

## Meet Greg Fugate Photographer



**Hi Greg, we'd love to hear about a book that's had an impact on you.**

One of my favorite books is *More Than a Rock* by Utah-based photographer, Guy Tal. This book is a compilation of essays on art, creativity, and photography, and it articulated something that I didn't have an appreciation for 10 years ago as a relative newcomer to landscape photography. At that time, my energy was focused on gaining experience in the traditional sense, such as building technical knowledge and skills, which are, of course, essential. But often this process of gaining experience also comes with it a desire to get that trophy shot and the resulting social media shares and likes and accolades—that these somehow validate one's efforts. But what this book articulated so well and reinforced for me is that, at the end of the day, the intrinsic value in my pursuit of landscape photography is the experience of exploring and getting to know the natural places I visit, more so than any resulting image I might come away with.

**Please tell us more about your work. We'd love to hear what sets you apart from others, what you are most proud of or excited about. How did you get to where you are today professionally. Was it easy? If not, how did you overcome the challenges? What are the lessons you've learned along the way. What do you want the world to know about you or your brand and story?**

I came to landscape photography later in life, only about 10 years ago. During a trip to Utah in May 2011, I ended up at the Green River Overlook in Canyonlands National Park just before sunset. Standing at the Overlook, I took a photograph of the Green River's distinct s-curve carving its way through the desert landscape far below. The whole scene was bathed in the warm directional light that photographers live for. The photograph I took that evening remains one of my favorites, not because it's the most amazing photograph I've ever taken, but because it marks the moment—that spark—that set me on a deeply rewarding creative journey.

So, fast forward 10 years, and I can honestly say that if you put in the hours and the effort to learn and practice photography, you do get better. I've certainly built a more extensive portfolio.



But I've also come to understand better what inspires me as a landscape photographer. Getting out into nature allows me to slow down, listen to the universe, reconnect with myself, and recharge my soul. I'm drawn to Colorado's mountains and the desert landscapes of southern Utah and northern Arizona. I like exploring the paved road (and more and more frequently the unpaved road) off the beaten path. I enjoy seeing where those scenic byways and backroads take me. And, hopefully, in the end, I'm able to take a few good photographs along the way.

I don't actually earn my living through photography; for now, it's just an avocation. I've spent the last 20 years of my professional career working as a performance auditor with the Colorado Office of the State Auditor. When I retire from state service, I plan to pursue photography full-time.

**Let's say your best friend was visiting the area and you wanted to show them the best time ever. Where would you take them? Give us a little itinerary – say it was a week long trip, where would you eat, drink, visit, hang out, etc.**

Oh, I love a good road trip! We start off the evening before our road trip exploring Downtown Denver. One of my favorite places to go is Union Station. Sitting in the Great Hall with a cup of coffee and people watching is a great way to spend some time.

Day 1 we head west to the mountains. A drive up to Summit Lake and the top of Mt. Evans are our first stops if they're not already closed for the season. We grab lunch at Beau Jo's Pizza or Tommyknocker Brewery in Idaho Springs before continuing west and south to Leadville and the postcard views of Mt. Elbert and Mt. Massive in the Sawatch Range. After stretching our legs walking along Harrison Avenue and grabbing dinner-to-go, we set up camp out at Turquoise Lake in the San Isabel National Forest for the evening.

Day 2 we are up early and head south to Buena Vista where we grab a coffee and a breakfast burrito from The Midland Stop, then it's west over Cottonwood Pass we go. We spend the whole day exploring the Gunnison Valley, eventually ending up in Crested Butte for dinner and an AirBnB for the night.

Day 3 we drive through the Aspen groves along Kebler Pass to the west and eventually wind our way over to Hwy. 133 and McClure Pass for a night of camping in the White River National Forest.

Day 4 gives us a couple of options depending on our mood and the weather. Option 1 is a drive along the Crystal River to Marble and then a 4x4 Jeep tour to the famed Crystal Mill and Lead King Basin. We return to Marble and grab dinner at Slow Groovin BBQ before heading back to our campsite. Option 2 is a drive to Aspen for sunrise at Maroon Bells, followed by a day hike in the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness. We stop in Redstone for some ice cream on our way back to the campsite.

Day 5 we head north to Glenwood Springs for a morning hike to Hanging Lake, after which we check in to the Glenwood Hot Springs Pool, Lodge, and Spa and soak in the hot springs pool for the rest of the day.

Day 6 we drive back to Denver on I-70, perhaps stopping in Vail along the way for a scenic gondola ride and lunch on Vail Mountain. If we had a one-way rental car for the road trip, we would leave it in Glenwood Springs and hop on Amtrak's California Zephyr route back to Denver's Union Station.

Early- to mid-September would be the ideal time for this road trip because the days are warm, the nights are cool and crisp and not too cold for camping (although snow can happen at any time), and the fall colors may just be starting to put on a show!

**Who else deserves some credit and recognition?**

There are three photographers—Tim Cooper, Tony Rizzuto, and Elizabeth Stone—who, through various workshops, mentorships, and just being all-around great artists and people, have provided me support, encouragement, and inspiration in my pursuit of landscape photography.

