



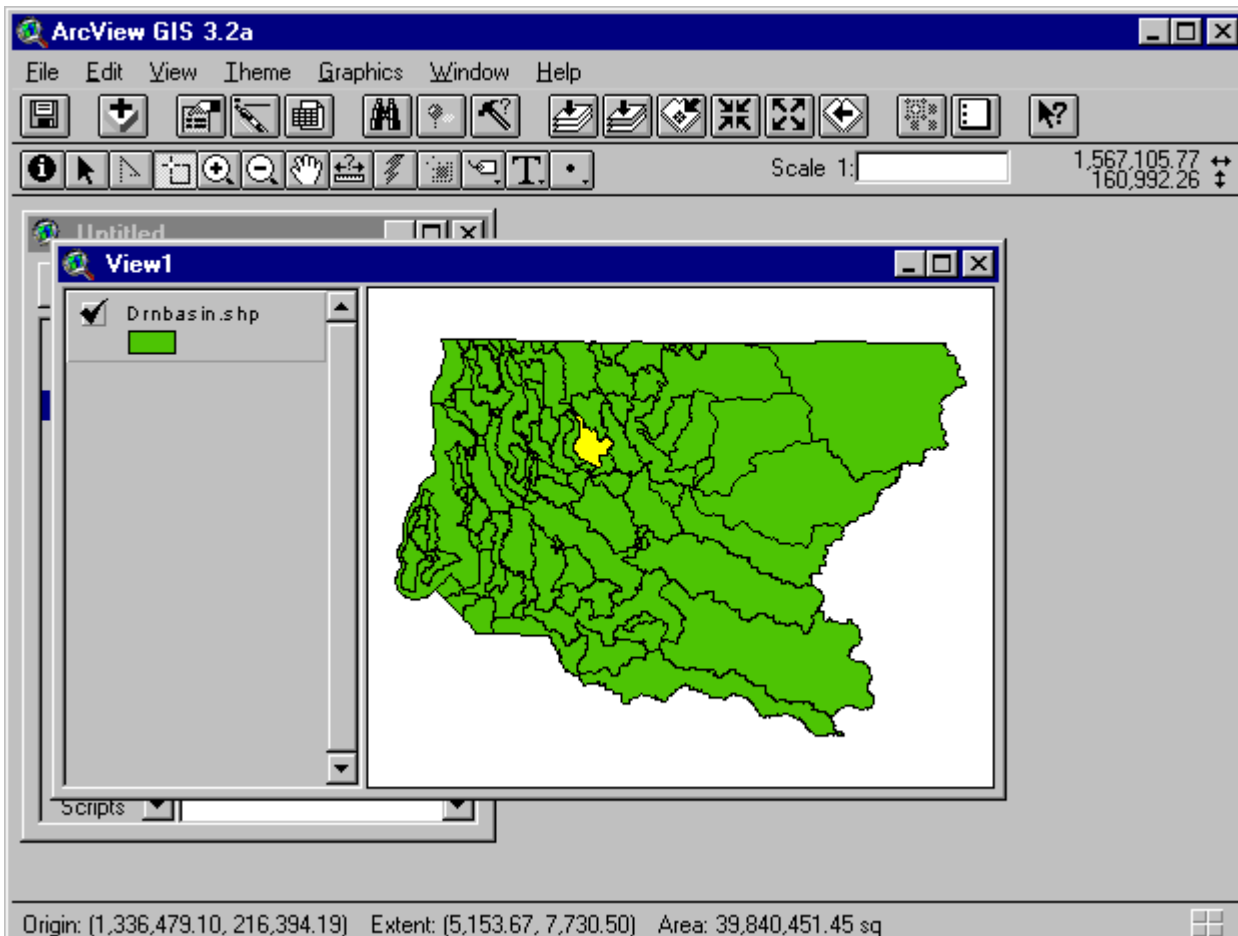
DNRP GIS TECH TIP: Masking Data



Many of the available King County GIS datasets cover a geographic area the size of the entire county, if not larger. So what can you do if you want to make a map with data appearing only in a small area of interest?

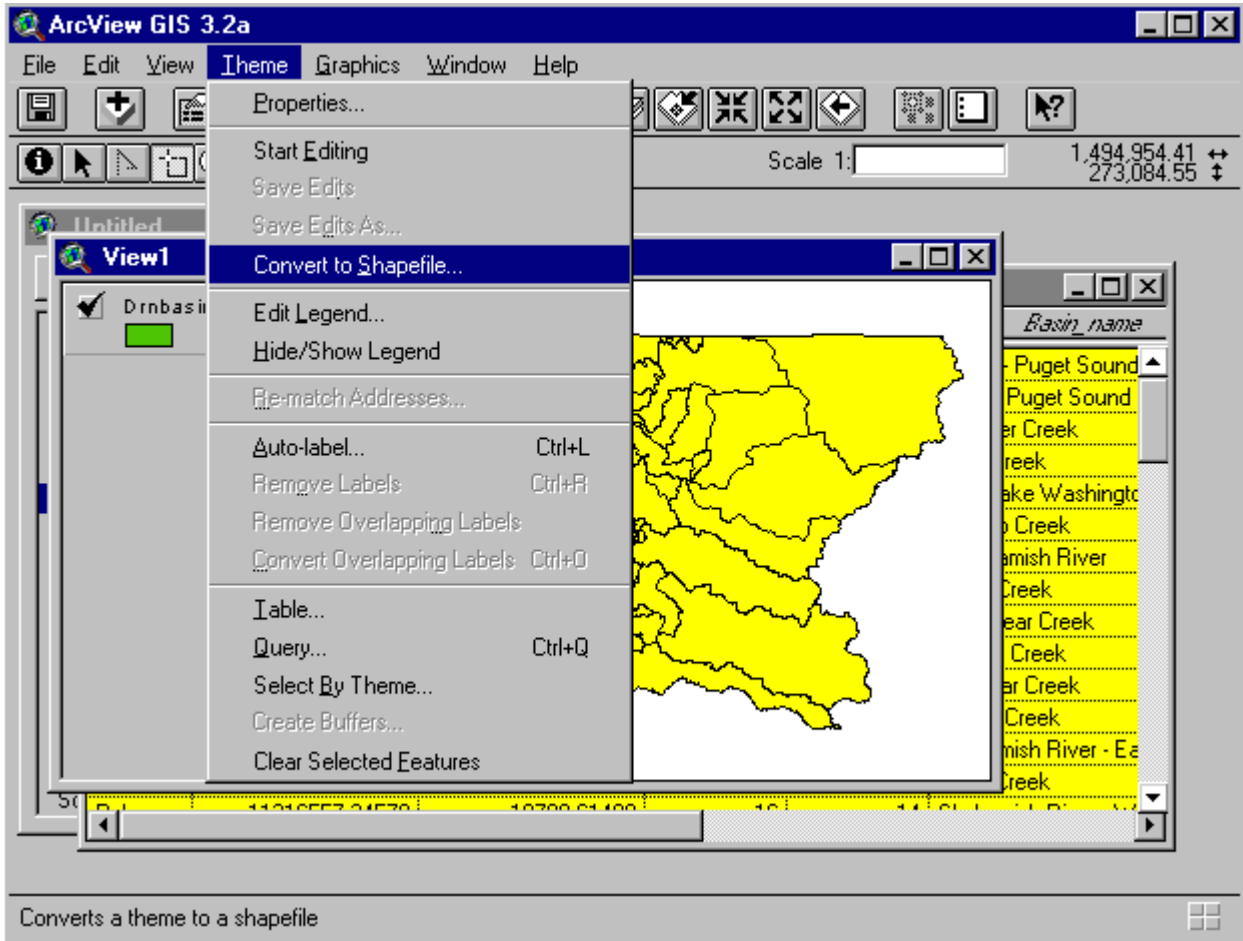
The most obvious answer is to clip all the larger datasets to the boundary of your area of interest. This has the advantage of greatly reducing the file size of each of the clipped datasets. However, when you clip the data, you now have created new (smaller) personal versions of the original datasets. If updates are made in the original datasets later, these will of course not be reflected in your clipped versions and so you will be forced to continually re-clip the data to maintain its currency.

Masking avoids this problem because the original datasets are still used. A masking layer is created that hides the unwanted portions of data so that only data in your area of interest appears on the map.

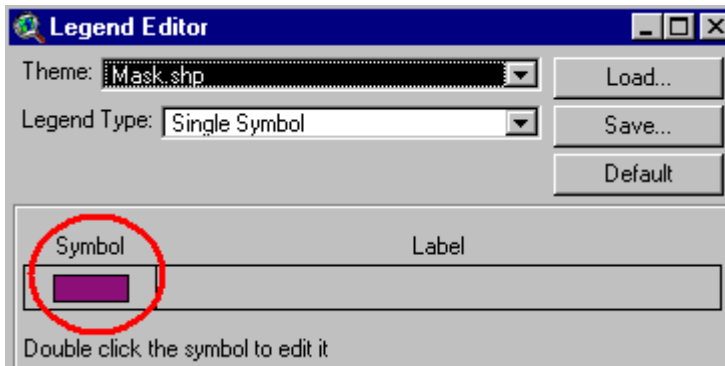
To create a masking layer, add a coverage that has boundaries for your area of interest and select the polygon that is your area of interest. In this example, drnbasin will be used to create a masking layer for a map that will focus on the E. Lake Sammamish basin.



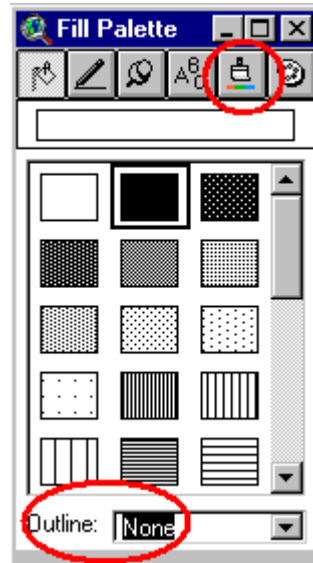
With the theme you added highlighted in the View Table of Contents, click the  button to open its theme table, and using the "Switch Selection" button , change the selected items in the table to everything that is not your area of interest. Make the View active again and pull down the "Theme" menu item and select "Convert to Shapefile". When prompted, save the new shapefile in your working directory and click "yes" to add it to your View.



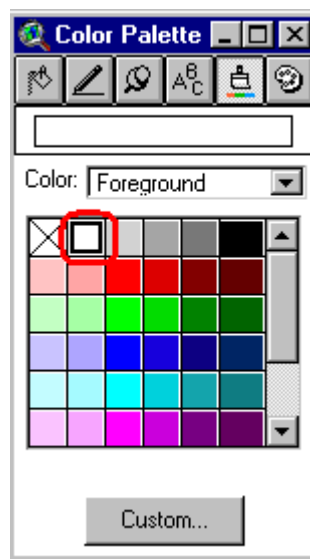
Double click on the newly added theme to bring up the "Legend Editor" dialogue box. In the "Legend Editor" dialogue box, double click on the rectangle of color under the heading "Symbol".



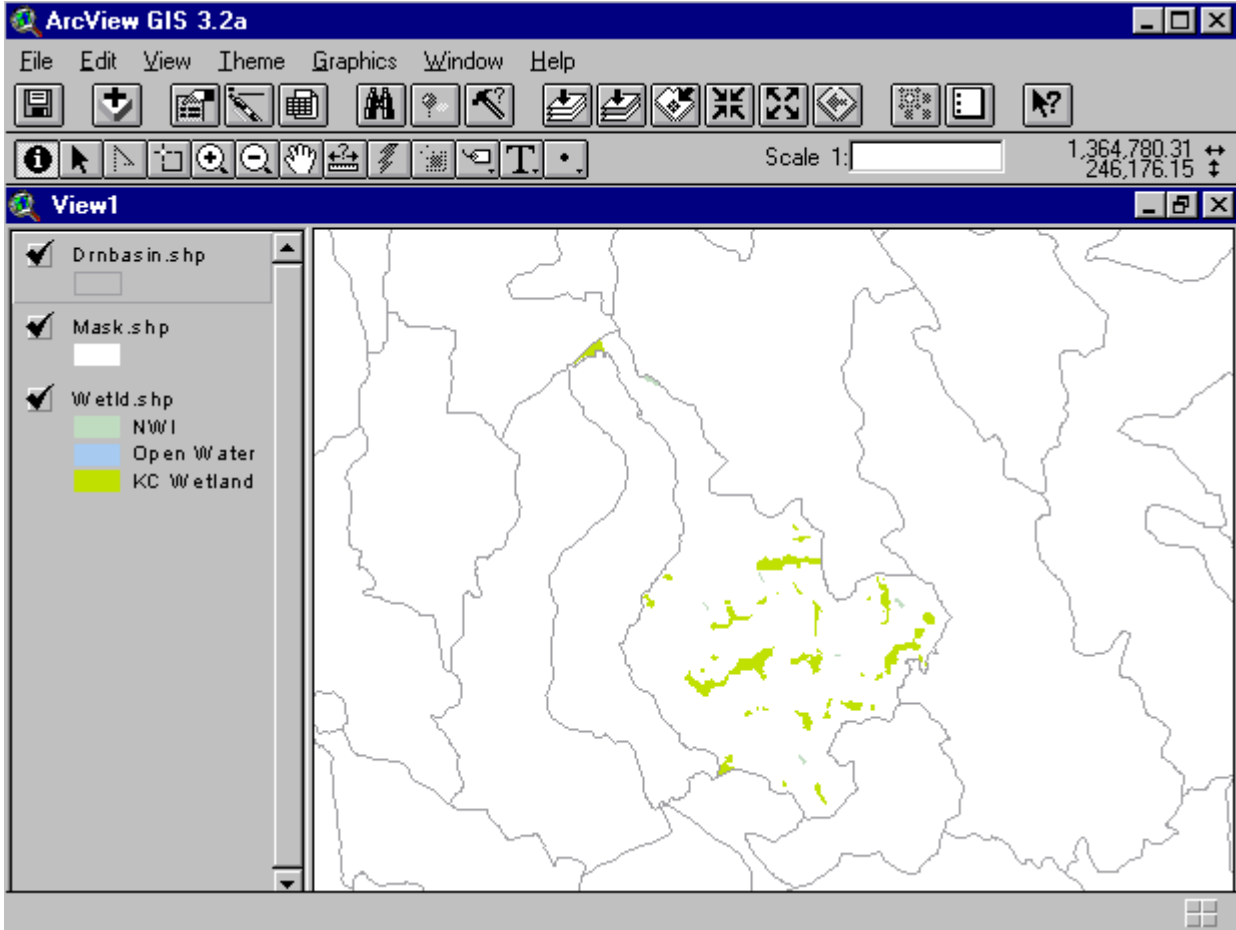
In the "Fill Palette" dialogue box that appears, change the "Outline" setting to "None" and then click the paintbrush button.



The dialogue box switches to the "Color Palette" dialogue box. Choose white for the foreground color and then close the dialogue box. Back in the original "Legend Editor" dialogue box, Click the "Apply" button in the lower right and close that dialogue box as well.



Now your masking coverage is complete and as long as you keep it above the themes you wish to mask in your View Table of Contents, it will hide data outside your area of interest. In this example, wetland data has been added to the ArcView project, and although the dataset covers most of western King County, only the portion in the E. Lake Sammamish basin is visible.



TECHNICAL RESOURCES

For more information about working with Views, consult other DNRP GIS Tech Tips found in the "Views" folder on the [GIS Tech Tips \(http://dnr-web.metrokc.gov/dnrtech/gis/tips/Techtips.htm\)](http://dnr-web.metrokc.gov/dnrtech/gis/tips/Techtips.htm) intranet page.