

# The Forest – Common Ground Photographer Submission Guidelines

## SUMMARY

*The purpose of the following is to provide guidance to Photographers with respect to how to photograph a tree to meet the project needs and what to submit for consideration. Doing so will increase your opportunity for inclusion in the Canadian and/or International Forest Initiatives.*

*While this may seem lengthy, we thought it best to provide greater as opposed to lesser detail and guidance. It will make the selection process easier as images will be reasonably comparable from a quality and technical perspective. Nevertheless, these are guidelines – if your equipment enables you to achieve the same result without following the guidelines then go for it. **The key is to submit focused, interesting images regardless of how you get there.***

*Further information as to the image selection process, Photographer recognition and compensation and the rules governing the Initiative may be found in The Forest – Common Ground Submission Rules and License to Use under the main tab entitled Rules. Please note these Guidelines form part of, and are governed by, The Forest – Common Ground Submission Rules and License to Use under the main tab entitled Rules. In the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency between the Photographer Submission Guidelines as posted on The Forest – Common Ground website and the downloadable PDF version, the website version shall prevail.*

We are not in any way encouraging Photographers to take a short-cut and ignore the Rules and Photographer Guidelines. Nevertheless, we thought it appropriate to provide a high-level summary of our photographic expectations to enable Photographers to participate in the Forest Initiative.

1. Read the Rules and Photographer Guidelines.
2. Follow the Photographer Guidelines when photographing trees to ensure consideration of your submissions. Only images taken with a digital camera having at least 18 megapixels will be accepted.
3. Make sure you set your camera to capture both raw and jpeg images (largest format allowed on your camera) for the trees you are shooting.
4. Send us a stitched and flattened jpeg (below 10 mb per tree image) of each tree you wish to submit by uploading the image via the Submit Entry button on this website. You can submit up to a maximum of 5 individual trees, of which 0 through 5 may be selected for inclusion in the initiative. Follow the format outlined below and as noted under the heading How And What To Submit for labelling each image.
5. If requested after review of your jpeg(s), upload your unaltered TIFF files (converted from the RAW images to 8 Bit) of each image comprising each tree you wish to submit to a secure site. You will be provided with the details of, and a password to access, the site in such request. Follow the format outlined below and as noted under the heading How And What To Submit for labelling each image.

6. Wait and be patient to be advised at the various stages of the process as to whether your image(s) has (have) been selected. Recognize it is going to take some time to coordinate and review images from across Canada and throughout the world and convert each tree to final product.

## **CAMERA & LENS**

While Jon Havelock uses Canon equipment, Photographers are not restricted to the use of any particular equipment (other than digital cameras only). Nevertheless, cameras should be of professional grade and at least 18 megapixels. The Canon equipment used by Jon and a couple of his critical setting and shooting parameters are outlined below.

### **Camera Type**

- Device make – Canon
- Device model – Canon EOS 5D Mark III (22+ megapixels full-frame digital single-lens reflex [DSLR] camera)
- Lens model – Canon EF 70-200mm f/4L IS USM

### **Camera and Lens Settings**

#### Camera

- Image Quality – RAW plus Jpeg L (both max/large)
- White Balance – Auto
- Color Space – Adobe RGB
- Picture Style – Auto
- Multiple Exposure – Disabled
- HDR – Disabled
- F number – f/22 (A higher f/number [smaller aperture hole] will make more of the foreground and background fall within acceptable focus. A lower f/number [larger aperture hole] will make less of the foreground and background fall within acceptable focus. Jon uses f/22 to achieve greater focus throughout the image)
- Captures both raw and jpeg images (largest format allowed on the camera)

#### Lens (70 – 200 mm) Settings:

- 1.2 to infinity
- Stabilizer – On
- Stabilizer mode – 2
- Filter – Digital UV ultraviolet filter

## IMAGE SIZES FROM ACTUAL SHOTS

The following are the actual image sizes of shots taken with the Canon EOS 5D Mark III.

### Raw file - 37.5 MB

- Dimensions – 5760 x 3840

### Jpeg image – 11.8 MB

- Dimensions – 5760 x 3840
- Resolution – 72 x 72

## SUBJECT & SHOOTING PARAMETERS

Below is a description of how Jon photographs trees. We have also included examples of a narrow, medium and broad tree at the end of these guidelines to give you a better idea as to what the final stitched jpeg images should look like.

### Suitable Trees

Look for trees that are relatively straight and have interesting growth, textures, colours and unusual patterns – for example, trees with lichen, moss, deep bark ridges, etc.

Do not shy away from trees that are “leaning” but still reasonably straight – or may have bends but are still quite broad – the key is shooting the tree core (down the middle). Post-processing can move the image to perfect vertical.

Trees with twigs, protruding growths or small branches can work, however if using Auto Focus you may find the camera focuses on that part of the image closest to the lens (e.g. a protruding twig). To avoid the background being blurry, focus on an area adjacent to the twig, then move the camera back to the desired image and complete taking the shot. Using f/22 usually provides a well-focussed image.

The previous paragraph also applies when shooting the bottom area of the tree – the camera will focus on the vegetation and/or roots closest to the lens. Use the same technique to achieve an image with focus throughout.

### How to Photograph

The following reflects using the Canon EOS 5D Mark III with 22+ megapixels. Where and how you shoot will vary if your camera megapixels are significantly higher. **It is important to note in order to ensure a consistent look throughout the created Forest, avoid the sun’s rays shining directly on, or casting shadows across, the tree. Soft light/images taken on overcast days will provide the best effect and chances of selection.**

- Trees that are alive, standing and in their original location are preferred. If dead, the tree must still be standing and in its original location
- Focus on the trunk – the final Forest compositions will not include branches (see examples of a narrow, medium and broad tree at the end of these guidelines)
- Do not use any filters other than a Digital UV ultraviolet filter – the goal is to capture the natural colors of the tree
- Depending on the width of the tree, stand anywhere from 4-12 feet from the subject. The narrower the tree, the closer the setup. This is not a hard and fast rule – the key is getting detailed shots of the trunk. Follow the general guidelines below:
  - Narrow trees like poplar – round 4-5 feet
  - Medium trees like mature elm – 6-8 feet
  - Broad trees like mature redwood, douglas fir, etc. – 8-12+ feet
- Always use a tripod and, if possible, shoot on a reasonably calm day to ensure grasses/vegetation at base are still, etc.
- Center the shots in the middle of the tree
- Shoot horizontally (landscape)
- If possible, select trees where you can shoot down to the root/base as opposed to having shrubs, etc. covering the same. Nevertheless, vegetation can also enhance the look, so this is not a hard and fast rule
- Start shooting the top of the tree and move down, ensuring significant overlap between images to enable stitching together to create the “trunk” (around 30% overlap). Shooting around 13-20 feet up the tree is sufficient, though this will vary depending on your distance from the subject and the extent of zooming
- When shooting the top of the tree, make sure the image captures the entire trunk with extra space on either side (though this may not be possible with really broad trees). As you move down the tree and the trunk widens the space will shrink and the trunk may eventually fill the entire image (especially for broad trees). Continue shooting down to the roots/base and capture some of the ground (see examples of a narrow, medium and broad tree at the end of these guidelines)
- Shoot each separate image 3 times. No matter how steady, there will be slight differences in each shot – this virtually assures having at least one perfectly focussed shot of each image
- You should have around 45-75 total images of each trunk prior to processing (3 of each image), though this can easily exceed 75, depending on the size of the tree, image overlap and how far up you start shooting. This results in an average of 15-25 final images of each trunk for processing
- As noted above, to ensure a consistent look throughout the created forest, avoid the sun’s rays shining directly on, or casting shadows across the tree

## **When to Photograph**

Virtually any time during the day is good however, note mid-day sun, even when somewhat overcast, can produce severe exposure. **Also note as stated in the previous section avoid the sun's rays shining directly on, or casting shadows across, the tree.** Depending on location, images taken throughout the year will work. Images with snow, after a recent rain and thus making the trunk wet, water covering the root base, etc. will not be accepted for consideration, so focus on spring through fall, particularly when growth on the trunk is evident and the tree is dry (e.g. lichens and mosses).

## **PHOTOSHOP IMAGE PARAMETERS**

All processing of submitted images will be done through Adobe Photoshop 2019 and later updated versions. Below are the parameters of the images taken with a Canon EOS 5D Mark III, without processing, when uploaded to Photoshop 2019/20. Ensure the submitted images are consistent with these parameters.

### **Canon Camera Raw file - 37.5 MB**

#### Raw Image

- 8 Bit Adobe RGB (1998)
- 5760 x 3840 (22.1 Meg Pix)
- 300 ppi (pixels per inch)

#### When Converted to TIFF File

- 8 Bit Adobe RGB
- 63.3 Meg Pixels (fit to original size)
- Width – 19.2 Inches
- Height – 12.8 Inches
- Resolution – 300 ppi (pixels per inch)

### **Canon Camera Jpeg image – 11.8 MB**

- 63.3 Meg Pixels (fit to original size)
- 5760 x 3840
- Width – 80 Inches
- Height – 53.333 Inches
- Resolution – 72 ppi (pixels per inch)

## **HOW AND WHAT TO SUBMIT**

To be eligible to submit images for consideration, an individual must:

a) for the Canadian Forest initiative (“CFI”), be a Canadian citizen/permanent resident of Canada

and resident in the province/territory in which the tree being submitted is located, or for the International Forest initiative (“IFI”), be a citizen/permanent resident of, and resident in, the country in which the tree being submitted is located. For example, if you are submitting to the CFI and the images are of a tree in Ontario, Canada, you must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada and resident in Ontario. If you are submitting to the IFI and the images are of a tree in Kenya, you must be a citizen or permanent resident of, and resident in, Kenya;

(b) be eighteen years of age or older at the time of entry; and,

(c) have personally photographed and own the images submitted.

Submission is a three-stage process. PLEASE NOTE THERE IS A LIMIT OF 5 TREES PER PHOTOGRAPHER (OF WHICH 0 THROUGH 5 MAY BE SELECTED FOR INCLUSION IN THE INITIATIVE).

1. Create an “auto-aligned” jpeg version of your images of the tree (using your best focused jpeg images) with Photoshop 2019/20 (when aligning use the “cylindrical” option). Once aligned, flatten the image and reduce the size to below 10 MB. Other than auto-aligning, flattening and resizing, do not do any other editing to the image. Upload the aligned and flattened jpeg of each tree you wish to submit by using the Submit Entry button on this website. See examples of narrow, medium and broad trees at the end of these guidelines to give you an idea as to what your final aligned jpeg image should look like
  - Indicate in the message of the email whether it is a “Submission for The Canadian Forest” or “Submission for The International Forest” (note submissions for the International Forest are not yet being accepted)
  - As noted above, the image should be flattened, unedited other than aligned, and not exceed a size of 10 MB
  - Ensure the image is labelled with your name, province/country of residency and the type of tree. Further, assign a unique identifier to each image if you are submitting multiple trees. For example, if you are resident in Alberta and are submitting to the Canadian Forest your image should be labelled Smith\_Alberta\_Elm1. If you are submitting to the International Forest and are resident in Kenya, your image should be labelled Mwangi\_Kenya\_Elm1. The “1” represents the first aligned jpeg you are submitting. Additional images submitted should be numbered 2, 3, 4 and 5 (note Photographers can submit up to 5 images)
  - Please note submissions for the Canadian Forest will be automatically considered for inclusion in the International Forest. All images will be considered for inclusion in a collection of trees for sale as single images
  - In the form indicate the make and pixel capacity of the camera
  - The aligned jpeg image will be reviewed to determine its suitability for further consideration
  - **Your image should be accompanied with a brief explanation as to why you feel it would be suitable for the project – don’t be reluctant to “sell” the positive qualities of your tree**

2. After review of the submitted aligned jpeg image, if selected you will be requested, via email, to upload to a secure internet site the unedited, unaligned TIFF files (converted from the RAW images to 8 Bit) of each image comprising the tree
  - Submit the best-focussed version of the TIFF file for each image
  - The TIFF files submitted should be consistent with the format indicated under the heading **Photoshop Image Parameters**
  - Ensure each TIFF is labelled with your name, province/country of residency and the type of tree. Further, assign a unique identifier to each TIFF in the sequence. For example, if you are resident in Alberta and submitting to the Canadian Forest your TIFFS should be labelled Smith\_Alberta\_ElmA1. The “A” represents the first tree you are submitting. If you are submitting multiple trees then use B, C, D and E, in that order, to represent your second, third, fourth and fifth trees. The number represents the sequence of the TIFFS for that tree, starting from the top to the bottom. For example, if you have 20 images for Tree “A”, the first TIFF (the top) should be labelled Smith\_Alberta\_ElmA1, the fifteenth TIFF from the top Smith\_Alberta\_ElmA15 and the TIFF furthest from the top Smith\_Alberta\_ElmA20. If you are submitting to the International Forest Initiative and are, for example a resident of Kenya, your image should be labelled Mwangi\_Kenya\_ElmA1. The lettering and numbering are the same as that described above for the Canadian Forest
  - To be clear, if you took 60 shots of a tree (3 of each image), resulting in 20 focussed images after selection, submit the TIFF file for each image (20 total)
  
3. Your TIFF images will be edited (alignment and various Photoshop filters) to create the final work product and you will be advised as to whether your submission has been accepted for inclusion in the Initiative. Notice of your inclusion in the Initiative will be provided concurrent with or shortly after any public announcement relating to that component of the Initiative for which your images so submitted have been selected. For example, if your images comprise the final work product for a tree in the Canadian Forest, notice will be provided when all of the final trees comprising the Canadian Forest are made public. Nevertheless, Initiative organizers reserve the right to advise you of your inclusion earlier if deemed appropriate.

**EXAMPLES OF STITCHED OR AUTO-ALIGNED TREES**

Broad



Medium



Narrow

