

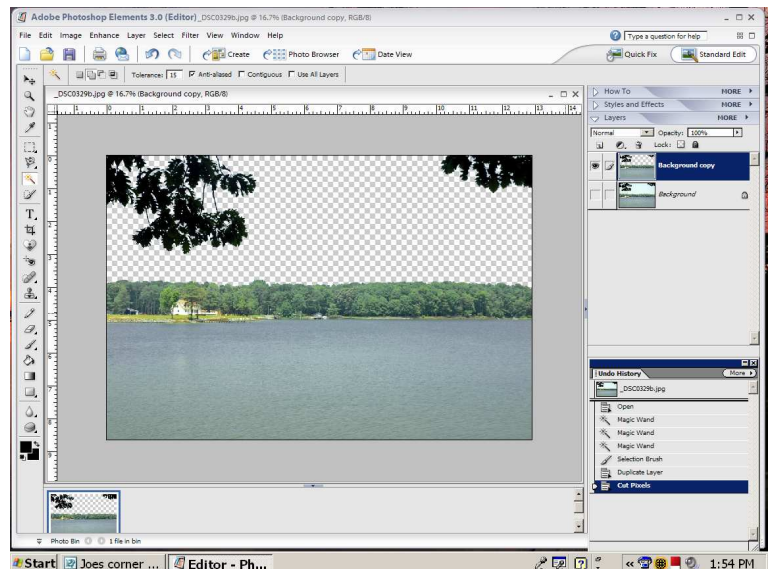
Joe's Corner

Presented by the Photo SIG of NNCUG

Tutorial: *A New Sky and Cloud Brushes*

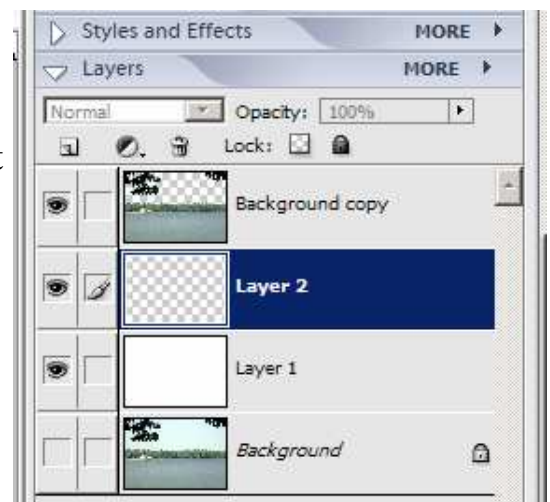
I will not go into the actual process of extraction in this tutorial, but there are many tools available to you. Probably the most used is the Magic Wand. The two key adjustments for this tool are setting the tolerance and checking on or off the contiguous button. I will start with the sky already extracted.

1) You can see from the layers pallet that I have opened my photo and made a duplicate copy of the background layer. I have also turned off the visibility of the background layer by clicking on the eye-ball to the left of the thumbnail. I then did my extraction of the sky on the visible layer.

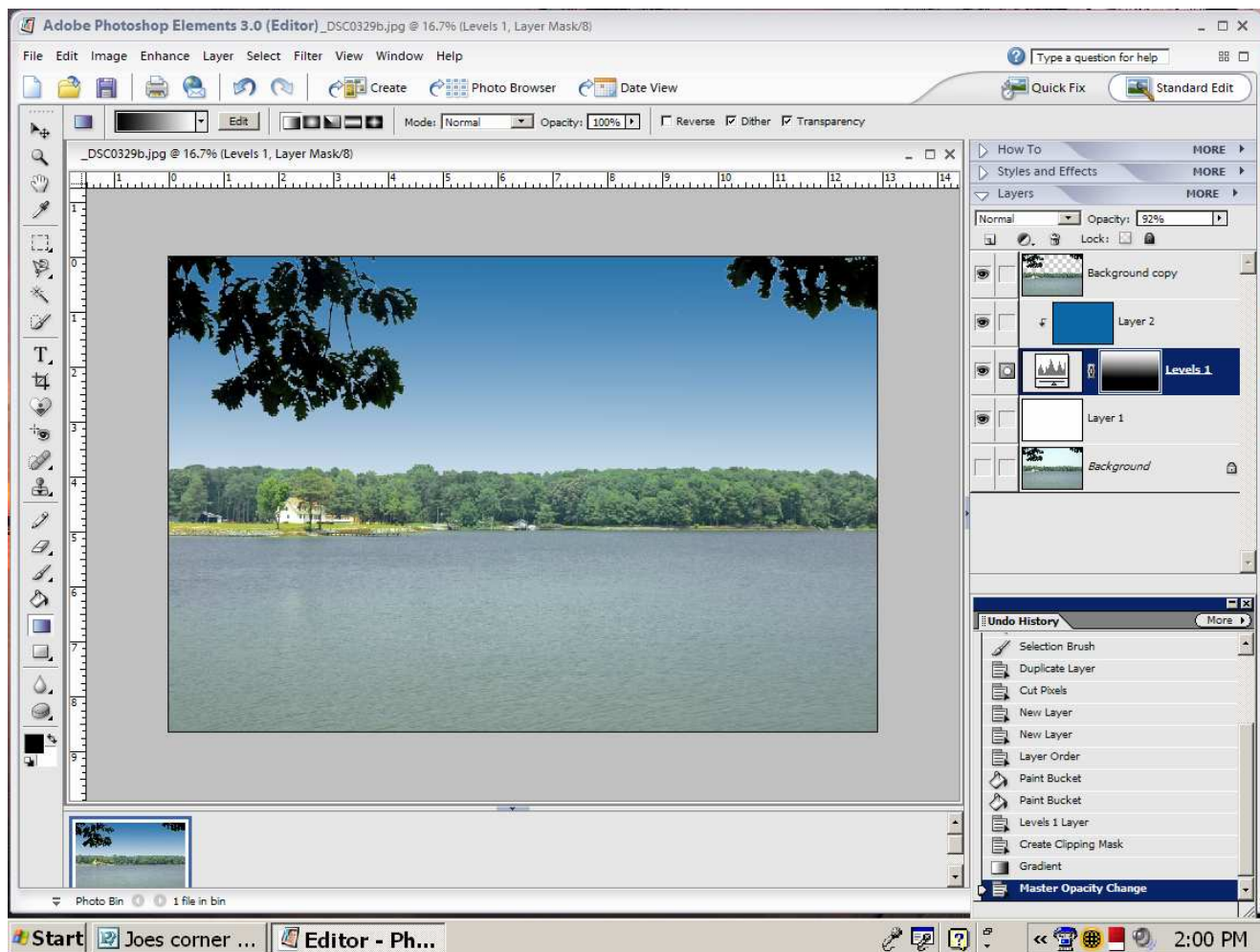
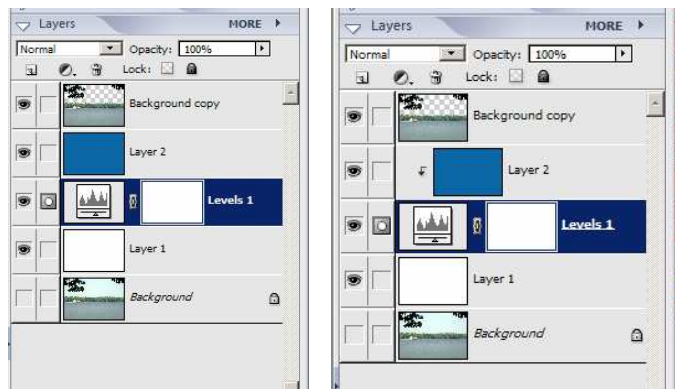


2) I am now ready to put in my new sky. I have inserted two new blank layers below my background copy, the bottom layer has been filled with white using the Paint Bucket tool and Layer 2 will be filled with my new sky color.

Click on the foreground color box on the bottom left corner of the screen to get the Color Picker dialog box. I can either move the slider to bring up a range of blue colors or go to my picture and click on the water to get a range of blues in the same family.



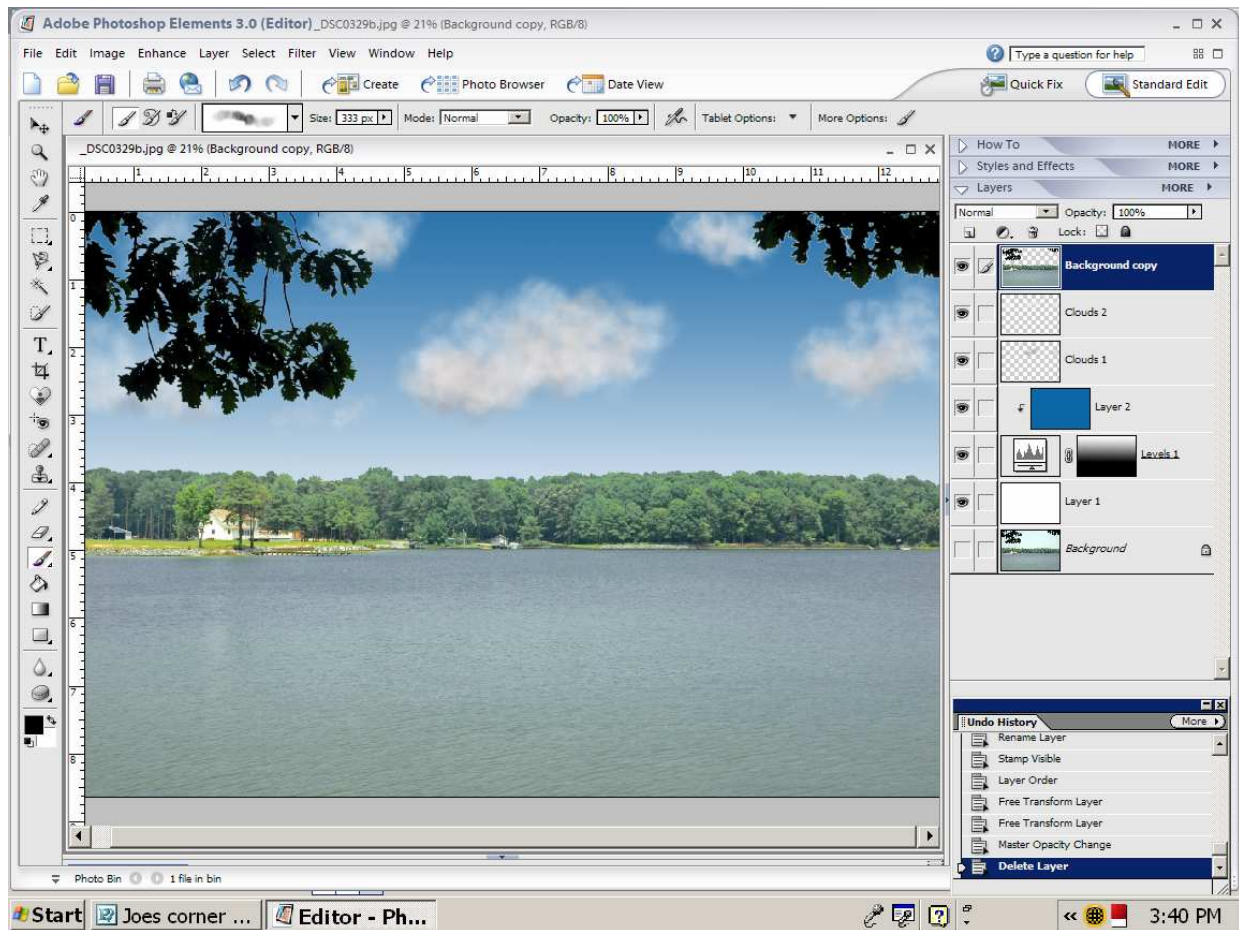
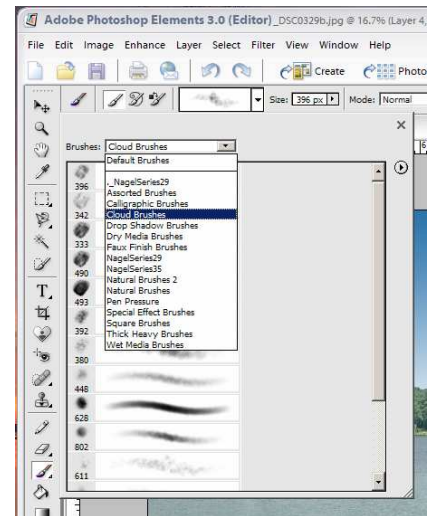
3) I now have to fool Elements into allowing me to use a mask. To do this I will create a Levels Adjustment layer below my blue sky layer and then clip the sky layer to the adjustment layer. To do this, click on the sky layer to highlight it, then press (Control-G) I will immediately see a small arrow appear in the sky layer pointing to the adjustment layer. I have now created a clipping mask.



4) I will now create a linear gradient in the mask of the adjustment layer. I set the foreground/background colors to black and white, select the Gradient Tool, select the first of the four gradient types, linear gradient.

Now click on the adjustment layer to highlight it and then click on the mask (the empty white rectangle). Now I move the cursor to the center of the picture, click and hold and draw a line to the top of the picture and release. I should now see the blue sky gradually darken as is goes toward the top of the picture and the mask has also changed showing the black and white gradient. (Remember that only black and white are used in a layer mask. White is the visible area and black is hidden. The gray transition will show partially). If I haven't placed the gradient in the correct location I can go back and put another gradient in until it is correct.

5) Now for some clouds. Select the brush tool and load the cloud brushes by clicking on the down arrow next to the graphic display of the active brush then on the next down arrow where it says brushes. Click on Cloud Brushes and the display will show you all of your cloud brushes. Select one and lets paint.



6) Create some new layers above the blue sky layer, Set you foreground color to white and start painting in clouds as you like them. I put some darker grayer clouds on a second layer and then change the opacity of that layer to make them blend in better. If I want my clouds to look even softer I could add a Gaussian blur filter to them to taste.

Links:

Easy sky replacement: http://www.skeller.ch/ps/easy_sky_replacement.php

Realistic clouds: http://www.lunacore.com/photoshop/tutorials/tut021_4.htm

Painting clouds: http://www.steeldolphin-forums.com/htmltuts/cloud_tut.html