

Friends of Steele Creek Nature Center and Park

Knobs and Knolls

April 2016

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Nature Center Expansion



Artist's rendition of the expanded Nature Center, courtesy of Carolyn Hanlon

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After years of anticipation and planning, expansion of the current Nature Center at Steele Creek Park is about to become a reality! On April 5th, the Bristol Tennessee City Council gave final approval to Burwil Construction Company's bid for the initial building project and, in the next few weeks, construction should begin. When completed later this year, the expanded Nature Center will have more than double the floor space of the current facility! In addition to greatly increased space for displays and hands on exhibits, there will be a large, multipurpose education/conference room, an expanded library, and designated spaces for the herbarium, Nature Center staff use, Friends use, and storage.

We continue to work closely with the Nature Center and Parks and Recreation staff to assure that the new Nature Center will be a state of the art facility that can serve as an educational center for the entire region. To assure that this happens, we have started a major fundraising effort that will continue into the future. We welcome your assistance with ideas, donations and volunteer time to help with this. If you are interested in helping in any of these ways, contact us at mail@friendsofsteelecreek.org.

2016 Annual Meeting

Our annual membership meeting is scheduled for **Monday evening, May 2nd** at the Steele Creek Park Lodge. We encourage everyone to attend this important and informative meeting.

Following a reception with light refreshments at 6:00 pm, the meeting will begin at 6:30 pm with a presentation and discussion of the Nature Center Expansion. Terry Napier (Director of Bristol TN Parks and Recreation) will be on hand to update us on the progress of the construction project and current plans for new exhibits; Sonie Schermer will then lead a discussion on the status of our fundraising efforts.

A short business meeting will follow, during which we will elect Board members for the coming year. An agenda with further details of these items will be set to all current members in a separate e-mail.

We hope to see you on May 2nd!

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Nature Center Activities

Friday, April 15th, 4:00 pm

Plants and Pollinators: Meet Don at the Park Lodge Conference Room for a short slideshow on plants and their pollinators, then take a walk looking for them in the wild!

Saturday, May 7th, 9:30 am

Spring Migration Bird Walk: Hearing is believing, and oh yeah, so is seeing! Meet Larry at the Nature Center for a moderate walk looking for migrating songbirds, waterfowl, hawks and more!

Sunday, May 22nd, 11:00 am

Ecology Creek Walk: Meet Don at the Mill Creek parking lot (located on Broad Street) for a foray into the creeks! We'll search for critters and assess the health of our streams. Wear shoes and clothes that can get wet!

Friday May 27th, 4:00 pm

Spring Butterfly Foray: Meet Larry at the Nature Center for an easy hike looking for these warm-weather gems of the skies. Bring a camera if you have one!

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Elements of Nature Photography

*In this issue, we continue a series of articles on using your camera to capture nature, **by Sonie Schermer**. Sonie is a founding board member of Friends, and an accomplished amateur nature photographer. Additional articles will appear in subsequent issues of Knobs and Knolls.*

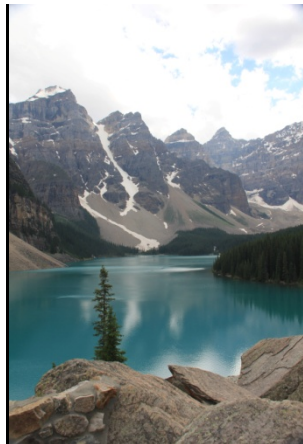
COMPOSITION: Landscapes

There is plenty to discuss with landscape photography, so we'll be covering the topic in two installments.

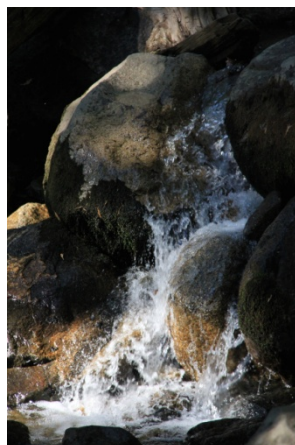
First of all, research is vital when photographing in a new location. What is the essence of the place? What made you stop and look? Identify the point of interest that will enhance your photo, then compose around it.

Landscape Photo Tips: Telephoto lenses, Freezing motion, Dramatic skies, Horizons

- A telephoto lens compresses the image so you need a foreground, a middle ground, and a background. Determine what your point of interest is and focus there.
- Include close objects in the frame, as well as distant ones to give the photo a feeling of depth.



- You can freeze the motion of water with a fast shutter speed (below left) or blur it with a slow shutter speed (below right).



Elements of Nature Photography (Continued)

Landscape Photo Tips: Telephoto lenses, Freezing motion, Dramatic skies, Horizons (Continued)

- Dramatic skies frequently offer great shots; look up – be aware of the sky.
- Include extra space; you can always crop later, but you can't add.
- Depending on your point of interest, you may need to place the horizon high in the frame or very low.
- Place the horizon as low as possible to take advantage of the clouds or other features you are seeking.



- Avoid the horizon cutting through the subject.



- Never place the horizon dead center; it should be in the top 1/3 or the bottom 1/2 of the picture. It's a good idea to follow the rule of thirds with the horizon. (We will discuss the rule of thirds in our next installment.)

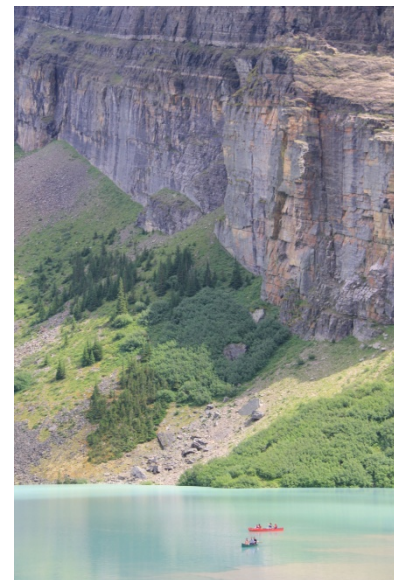
Elements of Nature Photography (Continued)

Landscape Photo Tips: Lead-in lines, Using objects for scale and interest, Utilizing polarizing filters

- Lead-in lines draw the eye from the edge of the photo to different points of interest that you want the viewer to see. Look for graphic elements to use to carry the viewer's eye to your point of interest.



- Without an object for scale in grand landscape photos we can't tell their magnificence – they come out flat. With a reference scale point the viewer can see the dramatics of the photo; look for people, animals, cars, trucks or bicycles to showcase the grandeur and space.

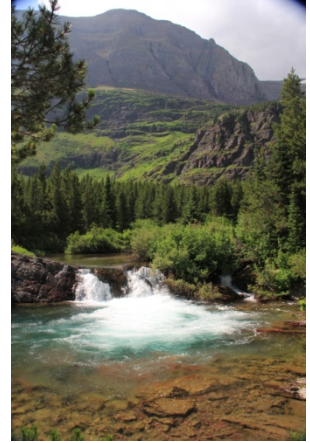


- Watch out for objects in the background that merge with your subject, such as a tree branch “growing out of a subject”; you might need to try another angle.

Elements of Nature Photography (Continued)

Landscape Photo Tips: Lead-in lines, Using objects for scale and interest, Utilizing polarizing filters (continued)

- For landscapes, a polarizing filter is very helpful. It can reduce reflections and add richer saturated colors.
- Using a polarizing filter adds depth to the saturated colors of the photo, particularly the blues; it adds a “pop” to the photo.



- Reflections can be used as a point of interest from a shiny object such as windows, mirrors and water. A photo of just the reflection sometimes conveys the point of interest.
- Reflection can also be used to offer a mirror image of your subject using a polarizing filter. In this case, the horizon is usually near the middle of the photo to get both images in the picture.



In our next issue we'll consider the elements of light and depth of field in landscape photography.

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Summer Nature Camps

Summer will be here soon, which means it won't be long until kids have the opportunity to participate in the Summer Nature Camps at Steele Creek Park. These camps are conducted by the Nature Center Staff. Separate sessions are conducted for campers of different ages, and each focuses on a different aspect of the wonderful world of nature.

Week-long sessions begin June 1st and will continue through mid July. Specific camp sessions include:

Feathered Flyers Camp - Ages 7 to 9, June 6th – 10th

Eco Awareness & Discovery Camp - Ages 7 to 9, June 13th – 17th

Young Scientists Camp - Ages 7 to 9, June 20th – 24th

Geology Rocks Camp - Ages 10 to 13, June 27th – July 1st

Nature Photography Camp - Ages 10 to 13, July 11th – 15th

Aquatic Ecology Camp - Ages 10 to 13, July 18th – 22

All camps are limited to 15 participants. The registration fee is \$60.00 (\$50.00 if paid before May 28th), and includes all camp materials. Partial camp scholarships may be available for those in need of assistance. Camps begin at 8:30 am and last until 12:00 noon. For more information please contact the Nature Center at 423-989-5616 or the Department of Parks and Recreation at 423-764-4023, or you can email istout@bristoltn.org.

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You can keep up with what's going on at the Park and with Friends by following our webpage at <http://www.friendsofstelecreek.org> or by [liking us on Facebook](#).

We appreciate feedback about our communication. Let us know if you find these newsletters interesting and/or useful. If you have suggestions for topics to be covered, or other formats that we could use, let us know by e-mail at mail@friendsofstelecreek.org.

If you prefer to not receive these newsletters, simply let us know at mail@friendsofstelecreek.org.

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Did You Know?

Steele Creek Park features over 23 miles of trails. Lakeside Trail, connecting the main Park area with Rooster Front, is easily the most popular for both walkers and bicyclists. Some of the more popular woodland trails include Lake Ridge, Hemlock Hollow, Cross Ridge, Fox Ridge, Powerline, and Rock Cut. The Loop Connector Extension of East Ridge Trail (the newest one in the Park) is considered by many to be the best of all of the Steele Creek Park trails.

