# Foregrounds

## The Foreplay of Aurora Photography
## Finding locations, viewpoints and compositions

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# How was your night?



# Don’t be an idiot.

Get the shot. Skip the trespassing charge.

# Give the aurora a foreground

A recognizable subject adds context and scale.



# Choose a foreground that works

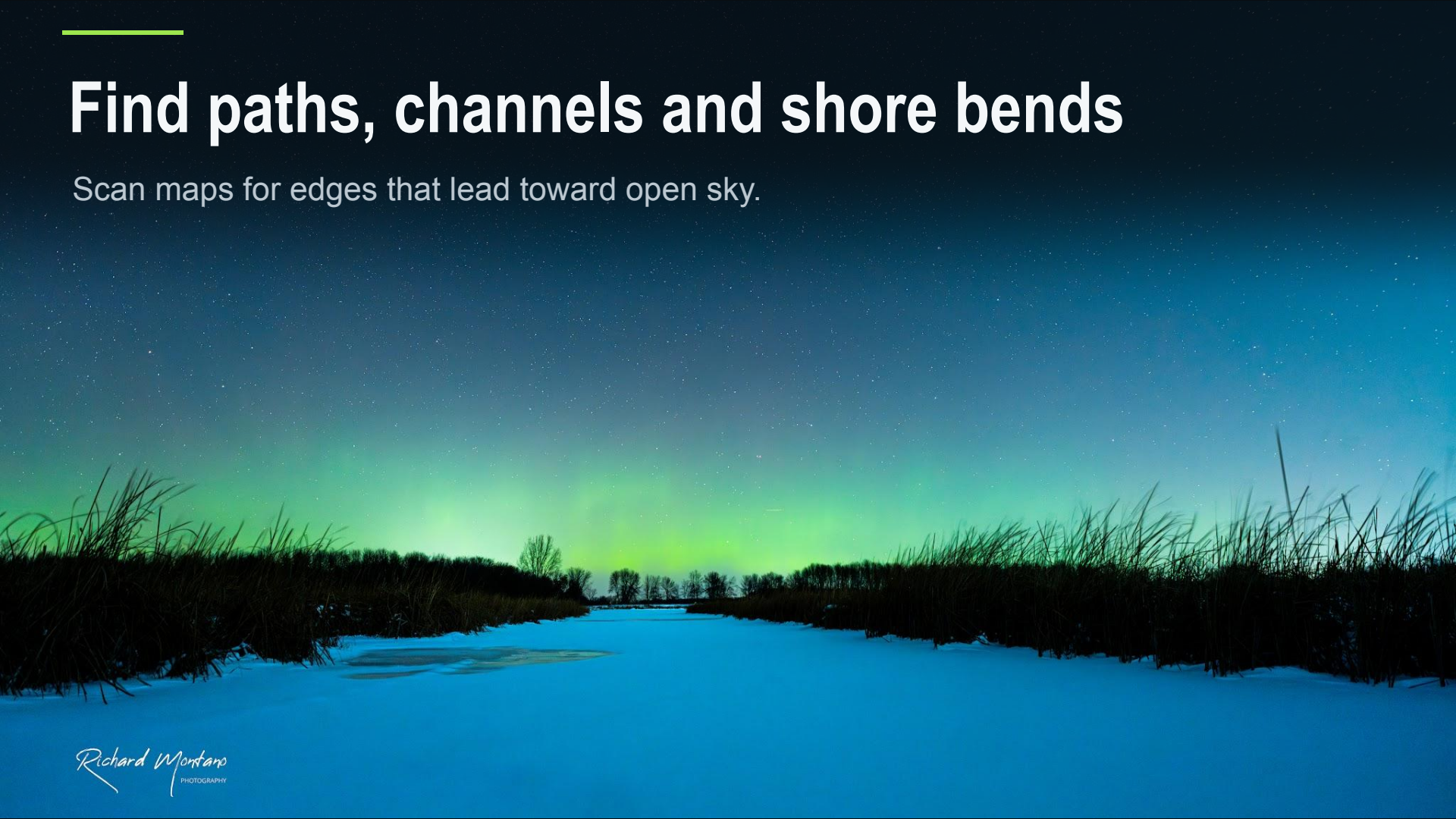
01 A recognizable shape

02 A line that leads into the scene

03 Enough space for the aurora

# Find paths, channels and shore bends

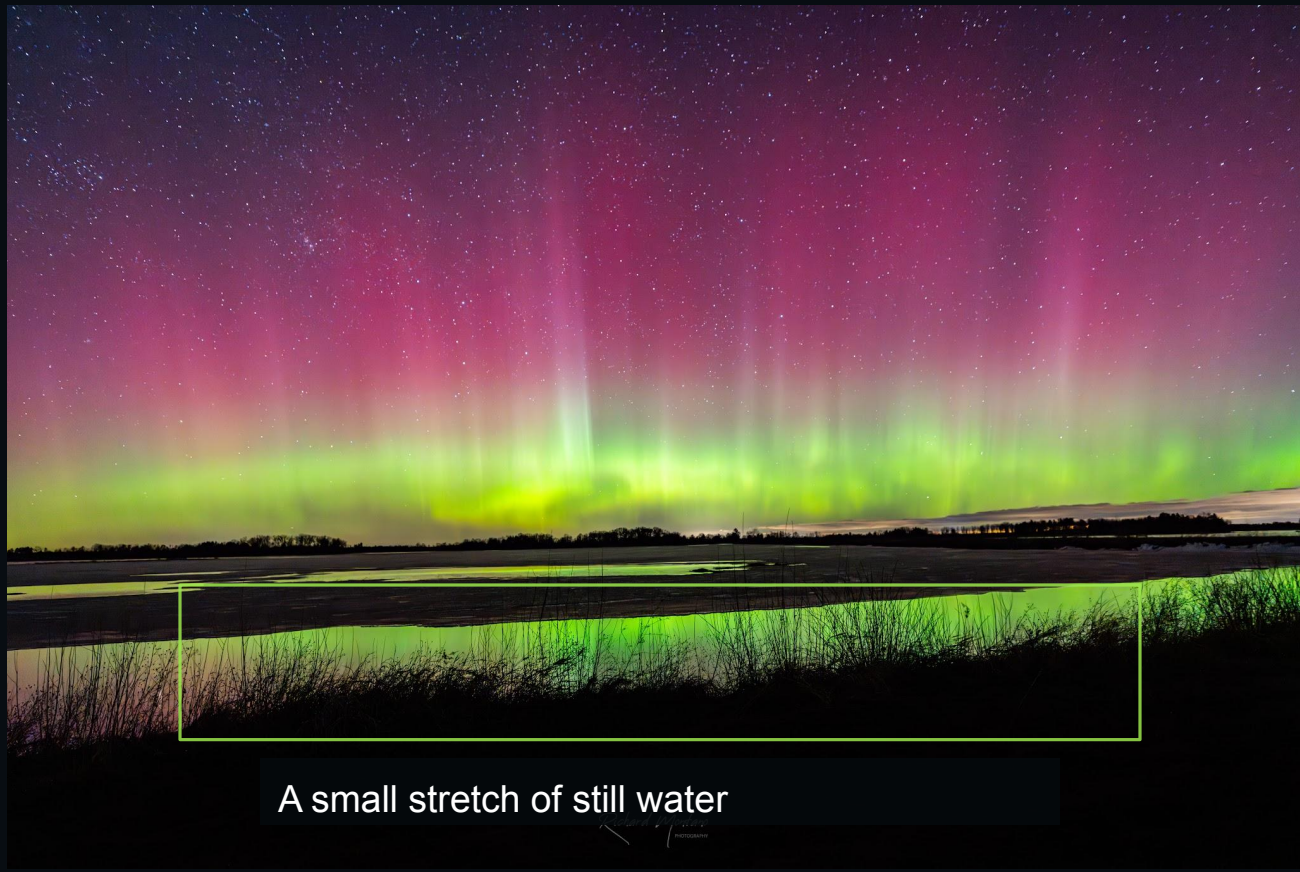
Scan maps for edges that lead toward open sky.



# Find small reflections

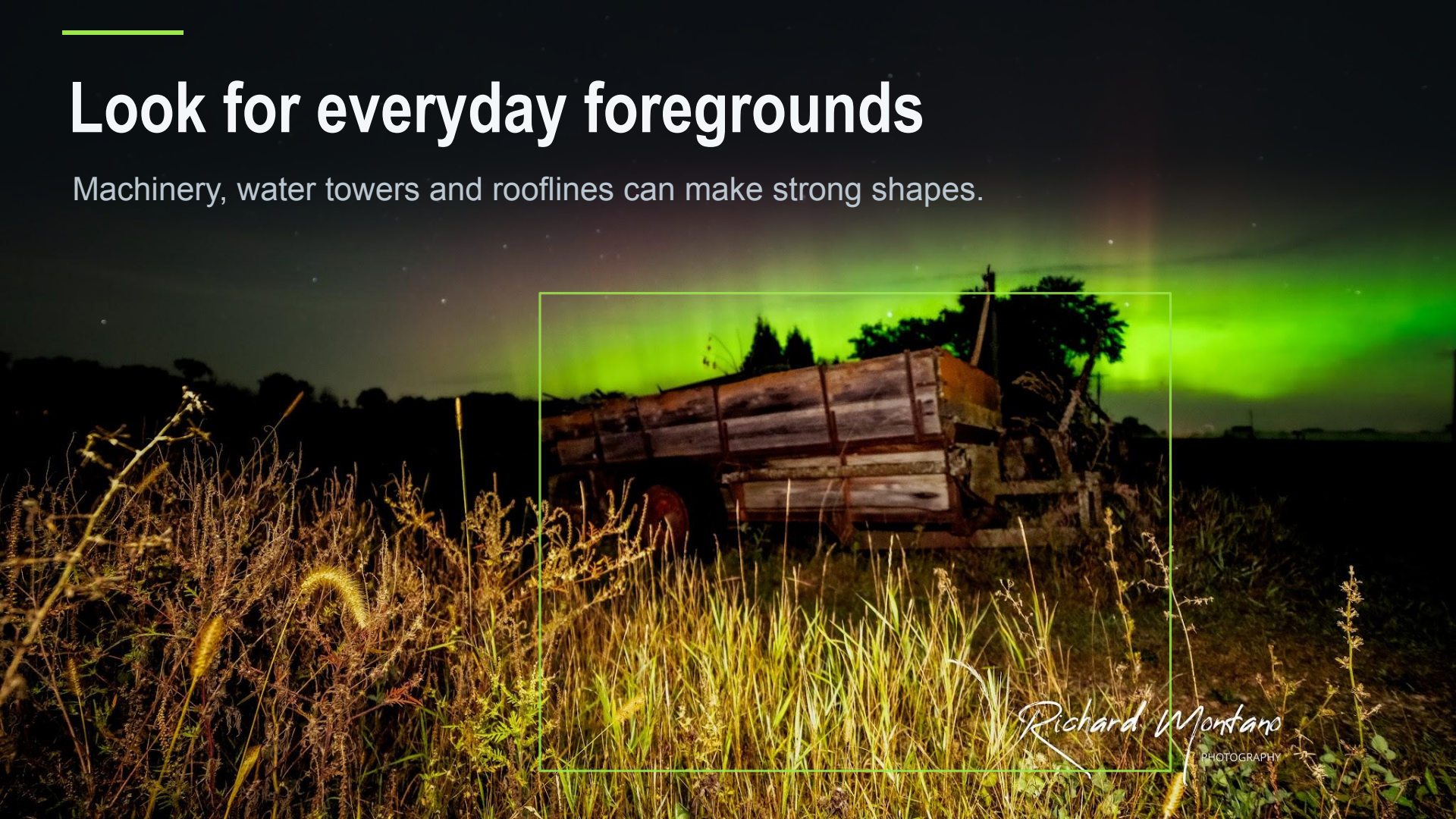
Look for quiet channels, shallow pools and puddles.

Try wet pavement, glass and polished metal.



# Look for everyday foregrounds

Machinery, water towers and rooflines can make strong shapes.



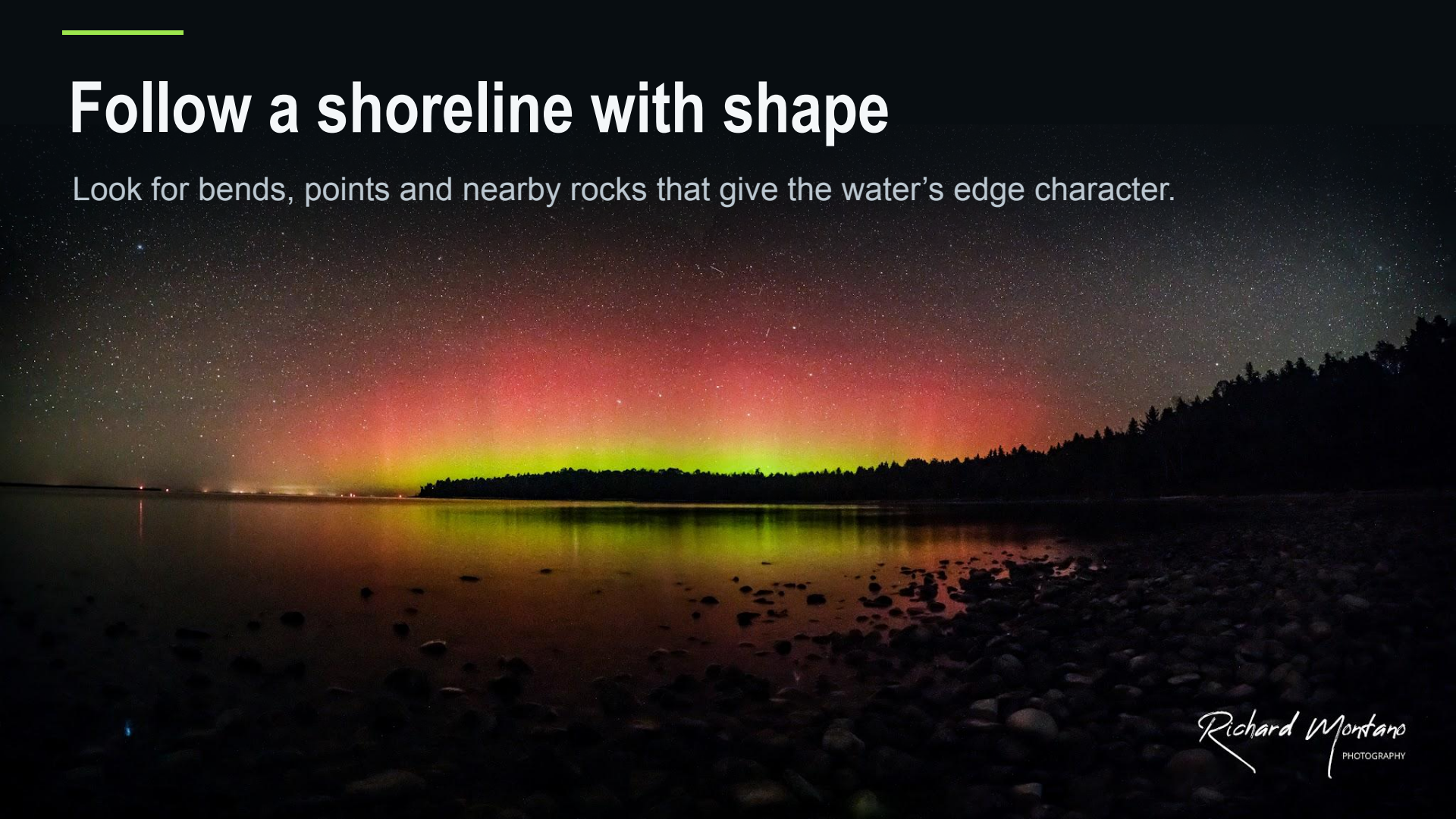
# Scout the light as well as the subject

Look for lamps, passing headlights and other light sources.



# Follow a shoreline with shape

Look for bends, points and nearby rocks that give the water’s edge character.



# Spotting the funky

Look for things that create a contrast



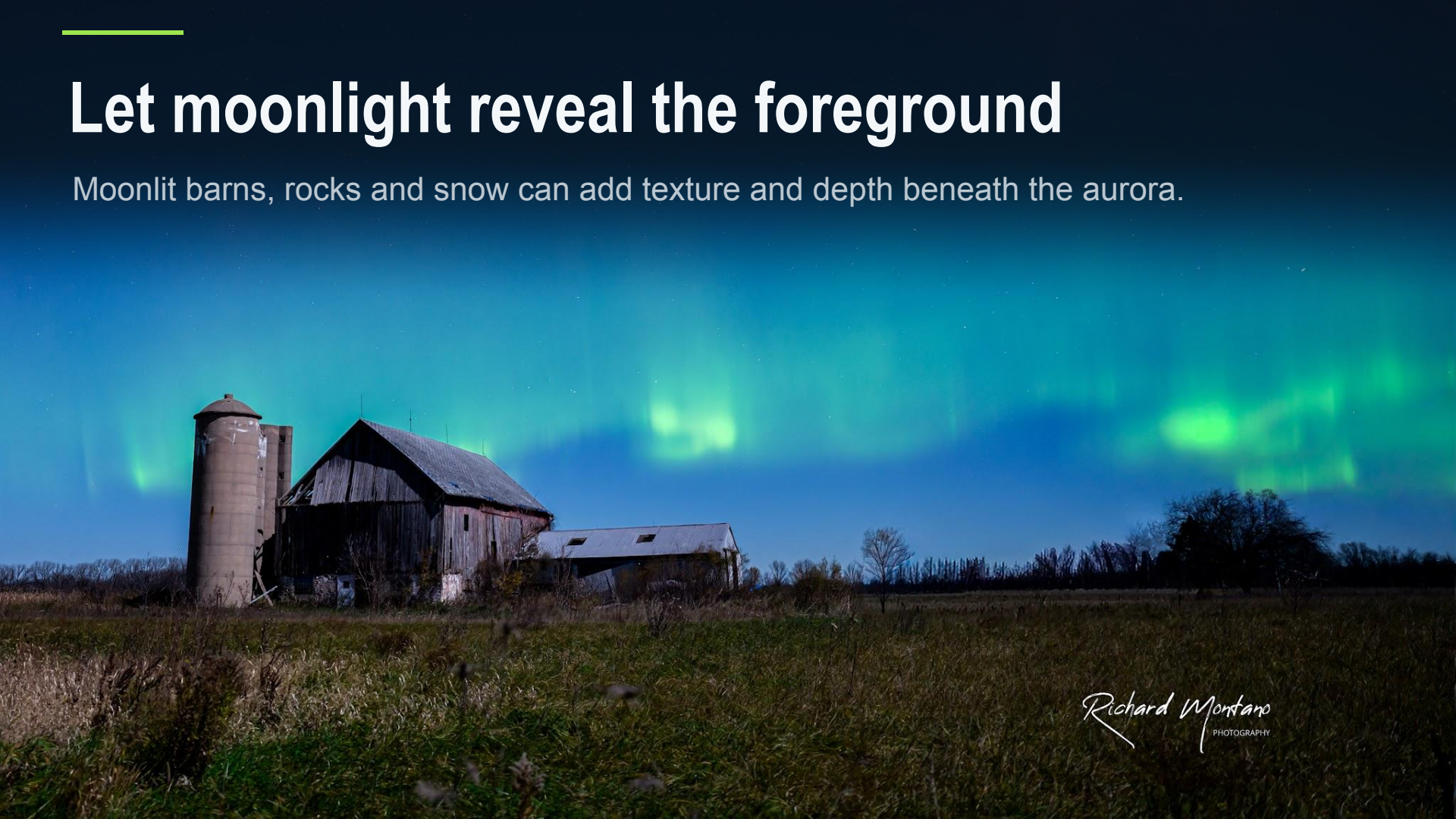
# Notice temporary foregrounds

Equipment moves. Save the idea and revisit soon.



# Let moonlight reveal the foreground

Moonlit barns, rocks and snow can add texture and depth beneath the aurora.



# Be your own foreground

An open viewpoint can work even when there is no landmark.




Try a person or a familiar object




Look for open sky behind the outline

# Keep a backup location ready

If clouds or lights spoil the view, try your backup.



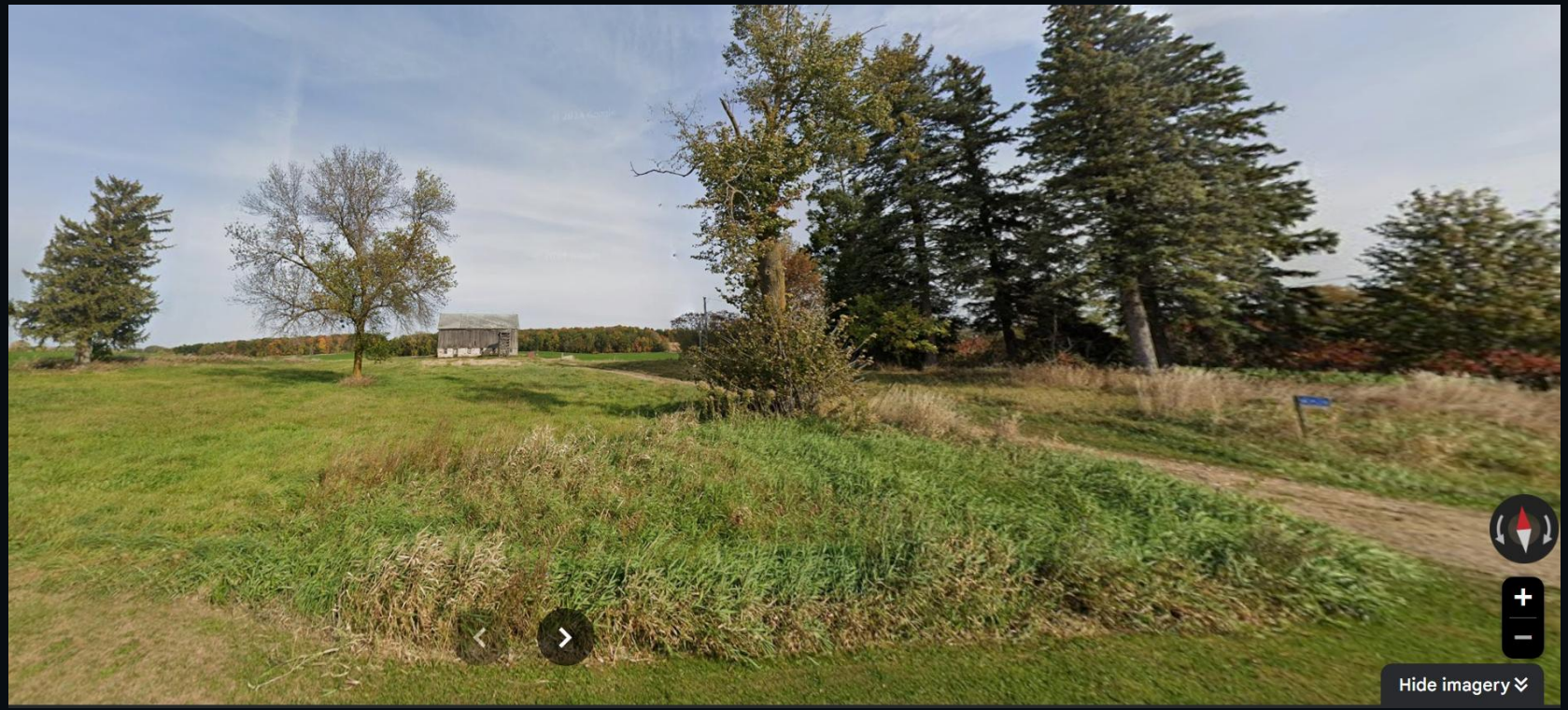
# Satellite view: find isolated shapes

Look for a building, a few trees and open ground.



# Street View: check the outline

Compare the tree, roofline and horizon from ground level.

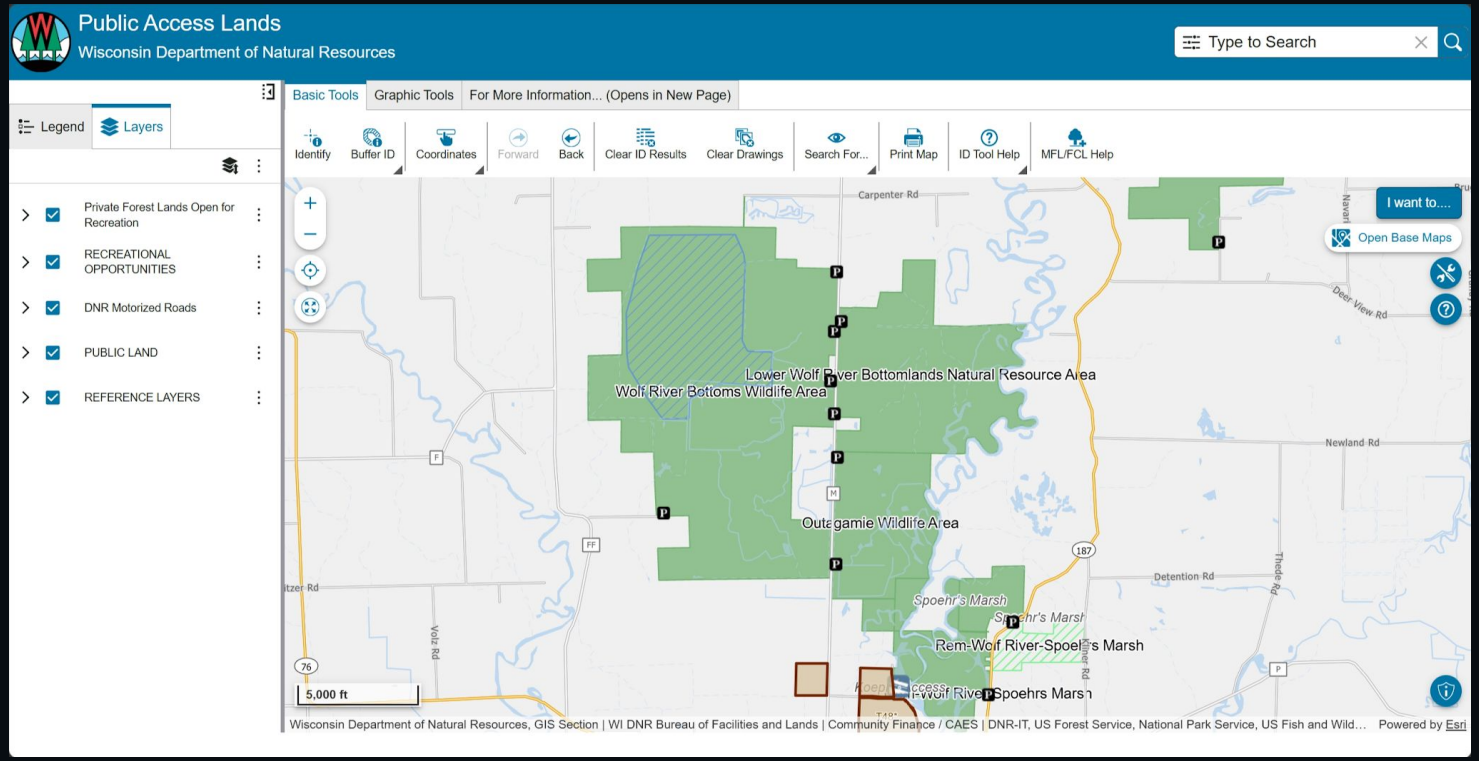


# The tree and barn give the sky a setting



# DNR maps: find water and approach points

Outagamie Wildlife Area — start with the larger area.



# Satellite view: follow the water’s edge

Look for channels, bends and openings beside the paths.



# Find the foreground before dark

Outagamie Wildlife Area — water nearby, an open horizon, room to stand.



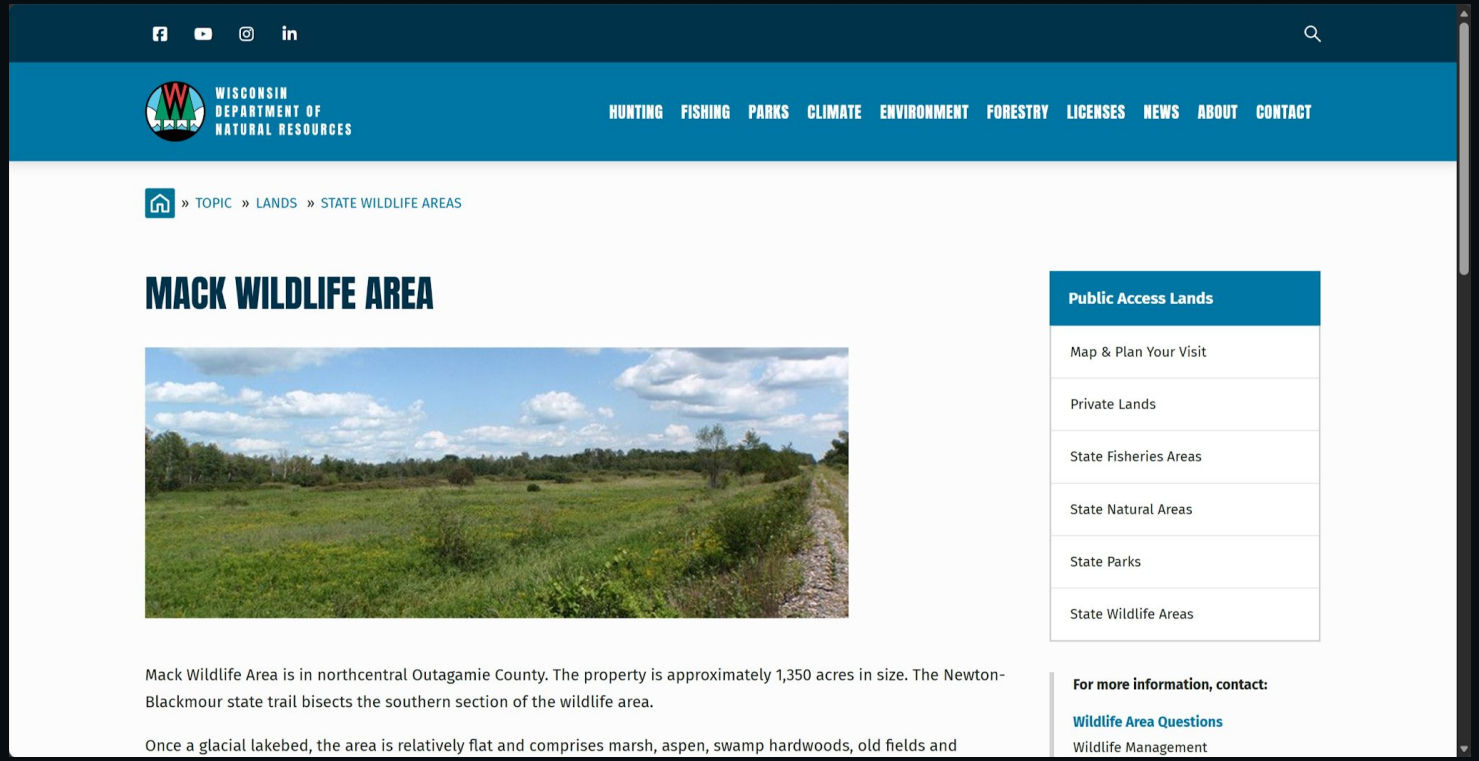
# A water edge becomes a foreground

Nearby water carries the aurora into the scene.



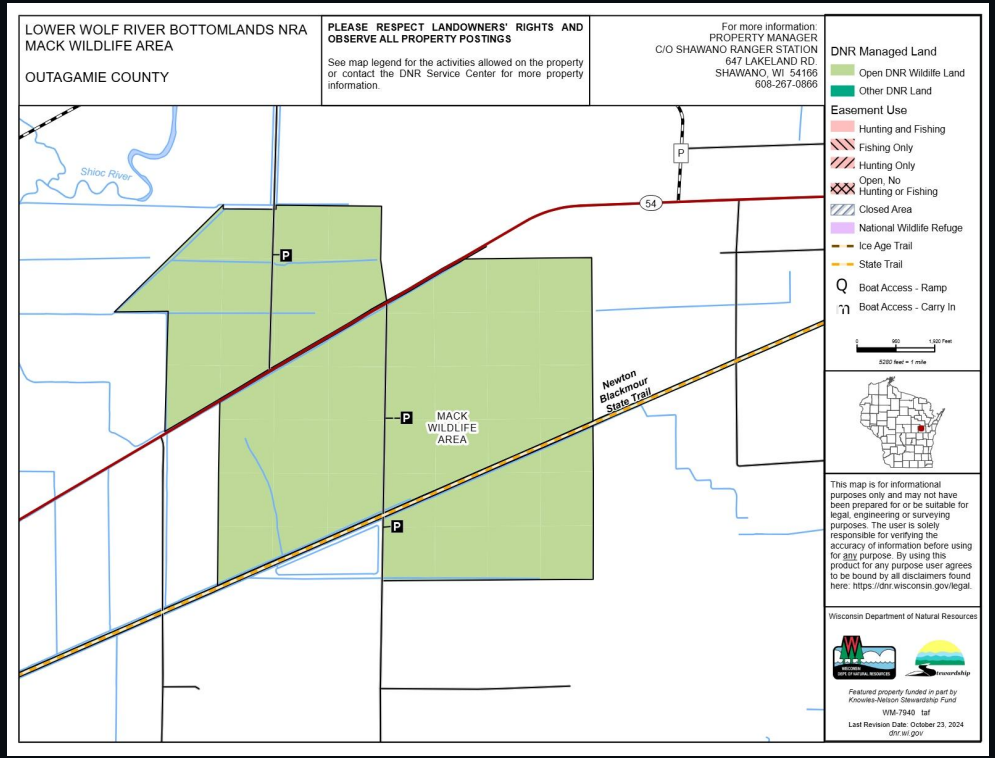
# Wildlife-area pages are scouting leads

Mack Wildlife Area — look for landscape clues and a property map.



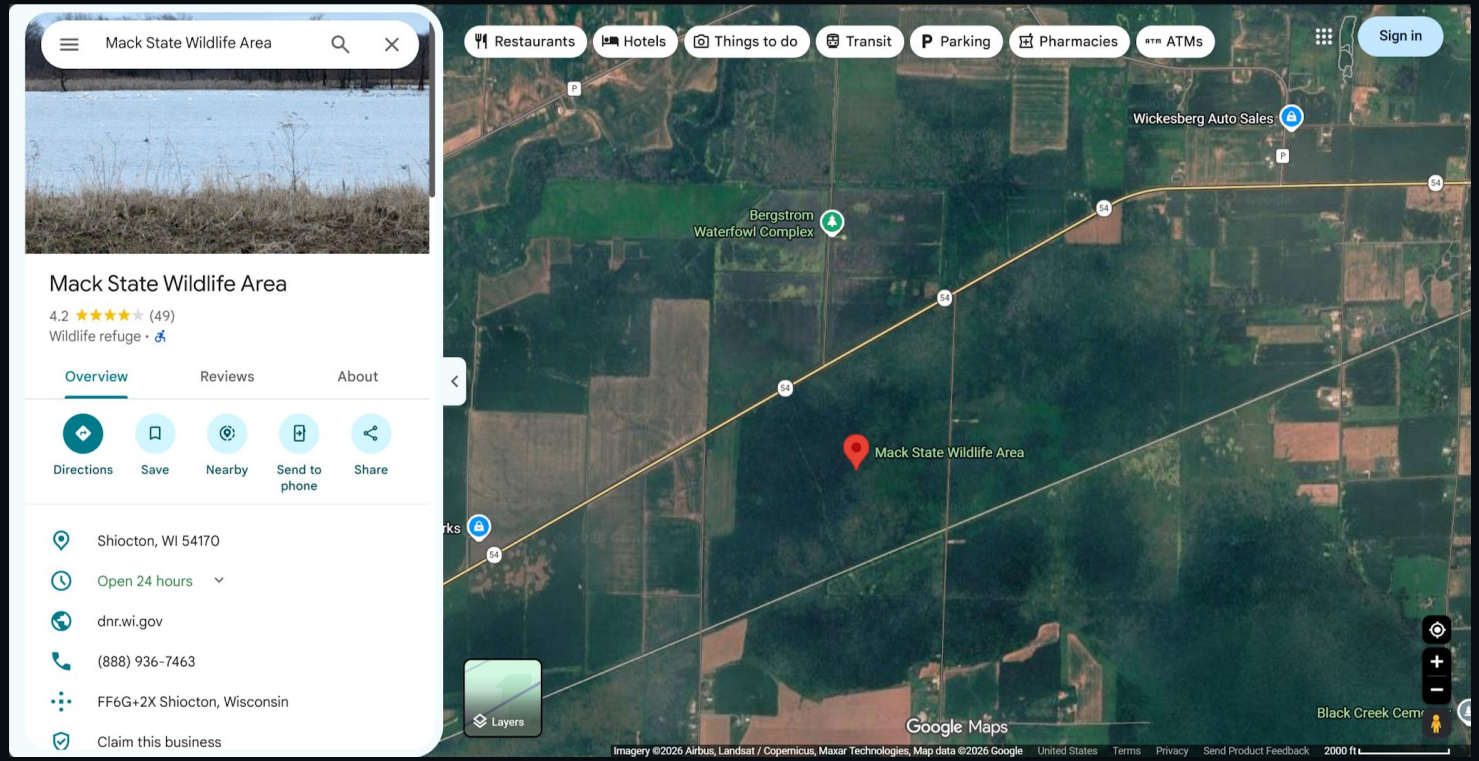
# The property map narrows the search

Compare parking, roads, trails and the area boundary.



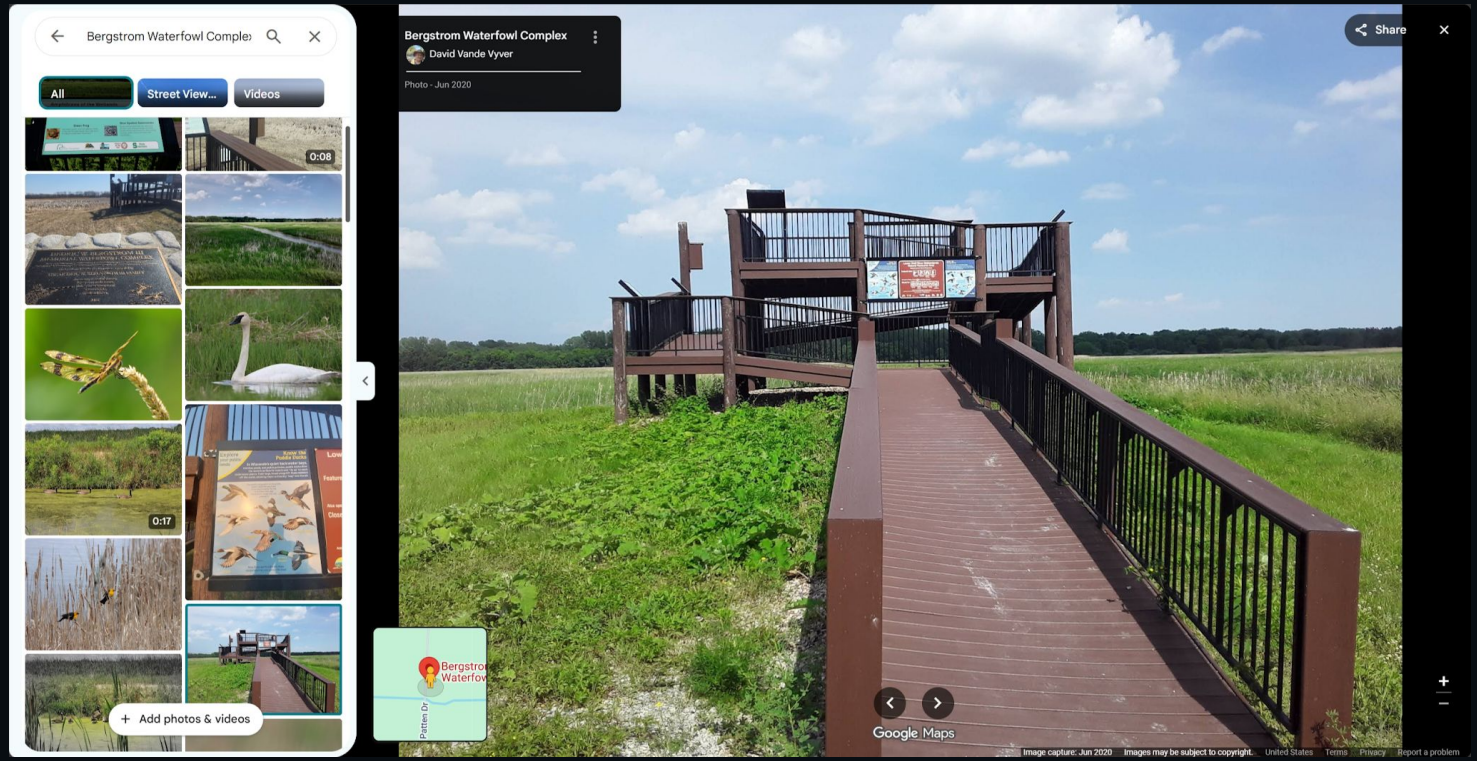
# Look beyond the main place pin

The nearby Bergstrom Waterfowl Complex is another lead.



# Visitor photos reveal the foreground

A wildlife observation tower, open ground and a low horizon.



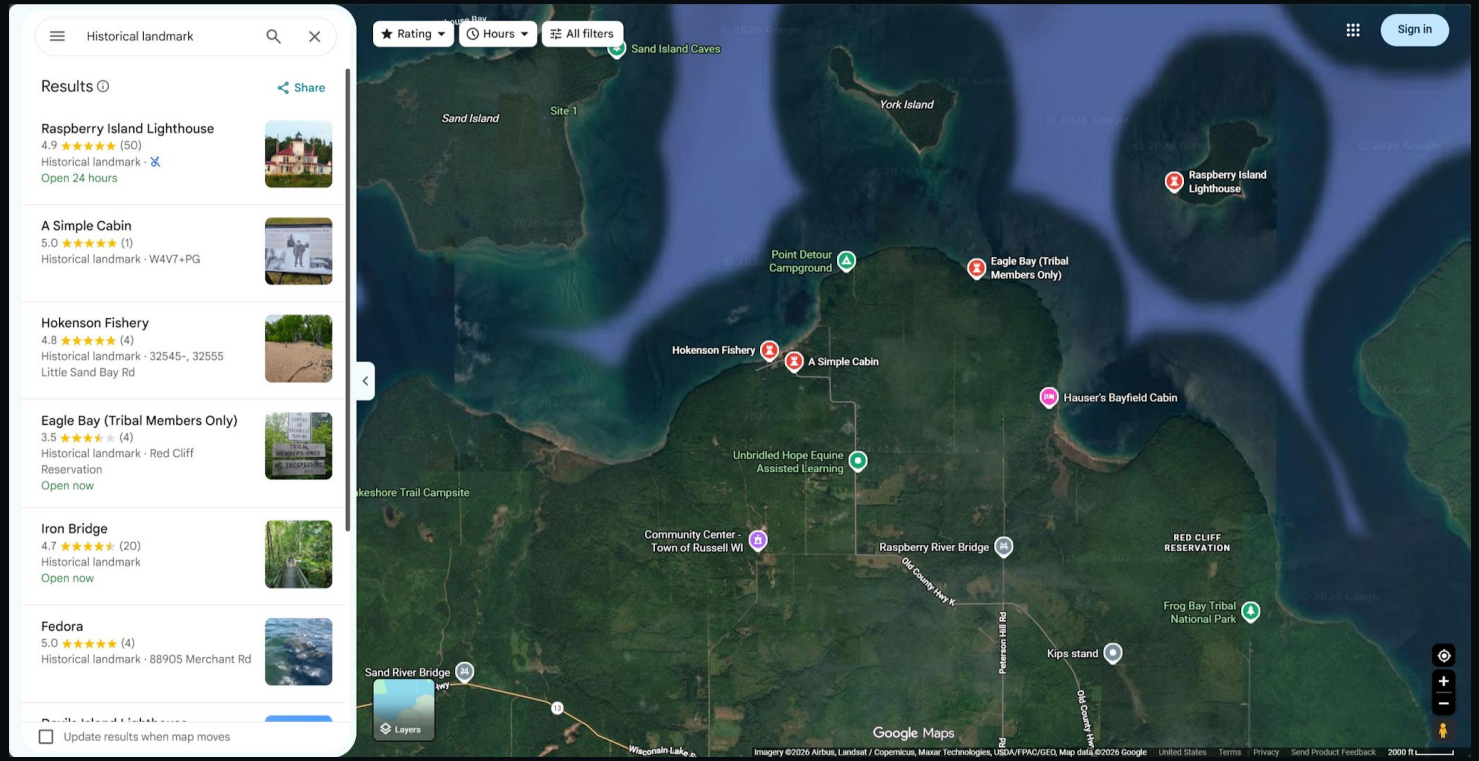
# The tower can be part of the view

Explore around a viewing structure as well as from it.



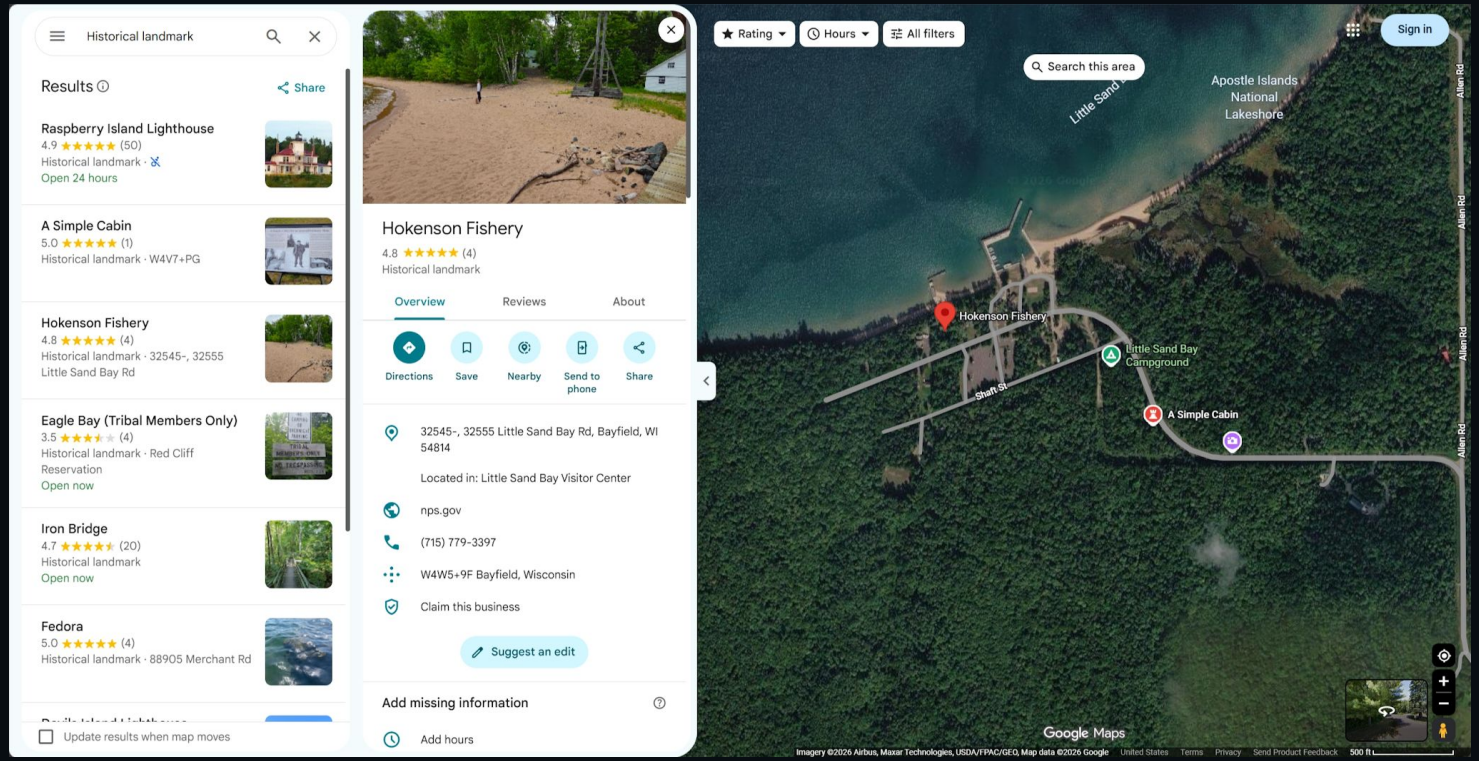
# Search for a feature, not just a town

Try “historical landmark” in the area you want to explore.



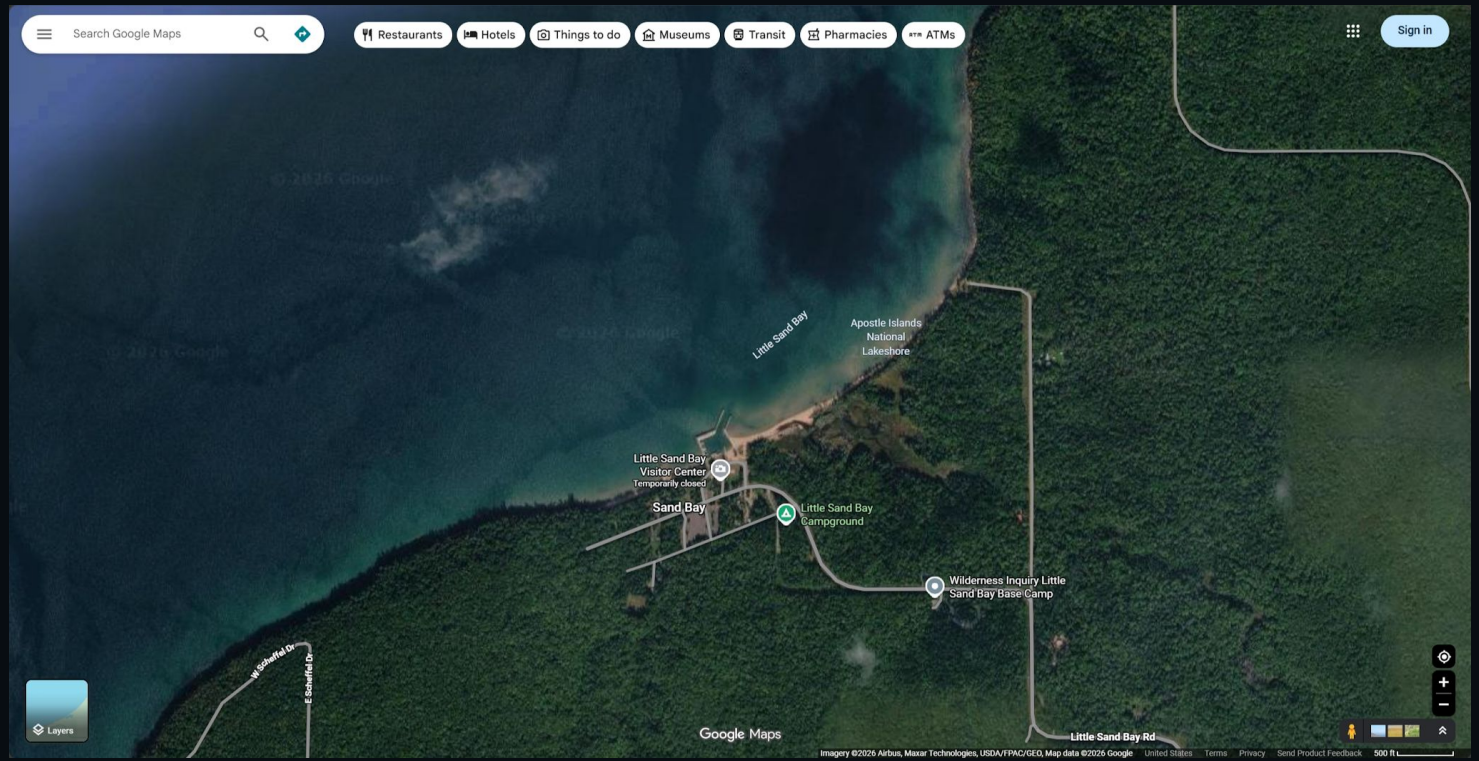
# Open a result and study its photos

Hokenson Fishery — a distinct structure beside the shore.



# Check the shoreline around the landmark

Little Sand Bay — compare open water, trees and approach roads.



# A landmark gives the shoreline a subject

Hokenson Fishery



# Check hills and the horizon

01 Contour lines show hills

02 Visit to check the actual sky view

USGS topoView
Topographic maps

Check contour lines
and the map edition date

# Save the camera spot

01 Pin where you will stand

02 Record the direction and sky view

03 Add a reference photo, conditions and backup

# Before the next alert

01 Find three candidates within 30 minutes

02 Visit one in daylight

03 Save a photo and camera pin

# Questions

What do you still need to check
before photographing your location?