

My Personal Project – Case Studies

Name: Heidi Walker

Name of Project: Washington State Parks

Is your project primarily about:

SUBJECT

Your elevator pitch: Through photography and storytelling, I help photographers find their story in the story of Washington's State Parks.

Why this project? Started out to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the state parks commission and a challenge to help me out of a serious depression and anxiety. I needed a purpose that would take me out of the gloom of my mind at the time.

How did you get started with this project? When I heard about the state parks commission centennial, I wondered if I could photograph all the iconic images of the state parks.

Who is your intended audience? Photo hobbyists and enthusiasts aged 40 and over who recreate in the state parks

Do you currently have an online gallery or website we can share? (please include the link) I share my images on my website; HIWalkerPhoto.com (when I remember to update it), Instagram; @HIWalkerPhoto (I share photos from my life on this account so not specific to the state parks). Instagram is connected to my Facebook business page and Twitter both under HIWalkerPhoto. I also started vlogging on Youtube under HIWalkerPhoto (this also includes other videos beyond the state parks project)

What are some hurdles you've had to overcome? Did you know there are over 120 state parks, state park properties, affiliated sites and long trails? Having to decide if I was going to ALL of them or be a bit selective. (I'm being somewhat selective) I've been doing this for 6 years all on my own dime, slept in my car a lot and have lived off of potato chips and AM/PM hot dogs on some road trips. I put nearly 10,000 miles on my car and more than that in photos on my hard drive.

What are some of the shining moments that keep you moving forward? Finding those moments of beauty in parks where I wasn't too sure if there would be any – there are two gravesites in our park system. Gravesites! How do you photograph those? But I was able to find a moment where light and life came together perfectly and I believe you can too.

What lessons have you learned along the way? The biggest one is to trust myself, ignore the nay-sayers and find the beauty in the park. That it's not always about that iconic image, it's about finding the story, my story within the story of the park and to share that.

Has your purpose changed at all? Did the project zig instead of zag? Are you looking at a final product when you didn't have one before? If yes, would you like to explain in a little more detail? When I started, I thought of this as a way to get me out of my gloom, maybe share the images in the family calendar. Then while driving in Eastern Washington between parks, on a fun weekend road trip with my dog, I realized if I was going to write a book, I better get serious

and dedicate vacations and weekends to research. And the Photographer's Guide to Washington State Parks became my dream and new goal.

What are your plans for the project? Ultimately, I want this project to be recognizable that I become the go-to person for information on photographing the state parks.

Are you hoping to create a final product and if so, what form? (book, travelling show, gallery exhibition, video?) I actually have two books in the works – A guidebook for photographers, and a photobook with road trips to take to see the parks. I also have done presentations and would love to do a gallery type show

What steps have you taken to find a publisher, gallery, or other outlet for your project?
Working on the monstrously huge submission to publishers

Have you found a publisher, gallery, or other outlet for your project? The Socials!

What advice would you give to someone looking to get their project out to the public?
Don't neglect the Socials!