EXPLORE OREGON

Waterfalls & Ancient Forests

Photographs and Reflections

JERI ABEL



Nature's Choreography – The McKenzie River

Why Oregon?

I am drawn back to Oregon over and over because of the waters and the primeval forests which have the feeling of being eons in the past.

I visited 10 waterfalls, and three rivers, the Umpqua, the Rogue and the McKenzie. Of these, though all beautiful, the McKenzie was the most pleasing of them all. The turquoise of the water, the foliage which seemed to be purposefully planted, and the rushing water will call me back again.

The Cascades in central Oregon are most appropriately named as I have only begun to explore all the falls. Each one is unique, and I tried to capture not only the falls themselves but the feeling of the forest that surrounded each one. These mountains are formed by ancient lava flows and the rivers shoot over these basalt walls and cliffs forming the variety, from tall and delicate like the Barr Falls, to the Sahalie where the McKenzie thunders over it's cliffs.

Oregon still pulls at my heart strings and I hope I have passed on the wonder and awe that I felt there.

Proxy Falls

I had visited Proxy Falls in the autumn of 2024.
It is one of the falls that brought me back to Oregon in 2026.

I actually made the hike twice. The first time I didn't capture the falls with the detail that it deserved and it was raining. I met some gentlemen that had hiked to the bottom of the falls and had been able to capture the entire view. I wanted to do that so I started down. It's very steep but not dangerous, however there were two giant fallen trees that I was not able to cross. The closeness of the falls as seen through the ancient cedars created an environment that I had not expected. The feeling is conveyed in "The Ancient Forest".

Proxy Falls clings to the basalt wall covered with moss and ferns. It's a primeval view, centuries old. The water glides over this surface creating strands as if lace. This is portrayed in "Living Lace".



Sublime Veil – Proxy Falls



Ancient Forest – Proxy Falls



Living Lace – Proxy Falls

Watson Falls

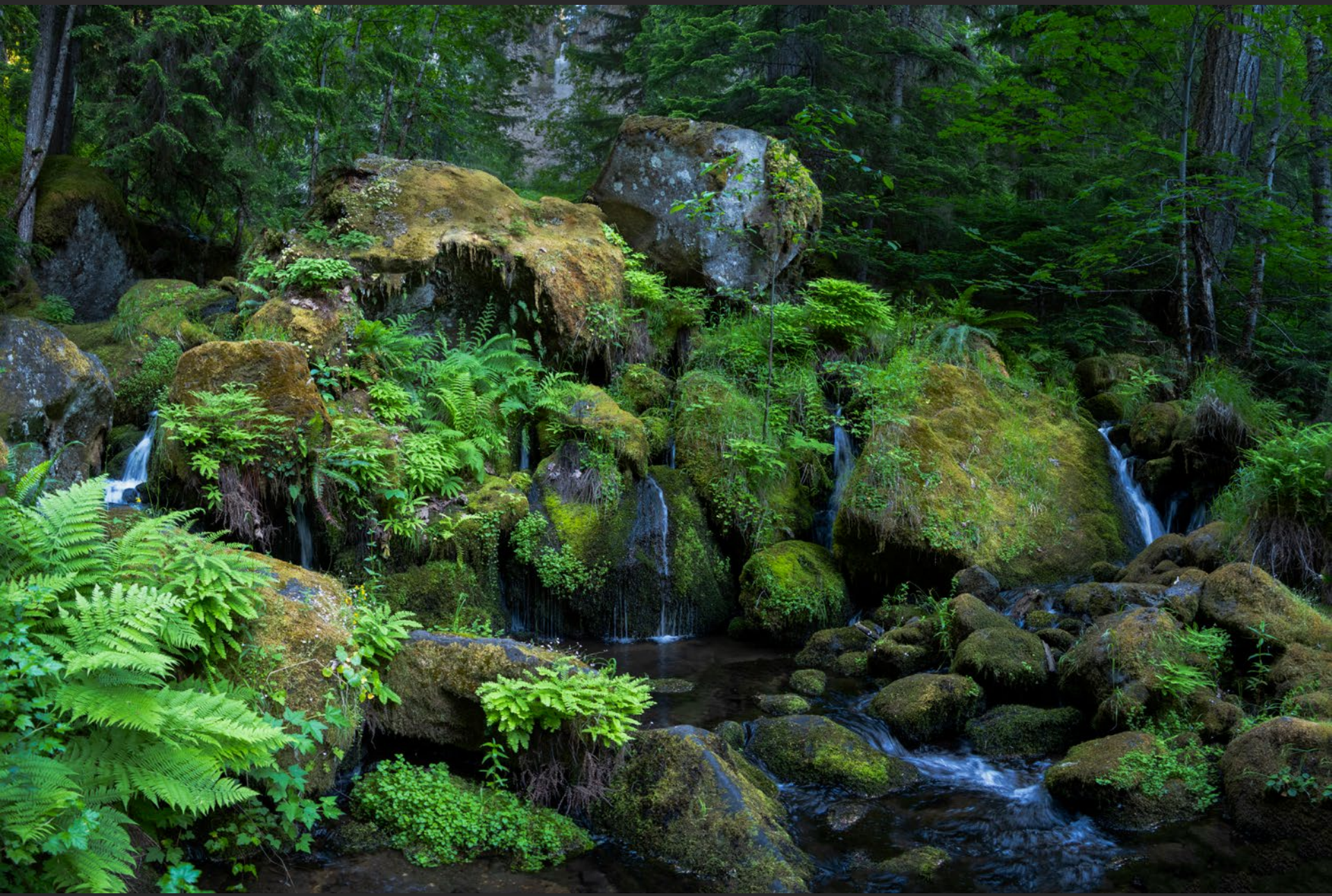
Watson Falls once seen can never be forgotten.

It plummets 300 feet over the edge of a 180 degree amphitheater of basalt. It is like being inside an enormous crater. The hillside is covered with the remains of the lava when it caved in. Watson Creek tumbles through these moss covered boulders creating little paradisical gardens.

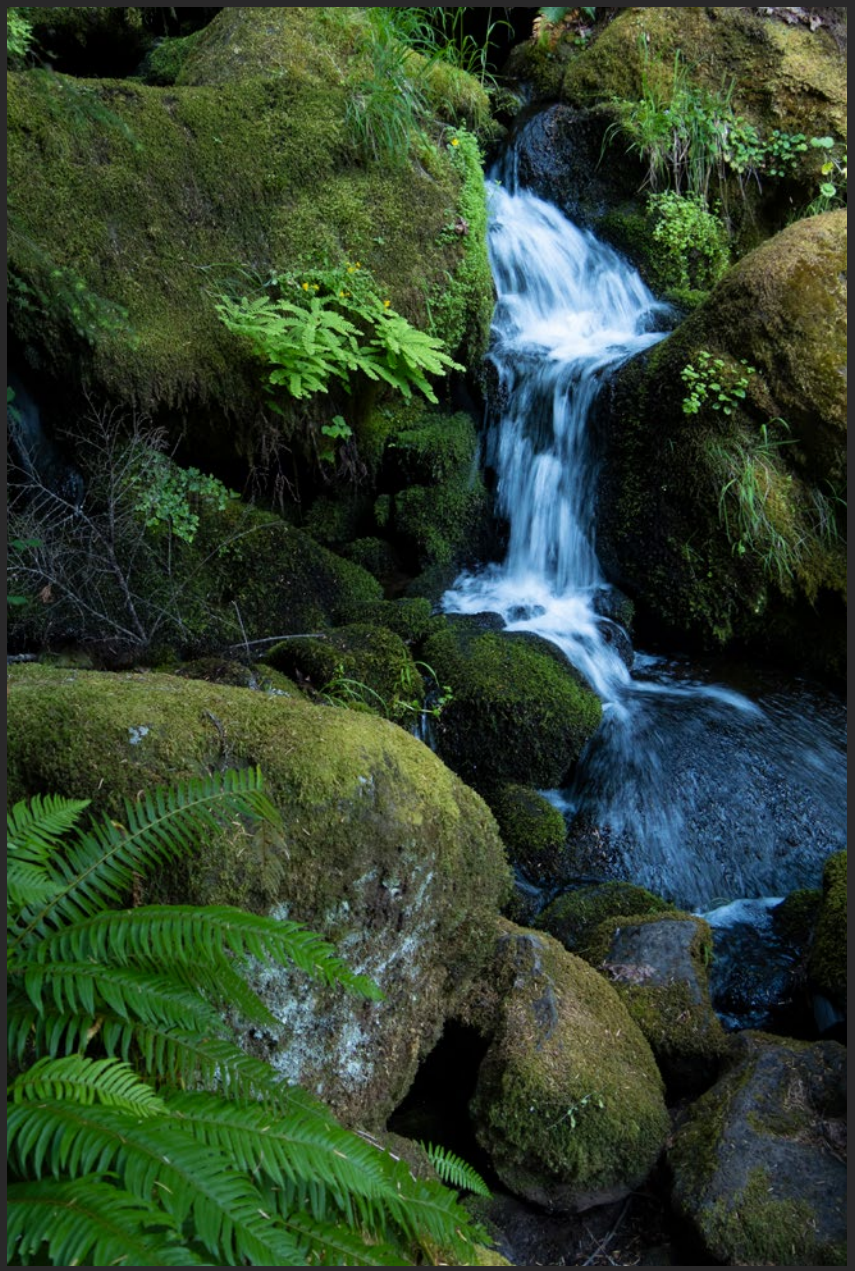
It was one of these gardens that brought me back to Watson Falls. When I had photographed it in the autumn, I was so concentrated on the scene at hand that I never noticed Watson Falls in the background. This time, also I was very focused on the details of the garden, but not being in a hurry, I happened to look up and there was the Falls. I couldn't believe I had missed it the first time.

I learned a lesson, photographically speaking, "Don't forget to look around" and as a life lesson, "Don't forget to LOOK UP".

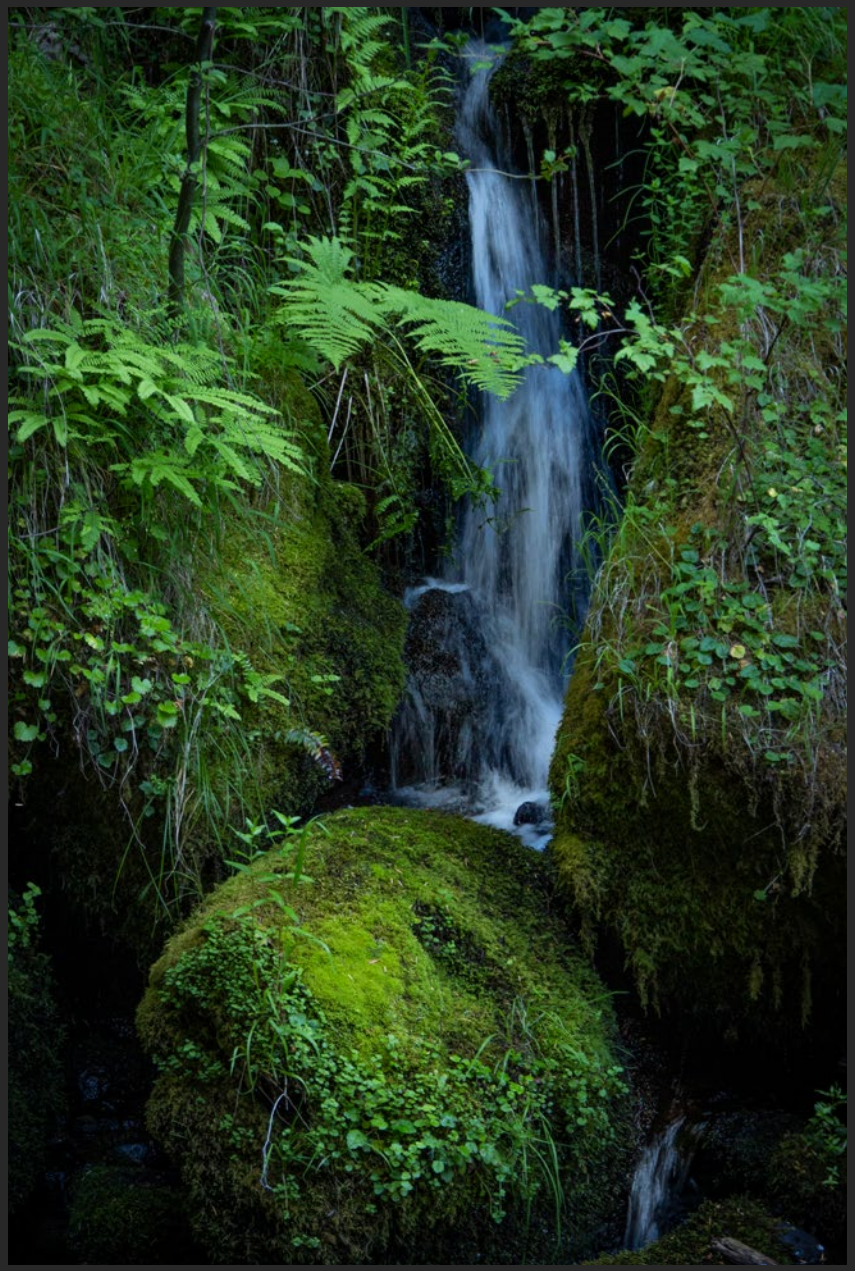




Hidden Sanctuary – Watson Creek



Through the Boulders



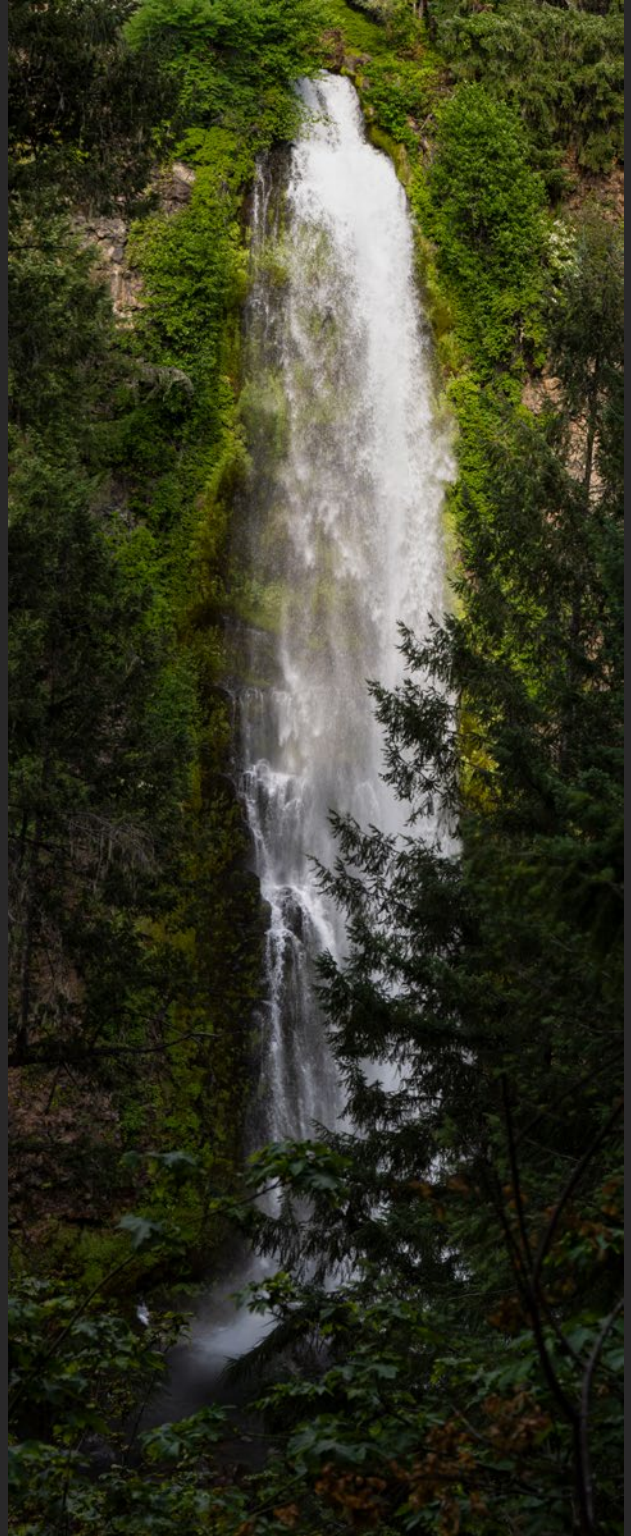
Hidden Blessing



Through the Green



Sahalie Falls – McKenzie River





Mill Creek &
Barr Creek Falls

National Creek Falls

This falls is one of the reasons I planned a two week trip to photograph the waterfalls of the Cascades in Central Oregon.

In the fall of 2024, I looked for this falls but with some poor advice, never found it. It had been recommended to me by a photographer friend who said it was his favorite of all the Falls.

I and the pups started out early and the trail was an easy three tenths of an mile. On the way down we encountered a doe who obviously had a fawn hidden in the ferns and she was determined not to let us pass. What a beautiful place to raise a fawn.

The falls was everything I hoped. It split over the boulders and fallen trees that must have been there for generations. The mist rose and filled the air and the sun started to create a golden glow.





Toketee Falls

A Closing Reflection

The memory of the cascading waters and the ancient forests will stay with me as long as I live.

I'm so glad I had those two weeks to absorb the feel of the rivers, the falls, the trails, and expecially the forests. It reminds me to take the time to really enjoy the beauty that this earth has to offer.

I hope that these photographs bring you a little of the wonder, awe and peace I experienced there.

Jeri Abel

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