of the Wilderness](#)' exhibit continues its tour in Alaska through February 2015. The exhibit showcases artwork by multiple artists-including myself-inspired by Alaskan Wilderness.

Wildling and Wuksachi Workshops

This fall, I'll conduct several photo workshops in California. The subject will be composition-the part of the big picture you choose to focus on. I'll discuss selecting and composing a scene, and how to use natural light to best advantage. Each workshop has a limited number of spaces, so if you're interested sign up soon!

The Wildling Museum in Solvang is offering two workshops. The first is an indoor afternoon class at the Museum (November 7). The second is a 3 day/2night backpack workshop in the San Raphael Wilderness in Santa Barbara County (November 8-10). On the backpack trip, we'll visit two very different settings: a lovely riparian woodland with the immediacy and intimacy of such a habitat, and a mountain ridge (Hurricane Deck) that provides impressive vistas. The backpack trip will give us abundant opportunities to practice and discuss the concepts presented in the afternoon workshop. See the [Wildling's website](#) for details. These workshops are in conjunction with the Wildling's year long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act and its exhibit of some of my San Raphael Wilderness work, '[Preserving Santa Barbara's Wild Lands](#)'.

Wuksachi Lodge in Sequoia National Park is offering two half day workshops (October 25 and November 15) that will include presentation of compositional components, student hands-on exercises, and class discussions of concepts and exercises. Students will then be asked to step outside and photo in the park. We will gather again that evening as a group to review students' afternoon photos and discuss them relative to the concepts presented earlier in the day. You can sign up for either date as part of a [weekend fall photography vacation package](#) offered by Wuksachi Lodge for a great get away and photography weekend!

Cheers,
Jeff
www.lumnos.com

Previously, you expressed interest in my photographs or workshops. If you no longer wish to receive emails from me, please reply and ask to be removed from my list. I manage my own mailings, and never give your address to anyone.