

A Soft Focus Effect Technique

This process attempts to resemble the effect of a soft focus filter on your lens. It is quick and easy and gives images a soft glow. The technique works quite well on a sharp photo with trees.

Preliminaries

Download the photo *Soft_Focus_01.jpg*.

Steps

Step One:

Open the photo to which you want to apply a soft focus effect. Crop, adjust and otherwise prepare your image for printing/display, including sharpening to the level you would normally use. Flatten the image.

Step Two:

Duplicate the Background layer by pressing Control-J. This duplicate layer is named Layer 1. You may rename it "Soft Focus" if you wish (double-click the layer name and then type in the more descriptive name)

Step Three:

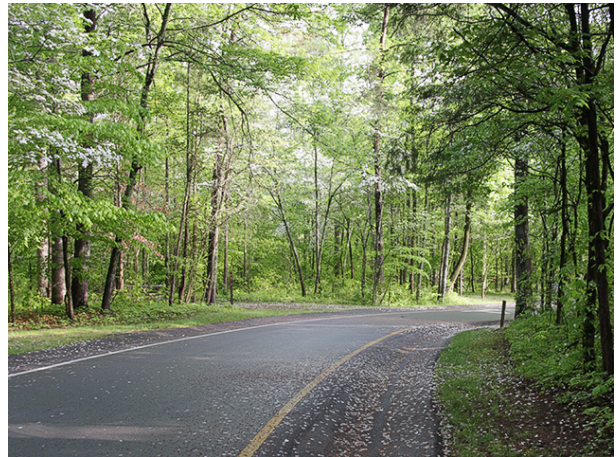
Make sure Layer 1/"Soft Focus" is selected by clicking it. Then go under the Filter menu, choose Blur, and then choose Gaussian Blur.

Step Four:

Set the amount for about 20 pixels for higher resolution images (180 to 360 dpi) and about 6 to 10 for lower resolution images (less than 180 dpi). Then click OK.

Step Five:

The addition of Gaussian Blur will blur the entire image so much that it'll be hard to see any detail. To bring back some of the detail, go to the Layers panel and lower the Opacity setting of Level 1/"Soft Focus" to 50%. Adjust the amount of blur to produce enough blur to produce the soft focus effect, but not too much to obscure detail. By lowering the Opacity setting the detail comes back, but along with it comes a soft glow that gives the image a dreamy, almost painted look, which completes the effect.



Soft_Focus_01.jpg before (above) and after (below) the application of the Soft Focus Effect Technique.

