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Photographer QT Luong, who has taken photos of every national park in the U.S., assembles his large-format camera for a photograph during his visit to Cowles Bog on Wednesday.

Photographer stalls printing of new book

Date pushed back to get images of nation's newest national park in Indiana

BY AMY LAVALLEY
Post-Tribune

QT Luong's first edition of "Treasured Lands: A Photographic Odyssey Through

America's National Parks" came out in 2016, timed with the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service and featuring what was at the time the nation's 59 national parks.

He had an updated edition, including Gateway Arch National Park in St. Louis, ready to be printed in the next few days. And then his plans changed.

"All of a sudden I log on to

social media Friday, and I saw (that Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore had been made a park), and I had to make plans.

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Capturing newest national park in Indiana

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The best I could do is come Monday," he said. "The thing I wanted to avoid was having it out of date when it came out."

Luong stopped the presses, literally, and put publishing of the coffee table book on hold until he could visit the nation's newest park, large format camera in hand.

Luong, 54, of San Jose, Calif., was born to Vietnamese parents in Paris and was a trained scientist, mountain climber and wilderness guide who came to the U.S. for scientific research at the University of California-Berkeley. He chose the campus because of its proximity to Yosemite National Park and its reputation for rock climbing.

He soon shifted career gears to focus on photography and the nation's national parks.

Luong had been following the legislation to turn the lakeshore into a park, sponsored by U.S. Rep. Pete Visclosky, D-Gary, and was aware of the various delays in making the change a reality, including an August statement to the U.S. Senate by P. Daniel Smith, interim director of the National Park Service, against the switch.

When Visclosky's legislation, tucked into the budget appropriations bill, passed on Feb. 15, Luong was



KYLE TELECHAN/POST-TRIBUNE PHOTOS

Photographer QT Luong, who has taken photos of every national park in the U.S., lines up a shot along the Cowles Bog Trail on Wednesday.

caught off guard.

"It was a big surprise to me that it happened so quickly," he said Wednesday while stopping at the visitors center before heading out to take pictures at Cowles Bog.

He arrived in Northwest Indiana on Monday evening and headed to West Beach, undeterred by the dark.

"I saw the shelf ice. It's the first time I saw something like that," he said, adding the moon was almost full and the Chicago skyline was in the background. "It was quite beautiful, I must say."

While West Beach is

teeming with people in the summer, Luong found himself alone.

"There was just nobody. I had the place to myself. It was just wild with the shelf ice. It's a special place," he said. "Of all the 61 national parks, it's the only one where you can see that."

He has found the park "pretty dramatic," and while he's heard that one of the things that makes it special is its biodiversity, that's been difficult to see in the winter.

Still, he visited Mount Baldy and Mnoke Prairie, among other sites, and had plans to visit Miller Woods before leaving Friday.

"The thing which is quite unique about the park is it's so broken down. It's a patchwork of different lands, so that's a bit different. I can see why the park service was hesitant at first," he said.

During his short stay, Luong said, he planned to visit all of the areas in the park that make it unique.

What makes "Treasured Lands" different, he said, is it covers every national park in detail.

"For the chapter on the Indiana Dunes, I'm going to have the shore and the shelf ice and the dunes, but I'm also going to have the wet-



Luong delayed publication of the updated edition of his book "Treasured Lands: A Photographic Odyssey Through America's National Parks" after finding out Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore had been made a national park.



Luong arrived in Northwest Indiana on Monday evening to begin photographing the Dunes for his book. He said he hopes the book will be published in August.

lands," he said, adding each chapter on a national park has six to 10 images.

He is hopeful the book will be published in August. "I don't think there will

be further delays," Luong said.

Amy Lavalley is a freelance reporter for the Post-Tribune.