

Grandfather Mountain Photo Contest Rules and Requirements

PART 1: IMAGE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- **File Format:** JPEG with minimum compression — (highest quality setting)
- **Image size:** Images must be of *resolution sufficient for an 8 x 10 or 8 x 12 print*. Suggested *minimum* resolution for an 8 x 10 would be 1600 x 2400 pixels (approx. 3.8 megapixels), for an 8 x 12 it would be 1600 x 3000 pixels (approx. 4.8 megapixels). Larger sizes are of course acceptable. Images may be cropped as long as the resulting image meets the size requirements listed above *and* fits a standard aspect ratio of 4:5, 3:4 or 2:3. (For reference: 35mm film cameras and digital SLR's make images with a 2:3 aspect ratio.)
- **Media:** Photographers entering the contest must provide a single CD-ROM (issued and provided by Grandfather Mountain at registration) containing no more than three images. The CD-ROM must be marked with the photographer's contest ID number (*not* the photographer's *name*) Each photographer will be assigned an ID number at registration at the beginning of the weekend.
- **File Names:** Do not submit photos with the file names generated by the camera! Each digital photo file must be *renamed* using the following convention:
 - First character: Either "A" for advanced class or "B" for amateur class
 - Next two characters (Photo Category):
 - "AN" for animals in nature
 - "HA" for animals in Grandfather Mountain habitats
 - "SC" for scenic
 - "WF" for wildflower
 - If you are entering more than one image in any category, add a "1", "2" or "3" after the two-letter category code.
 - Next character: Underscore ("_")
 - Last three characters: Photographer's ID number

For example: Advanced class photographer James Bond, assigned ID number 007 (of course), submitting three images in the "Scenic" category would rename his files "asc1_007", "asc2_007" and "asc3_007". This renaming system will allow the judges to evaluate the images impartially, without any knowledge of who took the photo.

If you have any questions about file naming, consult with a member of the Nature Photography Weekend Team before burning your CD!!! We will have a TEAM member stationed near the restaurant on Saturday afternoon.

PART 2: IMAGE MODIFICATION/MANIPULATION

Yes, you can touch up images on your computer. Be warned that the judges will not look kindly on images that were not taken during the weekend (images of a flower that bloomed in April), contrived images (like placing a zebra on the top of MacRae Peak), or images that have been manipulated to the degree that they violate the spirit of the contest (like bringing the end of a rainbow down in the center of the Mile High Swinging Bridge). Given the fact that this a low-key contest and the modest nature of the prizes offered (there aren't any), we don't expect any "cheating", but this information is provided as much to put everyone on an equal footing as anything else. We also want to encourage you to spend as much time as possible out on the mountain and as little as possible hunched over a laptop computer! Below is a list of techniques and tools that are permitted and some that are forbidden. If you have any doubt, or if there is something that is not mentioned here, you should assume that it is **not** permitted.

Basic Rules:

Each image entered must come from a single photograph, taken during the 2006 Nature Photography Weekend. You may not combine multiple exposures.

You may not add graphics (including borders) or text, clip art, computer-generated images, or elements from other photographs (even those taken during Nature Photography Weekend).

Some modifications may be made to your image in a photo editing program, as long as the modification is applied to the whole image. Details below:

- **Cropping:** As mentioned earlier, images may be cropped as long as the resulting image meets the contest size requirements (listed in section 1 above) *and* fits a standard aspect ratio of 4:5, 3:4 or 2:3. (For reference: 35mm film cameras and digital SLR's make images with a 2:3 aspect ratio.)
- **Brightness & Contrast:** These adjustments are permitted, provided they are applied to the entire image. This also applies to the levels and curves tools in Photoshop and their equivalents in other image editing applications.
- **Rotation:** Rotating the image (to level a horizon, for example) is permitted.
- **Spot Retouching:** Clone or rubber stamp tools may be used to remove spots caused by dust on the sensor. They may **not** be used to remove features actually in the scene photographed or to add features that were not there.
- **Sharpening:** The use of unsharp masking and other sharpening tools is permitted, provided it is applied to the entire image.
- **Blurring:** No blurring of any part of the image is permitted.

- **Black & White Conversion:** Converting a color image to black and white is permitted, provided you convert the whole image and not just part of it.
- **Filters:** The use of Photoshop (or equivalent) filters is permitted (if applied to the entire image) as follows:
 - Noise reduction and dust/scratch reduction filters are permitted.
 - Unsharp mask and other sharpening filters are permitted.
 - Color balance filters are permitted.
 - Lens distortion correction filters are permitted.

General tips:

Most of the permitted techniques described above are easy to do... and easy to over-do. The judges are experienced in digital photography and have both the technical experience to detect excessive processing and the aesthetic inclination to frown on it. Keep in mind that this is a *nature* photography weekend and that its main purpose is learning and fun. Just capture the beauty of nature in the least artificial way you can and you'll be more likely to achieve both goals.

PART 3: CONTEST TIMELINE

- Check in and registration Friday, June 1, 3:00 - 7:00 p.m. and
Saturday, June 2, 8:15 - 9:00 a.m.

Friday check-in has moved to MacRae Meadows (gate 3), about 10 yards on the Linville side of the driveway to the Grandfather Mountain Office and 30 yards on the Linville side of the attraction Entrance Gate. In the case of torrential rain or very high winds, the registration will move to the Nature Museum.

Saturday's late check-in will be in the sun room at Mildred's Grill.

When you check in you will receive a registration packet, which will include your photographer ID number and a blank recordable CD-ROM for your contest entries.

- **Photo entries turn-in deadline:** Saturday, June 2, 3:00 p.m.
- Presentation of winning images: Sunday, June 3, approx. noon
- Judges' decisions and selections will be final.
- Forward questions or comments to Don Nelson at don@grandfather.com.