Monmouth Camera Club

MCC Digital Projected Images Guidelines

These Guidelines are targeted for all members of the Monmouth Camera Club, whether novice or experienced, in preparing digital images for judging. Subjects include: importing photos from cameras into cataloging or editing software, editing tips, and exporting files to a designated computer folder.

The instructions for uploading the images to PhotoContest Pro, our web-based contest software, can be found on the club website (www.mcc-nj.org) and in our companion guide:

"MCC-Digital_Image_Guidelines-II_Uploading"

I. Summary:

Contest Software:	PhotoContest Pro; (Current Version: 4.0)
Required Add-in:	Microsoft Silverlight; free at:
	http://microsoft.com/getsilverlight/Get-Started/Install/Default.aspx
Image Dimension:	1050 pixels on its longest side.
File Type:	JPEG only (TIFF format is not supported)
Color Space:	sRGB
File Naming Syntax:	Not Applicable
Image Title Format:	Include ONLY title and capitalize the first letter of each word, (except articles e.g., the, a, an). Do not use all caps or quotes.
	(Example: Bird Over the Calm Stream #3)
Submission:	Direct submission by member to the Photo Contest Pro server at:
	http://www.photocontestpro.com/UploadPicturesStart.aspx
	(Do not submit to the MCC organization)

II. Import and Edit the Image

(This Section assumes that the photographer utilizes Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom in either the Windows or Apple environment to import, organize, edit and export the photograph as a .jpg file suitable for digital projection. The concepts should also apply to other cataloging and editing software. Refer to the directions of the individual software for detailed instructions.)

1. It is recommended that the computer used to edit and save the image should be the same one used to upload the image to the PhotoContest Pro server. If different computers are used, copy the final image to the hard drive of the computer accessing the web.

2. Set up a folder on the hard drive that will contain the final contest images. The folder name and location should be easy to find. (Examples: Libraries\Pictures\MCC-Contests; Desktop\Photo Uploads). Subfolders can be used for different contest dates.

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3. Import the image from the camera or its memory card and place it in the proper library folder on the hard drive. While beyond the scope of these guidelines, it is recommended that the folders be named and the images be backed up, renamed, and imported with key words so that they may be easily found at a later time. Cataloging and managing thousands of files in a library is a subject in itself and requires thoughtful planning.

4. When importing RAW files (Canon: .cr2; Nikon: .nef; etc.) we recommend that camera presets be used as starting points. Typical settings are:

   - Camera Standard
   - Camera Landscape
   - Camera Portrait

   The reason is that RAW files will look flat and dull when compared to the settings used by the camera to generate the view on the camera display. It will save editing time to start with one of the presets. However, if desired, you can import the file as "Adobe Standard" or "Flat", in which case adjustments will not be made to the sensor's native image.

   If the photos are taken in JPEG format (.jpg file suffix), the editing software can still make adjustments after importing them. However, JPEG files are less amenable to post-processing than are RAW files. (Shooting RAW vs. JPEG is beyond the scope of these guidelines but, in general, working with RAW files is recommended for maximum flexibility.)

   When importing with Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom, RAW images are saved as either .psd or .dng files, Adobe's proprietary formats, while .jpg files are copied without conversion. Refer to the specific cataloging and editing software instructions as to how it treats the imported files.)

5. Select and edit the image(s).

   When editing, use a copy of the imported file so that you can return to the original if things go awry. Pay attention to the following items as they are critical to producing a quality image suitable for projection:

   a) Composition.

   b) Inherent sharpness.

   c) Cropping. (There is no constraint to aspect ratio but the final image must be resized to the required resolution)

   d) Overall exposure.

   e) White balance.

   f) Contrast, dynamic range, and saturation.

6. Determine if a border (or "stroke") around the image is needed to separate one or more edges from a similarly-colored background. For projection, consider that the projection screen surrounding the image will be dark so dark portions of the image should have a white border. (This may require advanced editing techniques in layers, or specialized plug-ins.)

In general, applying a border in the editing stage will cause it to be saved with the image. If a print does not require an integral border because it is intended to be matted, either two versions should be kept (one for exporting for screen viewing and one for printing) or the image should be worked and saved in layers and the border layer turned off for printing.

(For photographers wishing to investigate advanced editing, working in layers in Photoshop or in On1's add-in software for Lightroom is a subject worth exploring.)

7. Check if the editing software allows selection of the color space when exporting the file in JPEG format. If that option is not available, check and convert, if necessary, from Adobe RGB (or other color space) to sRGB before saving. (Adobe RGB, ProPhoto, and some other color spaces have wider gamuts and contain more color information than sRGB. Photographers tend to work on and archive files in the wider color spaces to maintain the maximum possible image information and then output in the color space specific to the printer or projector to be used. The MCC projector is set to operate in sRGB color space).

8. Save the edited file in the properly named library folder. The edited image can be used for viewing, printing, or exporting at any future time.
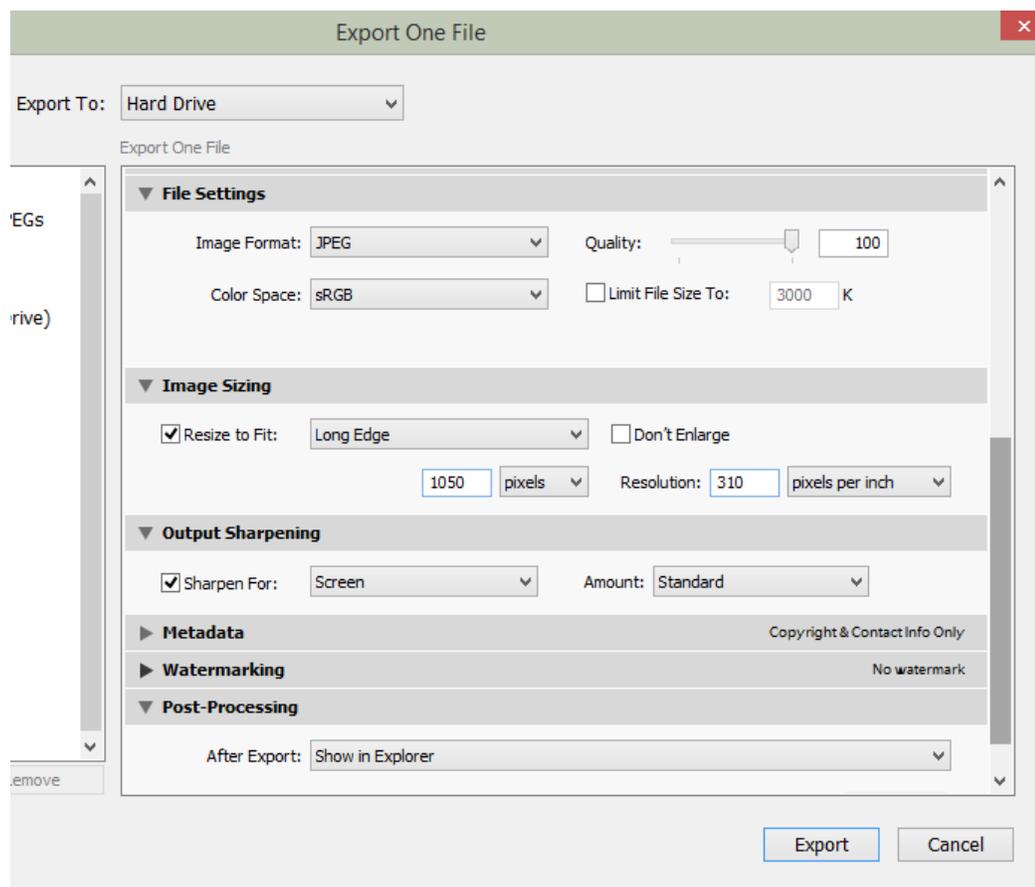
III. <u>*Export the Image as a JPEG file to the Contest Folder*</u>

(Use the software's menu system to Export to the contest folder. The choices shown in the following Lightroom screen shots should be typical of most modern editing software):
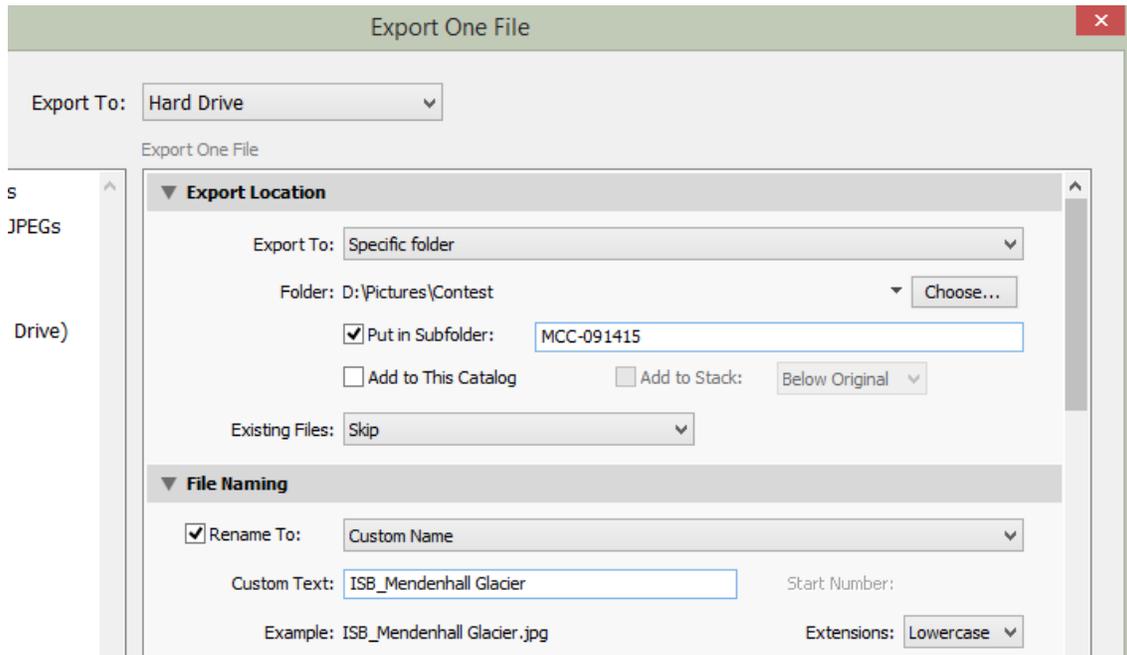
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1. Select the folder holding the images to be uploaded to PhotoContest Pro.
2. Rename the exported file to meet the requirements set forth in Section I.
3. Select JPEG format in sRGB color space.
4. Resize the file so that the long edge is 1050 pixels. The software should automatically adjust the short edge according to the image's aspect ratio. If not, consult the editing software instructions for a menu item "Constrain Proportions" (or similar language). A typical screen shot shown below:

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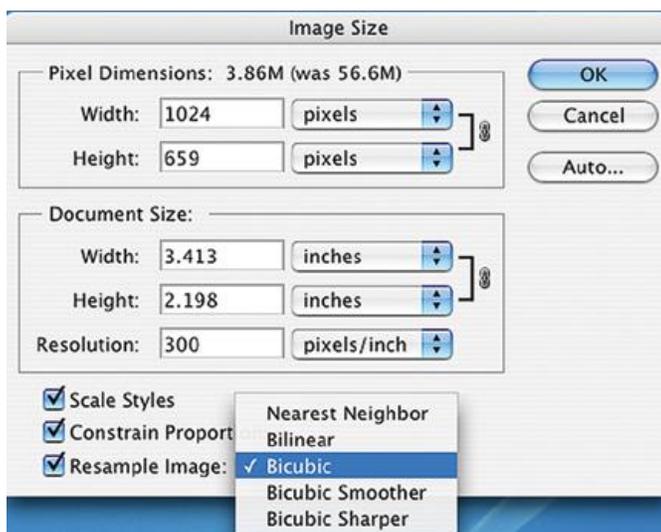
1. Ignore the "Resolution: pixels per inch." The resolution has already been established, above, and this setting used mainly for output to a printer.

2. Check "Sharpen for Screen".   This is distinct from sharpening the image from within the editor and is used to account for the final output to screen or printer. Some programs require the user to determine the method of sharpening. In the above Step 4, instructions are shown for Photoshop CS2 to sharpen the image by utilizing bicubic interpolation during the resizing process.

3. If a border has not yet been incorporated into the image but is desired, the software (or add-in) may add this option to the Export menu. (Remember that the entire image, including the border, must meet the 1050 pixel resolution requirement.) This leaves the original image without a border for printing and framing with mats of the appropriate color.

After the file has been saved to the folder holding the contest entries, it is ready for uploading to the PhotoContest Pro website. Refer to the MCC website and our companion guide, **MCC-Digital_Image_Guidelines-II_Uploading**, for detailed instructions.