How I Made this Image

In Pursuit of Local Thematic Imagery

Steve Friedman

April 10, 2019

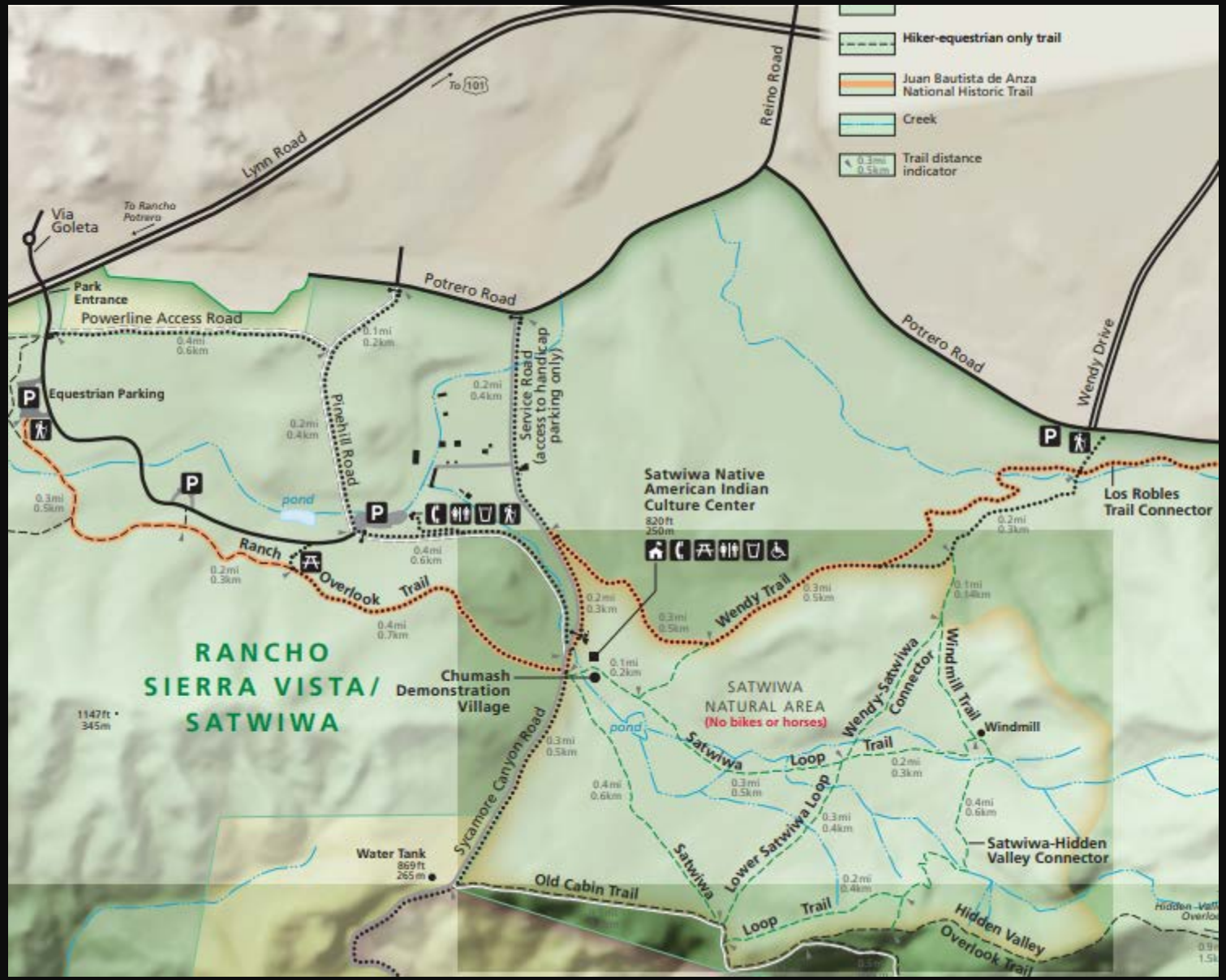
Inspiration

- a Tom Gamache workshop
- It turned out to be his last.

- Tom brought lots of prints of the Santa Monica Mountains
- There was this one tree, a Valley Oak.

Where is this tree?

- Where was this beautiful lone Valley Oak in Rancho Sierra Vista?
- I had hiked all the trails, and I had never seen it
- There were trees.
- But there was no “Lone Tree of the Rancho”


Hiker-equestrian only trail
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail
Creek
Trail distance indicator
To 101
Lynn Road
Reino Road
Via Goleta
To Rancho Potrero
Park Entrance
Powerline Access Road
Potrero Road
Wendy Drive
Equestrian Parking
Pinehill Road
Service Road (access to handicap parking only)
pond
Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center
820ft 250m
Los Robles Trail Connector
Ranch Overlook Trail
Wendy Trail
RANCHO SIERRA VISTA/ SATWIWA
Chumash Demonstration Village
1147ft 345m
SATWIWA NATURAL AREA
(No bikes or horses)
Wendy-Satwiwa Connector
Windmill Trail
Windmill
Satwiwa Loop Trail
Lower Satwiwa Loop Trail
Satwiwa-Hidden Valley Connector
Sycamore Canyon Road
Water Tank 869ft 265m
Old Cabin Trail
Hidden Valley Overlook Trail

After the Springs Fire (May 2013)

- I Started doing comparative site photos for the NPS:

Nikon D300, Nikkor 18-200mm f/3.5-5.6G IF-ED
AF-S VR DX: 34mm, 1/200 sec, ISO 400, f/14
3/13/2010

Nikon D600, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
55mm, 1/250 sec, ISO 400, f/10
5/18/2013

That led to other photo pursuits like sunsets

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8: 24mm, 1/20 sec, ISO 800, f/8

… and run-ins with the ranger over the sunset parking lot closure rule.

Using the staff parking lot…

I found the tree!

I had to photograph that tree.

Considerations for imaging the tree:

- Composition:
  - Don’t duplicate Tom Gamache’s photo (a postcard photo)
  - Don’t include distractions like the house and eucalyptus to the SW of the tree
  - Feature the tree itself, with foreground definition
- Season: Spring
- Time: Late Afternoon, the Golden Hour
- The right weather conditions

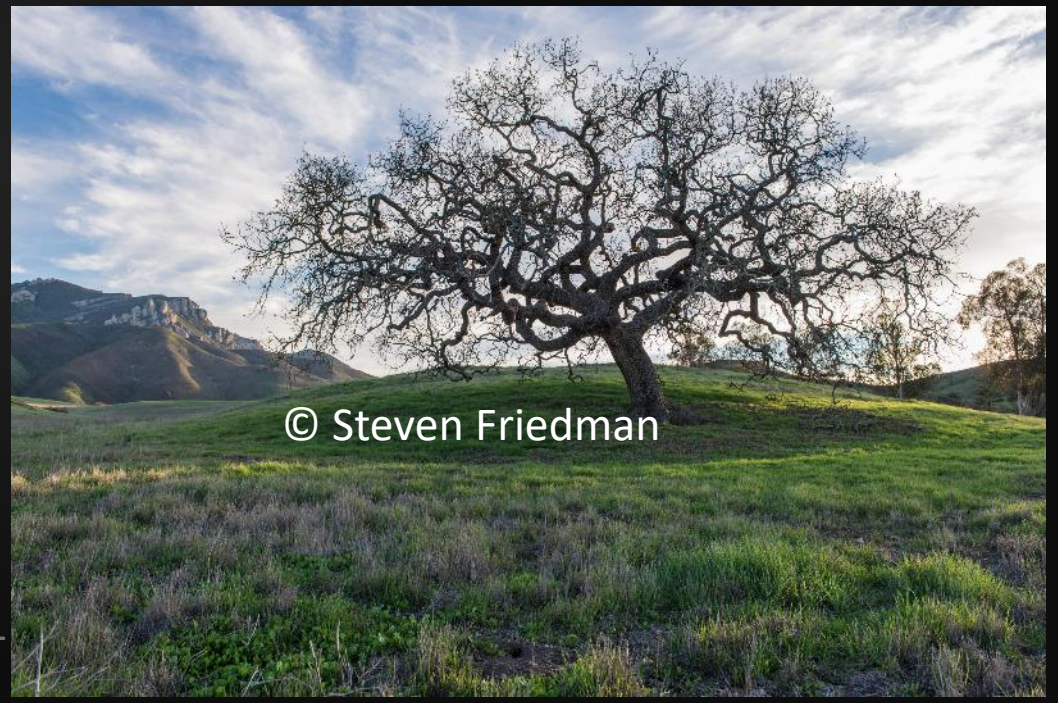
Persistence and patience will be needed!

Very early winter, no rain
Interesting sky, but everything looks dead…

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
38mm, 1/160 sec, ISO 800, f/14
1/2/2016

Interesting sky, green grass…
The tree is still bare…
Rear distractions and blown sky to west

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
24mm, 1/100 sec, ISO 400, f/13
1/18/2015



Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
HDR: 28mm, 1/200 sec, ISO 400, f/7.1
1/18/2015

Soft, foggy light…
Green grass
The tree has leafed out

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
24mm, 1/400 sec, ISO 400, f/11
2/20/2015

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
27mm, 1/400 sec, ISO 400, f/11
2/20/2015

Green grass and flowers
The tree has leafed out, but distractions to rear-right

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
29mm, 1/80 sec, ISO 400, f/11
2/28/2015

Stepping back

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
40mm, 1/80 sec, ISO 800, f/8
3/1/2015

Driving up the access road …

… there was the most beautiful golden light,
peaking through the clouds …

… and the tree glowed this magnificent color

Would the light hold until I parked the car, hiked to the vantage point and got setup?

Of course, it didn't.

And then it did!

Great sky, great lighting, spring green!

Persistence and patience paid off!

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8: 24mm, 1/50 sec, ISO 400, +1EV, f/11 2/27/2015

The benefits of being local

- Being local enabled me to try, try again, until I got it right
- I could monitor the weather, and when conditions were right, take off at a moments notice
- Best of all, I was able to capture some other amazing scenes, all because I was there

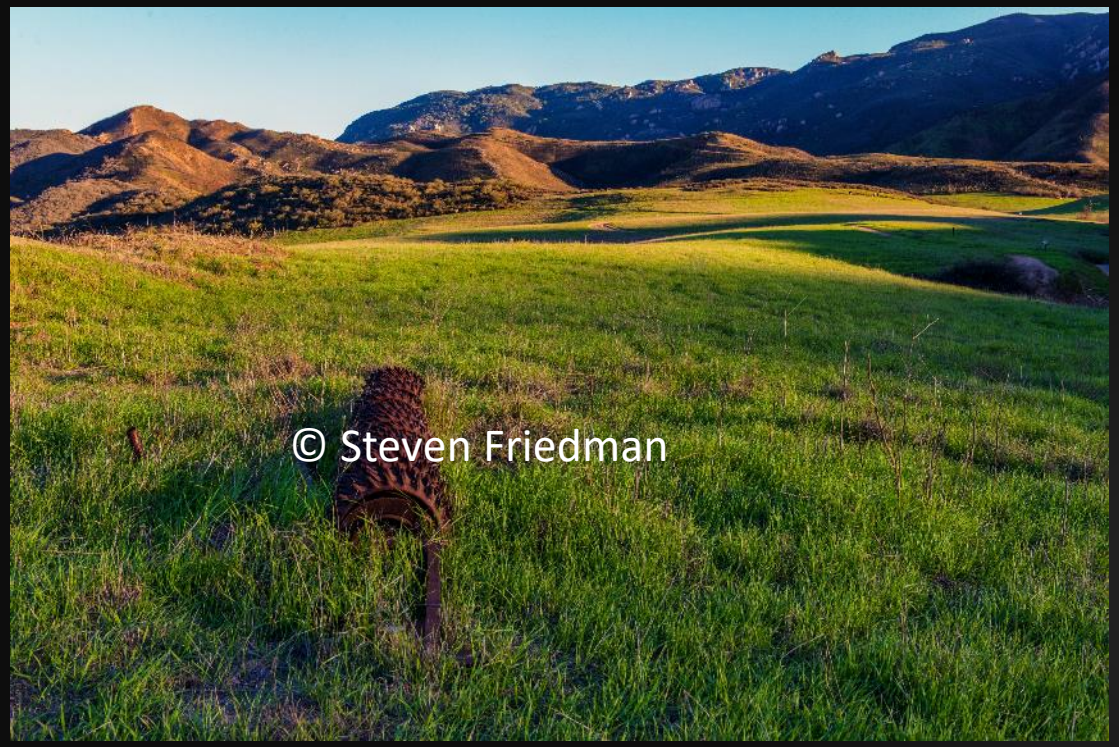
I’m still trying to get that sunset

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
24mm, ISO 800, f/5, HDR
1/18/2015

Nikon D610, Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8:
16mm, 1/400 sec, ISO 800, f/11, HDR
1/8/2017

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8: 24mm, ISO 1250, +1EV, f/8, HDR 2/28/2015

… and shoot some other interesting things



Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
38mm, 1/100 sec, ISO 1000, f/13
12/28/2014

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
35mm, 1/160 sec, ISO 800, f/11
1/2/2016

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
24mm, ISO 4000, f/10, HDR
2/27/2015

Nikon D610, Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8:
50mm, 1/80 sec, ISO 3200, f/11
3/1/2015

Lynn Road
Via Goleta
To Rancho Potrero
Park Entrance
Powerline Access Road
0.4mi 0.6km
Potrero Road
0.1mi 0.2km
Service Road (access to handicap parking only)
Potrero Road
Wendy Drive
0.3mi 0.5km Trail distance indicator
Equestrian Parking
Pinehill Road
0.2mi 0.4km
Farm Equipment
Valley Oak Tree
Farm Tools
Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center
820ft 250m
pond
0.3mi 0.5km
Ranch Overlook Trail
0.2mi 0.3km
0.4mi 0.7km
0.4mi 0.6km
Wendy Trail
0.3mi 0.5km
0.2mi 0.3km
0.1mi 0.14km
RANCHO SIERRA VISTA/ SATWIWA
Chumash Demonstration Village
0.1mi 0.2km
SATWIWA NATURAL AREA
(No bikes or horses)
Wendy Satwiwa Connector
Windmill Trail
Windmill
1147ft 345m
pond
Satwiwa Loop Trail
Overlook
0.3mi 0.5km
0.4mi 0.6km
0.2mi 0.3km
0.4mi 0.6km
Sycamore Canyon Road
Lower Satwiwa Loop
0.3mi 0.4km
Satwiwa-Hidden Valley Connector
Water Tank
869ft 265m
Old Cabin Trail
0.3mi 0.6km
Satwiwa Loop Trail
0.2mi 0.4km
Hidden Valley Overlook Trail
0.1mi 0.2km
0.5mi 0.8km
No dogs past this point
935ft 285m
0.9mi 1.5km
grade