

Moose Podcast #468

Moose Peterson Howdy, folks, and welcome to Moose Podcast number four hundred and sixty eight Over the grass. Well, greetings. This first day of fall. That's right. The sun is over the equator. And technically, uh, some places should have the equal amount of daylight and nighttime, uh, being a little bit further up. We don't quite have that. But, uh, the first day of fall is here, I just. That just staggers me. Here it is, September twenty second already. Oh, man. We are just this year's cranking by. But officially, we have gorgeous fall color just back from Alaska. And I can tell you, the mammals up there have got really luscious winter coats. Now, they say with all the dense fur, the extra amount of spider webs and other indications that, uh, it should be a really The cold and wet winter which eastern our neck of the woods. We would really love that water. This episode of the Moose Podcast is brought to you by Adobe. Podcast beta. Using their AI voice to clean me up as best as possible. Now it also creates a transcript, so we head to the blog post for the podcast. You'll see a photograph that illustrates what I'm talking about and you can download the transcript. You can go to other locations as well as iTunes or Spotify. My preference? Amazon, YouTube and hear the podcast as well. On Spotify, you'll see the transcript and you'll have the ability to leave comments. All that is here because I just want to talk. I'm a lonely no, I just I'm here to help so any way I can. And so if you want to reach out that way, go for it, please. I'd love to talk. Well, this past week, Mac Tahoe got released. I released her from at least one who is very afraid of updating their phone and their Mac, making it possible into a brick waiting. Yeah, no, I just dove right in Mac Tahoe. Um, which is whatever twenty six point oh, whatever it is. I have it going. I have it running on my M2 and M4 machines running. Brilliant. I like some of the customization you can do. Turned off some of the stuff that I don't need, and it was all relatively painless and easy to do. So that's pretty cool. And right now I'm staring out the window because the coolest news that will happen any moment is UPS will come up the drive with the new Z twenty four to seventy two point eight version two. Can't wait for it to get my hands. I am looking forward to giving it. I got a lot of things already lined up this week, uh, starting tomorrow. And, uh, I'm excited. So hot stuff. Want to thank my good friends at Bedford Bedford's dot com for sponsoring the Moose podcast. Besides getting geared to me and to I know many of you, uh, these folks are there to help us as much as possible. Now, I mentioned the new Nikon Z video body that came out. Uh, I guess we're two weeks ago. Yep. Bedford's is your headquarter to get that now. It does have some really cool features, including that thirty two bit float audio. But what if you're not a sound expert and when you're shooting video, sound is so important. It is so important. Well guess what? Bedford's got sound experts there. Yes, sir. They can help you with microphones and settings and all the things you need to to build out that video system around that, whether it's the Nikon XR or Z9 or Z8 or Z6 three with its two hundred and forty P. Yep. Bedford's is the folks that can help you. All that and coming up here shortly. Um, God, it's probably gonna be here tomorrow. The way time's going, they've got photo con with my dear friend Dixie Dixon there. As the keynote speaker. Will you go to the photo con to buy your gear? You go to the store, you give them a call or you go to the website. Just make sure to use that discount code m o. Save yourself five percent after you get done checking out Bedford's. They are the greatest. I love them to the pieces. Thanks, Bedford for sponsoring the Moose podcast. A big part of photography. A big part is not camera settings per se. It's not camera gear, per se. It's a little bit of light, a little bit

of luck. I think a lot of imagination and seeing over the grass. It's it was key. So there we were, up on the gigantic river and more or less surrounded by, you know, six hundred to a thousand pound bears as they go about their daily life. Now, the salmon were running. I haven't seen so many pink salmon in my life. That run was unbelievable. And of course, the classic thing is bears are eating fish. But, you know, they say about ninety percent of their diet is vegetation and they are out there in the grasses munching. And you've probably heard me talk about it, even seen the photographs from May when we're on the flats. And the grasses oh six nine inches tall or so, maybe a foot when we leave. Well, this time of year, the grasses. And because they hadn't had any big water events to knock it down, grass is a whole lot taller. In fact, um, it's a it's a dicey time of year to be on the flats if you're, you're near the grasses because you can't see anything through them if it's just two feet away. Now, besides not being really safe, right. If you can't see the subject, it's pretty darn hard to take a photograph of it. I mean, it's kind of part of the deal. You got to be able to see it before the the, the technology and the equipment can be effective and, uh. Well, seeing through the grass is impossible, but seeing over the grass. Well, that takes an imagination. It takes that technology and combining it with biology and that imagination to come back with the photographs. So a little back story. So bears, grizzly bears with its coastal grizzly bears and Kodiak brown bears. They have a period of time from when the cubs first venture out of the den, and they're a few months old, until when they're three or four years old, they spend all their time with mom and mom teaches them everything she can about surviving in the world that she has decided is going to be her home range. Lots of things to learn about. And then and then comes. And I still would love to witness this. And someday, God be willing, I will see it. Mom says, get the jiggers out of here and it can be brutal. As in, like she is just going to beat the bejesus out of him. Um, bite the jiggers and chases them and says, get the hay out of town. And at that point, the kids become goobers, as the biologists would call them. They're kind of scared of their own shadow because, you know, what's the the bear that's kept him safe and warm and fed and protected for three to four years, has all of a sudden turned into almost their worst enemy. So they're scared of their own shadows. They're scared of other bears. Now, there's always going to be exceptions. None of this is carved in stone. Um, believe it or not, bears don't read biology books. They don't really know the stuff that we're supposed to know. And of course, we really don't. But we generalize because it gives us a roadmap in which to work. Now, at a point in time, and you don't really know that they're males or females. And unless you actually see them take a whiz, that's the most, you know, easiest way of doing it. They, the Cubs could be if it's a one cub, either one and there's two or three, there's going to be at least one male, one female. And they are siblings. And when they are with mom, they they're pretty congenial. Get along, look out for each other and play. But when they leave, mom often, like I mentioned, they're scared of their own shadow, which includes their sibling. Now, I've never heard or read about how bears know a sibling is a sibling or not, but when you see certain biology going on, you kind of make some assumptions. And we had this one afternoon where we had this pair of bears in this grass and this grass. If you look at the photograph, you can see, you know, these are eight to eight and a half foot tall bears, because they're on their hind legs and you only can see perhaps maybe the top two feet of the bears. So the grass is at least, you know, five and a half feet, six feet tall. So when they're just walking around on all fours, you cannot see them. They're just gone. And then they pop up. So this pair, which I believe were siblings, um, were

just goofing. They were they were having a grand time. A just simply goofing. I don't know, there's no biological term for it. They weren't like, I don't know, you could say they're mock fighting because it was obvious that they weren't curving their nails to cause any damage. When they were biting. They weren't coming back with a mouthful of fur. There was no blood drawn. In fact, the whole thing was kind of silence. The only thing you heard was grass getting smushed under their their, you know. probably six hundred pound weight. But photographically, people love to get the shots of the bears fighting. Which is so rare. In fact, these guys were playing. And if you watch my Instagram channel, you can see a number of my, um, my tongue in cheek comments in, you know, for a single click. But the actual photograph had to be seeing over the grass, had to have an imagination. And when they pop up the first time, like a periscope and they're up above the grass for, oh, a whole five, seven seconds and then go back down, then they would move because they're, they're wrestling and playing and I guess they're playing tag in there. You have to figure out they're going to go up here to the right or the left where you disarm and then move the lens accordingly. And here's the thing. They would pop up and you know that there's going to be a photograph there. You know it's going to be it's just it's just no way. It can't be a photograph. Um, because they're busy goofing. Their mouths are open, their jowls are flopping, their ears are, you know, in different positions that lend themselves to the imagination. Telling a story, putting, you know, personal traits, human traits to it. And there's going to be one that's going to be, I guess you could say, the dominant one or not, which in this case never were. They were just. And you just because the grass was this big wall you couldn't see, you had to start seeing over the grass. Now, I was shooting with the Z8 with the drive attached, the Ambien twelve and I was or fourteen, I forget. What is that one for that drive? It's the twelve. Yeah, it's the twelve and I was in, uh, C1 focus mode. Continuous high ISO was at sixteen hundred, slight overcast, saturated light, uh, with the six hundred f4 TC lens with the one point four engage with the two x. So I was shooting at sixteen hundred and eighty millimeter. And you had to do two things in the lens is the rig is on the Benro Mammoth tripod with the wildlife head. So you have to first see him pop up and then you kind of get an idea which way they're going to go. Are they you know, if they're leaning to the right or left, you'd assume gravity is going to take in that direction and you kind of move your lens over. And here's the deal. You can't see anything. And by the time they pop up, if you're gonna sit there and hit the A of on button and things, you're going to get the image sharp by the time they fall back down within a few seconds. You're kind of, you know, dreaming, uh, actions happening too fast, you know, by. And you've got these seconds. The clock is ticking. As soon as they pop up, you have to swing the lens over there, arrange the elements. You don't want too much sky. You with grass, and then you get them where you want them in the frame. By the time you click. If you hit the Af-on button, they're already down. So you kind of have to pre-focus and have to do something that I'm here to tell you. It's amazing. It's staggers me, in fact, how few people know this very simple technique. I'll let you in on a secret. Come closer to the speakers. Just so you hear the secret. It's called manual focusing. Yeah, it's like manual focusing. What the heck is that? It's when you turn this ring on the lens and it manually moves the elements and it changes the focus. But if you can't see them, what good is manual focusing? Well, one of the amazing things about mirrorless is you have focus peaking. The default color is red. I have mine set to yellow personally. And what you do is you manually focus so the the grasses where you think they're going to come up is going to be in this case

going to be this yellow crinkly look. When you focus peaking you can see this, this band of color go away and closer to you. And so I would manually focus where I had my best guess. They would appear because I'm trying to see over the grass and watch what's going on. And I manually focus. And once that crinkle is there, I was I didn't touch it. Then when it came up and I just started shooting, I'd start shooting because I know if the crinkles are on the bears, I know there's tax sharp As far as the focusing goes. Um, not necessarily because of the movement. And then if I had the luxury of time, I would hit the Af-on button to double check that focus was dead, tax sharp. And just to make sure that if they all of a sudden are doing that and I lose focus because I hit the Avon button, I had put the memory lock on to where it was crinkled, so then I could hit one of the recall buttons on the lens barrel to bring it right back so I could keep on shooting so I wouldn't miss the shot. The other thing that I did was I went into the menu, into the, uh, focus tracking with lock on, which is in the A3 neighborhood, depending on the body. And in that case, I sent it to three and a steady. So lock on and and not be fooled by the grass because autofocus needs still needs three things. contrast strong vertical or diagonal line. And in that saturated overcast light, there wasn't really a strong contrast, just like none. But you had these strong vertical lines, the grass. So of course the AF system was going to what, want to lock onto it. Um, and in that process, I started seeing over the grass, I was able to get some shots that, um, if I didn't have them, it didn't have that memory saved. And it's all about memories. It's all about memories. Because, man, the way our minds work, it doesn't take long for things to kind of get out of focus. You know, we start losing details and all of a sudden the memory is gone. And if I didn't have these photographs, seeing over the grass and seeing these two big, big bears just enjoying life, I would I think I'd be devastated. Because the funny thing was, is that seeing it is kind of really kind of rare. in a, let's say, in a five day period in the field. I might see it once in ten days. It's that kind of not a common occurrence. But this pair of siblings, they were in the same spot, playing almost the same time a day, nearly four days in a row. I mean, it was like a gift from heaven to watch all this and just being able to see over the grass using the imagination and technology to bring back the picture. It was just one of those moments that is like, I'm grateful to be a wildlife photographer in the field. You just you just gotta put a little faith in things. Start seeing over the grass. You folks have a marvelous week this first week of fall. Get out there and shoot. Share your photographs, share your passion, and remember to make every click your story.