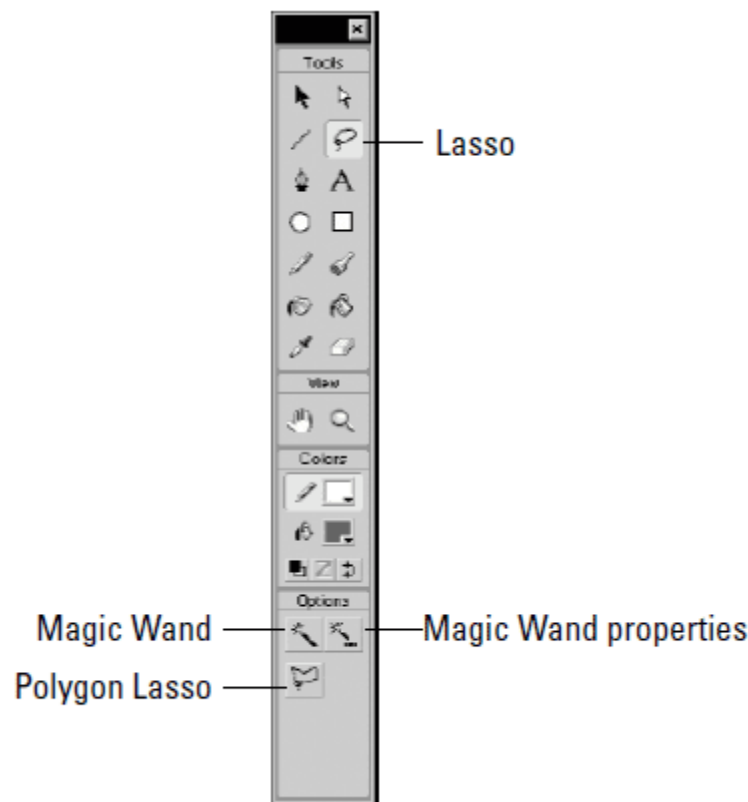# THE LASSO TOOL - FLASH

The Lasso Tool (L) is used to group-select odd or irregular shaped areas of your drawing. After areas are selected, they can be moved, scaled, rotated, or reshaped as a single unit. The Lasso Tool can also be used to split shapes, or select portions of a line or a shape. As shown in Figure below, it has three options in the Options Tray: the Polygon Lasso, the Magic Wand, and the Magic Wand properties.

The Lasso Tool and options

The Lasso Tool works best if you drag a loop around the area you wish to select. (Hence the tool name Lasso!) But if you slip or if you don't end the loop near where you started, Flash closes the loop with a straight line between your starting point and the end point. Because you can use the Lasso Tool to define an area of *any* shape limited only by your ability to draw and use the

multiple selection capabilities of Flash the Lasso Tool gives you more control over selections than the Arrow Tool.

Using the Polygon option with the Lasso Tool

The Polygon Lasso affords greater precision when making straight-edge selections, or in mixed mode selections that combine freeform areas with straight edges. To describe a simple polygon selection, click the Polygon option to toggle the Lasso Tool *on* and commence Polygon selection mode. In Polygon Mode, selection points are created by a mouse click, causing a straight selection line to extend between mouse clicks. To complete the selection, double click.

Mixed mode usage, which includes Polygon functionality, is available when the Lasso Tool is in Freeform Mode. To work in Freeform Mode, the Polygon option must be in the *off* position. While drawing with the Freeform Lasso, press the Alt (Option) key to temporarily invoke Polygon Mode. (Polygon Mode continues only as long as the Alt (Option) key is pressed.) Now, straight polygonal lines can be described between selection points that are created by a mouse click. That is, *as long as the Alt (Option) key is pressed, a straight selection line extends between mouse clicks*. To return to Freeform Mode, simply sneeze—or release the Alt (Option) key. Release the mouse to close the selection.

Using the Magic Wand option with the Lasso Tool:

The Magic Wand option of the Lasso Tool is used to select ranges of a similar color in a bitmap that has been broken apart. After you select areas of the bitmap, you can change their fill color or delete them. Breaking apart a bitmap means that the bitmap image is subsequently seen by Flash as a collection of individual areas of color. (This is not the same as *tracing* a bitmap, which reduces the vast number of colors in a continuous-tone bitmap to areas of solid color.) After an image is broken apart, you can select individual areas of the image with any of the selection tools, including the Magic Wand option of the Lasso Tool. You can restore a broken bitmap by selecting the entire image (this causes it to look like a negative relief), and then choosing Modify⇒ Group from the Menu Bar. The equivalent shortcut is Ctrl (Command) + G.

Using Magic Wand properties

The Magic Wand properties option has two modifiable settings: Threshold and Smoothing. To set them, click the Magic Wand properties button while the Lasso Tool is active.

The Threshold setting of the Magic Wand option

The Threshold setting defines the breadth of adjacent color values that the Magic Wand option

includes in a selection. Values for the Threshold setting range from 0 to 200: The higher the setting, the broader the selection of adjacent colors. Conversely, a smaller number results in the Magic Wand making a narrower selection of adjacent colors.

The Smoothing setting of the Magic Wand option

The Smoothing setting of the Magic Wand option determines to what degree the edge of the selection should be smoothed. This is similar to anti- aliasing. (Anti-aliasing dithers the edges of shapes and lines so that they look smoother on screen.) The options are Smooth, Pixels, Rough, and Normal.