



A Typical Day in the Field

It is 4:30 a.m. and I roll out of bed, well actually out of the back of my trusty Toyota pick-up truck. My bare feet hit the cold ground and I quickly get my boots on. About 3-4 minutes after waking I am dressed and ready to go. I strap my photography gear to my back and feel the weight on my weary shoulders.

I find myself hiking briskly and often falling into a light jog in an attempt to beat the emerging light starting to show some life on the distant horizon. I reach my destination breathing hard and sweating. I am 3 miles up a high mountain trail at a beautiful mountain lake. It is 5:15 a.m. and the light should kiss the peaks in about 15 minutes. I scouted this spot yesterday and know exactly where I will set up. A few moments pass and I find myself standing behind my camera waiting for the light. I take a quick drink of water from my water bottle, my breathing calms and I throw on my fleece jacket and zip it up to my neck.

At 5:30 a.m. the light splits the horizon and the peaks begin the day in alpenglow. The light moves quickly as I work to capture the composition and how it relates to the landscape before me. I try to capture what I see, and what I feel. It is 5:40 a.m. and the alpenglow is now gone, and I am confident I have my shot. I spend a little more time looking for new compositions, unique features around me, and capture those while the light is still good.

It is 6:20 a.m. and I turn from the lake and begin the descent down to the valley below. At 7:15 a.m. I reach my truck, my home in the field, and pack up my sleeping bag and gear from the night before and get organized for the day. I pull out my map and see a picnic site a few miles away. I stow my gear away and jump behind the wheel and open an Ensure drink (not just for old people) and force it down along with a granola bar. It is 8:00 a.m. and I am tired! I crawl into the back of the truck and settle in for a morning nap. After all I didn't get to sleep until midnight last night.



It is 10:00 a.m. and I emerge from my morning slumber and take in the fresh mountain air. I am still alone in this picnic area because most people are just getting out of their tents or condos. I flip open the laptop and download the images from the morning shoot, which already feels like yesterday! After a quick edit, and memory cards now empty, it is time to get moving. I pull out my Tupperware bin full of food and fix a peanut butter and honey sandwich. I force it down with some cold water, and a small bag of cheetos.

With lunch complete, it is 10:45 a.m. and I jump behind the wheel of my truck and head for my evening destination. I arrive at 11:10 a.m. step out of my truck, throw on a small pack with some snacks, water, and a jacket and head up the trail. I reach my spot at dead noon. The light is harsh and the air is hot. That is okay because I am just here to scout this area out. After walking around the area awhile, I find the right composition and based on my compass heading, the light should be perfect. I turn and head back to my truck.

It is 1:40 p.m. as I reach my truck. Confident in my location for this evening, I open the map in search of tomorrow mornings shot. My topo map shows a nice high mountain lake surrounded by peaks on all sides. This looks like a very promising shot for the morning. I decide to go check it out. I am hungry,



another peanut butter and honey sandwich is made and forced down. I once again get behind the wheel and head out to scout tomorrows shot.

It is 3:00 p.m. and I find myself jogging up a mountain trail in search of the high mountain lake. I reach it at 4:00 p.m. and begin scouting it out. I find a great set-up location for morning. At 4:20 p.m. I begin my descent and notice thunderheads building around the peaks. At 5:10 p.m. I reach my truck just as the rain begins. I set up my little backpacker stove on the tailgate and cook some noodles for dinner. With the rain still falling I sit inside the shell of my truck and watch the rain as I eat my noodles, a power bar, cheese, crackers and some Gatorade.

At 6:30 p.m. I pull into my destination for this evenings shot. I throw on my photography pack and head out to my predetermined location. It is still raining and I am wearing my rain jacket. Like most mountain storms, the rain stops at about 7:15 p.m. and I arrive at my destination at 7:30 p.m. I spend the evening hours exploring and photographing the area in search of unique compositions. At about 8:30 p.m. I return to my exact spot I scouted earlier and set up for the final shot for the evening. As 9:00 p.m. approaches the surrounding clouds begin to glow red as the mountains and clouds dance in a beautiful array of colors and drama. It is 9:45 p.m. when the light finally surrenders to the un-photograph-able darkness of night.

It is 10:30 p.m. as I reach my truck, my home in the field. I drive to the trailhead of tomorrow morning's shoot. It is 11:00 p.m. as I slip into my sleeping bag I am tired but already excited for tomorrows adventures. After all, photography, like life, is just another adventure, and I cannot wait!