Using the Base Layer to Create Custom Layers

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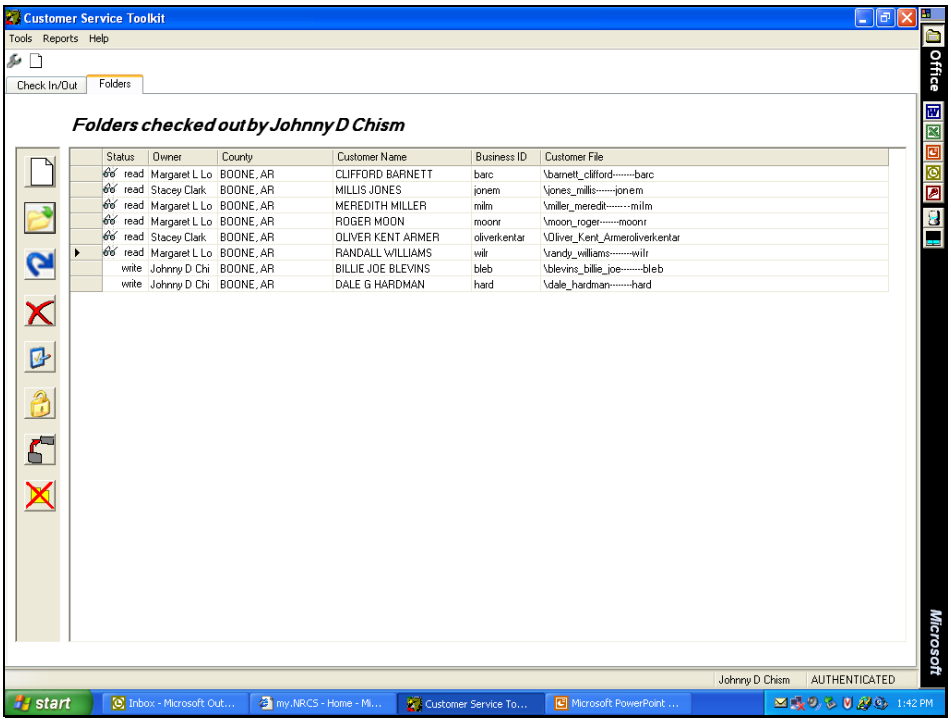
In Customer Service Toolkit 2004 and ArcMap, the base layer (geodatabase) is created when customer data is “checked out” to a local computer. Most users do not understand the base layer and are often confused by it, however it can be a useful tool. The digitized land units and practice layers for all customers checked out are added to the base layer. The data from the base layer can then be copied and pasted to a new shapefile layer that consists of all the land units from all checked out customers. This process is useful for creating shapefile layers that show the location of land units for selected customers. An example would be: if you wanted to create a shapefile layer that contained all the land units for all of the CNMP’s in your county. It could also be used to show the land units for a special project or many other situations, you have the choice in determining which land units are included by determining which customers you check out.

There are some details that you must consider:

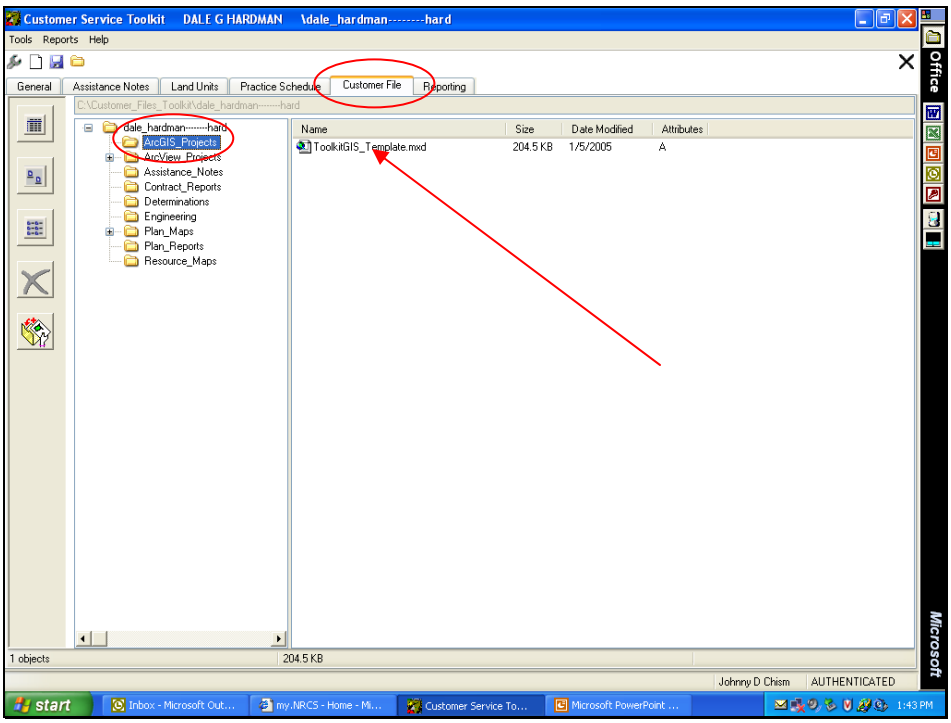
1. You have to manually choose the customers that you want included.
2. The land units have to be digitized in ArcMap. If the customer has land units that were digitized in Toolkit 4.1, you must first link them to the map in Toolkit 2004.



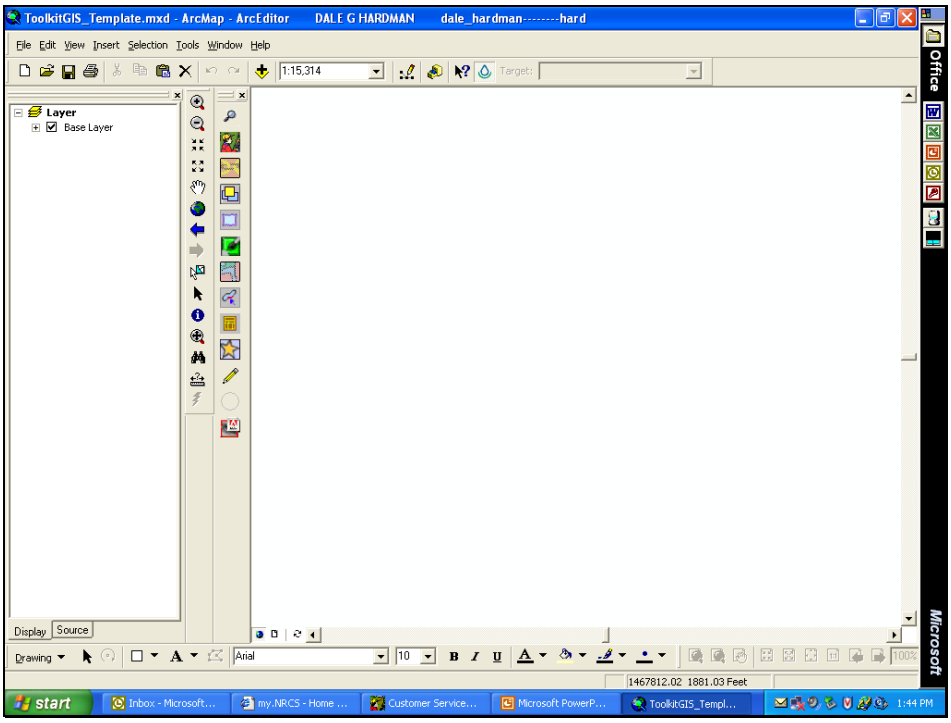
Manually choose and check out customers whose land units you want included in the new shapefile.

Note: You do not have to have write permissions for the customer files.

Once all the customers that you want included are checked out, Open any customer folder (it doesn’t matter which one) by double clicking on the customer folder.

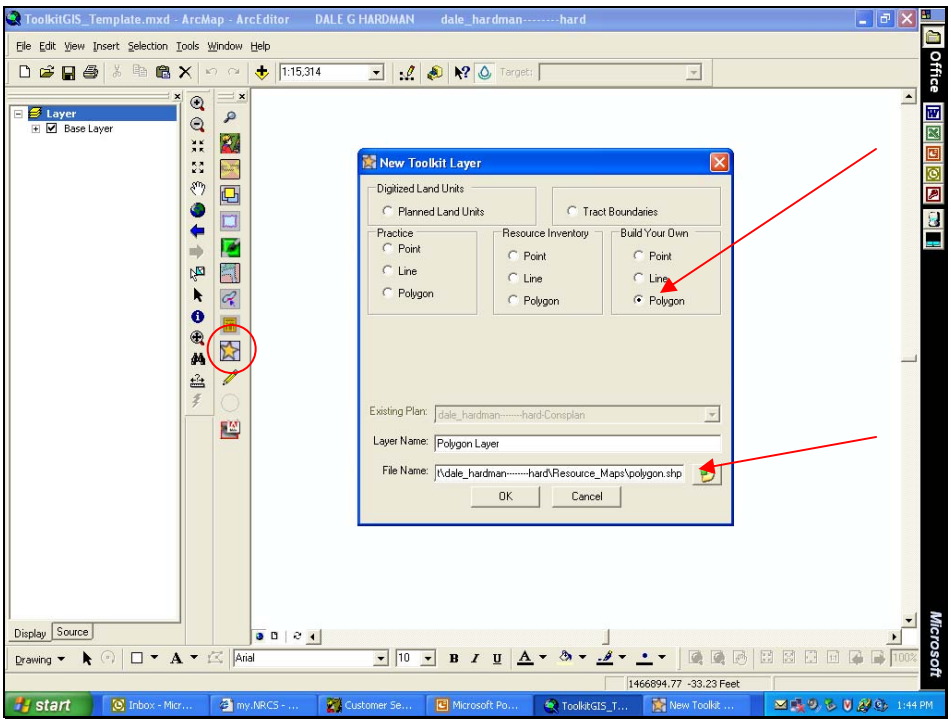


Go to the Customer File tab, click on ArcGIS_Projects in the left pane and double click on the map document in the right pane to open it.



The map document opens with only the base layer present.

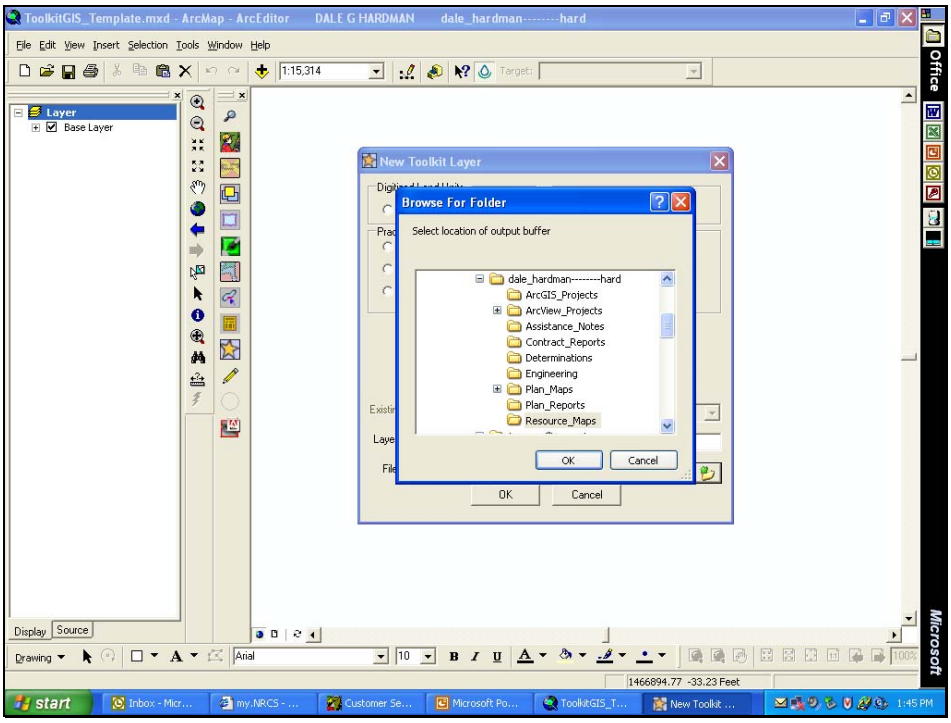
This base layer actually contains the land units for all the customers checked out.



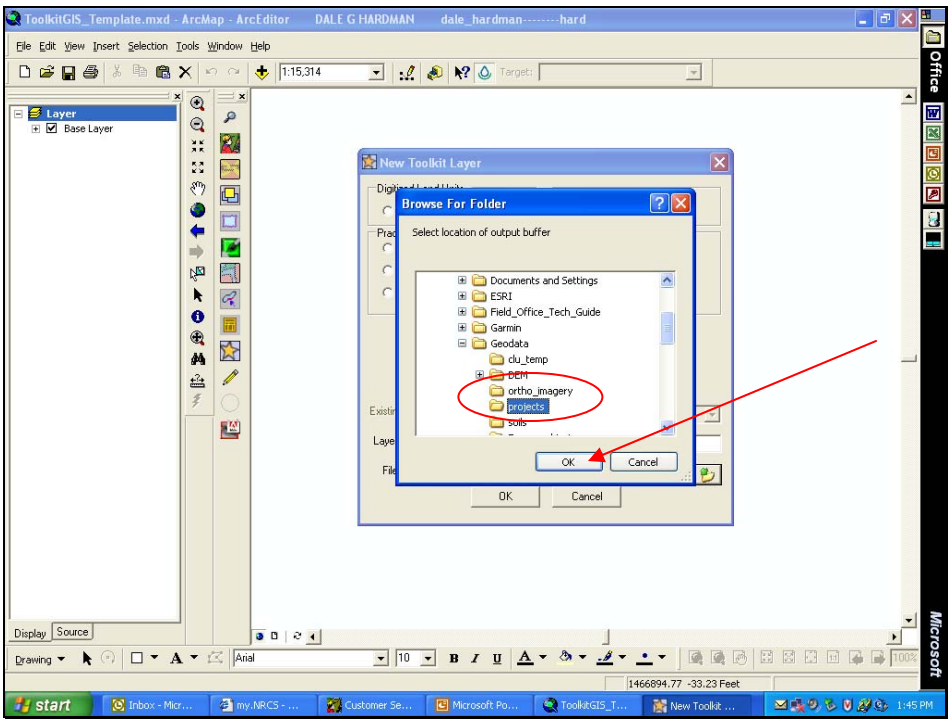
Click the New Toolkit Layer button, and choose the Build Your Own Polygon layer.

Since the data is for several customers, do not save the file in the present customer's folder.

Click the Open Folder button to choose a different folder

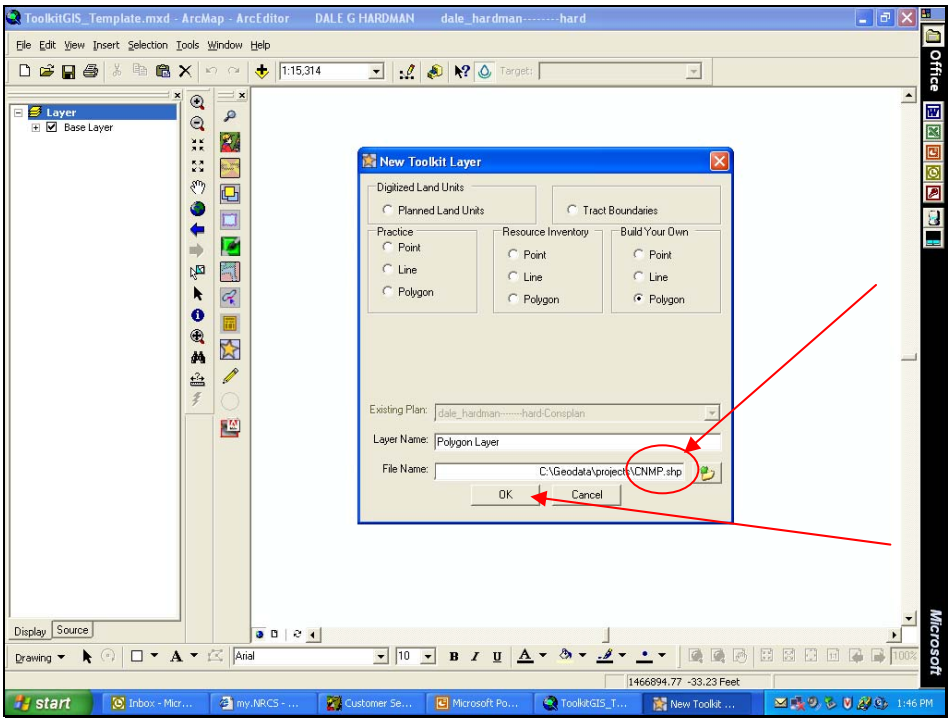


The default folder is the Resource Maps folder of the present customer. Change it by navigating to and selecting a folder where data is more easily accessed.



If you want to use the layer again, save it in a folder on your computer that is easily found. I created and use C:\Geodata\projects.

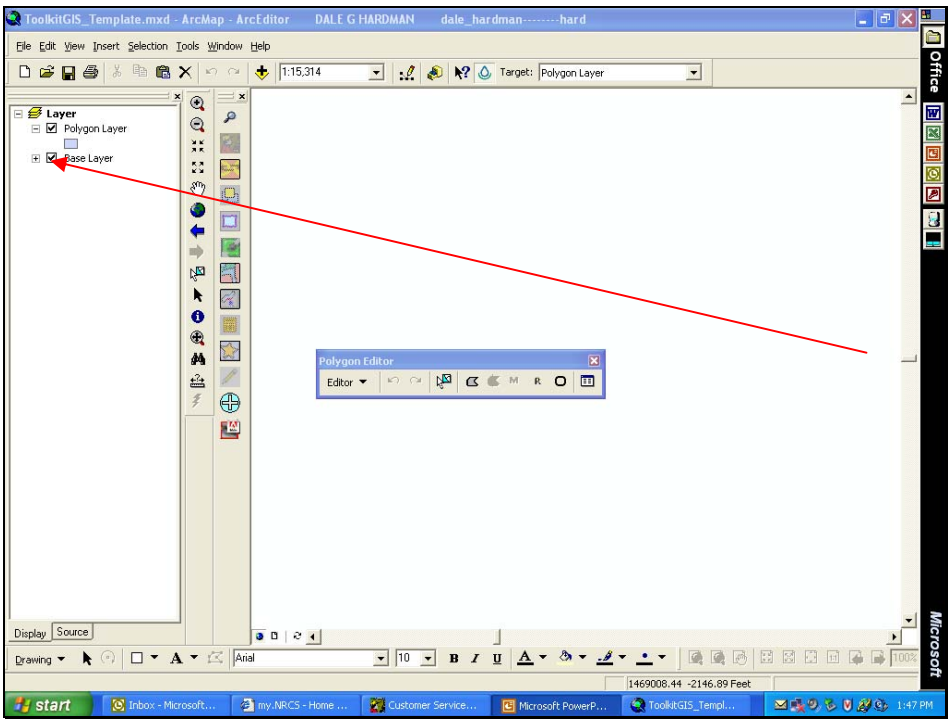
Click OK.



The new folder is selected. I usually change the filename to make the file easier to recognize.

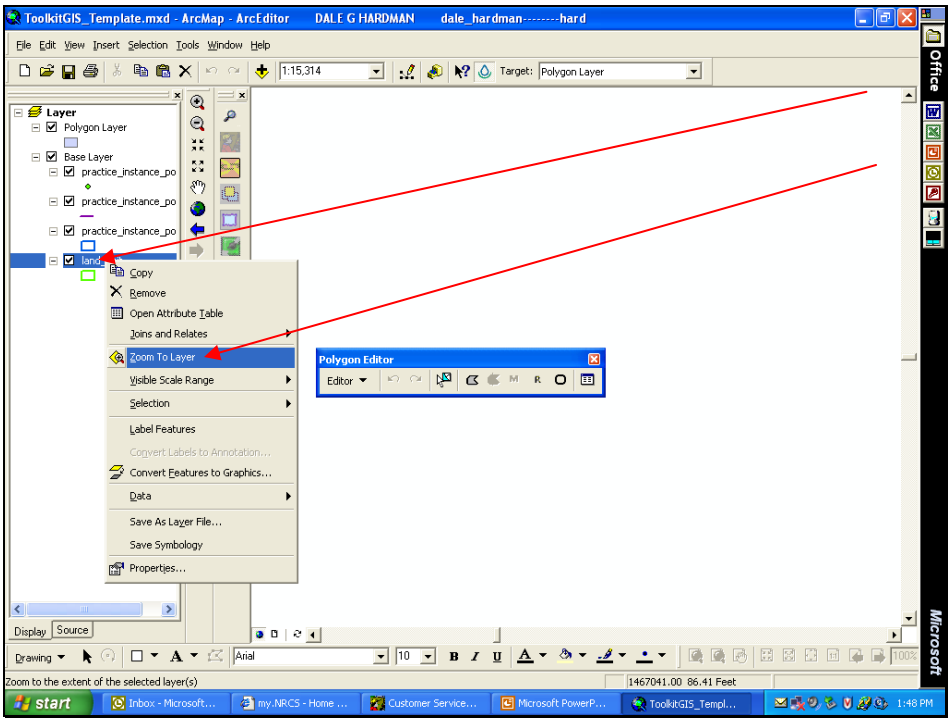
Change the filename after the last slash and BEFORE the .shp. DO NOT use spaces in the filename or change the .shp extension on the file.

Click OK

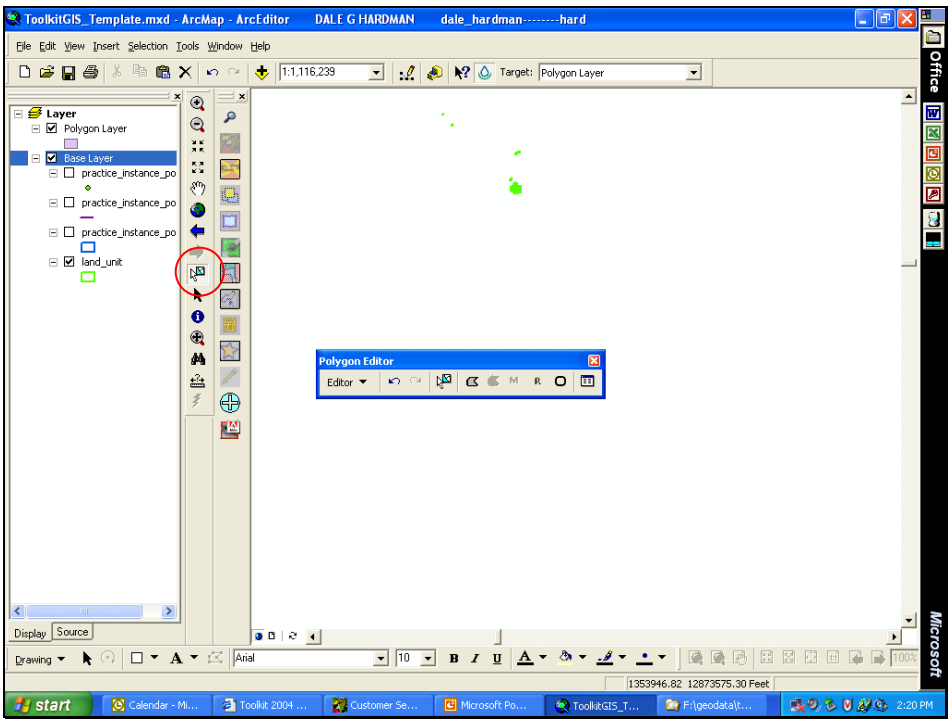


The polygon editor appears. You do not have to digitize any polygons but simply copy them from the base layer.

Expand the base layer so you can see the individual layers by click the + symbol in front of the base layer.

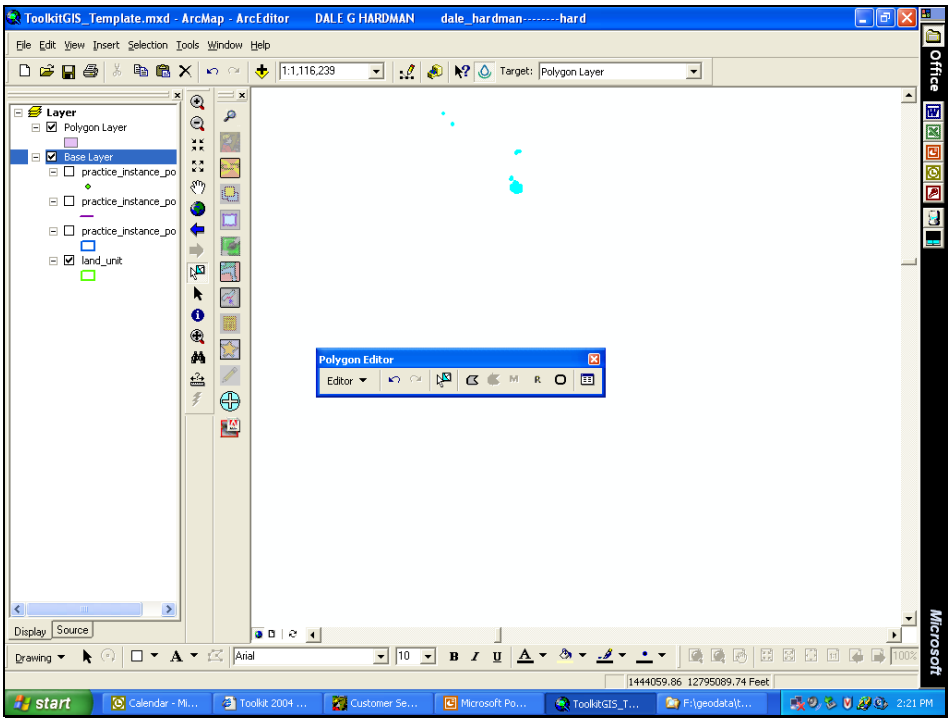


To be able to see the land units, Right click on the Land Unit layer and click Zoom to Layer.

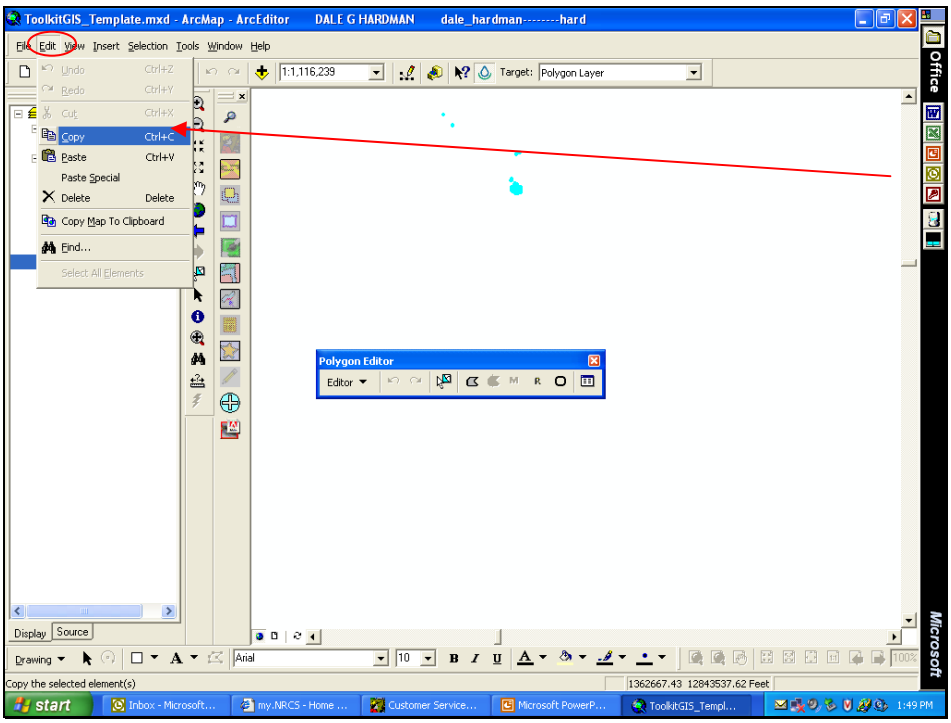


All land units in the base layer should be visible.

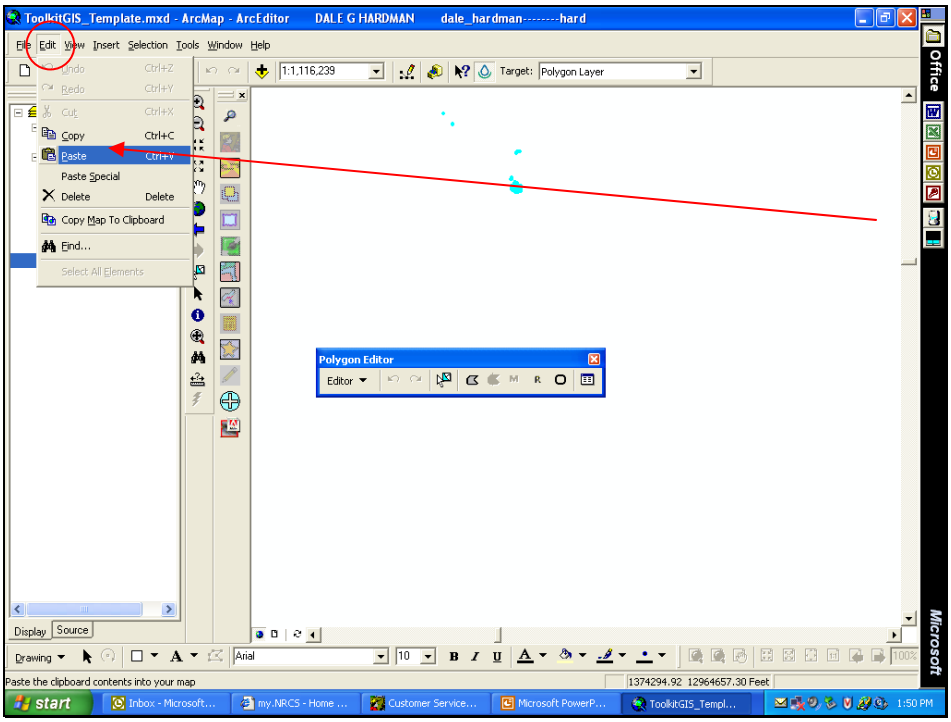
Use the select tool on the ArcMap toolbar (not the polygon editor toolbar) and select all the land units.



All land units should be selected.

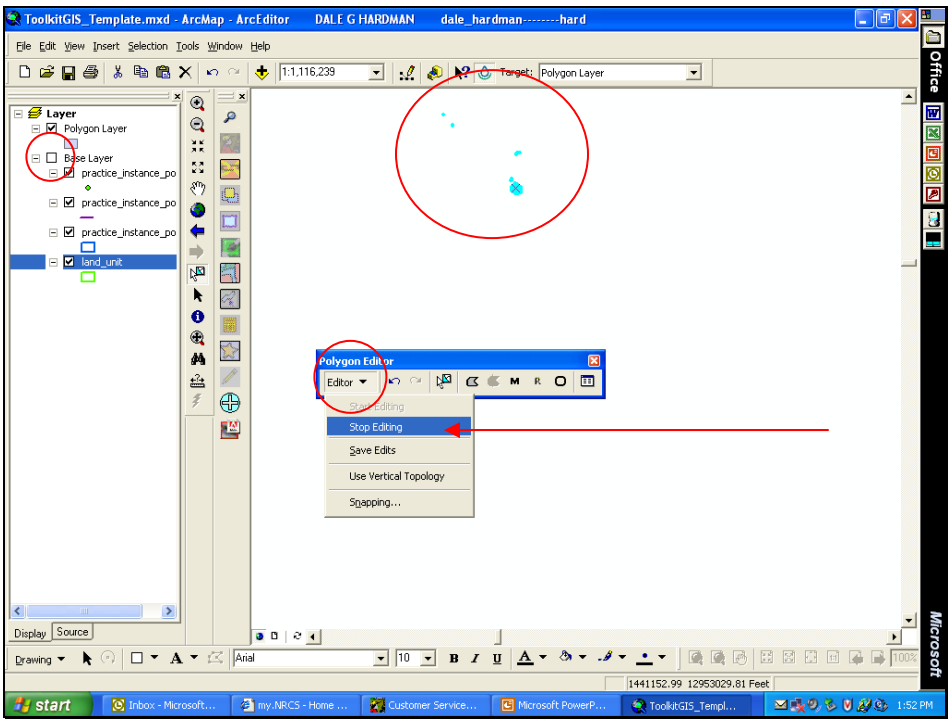


Click Edit, then copy.



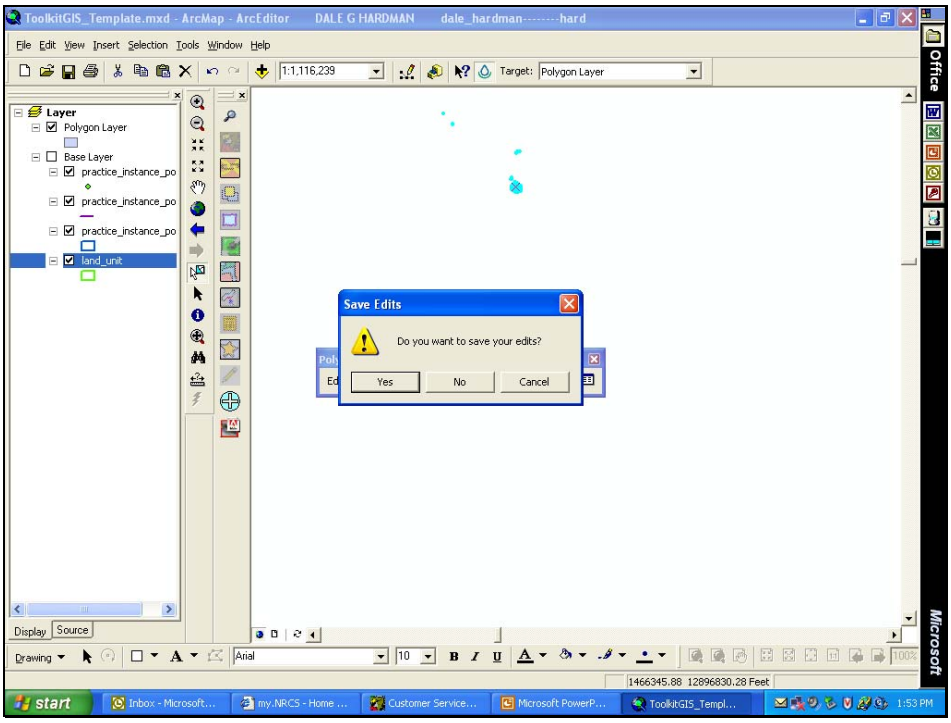
The land units are copied but nothing seems to happen, that's OK

Click Edit, then paste.

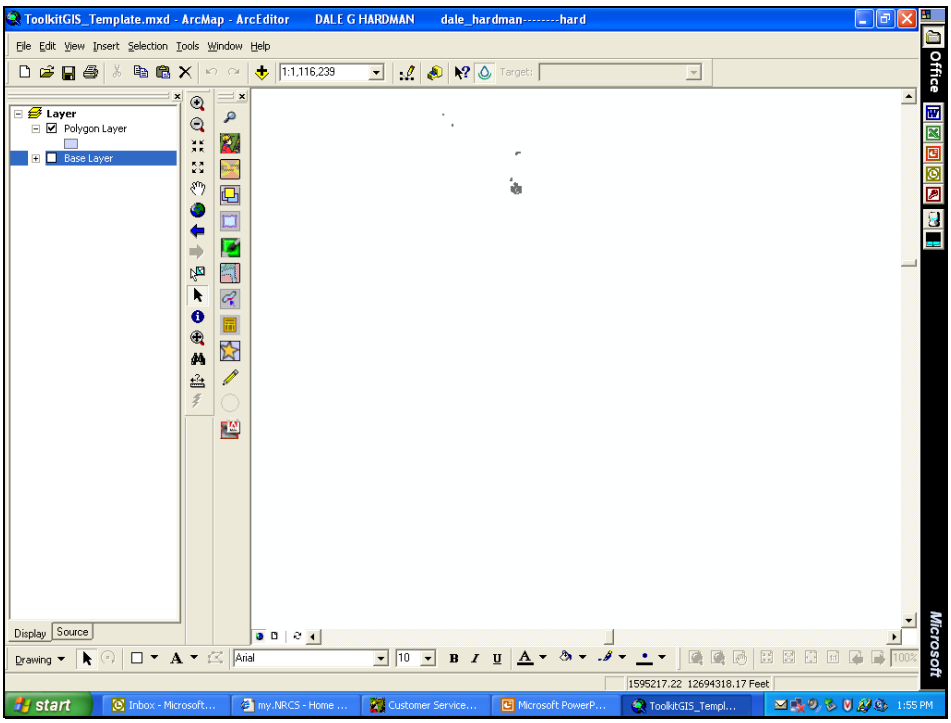


If you uncheck the box to turn off the display of the base layer, notice the land units are still in view, that is because they are now in the polygon layer.

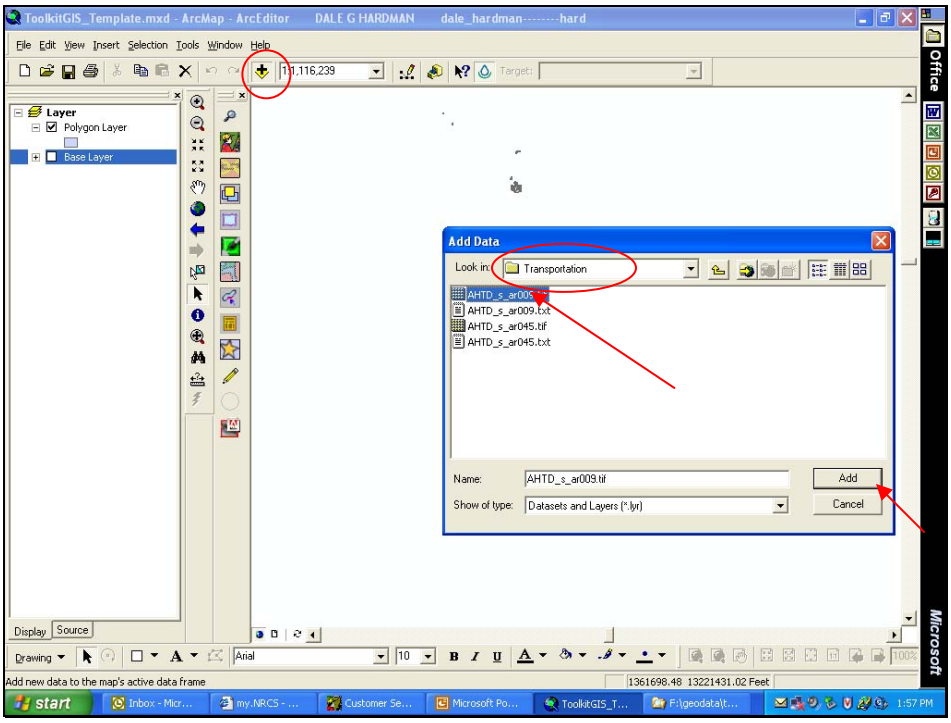
Click the Editor dropdown button in the polygon editor and click stop editing.



If prompted click Yes to save your edits.

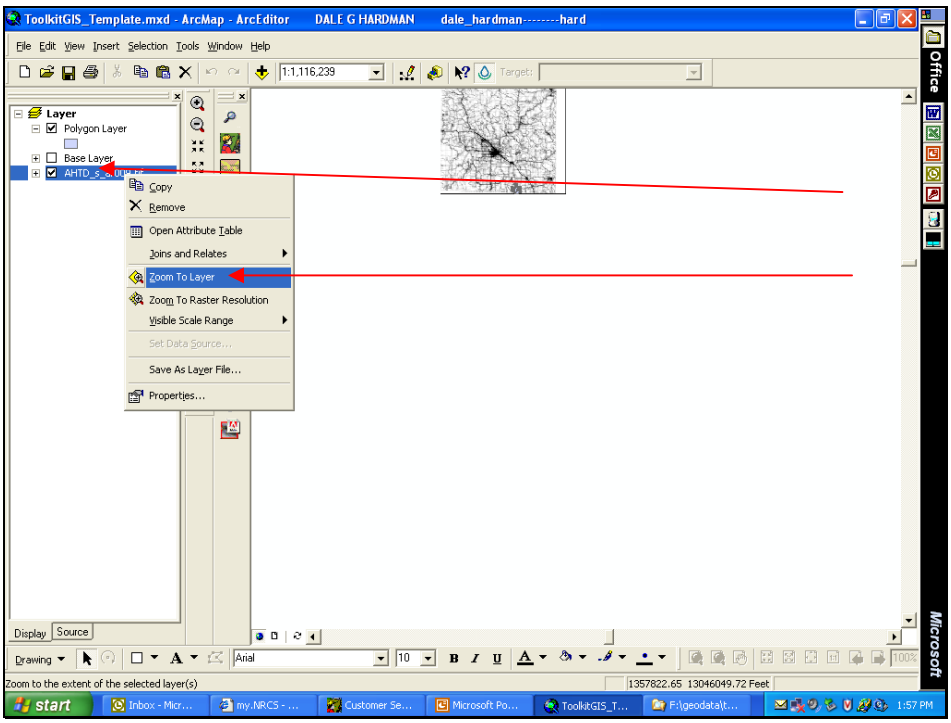


Since the base layer is not displayed, the only land units (polygons) that show up are the ones in the polygon layer.



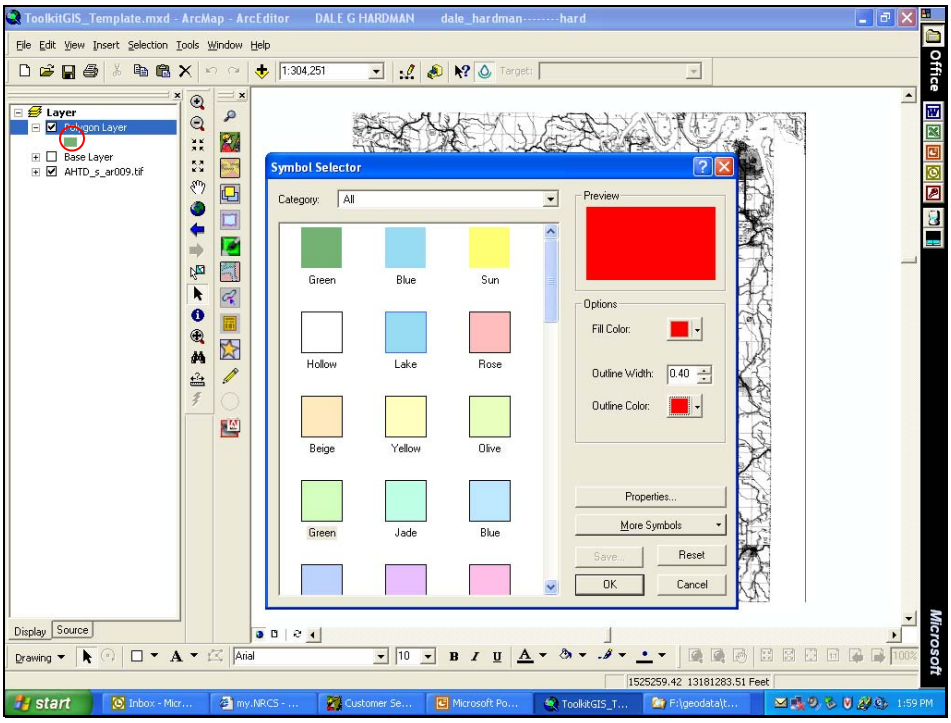
For county wide data, you will probably want a base map. In this case I am using a scanned county road map.

Add a map by clicking the add data button then navigating to the location where your images are stored. Click the image to select it then click Add.

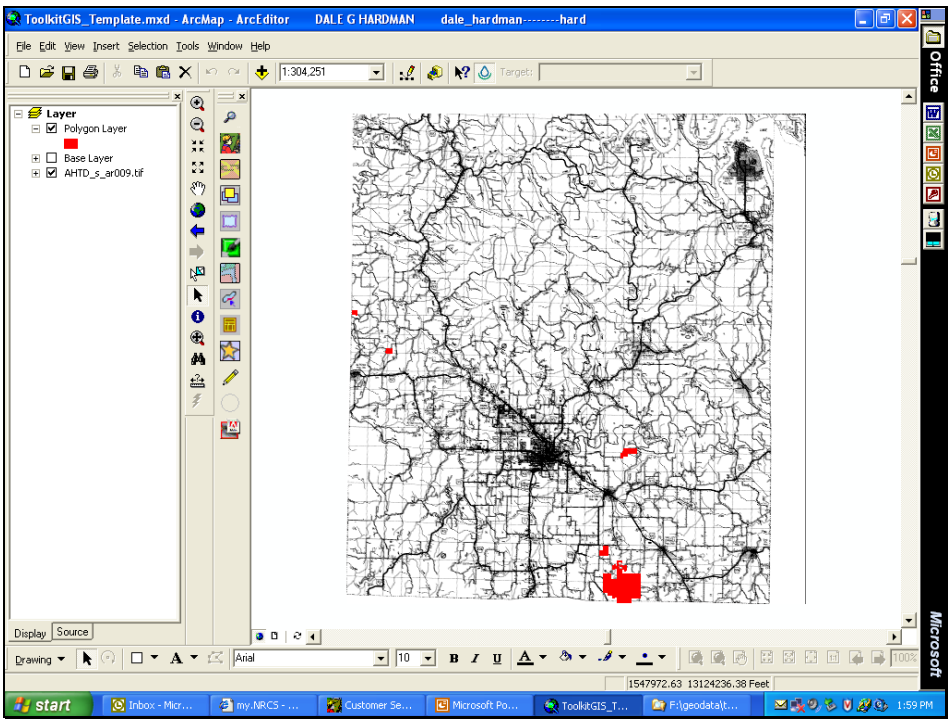


Depending on where the land units were located you may be zoomed out too much.

Right click on the image layer and click Zoom to Layer.



Click on the symbol for the polygon layer and choose a symbol that is clearly visible on your map.



Now we have a map that shows the location of all the land units for CNMP's in my county.

If you want to save this map document, save it with a descriptive name somewhere OTHER than in the customer's file.