

February 1, 2016 - No. 50

**Bob Watson Photography**  
Reflecting The Spirit of Nature

NATURE - LANDSCAPES - WILDLIFE

*Featured Photograph No. 1*



*"Yellowstone Rush" - Yellowstone River, Yellowstone National Park*

Hi Folks ,

Please feel free to [Forward or Share](#) any of my Newsletters with friends and family.

**Exposing Snow Images**

Although many people avoid going out in snow and dislike the cold, most agree that images of snow scenes can be beautiful and often serene. Also, most people who have photographed snow scenes agree that it can be somewhat tricky to obtain the proper exposure, particularly on bright sunny days.

*Featured Photograph No. 2*



**"Melting Snow" - Unnamed Creek, Yellowstone National Park**

*For the experienced photographer, this Month's Newsletter will be elementary, but hopefully, still serve as a subtle reminder. For the novice photographer I'm merely discussing something that requires consideration.*

*There are numerous factors to keep in mind when photographing snow, but proper exposure is the most important. Although some changes with software during post processing your image can be made to improve your photograph, there's no substitute for a properly exposed image.*

*Whether you photograph with a "Point and Shoot" camera or a fancy digital "Single Lens Reflex (SLR)", the concern is the same, proper exposure. Snow can be bright and overpowering to your camera's light meter. If you set your camera to either "Auto", "Aperture priority", or "Shutter priority", and just shoot, your image will often be too dark (underexposed), resulting in the snow appearing grey and your subject even darker. This is because the meter in your camera is reading all the bright light and compensating accordingly, thereby automatically letting less light into the camera to your sensor, by adjusting your shutter speed or aperture (lens opening). (Click here on Newsletter No. 33, "Night Photography – Storing The Light", for a fundamental explanation of the three things that affect how much light is seen by your camera's sensor.)*

*Therefore, to obtain a better exposure, you must overexpose the scene (at least according to your camera's light meter). I know, to most people this may seem counter intuitive. However, remember, your light meter has set your camera to underexpose the image.*

*Most cameras today are outfitted with an "exposure compensation dial". One way to compensate for your camera automatically under exposing the scene is to increase the exposure between 1 and 2. Then check your exposure in your camera's monitor and/or the histogram and adjust accordingly.*

*If your camera permits, another method of obtaining correct exposure, and my preferred method, is to shoot in "Highlights Mode". Not only for snow scenes, but also for all photographs, I shoot in this mode 100% of the time. This mode shows when and where the brightest areas of the scene might be overexposed, by blinking "on and off" in that particular overexposed area (called blinkies). This is what's referred to as "blown or clipped highlights". Generally speaking, I do the following:*

- 1. Shoot in Manual mode (set the aperture and shutter speed manually yourself, don't let the camera set it) along with Highlights mode.*
- 2. Set the aperture (f stop) to where I want it for that particular scene.*
- 3. Set the shutter speed to where the meter registers slightly overexposed.*
- 4. Increase the shutter speed of the image (i.e., 1/3 second to 1/2 second), which has the affect*

*of overexposing the image according to the meter only, until I see the first blinkie.*

5. *Then increase shutter speed until the blinkies are gone, or only slight. It might be okay to have a slight blinkie (over exposure) in the snow, but not of the subject matter on the snow.*

*Please email me if you have a specific question about these procedures. Anyone wanting to learn more on this topic should search the Internet, and you'll find volumes of material.*

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