



## TechNote (Archived)

### Using Photoshop layer masks in Fireworks 3

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#### Accessing a layer mask from Adobe Photoshop

Layer masks in Photoshop do not appear as masks in Fireworks 3 layers. Instead the masked objects appear in the Fireworks 3 PNG file as an image with a transparent background. Beginning with Fireworks 4, however, the masks are retained from Photoshop files.

This TechNote, then, is useful for Fireworks 3 users who would like to use a Photoshop file containing masks. The instructions show users how to use a layer mask from a Photoshop document as a mask in Fireworks. Such a layer mask can be edited when selected. This TechNote is also useful for all Fireworks users wishing to follow the *Fireworks steps* ([www.adobe.com#markh](http://www.adobe.com#markh)) to composite masked images in all versions of Fireworks.

**Note:** This workaround is for Fireworks 3 users. Layer masks in Photoshop files that are opened or imported into Fireworks 4 or MX will be retained as bitmap masks.

#### Strategies

There are two ways to approach the task:

- ▶ A user can copy and paste a mask to a new layer from within a Photoshop file if a selection path is not needed for modification. See the *first set of Photoshop instructions* ([www.adobe.com#sande](http://www.adobe.com#sande)) for step-by-step instructions.
- ▶ If you wish to change a selection, you have the option of either using a previously saved selection or creating a selection from the mask. The instructions below will show how to add a modification, such as a feathered edge, to the selection. You will also learn how to recreate the layer mask as an image on a new separate layer. Refer to the *second set of Photoshop instructions* ([www.adobe.com#markw](http://www.adobe.com#markw)) for step-by-step instructions.

Once the layer mask is separated out to its own layer, import the file into Fireworks and use the mask object to mask any other object in the document.

#### Photoshop tasks

##### Preparing a Photoshop file with a layer mask (without a selection path):

- 1 Open the Photoshop file containing the layer mask and turn off the visibility of any other layers. If more than one layer has a layer mask applied, you will need to perform this operation multiple times (once for each individual layer mask). Make sure that only one layer is visible at this time.



- 2 Press Alt (Windows) or Option (Macintosh) and click the thumbnail for the layer mask. This will make the mask itself visible rather than the artwork on the layer.



- 3 Press Ctrl + A (Windows) or Command + A (Macintosh) or choose Select > All to select all of the mask image. Press Ctrl + C (Windows) or Command + C (Macintosh) to copy the mask.

#### Search Support



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#### Document Details

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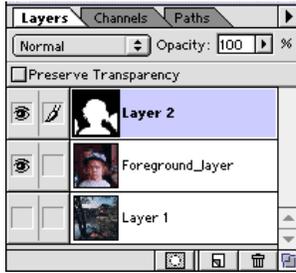
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#### Products Affected:

**Fw** Fireworks (<http://www.adobe.com/http://www.adobe.com/support/fireworks/>)

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Proceed to the Fireworks portion of this TechNote. ([www.adobe.com#markh](http://www.adobe.com#markh))

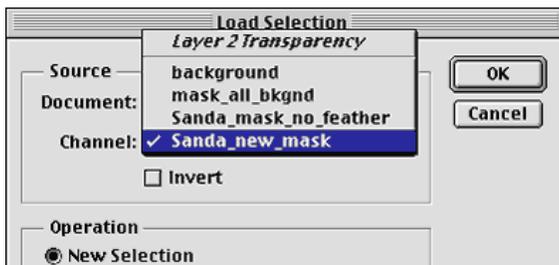
#### Preparing a Photoshop file with a layer mask (with a selection path):

- 1 Open the Photoshop file containing the layer mask. Notice that the black areas of the mask are the background. These areas mask out to reveal the graphic in Layer 1 with the Foreground\_layer image on top.



- 2 Choose Select > Load Selection. Choose the selection that was used to generate the mask. If the selection was not saved, do the following: Open the Channels panel. Hide all channels except the mask. Select the Magic Wand. Set the tolerance for the wand to 12. Click on the black area to select all of the mask (use shift-click if noncontiguous areas exist).
 

**Note:** If you want to reverse the mask in Fireworks, you can choose Select > Inverse. If you want to feather the selection you can choose Select > Feather, then set a pixel distance for the selection's feather.



- 3 Click the triangle at the top right of the Layers palette to display the palette menu. Choose New Layer and fill the selection with black. The image on the new layer will be an exact duplicate of the layer mask but it will be a grayscale image on the new layer. If you inverted the selection it will be a reverse of the layer mask.
 

**Note:** In Fireworks 3 and 4 masks, black areas cause the image being masked to appear opaque. White areas cause the image being masked to appear transparent. This is reversed in Fireworks MX masks.



**Tip:** You can also save your selection as a clipping path in Photoshop. Open the Paths panel in Photoshop. While the selection is still marquee'd, click the Options arrow at the top right of the Paths panel and select New Path from the pop-up menu. Name the path and click OK in the New Path dialog box. With the path highlighted in the Paths panel, click the Options arrow again and choose Make Work Path. Set the tolerance to .5 and click OK in the Make Work Path dialog box. Double-click the work path and give it a name in the Save Path dialog. Click the Options arrow one more time and choose Clipping Path. Select the path from the pop-up in

the Clipping Path dialog box and set the flatness to 3 device pixels. Click OK to save your settings. Choose File > Export > Paths to Illustrator to create a vector shape which may be imported into Fireworks and used as a mask or for other purposes. The vector shape is always editable but if pixel level accuracy is needed in your mask, a bitmap selection may work better.

4 Choose File > Save As. Name and save your file as the Photoshop file format.

#### Fireworks tasks

To use the layer mask in Fireworks, do the following:

1 In Fireworks, open the Photoshop file containing the layer mask. Use the default settings as illustrated in the image below.



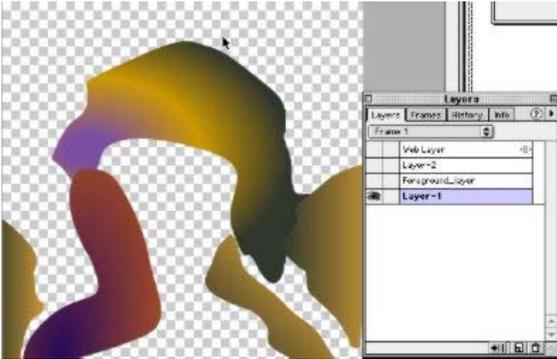
2 Because the mask has been converted to a layer in Photoshop, it will also appear in the same layer in Fireworks. Notice that all of the layers are intact. The Layer that had the layer mask on it appears as an image with a transparent background. In this example, the selection was feathered so the foreground image has a glow around it. The canvas color is showing through the feathered area.



3 In this image, the layer mask was left intact and the duplicate mask was feathered to produce a mask for the background image. Masking the background image with a feathered image will produce transparency at the intersection of the images, allowing the canvas to show through. If desired, a background layer with colored fills can be added to give a variety of colors to the glow, adding interesting lighting effects. Select the mask image and the background image and choose Modify > Mask Group to create the masked background with its feathered edge.



4 In the layers panel, click the Options arrow and select New Layer... Name the layer. Move the new layer to the bottom of the layer stack. Draw vector paths containing gradients using colors from the foreground and background images.(The eyedropper in the Gradient Fill Editor's swatch pop-up should be used to select colors from the image). In this selection the flowers on the hat, the green in the background and a yellow color were chosen to get a glow in some areas and a shadow in others.



5 Because the vector shapes are behind the areas that are feathered and semi-transparent, they show through the feather only slightly giving the image a glow in some places, a shadow in others. This adds depth to the image. Also, the Mask Group in Fireworks allows you the option of ungrouping the mask. You can then apply it to any other image you wish to import.



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