

Photo taken 10-16-2021 at Monahans Sandhills State Park
Photographer – Malcolm McElvaney



This picture exist because I broke my pattern and visited the sand hills for a full moon walk a couple days earlier than I normally would have. October 20th (Wednesday) is the actual day of the full moon so typically I wouldn't have “camped” out to walk at night four days out but a day or two out definitely, I had a reason to this time and photography

while my typical reason to hike was also augmented by a need to practice a new night photography idea. Even if not as bright I had more than more than enough light to walk by and to my surprise the moon was up sooner so while shooting the sunset I had this opportunity to compose this image. I walked out and stopped at this spot before sunset as I waited to see the sun setting, chosen at random it was a good location to rest up and continue on from once it got darker.

I know I have a pattern, especially for full moon walks, where when the full moon is close to a weekend I can go camp and walk all night I try to do so. Usually that place is the Monahans Sandhills State Park but no matter where I may go I seek out this unique light source to photograph by as I try to capture something it is worth the effort. The challenge isn't that I get the best results but learn to work within the limits I have present and adapting to them. I took the next photograph at 8:45pm once I had the full moon light to work with and it is a product of post processing.



I took it using the settings of ISO-2500, 2 sec, at F/3.5 and bracketed with 3 shots of plus or minus exposure evaluation of 2 stops. My quest for this session was to use much higher ISO's than my self imposed ISO-640 limit I have stuck too in past attempts, perhaps this isn't new to you or something you may not do but I'm learning as I go. I got my exposure time down from 10 seconds to 2 seconds at least. Considering I got decent

results and using all the extra data from the bracketed set could achieve this level of capture I will be pushing my idea of the workable limits for the camera settings used for now on.

For a spur of the moment photography session I came home relaxed and added a few more pictures to my collection that I liked; however, it was the lessons learned that mattered most. Planning can be a good tool, if you are into that, but anytime is a good time to go out and find opportunities to just be part of nature and see what catches your eye. Night photography is still new to me but being open to experimenting and not limiting my mindset going into a session is also important. This session turned out well but in truth I would have been just as satisfied had the outcome been different, I spent a night in nature and simply was in that moment of time. Photography may have a serious side for you but at least try to go out and play and try something new when you can.