



WILDFLOWER
festival

2026 QUIET LANDSCAPES PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Photographing Flowers, Plants, and Intimate Landscapes

Thursday, July 9 to Sunday, July 12, 2026

Crested Butte is a magical place during the summer and we will have the privilege of exploring the region together during the 2026 Wildflower Festival. During this workshop guided by Sarah Marino, we will seek inspiration and photographic opportunities across a diverse range of landscapes with a focus on mountain scenery, lush aspen forests, and, of course, the region's incredible summer wildflowers. An additional focus for this workshop will be developing a visually cohesive portfolio that represents your time in Crested Butte, culminating in a group ebook featuring participant portfolios.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

- **Required Zoom Orientation on Monday, June 8 at 6:00 pm MT:** 1.5 hour session to prepare you for the workshop.
- **Thursday, July 9:** Meet around 2:00 pm for introductions, our first classroom session, an early dinner, and a sunset outing.
- **Friday, July 10 and Saturday, July 11:** Morning field session, group brunch, midday break, classroom session (one on photo processing and one on portfolio development), early group dinner, and evening field session.
- **Sunday, July 12:** Morning field session and group brunch. The workshop will wrap up by 11:00 am this morning.
- **Friday, August 8:** Photo portfolio selections for the group ebook are due (participation in the ebook is optional). This will give participants about two and a half weeks after the Wildflower Festival wraps up to process photos for inclusion.

Important Note: We will be photographing around sunrise and sunset but will not be photographing the sunrise or sunset over a grand landscape. You will get the most out of this workshop if you are excited about focusing on smaller scenes during our time together.

[You can learn more and register here](#)



Sarah Marino will be teaching this nature photography workshop as part of the 2026 Crested Butte Wildflower Festival. Sarah is a full-time nature photographer, photography educator, and writer based in southwestern Colorado. In addition to photographing grand landscapes, Sarah is best known for her photographs of smaller subjects including intimate landscapes, abstract renditions of natural subjects, and creative portraits of plants and trees.

Sarah is the author or co-author of a diverse range of educational resources for nature photographers on subjects including composition, photographing nature's small scenes, and black and white photography. Sarah has extensive experience photographing around Crested Butte and in similar landscapes across Colorado. You can see more of Sarah's photography on her [website](#).



WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

PHOTOGRAPHY: Crested Butte is a magical place during the summer and we will have the privilege of exploring the region together during the 2026 Wildflower Festival. During this workshop guided by Sarah Marino, we will seek inspiration and photographic opportunities across a diverse range of landscapes with a focus on intimate views of mountain scenery, lush aspen forests, and, of course, the region's incredible summer wildflowers.

EXPERIENCE LEVEL: Each participant will receive individualized instruction tailored to their learning goals. Although Sarah can help you with improving your technical skills, the more creative aspects of photography will be the focus of this workshop.

You will get the most from this experience if you are comfortable with the technical basics of nature photography including how to operate your camera, how to use your lenses, choosing a proper exposure, accurate focusing, and basic photo processing skills.

FITNESS LEVEL: This workshop will include a mix of easy roadside locations and shorter hikes. You should be able to carry a full bag of camera gear for a total of 2 to 4 miles of walking each day, often over uneven terrain with some elevation gain.

Crested Butte's high elevation makes physical exertion much more challenging so please keep this in mind as you register for the workshop. If you have any concerns, please reach out in advance so we can make sure this workshop is a good fit for you.

GROUP SIZE: Maximum of ten participants.

REGISTRATION FEE: \$2,200

INCLUDED: The workshop registration fee includes six field sessions, three classroom sessions, six group meals, a pre-workshop orientation to help you prepare for our time together, and a group PDF ebook portfolio.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

During the workshop, we will spend time exploring Crested Butte's dynamic landscapes at the peak of wildflower season, engaging in the creative process, experimenting with new ideas and techniques, and creating photographs. Our itinerary will be flexible and location selections will be based on regional conditions during the time of our visit.

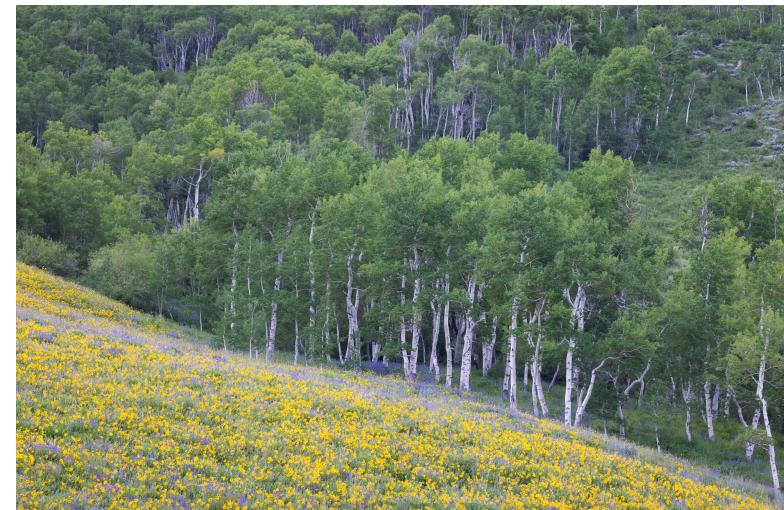
This workshop will focus on creating a visually cohesive personal portfolio of quiet landscapes from around Crested Butte. This means that we will spend our time looking for and photographing mostly smaller scenes in nature, including intimate landscapes, abstract renditions of natural subjects, portraits of plants and trees, and macro subjects including wildflowers. Please note that grand landscapes will not be a focus for this workshop. If we come across a spectacular wide angle landscape scene while out photographing, we will likely stop but photographing such scenes will be a low priority for our group.

We will explore Crested Butte's diverse landscapes and will visit a range of different ecosystems to find a variety of photographic subjects. You can expect to photograph mountain scenery, lush aspen forests, the region's legendary summer wildflowers, and riparian areas, all complemented by the dynamic weather that comes along with summer in Colorado's mountains. We will choose locations based on conditions at the time, so, again, this workshop does not have a set list of locations you can expect to visit.

Throughout the week, we will take advantage of the soft light at the edges of the day along with changing light throughout the morning and afternoon. This means that we will have longer field sessions compared to workshops that focus exclusively on sunrise and sunset. During our time in the field, Sarah will share lessons on learning how to see photographic opportunities, composition, working with a broad range of lighting conditions, and overcoming technical challenges, plus time for individual instruction.

This workshop will include extensive time in the field, guided lessons to extend your learning, time for personal exploration, and three classroom sessions. We will also share meals as a group to allow time for discussion about topics related to nature photography, travel, and the places we are visiting. Since portfolio development is a focus of the workshop, we will have one classroom session on the topic and you will be invited to submit up to 15 photos for inclusion in a PDF ebook that will be shared with the group (participation is optional).

Everyone in the group will be expected to practice Leave No Trace and Nature First Principles to help protect Crested Butte's wildflowers. During our first in-person session, Sarah will share more information about Nature First and how we will be respectful of this sensitive landscape.





WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THE FIELD

- Expanding your visual exploration skills and improving your ability to see opportunities
- Approaches to enhancing your creativity and learning through experimentation
- Creating compelling compositions using shapes, visual weight, balance, flow, and more
- Utilizing weather and scouting information to make location decisions
- How to photograph a wide variety of scenes under all different kinds of lighting conditions
- How to use a broad range of lenses to photograph subjects in nature
- Depth of field and instruction on focus stacking (both in the field and in processing)
- Making sound technical decisions in the field to help maximize file quality and flexibility

INSTRUCTION ON PHOTO PROCESSING

- Making dull RAW files pop in Adobe Lightroom using the tools in the Develop module
- Using of local adjustments for a refined approach
- Using white balance and color adjustments for mood and visual harmony
- Start-to-finish examples using photos similar to those we will be creating during the workshop, including focus stacking with Helicon Focus
- Curating, processing, and sequencing to create a visually cohesive portfolio

MY APPROACH TO TEACHING

I enjoy teaching photography almost as much as I enjoy creating my own photos. I always strive to create a supportive, encouraging learning environment for participants, with a focus on personal attention and helpful coaching. Although technical assistance is always available, my teaching focuses more on personal expression, creativity, improving your ability to identify photo opportunities, and connecting with a landscape.

Unlike many nature photographers offering workshops, I have an extensive background in offering professional and personal development coaching—a background that helps me provide instruction that is tailored to your specific needs. You can expect inspirational locations, top-notch instruction, personal attention, professionalism, and a well-organized itinerary when participating in this workshop.

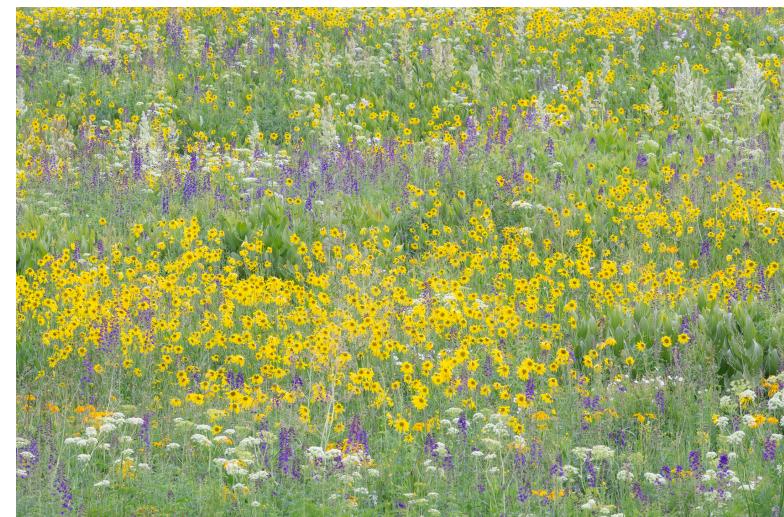
Our time in the field will include a lot of exploring, experimentation, guided learning, and time on your own, and will help you take your photography to the next level – whatever that means for you. I only take photos of my own as part of the teaching process so that my focus can stay on helping each participant with individualized instruction or sharing broader lessons with our full group. My only goal while teaching is to help you build your skills and creative vision.

THIS WORKSHOP INCLUDES:

- **INSTRUCTION AND GUIDING:** An attentive, helpful, and experienced instructor who prioritizes student learning and provides ample individualized attention throughout our time together. Sarah's instruction focuses on connecting with the landscape, seeing opportunities, experimentation and trying new ideas, improving your composition skills, working with a diverse range of natural light, and making sound technical decisions.
- **PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION:** Ample time for one-on-one instruction in the field.
- **SIX MEALS:** Because Crested Butte's restaurants are quite busy during the Wildflower Festival, six meals (three brunches and three early dinners) are included in the workshop fee to allow more time for learning and exploring in the field. You can expect these meals to be simple yet high-quality, healthy, filling, and delicious. Water and snacks will also be available when we are in the field.
- **EXTENDED FIELD SESSIONS:** Since the subjects we will be photographing can work in many different types of light, each full day will include an extended morning and afternoon photography session with a break in between.
- **THREE CLASSROOM SESSIONS,** including instruction on seeing small scenes, composition, light, photo processing, and portfolio development.
- **GROUP PDF EBOOK:** Since one learning objective for this workshop is portfolio development, all participants will be invited to submit a collection of up to 15 photos that Sarah will gather into a PDF ebook to share with the group. After the workshop, Sarah will also be available to provide feedback on portfolio curation and sequencing.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT INCLUDED:

- **TRANSPORTATION:** Most of our photography locations will be accessed from paved roads or easy gravel roads around Crested Butte, Mount Crested Butte, and the surrounding National Forest areas. After the workshop begins, we will arrange carpools since some locations have limited parking.
- **LODGING:** The Wildflower Festival has a block of rooms available through the Elevation Hotel and Spa in Mount Crested Butte. You will receive information about how to book your room after registration. Other lodging options, including camping, are also available in both Crested Butte and Mount Crested Butte. The classroom sessions will be held at the Crested Butte Depot at 716 Elk Avenue in Crested Butte. If being close to the classroom is important, please take that into consideration when selecting your lodging.





FEEDBACK FROM 2025 WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS:

Judy: I just wanted to say how much I truly enjoyed the workshop experience with you. What stood out most to me was your deep knowledge, your flexibility when plans needed to shift, and your ability to navigate a group with varying personalities so smoothly. Your pre-scouting made a big difference. It was clear you had a strong sense of what we'd encounter before we arrived. I also really appreciated how well you handled the somewhat post-peak bloom conditions. Your positive energy kept things inspiring...

Overall, the workshop left me with new techniques, refreshed perspectives, and a shift in how I approach photography. While out on a hike today, I found myself using my histogram more intentionally and photographing layers of flowers, something directly inspired by what I learned from you. I'll never forget the double rainbow and water textures we encountered and captured. I'm excited to start editing my images!

Anna: Couldn't have asked for a better workshop. Sarah was committed to making sure everyone's needs were met and they got the best out of the experience. I learnt a lot including many concepts that I was able to implement in my own photography straight away. I feel very lucky that I was able to participate in one of Sarah's workshops and I highly recommend.

Lois: I'll be forever grateful for the opportunity to participate in the photography workshops led by Sarah for the Crested Butte Wildflower Festival. Sarah is an extremely knowledgeable, helpful, and giving person who made the workshops interesting and fun. I was definitely stretched a bit outside of my comfort zone and hope to continue to use what I learned. Thanks for the great workshops!

Craig: The workshop was great and I thoroughly enjoyed it and learning from you. Overall, a 10/10 experience. Thanks so much for the inspiration and joy you provided.

Cathleen: I hope that this note finds you well and rested after your phenomenal photography workshops! You are an amazing, highly talented photographer and an extremely generous educator! I learned so much from you!! Thank you, Sarah, for the wonderful, fun, and thought-provoking workshop.

Cheryl: Thank you, Sarah! I very much appreciate you putting the ebook together. It turned out so wonderful! It was great to see everyone's photos and equally delightful to see how we each interpreted a scene through our own personal lens. I just love your idea of compiling an ebook of everyone's work. It's a beautiful keepsake of our shared experience.



WHAT TO BRING:

- **CAMERA EQUIPMENT:** Please bring a DSLR or mirrorless camera body, sturdy tripod, and an assortment of lenses. Focal lengths between 16mm (or 10mm on a crop sensor camera) to 400mm+ will all be useful for the subjects we will be photographing, as will a dedicated macro lens (100mm is a good option). In terms of filters, a polarizer and a neutral density filter may also be useful. You will get the most out of this workshop if you have a telephoto lens that is at least 200mm long (longer is preferable).
- **CAMERA BAG:** Please bring a camera bag that allows you to comfortably carry your gear on your back for long periods of time, with room for water, snacks, and layers of clothing. Reliable brands for outdoor photo packs include F-stop and Shimoda Designs. You may also want to bring along a knee cushion (lightweight options are available for less than \$20 through REI or Amazon) plus a collapsible reflector/shader for plant photography and smaller scenes. We will discuss these items during the orientation.
- **CLOTHING:** Summer weather in Colorado's mountains can vary from quite cool around sunrise and sunset to very warm during the middle of the day. Thus, we encourage you to bring a range of outdoor clothing including layers to help ensure that you will be comfortable during the workshop. Since bad weather can create interesting options for photography, we will plan to go out in all weather conditions except for thunderstorms. You should bring a waterproof jacket or poncho, a warm jacket, a hat, gloves if you get cold, clothing layers suited to outdoor activities, waterproof hiking shoes, and sun protection including sunscreen, sunglasses, and a wide-brimmed hat. An umbrella or other rain protection for your camera gear might be helpful if we encounter light rain.
- **LAPTOP:** While not required, a laptop computer with Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop installed can be helpful in following along or taking notes during the classroom sessions. We will also be using Helicon Focus during the processing session. If you do not own this software, you can download a trial version before the workshop.

You will receive a full list of recommended items during the required orientation session.

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION:

If you have questions about the workshop, you can contact Sarah Marino at sarah@smallscenes.com. If you have questions about registration or Crested Butte Wildflower Festival logistics, you can call 970-349-2571 or email info@cbwildflower.com.

[You can learn more and register here](#)



