

## Greg Adams

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In each of his images, Greg Adams provides a unique perspective on the wilderness around Roanoke, Virginia. Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Adams has access to an endless number of photographs that show the grandeur of the eastern United States.

"Not being a full-time professional and having the limitations of a job and time, you can't go to all of the great national parks out west," Adams said. "It was a conscious decision to focus my work on Virginia, and not even cross the border into North Carolina. I never run out of images. There is too much to see, and not enough time to see it."

Adams steers away from typical snapshots of the state, and instead focuses on details: the many shades of green in an eastern swamp; a lichen covered tree against the autumn grasses; the intensity of color within a fog-laden forest; the mountains of Virginia perfectly silhouetted by an orange sunset.

"There are a lot of nice pictures of a big sky and mountain range – but they all look the same. You take in the whole thing in a matter of 3 or 4 seconds. I don't find much interest in that," Adams said. "My photographs are for people who want to spend time with an image, and in spending time with it, my hope is that they feel rewarded for that time. I've tried to emphasize staying true to what I feel, and capturing the intimacy that is beneath the forest canopy, or within a large vista."

*Learn more about Adams - Click on the following links:*

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Greg first came to West Coast Imaging in 1999. We'd been featured in an Outdoor Photographer article that Galen Rowell wrote, entitled "The World's Best Prints." At that point, we had created the files for over 100 of Rowell's images, and the image files were printed on Fuji Crystal Archive paper. The results were so impressive that he wrote an article giving accolades to the digital process we continue to use today.

Across the country, Greg Adams, a human resources executive, found himself unemployed as a result of corporate downsizing.

"It was this job loss, so clearly "negative" on the surface, which sent me outside to revisit the natural world and to capture its essence on film," Adams wrote in a recent artists statement. "Only then did I begin to understand that outdoor photography served to meet a spiritual need, and that the meeting of this need created a balance that I otherwise did not experience. "

Adams thumbed through the issue of Outdoor Photographer, saw Rowell's article, and called West Coast Imaging.

"The person on the other end of the phone was [Jeff Grandy](#)," Adams said. "I started asking questions, and he was so generous and gracious with his time. That first conversation was 30 minutes long."

"We had another conversation, and I ended up sending in some slides. And then, Jeff offhandedly said, 'I wish you could come out here and see our prints. That's the best way to see the quality I'm talking about.'"

With no consistent paycheck, it seemed unthinkable to fly to Oakhurst. Within a few days, three of Adams's friends pitched in and bought a plane ticket, paid for the hotel and meals, and gave him some spending money for along the way.

Adams walked into West Coast Imaging with his sheets of slides, and put them on our light table with a sense of uncertainty, coupled with faith...faith that at least some of his images were worthy of printing.

We were impressed by the quiet, steady voice in his photographs; by his sense of place; and the fact that his personal demeanor so eloquently matched that of his photographs. During the visit, Adams spent a great amount of time with Grandy, talking about photography and looking through his slides.

"(Grandy) provided the nurture to help me cross a big hurdle – he built my confidence; encouraged me to stay true to me; and he critiqued countless images," Adams said. "It's not possible to describe that leap that occurred – he allowed me to go deeper within myself. I'm really indebted to him."

Adams returned to Virginia a few days later, leaving us with a slide sheet of images to scan and print.

"The first two prints (West Coast Imaging) made really sold me," Adams said. "Jeff scanned them, and [Rich](#) (West Coast Imaging's founder) printed them."

Adams then worked with Custom Printmaker [Terrance Reimer](#) on several more images, and now works with Custom Printer [Melanie Crutchfield](#).

"I remember looking through Greg's body of work as I began the interpretations on the first order I printed for him, trying to get a feel for what he likes to see," Crutchfield said. "Even having done that, learning to print the specific vision of a photographer is like trying to learn the subtle messages in the body language of a new friend. During that early part of my working with him he was very patient, always taking the time to describe not only how he wanted his photographs to look, but also how he wanted them to feel."

With each image, Adams and Crutchfield collaborate to capture not only what Adams recorded on film, but what he experienced in the field.

"Greg describes the feeling that he had standing in the frosty grasses of Virginia. He describes the feeling of wonder as the fog surrounded him in the forest making a quiet retreat for him alone. He describes being overwhelmed by the joining of vibrant color and delicate subtlety that only something bigger than us can create. And then we make a proof," Crutchfield said.

Adams doesn't rush to make his final print. He lives with the interpretation, and ponders whether it's telling his story to the best of its ability.



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Melanie Crutchfield, Professional Printer

"He really listens to what the photograph is saying, and tries to identify where it might be held back by too much density, or too much color, or not enough separation," Crutchfield said. "In a time where the soul has been replaced by the histogram, Greg sees no numbers, no readings, just the story."

"Melanie has completed the process for me in the sense that the final print really is the moment of celebration," Adams said.

Adams heads across the state with his 35mm Nikon and Contax 645 cameras most heavily during the spring and autumn months, when the foliage is boasting with fresh green color, or transitioning into autumn hues with a dramatic burst of color.

"The rest of the year, the photographic opportunities are there, but not for me," Adams said.

With a full time job and family, Adams says not photographing constantly has its pros and cons.

"The technical part comes back right away. And (not photographing all of the time) causes you to be even more careful. Are you checking corners? You take an extra look because it has been awhile," Adams said.

"And then there's a point of anxiety – it's been 3 months, and you wonder whether you can still see or not, and whether you can still receive the images. That has happened often enough now, that I know it's artist insecurity, and once I get back out there, if I come prepared and I am of the right spirit, then the images will come."

Adams says he goes into the field, not to take photographs, but to receive them.

"When I go out to take images, I don't do a very good job," Adams said. "When I go out to receive images and follow the voice, and follow the instinct, I am usually caught by surprise and very pleased with the results."

This goes hand-in-hand with the fact that Adams sees photographing as a way of connecting with God.

"The experience of being in the wilderness or being outdoors is a worshipful experience. I have been overwhelmed with a sense of the mountains truly bowing down, and with the music of the wind rustling the oak and the poplars – these were two very, very vivid experiences in my life, and there have been many more," Adams said. "There is a spiritual aspect to my photography and the photographic experience that is real, and it is as real as you and I are talking today."

That element is evident in each of his images, and we're excited to share this photographer's vision with you in our online portfolio.

As Crutchfield says, "I am one of many instruments in the process of Greg telling the story of what it is for him to be human. With each new image, I hear a new chapter of that story."

Helping photographers share their story is what West Coast Imaging is all about.



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Greg Adams, Photographer

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