## *Revised guidelines for submission to BPS Competitions, as of May 12, 2025

Every BPS member is encouraged to participate in BPS competitions.

The rules & the details for entry are also noted in the BPS Newsletter under "Competition" prior to these sessions. *Even if a member has done this before, please carefully review the entire process before the next submission as there have continued to be numerous naming & sizing errors requiring very time consuming corrections.*

***Once submitted, changes will no longer be accepted. Submissions that do not follow the guidelines for theme, file sizing & image attributes, as below, will be deleted automatically, moving forward. This long-stated policy had not been followed in order to encourage member participation. However, this policy will be strictly used moving forward. If you have questions or need help with submissions, please email the Competition Chair before submitting images.***

Each dues-current BPS member is encouraged to participate in BPS competitions & may submit up to two images in the **Pictorial category (P)** and up to two images in the **Nature category (N)** for each competition, using either **Class A** (advanced) or **Class B** group. As a point of clarification, all new BPS members are placed in Class B unless their body of work is well known. All the prior year's competition results will be reviewed at the beginning of each year to determine if a Class B member qualifies to move up to Class A based on that year's scoring.

BPS competitions typically have a **theme** for the submissions as determined by the Competition Committee Chairperson. The theme is announced in the BPS Newsletter along with the competition information. All submitted images must be consistent with the announced theme to be considered for the competition. Images deemed by the Competition Chair &/or the judge to not reflect the announced theme will be disqualified or receive a score of one & will not be eligible for a competition award. Image substitutions are not permitted.

Since the BPS competitions are meant to be a learning process & a demonstration of current skill levels, submissions will be limited to those images taken within 1 year of the competition date. The ultimate goal of the competitions is for members to actually go out & make images for the themes. In keeping with that, the themes will be announced as far in advance as possible.

These competition rules depend upon the honesty of our members. There could possibly be a request for the original, unprocessed file, in rare circumstances. The act of trespassing onto private property to make an image or an image that implies such is inappropriate.

**Concerning use of AI in BPS competitions:**

As a means of clarification, BPS is adopting the current PSA position on AI for its **Pictorial & Nature categories**: "Images created by image creation software (frequently called 'AI' images) are **not allowed**." The key point is AI "created" vs. AI enhanced. AI generated content, such as image elements resulting from use of the Generative AI Tool options in post processing software is not permitted in BPS competitions. AI enhancement tools utilized in-camera & in post-processing that help "enhance" an image without inserting new pixels are allowed. The BPS Board will continue to monitor trends in AI & update its competition guidelines as needed going forward.

**Categories are defined as:**

**- Pictorial (P)**: Almost anything goes in this category that originates *fully within a camera* - any type of image, genre, creative capture, creative processing, multiple exposures, composites, abstracts, diptych/triptych imagery, gilding or scanned outputs of images created on film, in a conventional darkroom &/or with historic alternative photographic processes, such as Cyanotypes & collodion. Unique &/or modified cameras or lenses & camera/phone apps that alter the image are fine for use in Pictorial, including but not limited to: infrared capture; fisheye lenses; Lensbaby lenses; 360° outfit; image distorting pinhole & toy cameras; digital scanner (considered a camera), painterly effect & toning; & creative apps. Sky replacement and texture addition is permitted *but only if* the composite image utilizes a sky or texture that the artist photographed & is not from another photographer or software program. The Pictorial category encourages creative imagery.

There are *several exceptions for Pictorial*: those images that qualify as Nature category images - nature images cannot be entered in the Pictorial category; AI computer generated assets/elements added to images; any form of nudity.

**- Nature (N)**: Nature images must conform to the classic Photographic Society of America (PSA) definition of a nature image (except as described below). Eligible subjects include trees, wild flowers, weeds, grasses, fungi, ferns, mosses, animals, birds, reptiles, insects, fossils, weather, the night sky & deep space as single or stacked image files, geological formations, land/seascapes (without boats or other human evidence), etc. Banding on wild animals is acceptable. The PSA standard has been modified by BPS to allow photographs of zoo or game farm animals within their enclosures & surroundings, botanical gardens, cultivated plants & aquariums. Ineligible subjects include scenics which show evidence of the hand of man (roads, fences, buildings, telephone wires, etc.), mounted specimens, domestic animals & feral animals (e.g., horses, dogs, cats, goats, rabbits, camels & pigs). These “non-nature” images would all belong in the Pictorial category.

Because the intent of a Nature image as defined by BPS is to *accurately depict a real subject*, the degree of digital manipulation should be “minimal” & must appear “natural”. Cropping, dodging/burning, grayscale black & white conversion, HDR & focus stacking are permitted, as that is what the eye can automatically perceive. Unique cameras, camera/phone apps & camera lenses that do not inherently or artificially change &/or distort the image are perfectly fine for capturing Nature submissions, including macro lenses, extension tubes & tele extenders. Digital scans of

Nature images created on film or in a conventional darkroom or with historic alternative photographic processes are fine. Below are detailed editing guidelines for the Nature Division.

**Editing Guidelines for Nature Division**:

Processing or editing must be limited to making the image look as close to the original scene as possible, except that conversion to grayscale monochrome is allowed.

**Allowed editing techniques:**

• Cropping, straightening and perspective correction.

• Removal or correction of elements added by the camera or lens, such as dust spots, noise, chromatic aberration and lens distortion.

• Global and selective adjustments such as brightness, hue, saturation and contrast to restore the appearance of the original scene.

• Complete conversion of color images to grayscale monochrome.

• Blending of multiple images of the **same subject** and combining them in camera or with software (exposure blending/HDR or focus stacking),

• Image stitching – combining multiple images with overlapping fields of view that are taken consecutively (panoramas)

**Editing techniques that are not allowed**

• Removing, adding to, moving or changing any part of an image (including generative AI removal tools and/or adding texture layers), except for cropping and straightening.

• Adding a vignette during processing.

• Blurring parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene.

• Darkening parts of the image during processing to hide elements in the original scene.

• All conversions other than to complete grayscale monochrome.

• Conversion of parts of an image to monochrome, or partial toning, desaturation or over-saturation of color

**File Naming** is very specific & the protocol for each entry must be followed exactly as shown in the example below.

*Example*:
For the first digital entry submitted by John Smith entitled Covered Bridge in the Pictorial category, the submitted file would be named:
BPS-SmitJ-P1-Covered_Bridge.jpg

*Explanation*:
BPS-SmitJ-P1-Covered_Bridge.jpg
^ ^ ^ ^^ ^
A B C DE F
A - BPS ON ALL ENTRIES
B - FIRST FOUR LETTERS OF LAST NAME (Smit)
C - FIRST LETTER OF FIRST NAME (J)
D - P = PICTORIAL or N = NATURE CATEGORY
E - 1 = FIRST IMAGE IN CATEGORY or 2 = SECOND IMAGE IN CATEGORY
F - IMAGE TITLE (MAX. 36 CHARACTERS)

*Note*:
Your name needs to be 5 letters. That would be the first 4 letters of your last name then the first letter of your first name. If your last is less than 4 letters then add the needed letter from your first name.

You must use the dash ( - ) not the underscore ( _ ) in between each part of the file name. And, you must use the underscore ( _ ) between each word in the image title (i.e., Covered_Bridge). Do not use any blank spaces in the file name. Only JPG file format is to be used & designated by ".jpg"; do not use ".jpeg" or ".jpg.jpg".

**File Sizing** is very important & is a common spot of errors. The maximum image dimensions are **1920 pixels (w) x 1080 pixels (h)**. In other words, images cannot be any wider right to left than 1920 pixels. Images cannot be any taller top to bottom than 1080 pixels. This sizing requirement holds for horizontal, vertical & square images. Images larger than the requisite file size will be automatically deleted. Resolution should be set to 72 pixels per inch. Image metadata should not be purposefully removed from the image files. Refer to the separate document on sizing, etc. to see how to do this properly. Resizing your Images.pdf

**Image Attributes**: Text may not be added to any image nor the utilization of an artist watermark or image border. Images that have *placed* in any previous BPS competition may not be resubmitted.

**Image Submission** is performed using 4 links to 4 separate directories in the BPS's SmugMug account to upload images, depending on the photographer's Class (A or B) and the image Category (Pictorial or Nature). This will then automatically separate the image files appropriately on the

receiving end. There has been no change in the BPS file naming rules, the file size requirements, etc. Please triple check your entries carefully before you submit to minimize errors & elimination.

**Class A** photographers use these 2 links to upload files:
Pictorial (P1 & P2): https://www.smugmug.com/upload/r5ZTvq/ClassAPictorial
Nature (N1 & N2): https://www.smugmug.com/upload/BkRVbG/ClassANature

**Class B** photographers use these 2 links to upload files:
Pictorial (P1 & P2): https://www.smugmug.com/upload/f7pVTw/ClassBPictorial
Nature (N1 & N2): https://www.smugmug.com/upload/F5hJxr/ClassBNature

When the SmugMug web page opens, you will have 2 options:
- "Drag Photos & Videos Here", or
- Click "Browse Computer" to be taken to your computer's folder structure to find where your images are stored, then select your images & click "Open".
Either way, the image files will then begin uploading to the SmugMug website. Once the upload is complete, you'll see a message that says: "Hooray! That's 2 happier photos. : )". Just click the "Done" button at the top right - that's it! Once you get the confirmation screen that your photos have been uploaded, your work is finished. You can then close your browser. You might get a screen that asks you to sign into the Smugmug Gallery. Just ignore this action.

Once uploaded, you cannot exchange, delete or make changes to your photos. Improper submissions will be deleted. It is strongly advised that members place all entries into a desktop folder & study them carefully to make sure that the images meet the category criteria & that the files are properly sized & named prior to beginning the submission process. Ideally, be ready with all your images for the one submission event. If you did not upload all of the eligible images initially, you can repeat the process later with more images.

After you are done uploading your photos, please email Mike Ruemmler, the Competition Committee Chairperson, at Mike.Ruemmler@berksphotographic.com, simply typing "x number of images were submitted for BPS" in the subject line; nothing else is needed. You will receive verification that everything is ok with your upload. If you do not send this requested email, you will not receive confirmation.

If you have questions or need help with submissions, please email Mike *before* submitting images as changes cannot be made once files are submitted.

*Submission of an image for any BPS competition indicates agreement of the maker to allow BPS to post the image in the BPS Newsletter, online via the BPS website & BPS YouTube channel & via Zoom.*