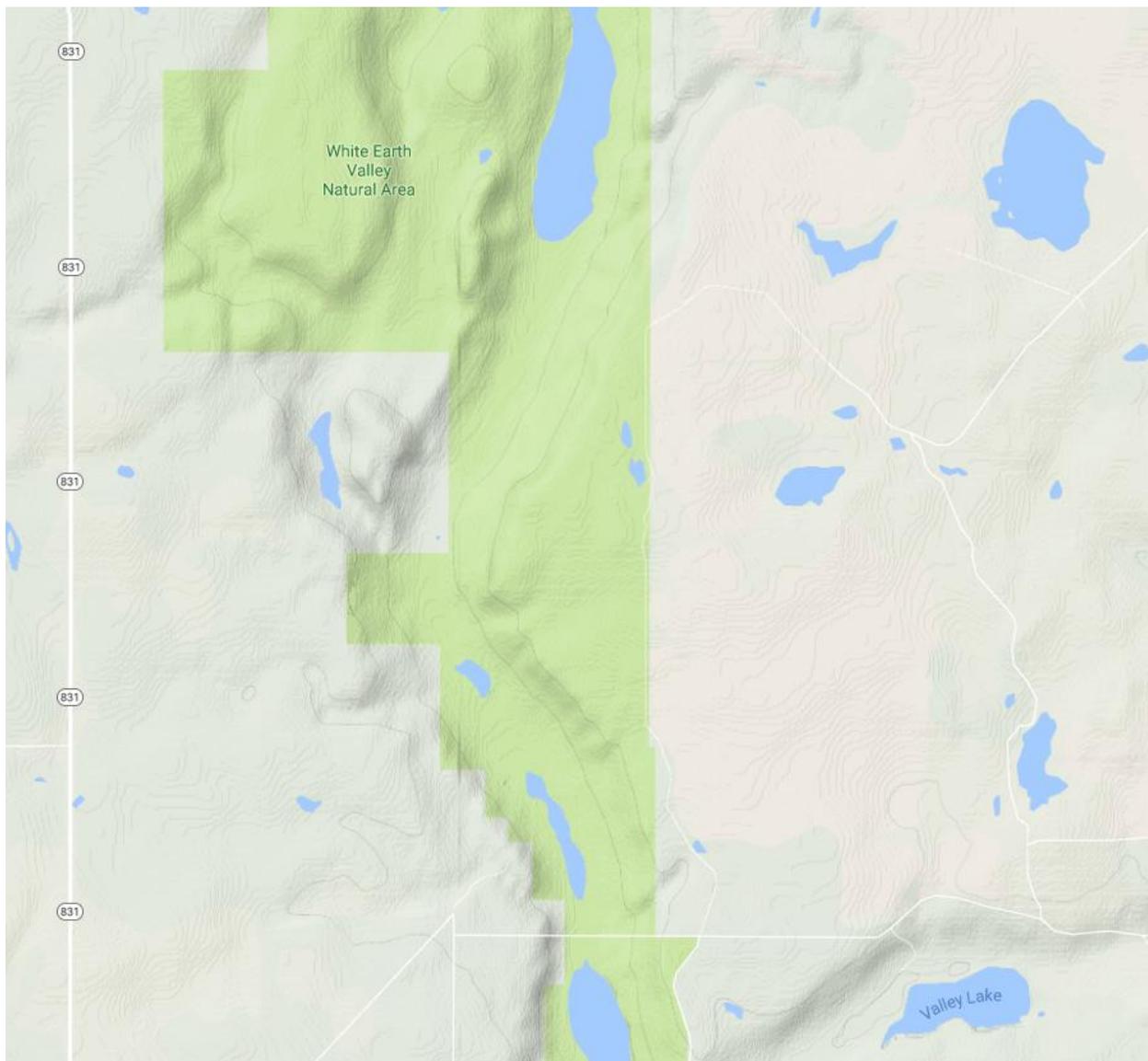


Scouting out locations for landscape shots

Capturing a great landscape photo involves several factors: the right time of day, a nice sky, good weather conditions. And especially the right location.

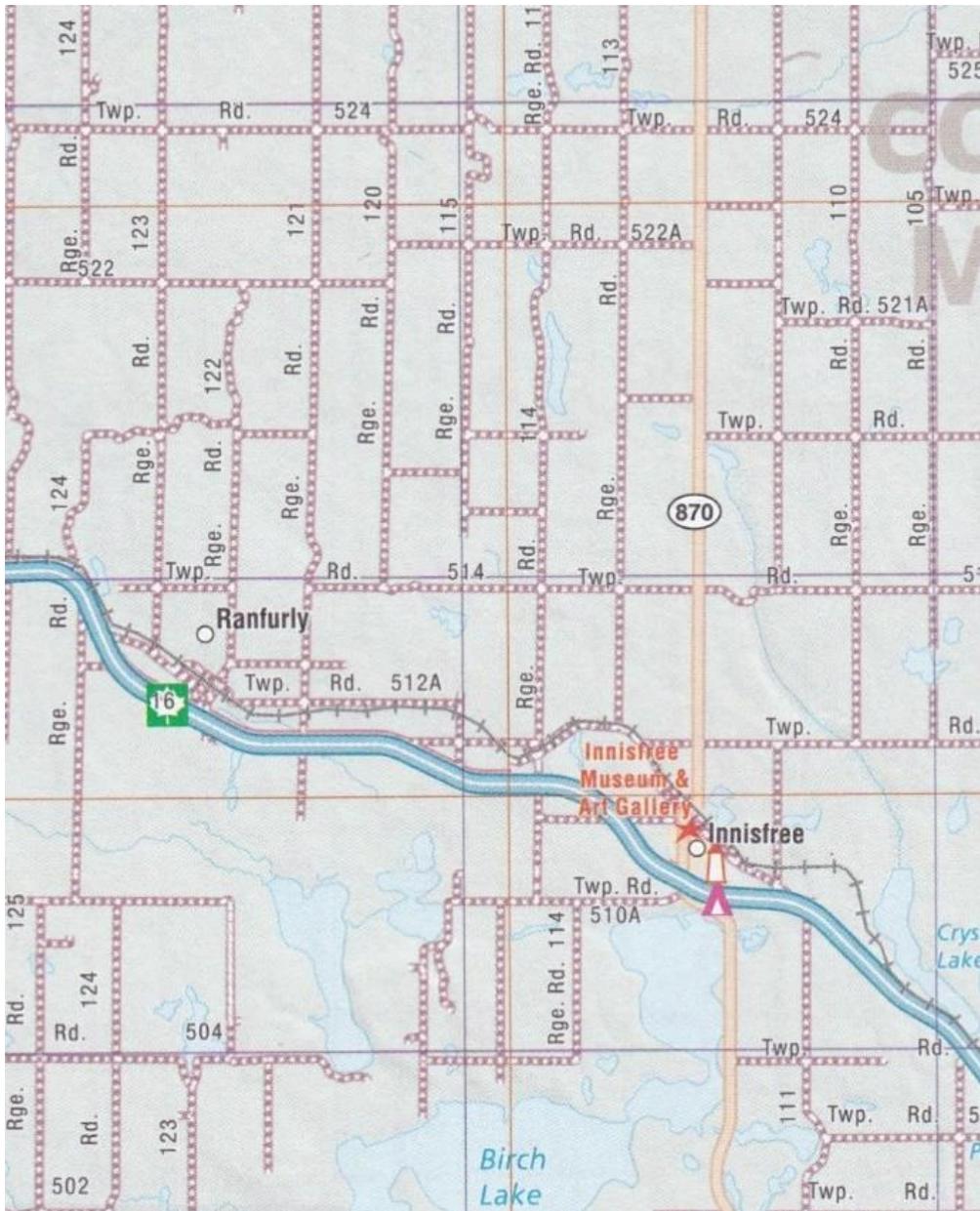
Doing your homework to find good locations ahead of time eliminates one factor and makes it easier to get that great photo.

I start by using Google Maps (in terrain mode; i.e. showing elevation) so that I can see hills and valleys, and the locations of roads, bridges, and rail lines. I also view the maps in satellite mode, to see what the ground cover looks like; i.e. is it treed or forested, farmed, or barren.

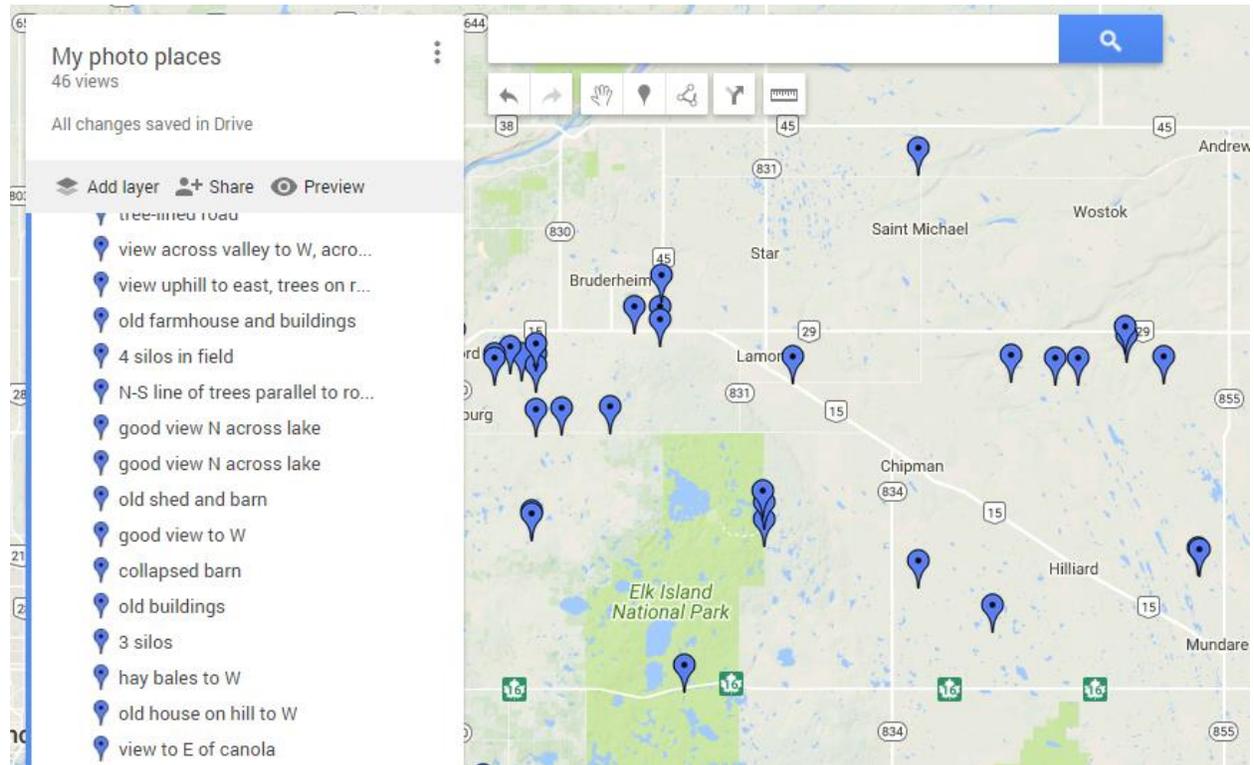


I then head out and drive around the countryside looking for great locations; e.g. a good view (and in which direction). I look for interesting buildings (esp. old barns and sheds), trees (esp. in isolation or in lines), hedges, wood and barbed wire fences, undulating roads and fields, railway lines, bridges, lakes and ponds (for reflections), crops (although they often change from one year to the next). Anything that helps to define a potential location.

I make notes, both on plain paper and on a map (Alberta Back Road Atlas, 1:250,000 scale), as in this example.

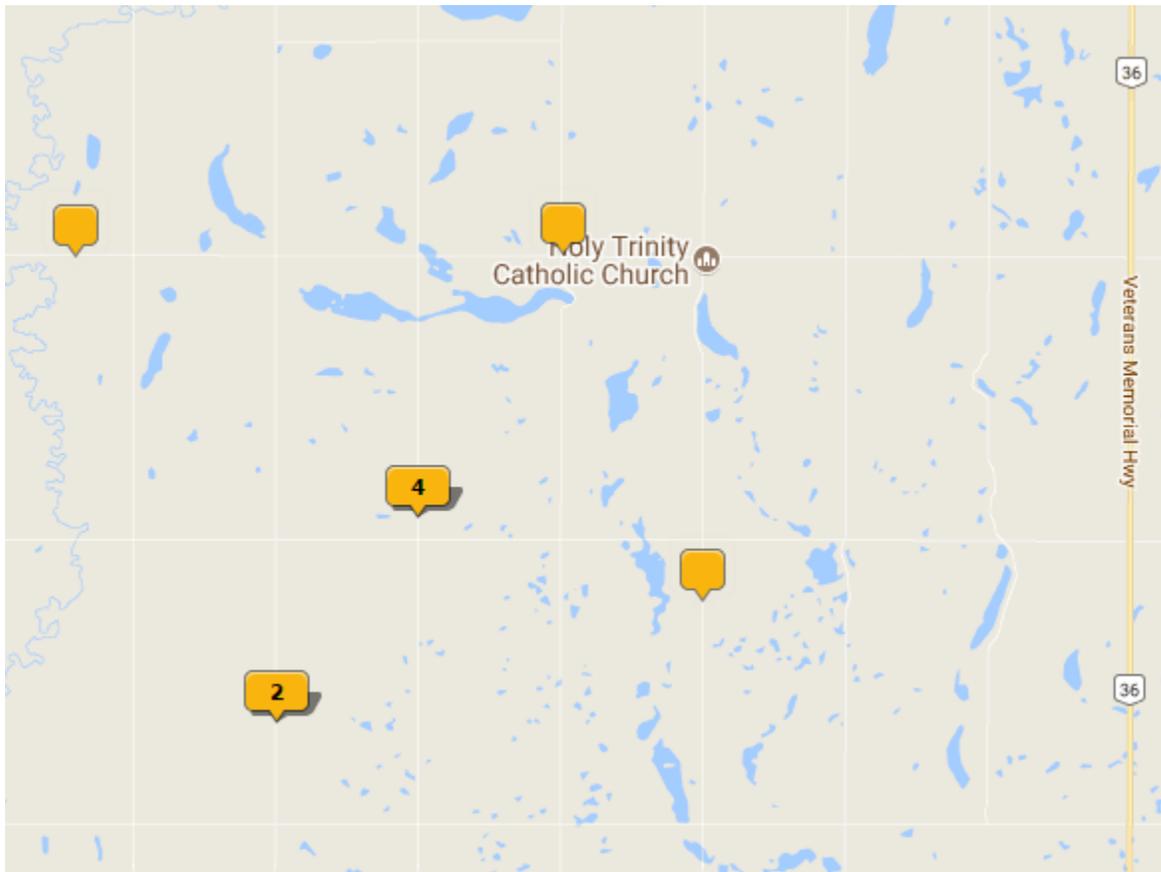


Then, when I have time, I transfer them to a personal Google map (“Your places”) that I’ve created.



I also use The Photographer's Ephemeris (<http://photoephemeris.com/>), a Windows-based app (there are also iOS and Android versions) that's useful for determining the angle and elevation of the sun and moon on any time and date. Using this app, one can determine precisely when the sun or moon will rise or set, and even when they will appear above a hill or mountain.

I also make use of a GPS (I have an attachment for my camera, although many newer models have one integrated into the camera); that way the location of an image is automatically embedded in the image's metadata. This data can be viewed in Lightroom, in the Map module.



With all this prep work done, when an opportunity presents itself (e.g. a promising sunset, the high potential of aurora, a heavy snowfall, a summer storm brewing), I know exactly where to head and will be ready to capture the moment.



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Jan, 2018