500 Yards Exhibit Guide

Paul Lucas Photographer

November 6th - December 28th, 2026

Heller Nature Center
Highland Park, IL



Artist Statement

500 Yards

“Anything more than 500 yards from the car just isn’t photogenic.”
— Edward Weston

In the world of landscape and nature photography, it’s not always about seeking out new places, but seeing with new eyes. Looking for the extraordinary in the ordinary. Living in Northeast Illinois, we have an embarrassment of riches in natural beauty. Lake Michigan, the wonderful county forest preserve systems, The Chicago Botanic Garden, The Morton Arboretum, Cantigny, farmland, forest. The list is endless of places we can photograph in our own backyard.

We can photograph these places to see what they look like captured by the camera. We can photograph these places to remember our experience in the moment that we created that image. We can photograph these places as way to share our creative energy. We can photograph these places to share with others the joy they’ve inspired in us in the hope that we will all be called to be conservationists of nature and the world around us.

All these images were created within a few minutes of my home in Lake County. Some were created a bit farther away, but all were created essentially in my Chicago-area “backyard.”

Artist Bio

Paul Lucas is a Nature and Landscape photographer living in Lake County, Il. The image, Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico by Ansel Adams inspired Paul to learn nature photography. He has studied with master photographers Will Clay, Allen Rokach, and Doug Beasely.

His work has been exhibited at the Morton Arboretum, the Chicago Botanic Garden, the Heller Nature Center and online at Landscape Photography Magazine (UK).

Paul was the Featured Artist in Issue 143 Landscape Photography Magazine and a featured photographer in the Full Frame section in Issue 144 Landscape Photography Magazine.

Paul has been teaching nature and landscape photography for 11 years. He started his photography teaching career in 2015 at the Morton Arboretum and is currently a photography instructor at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

Lake County is his studio for Nature and Landscape photography. His images are inspired by the natural beauty of the woods found in Lake County and commanding Western shoreline of Lake Michigan. Paul's specialty is in working with the abundant water for around Lake County. He believes in seeing with new eyes to capture the beauty of nature found close to home.

Paul hopes his images encourages everyone to enjoy and conserve nature close to home and throughout the world. And he hopes to inspire a few students to pick up a camera and express their own unique creative vision of the world around them.

Paul Lucas is a Nature and Landscape photographer and instructor living in Lake County, Il.