Exporting a Feature Class or Layer

This document was created to be a how-to guide for exporting feature classes or layers into shapefiles or geodatabases. This document will go over the following tools (ArcGIS Pro) for exporting:

- Feature Class to Shapefile:
  - Easy if you frequently use geoprocessing tools or need to export multiple layers into multiple shapefiles
- Export Features:
  - Helpful if you need to export one layer and edit the layer's fields
- Feature Class to Geodatabase:
  - Nice if you need to export multiple layers but want them contained within one geodatabase (not multiple shapefiles) or want to export a layer with their topology rules, domains, etc.

When Should I Export Data:

- ❖ You need to share data with someone outside your organization (i.e., you need to send ISTC parcel data to update webmaps. A zipped shapefile or geodatabase are the necessary formats)

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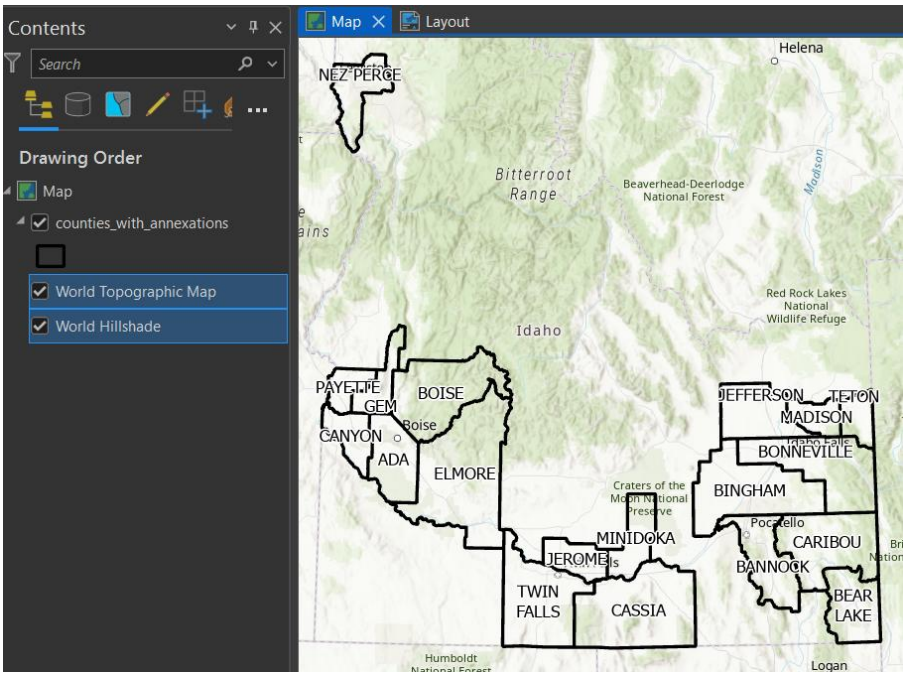
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HINT: Ctrl + left click on the Table of Contents item to go directly to that page

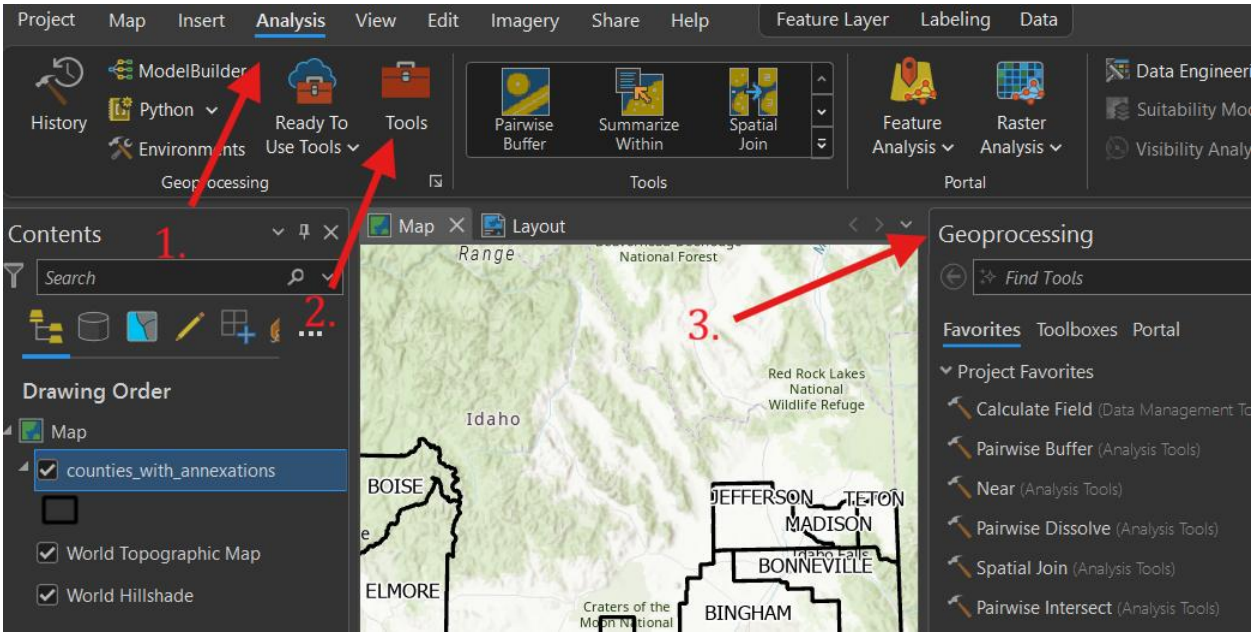
If you need additional help, please contact the GIS team (gis@tax.idaho.gov)!

Feature Class to Shapefile

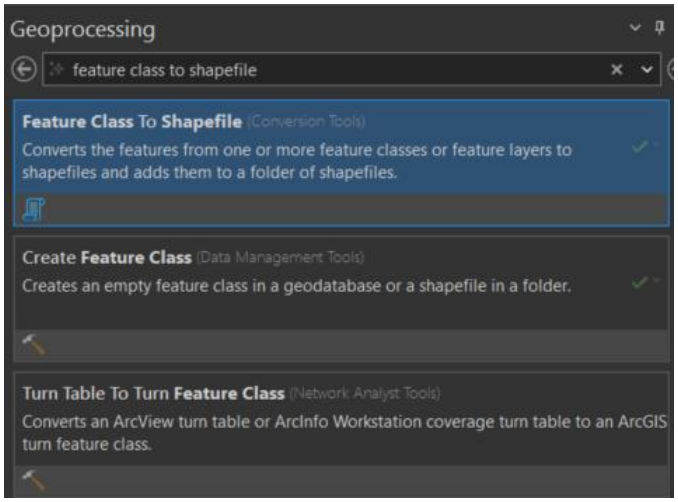
Below is a county feature class that I would like to email to someone



1) Click Analysis tab (top Ribbon) -> Tools (red toolbox symbol on left side); the geoprocessing pane should open in your right panel



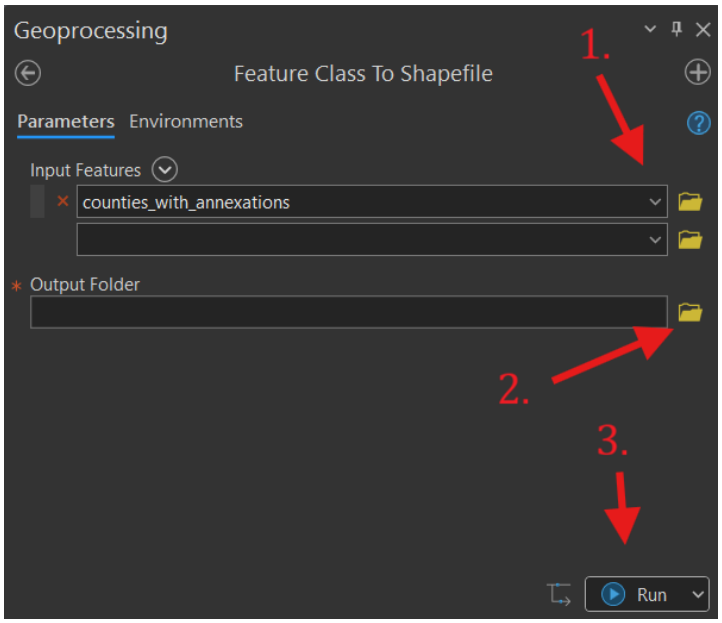
2) In the geoprocessing pane, type “Feature Class to Shapefile” -> click on the tool



3) Input Features = layer you want to export (e.g., parcel layer)
    a. If the layer is in the map already, it should appear in the dropdown list

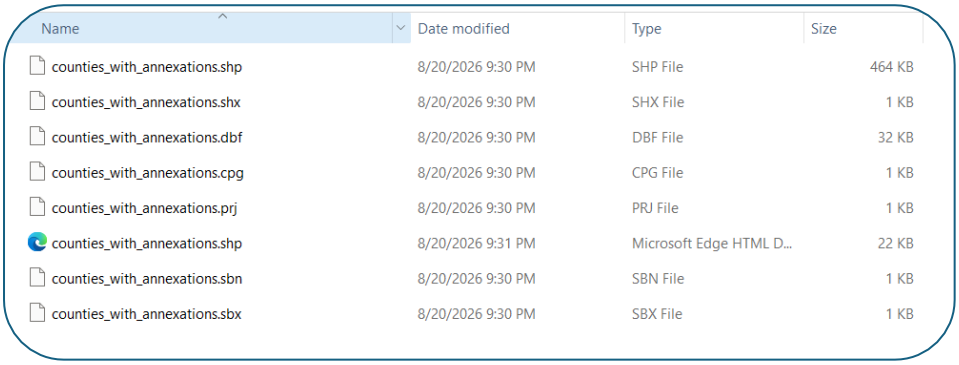
   Output Folder = where you want to export the shapefile
    b. Click the yellow folder on the right to browse to the correct folder. NOTE: DO NOT save it to a geodatabase (file ending in “.gdb”), **save it to a folder**

   Click Run (bottom right corner)



4) Depending on the size of the file, the process should only take a few seconds

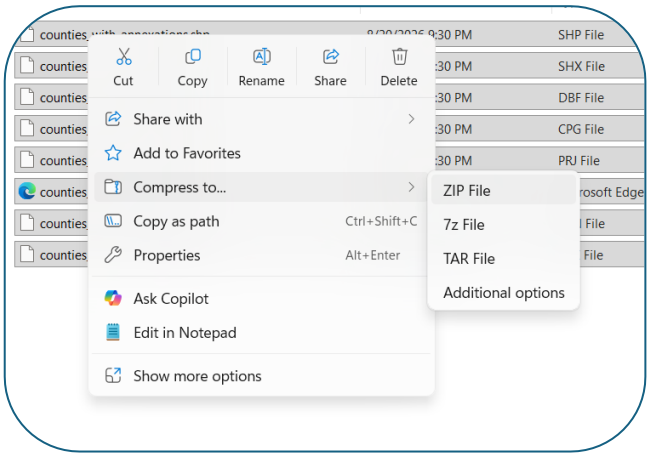
5) Open the folder to which you exported the layer, you should see ~8 different files

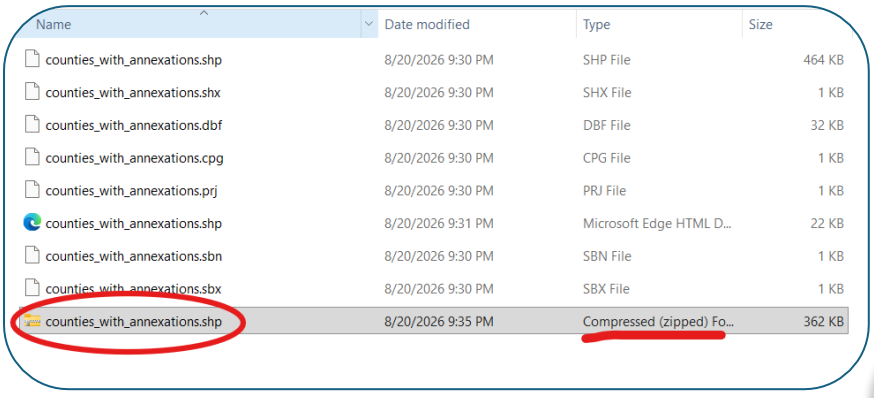


Explanation: The term “shapefile” can mean 2 things: the file that contains the shapes (geometries) and the whole shapefile. The file that contains the shapes has the extension and File Type .shp, sometimes referred to as the “main file”. The whole shapefile is a collection of files (usually 5 – 9). The file extension .prj stores the projection information, .dbf stores attribute table information, .shx is an index to quickly reference geometries (helpful when you have a lot of shapes). **The .shp, .shx, and .dbf are necessary for someone to use the data. However, all files are helpful and add context and should be included.** Almost always, when someone mentions a “shapefile”, they are referring to the collection of files.

6) Highlight all the files -> right click -> Compress to -> click Zip file

7) The result will be a folder with the name of the layer and a zipped folder symbol on the left. You can upload this zipped folder to an email and send it to someone so they can use the data

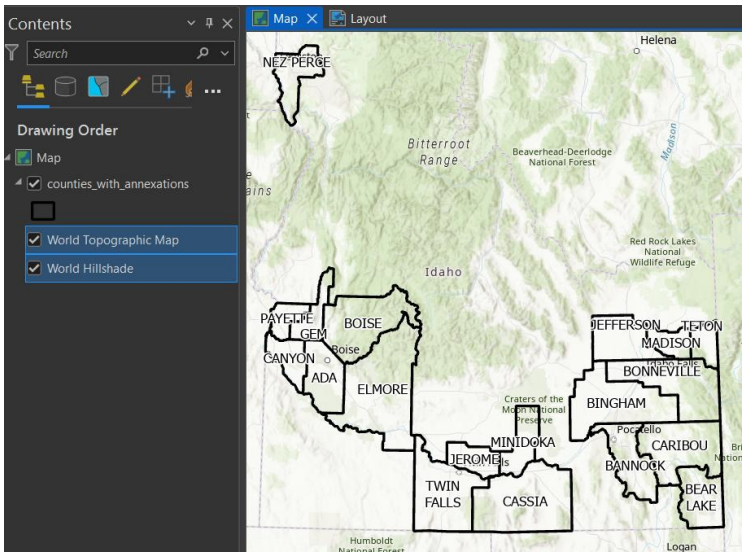




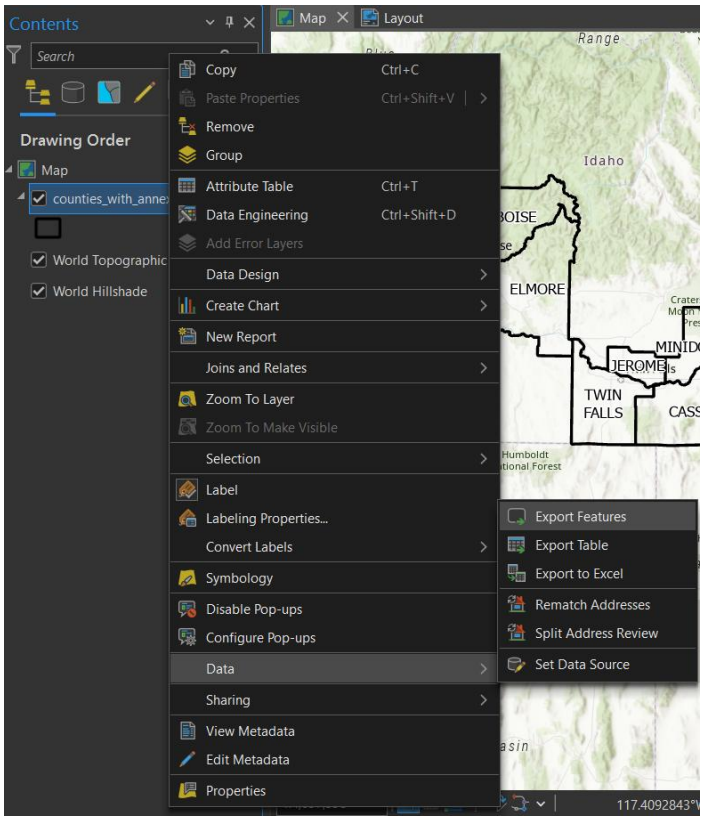
Export Features

Feature Class to Shapefile is useful if you tend to use the geoprocessing tool a lot; you can simply search the name of the tool you want. The Export Features tool is beneficial if you need to limit the fields that are exported.

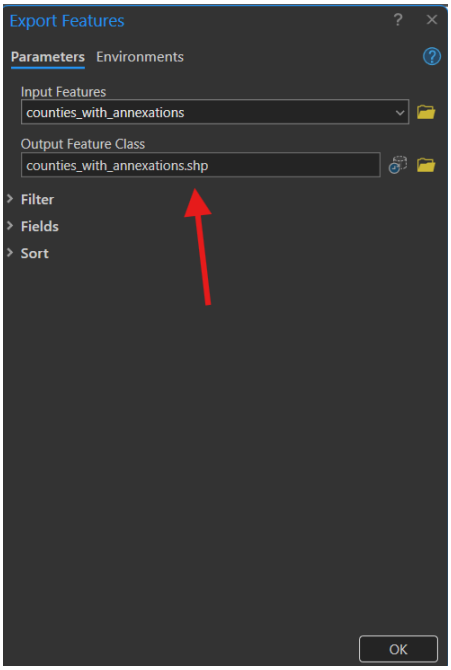
We will start with a county feature class.



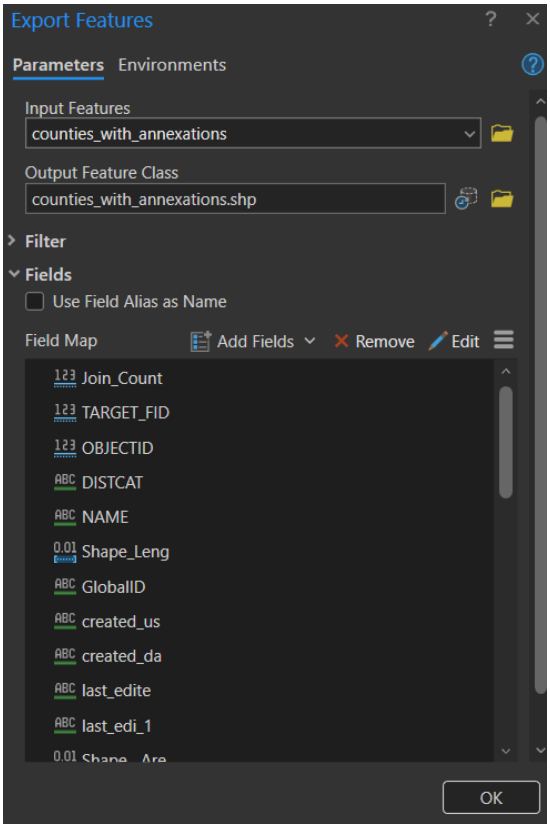
1) Right click on layer (County) –> Data (bottom of popup) -> Export Features



2) A small popup screen will appear
    a. You do not need to change the Input Features
    b. Change the Output Feature Class to include the desired pathway and name of export. DO NOT save it to a geodatabase (file ending in .gdb), save it to a folder
    c. Type ".shp" at the end of the name of the export

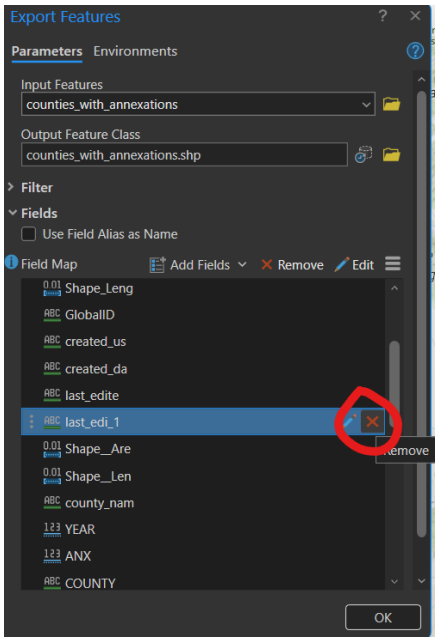


3) Click the Fields Dropdown, you should see all the fields in your layer appear



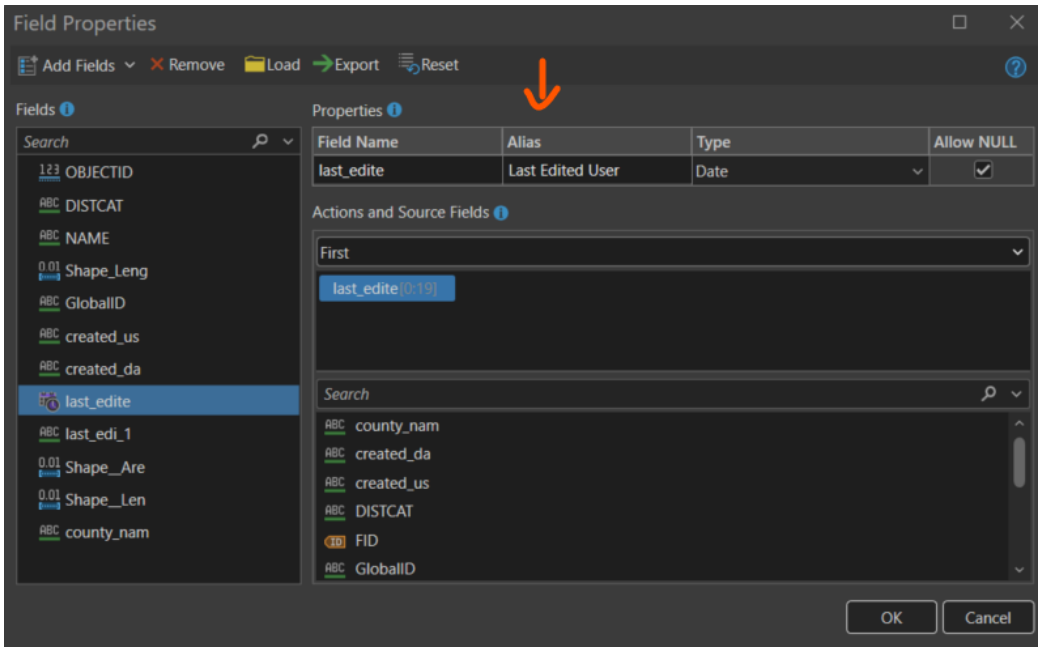
4) You can control what fields are present in the export

Example: Let's say you want to remove fields related to who last edited the layer. Click the field -> Click the red X next to the field



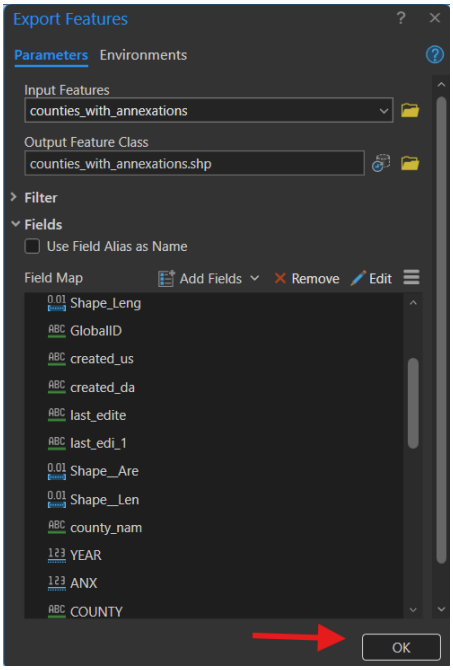
NOTE: If you accidentally remove a field, just exit out of the popup (top right corner x) and redo the previous steps.

Example: Let's say you want to edit the name of a field. Click on the field -> Click the pencil on the right (directly to the left of the red x). A new popup will appear, where you can change the Field Name, Alias Name, and field Type. Click Ok

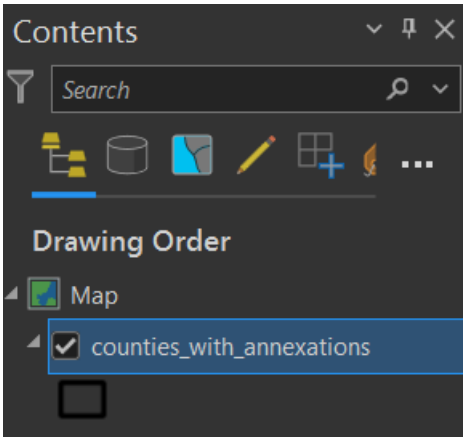


5) After you have edited your fields, Click Ok (bottom right corner) for all popups

NOTE: You will get an error if you edited a field incorrectly (e.g., changed a field type to numeric when the field has text)



6) You will see the new layer appear in your map

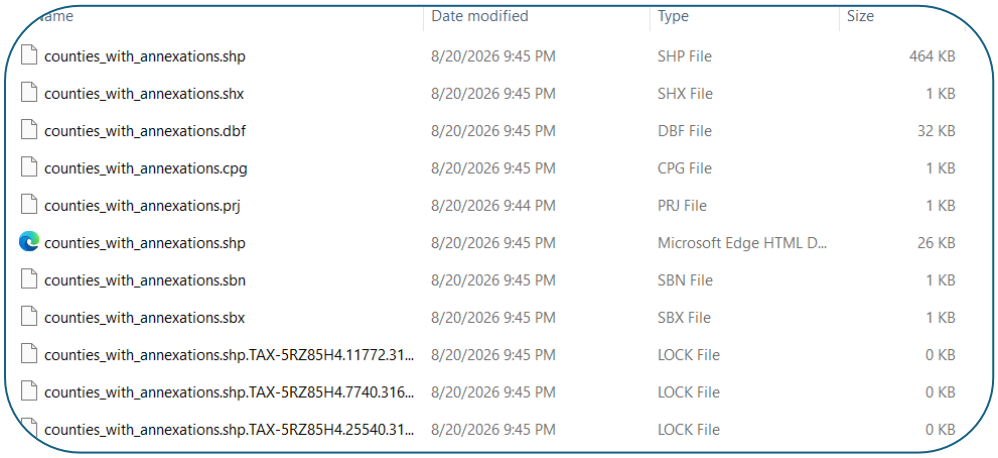


7) If you go to the path that you exported the shapefile to, you should see 8 files related to the shapefile and 2-3 LOCK files

Explanation: The term “shapefile” can mean 2 things: the file that contains the shapes (geometries) and the whole shapefile. The file that contains the shapes has the extension and File Type .shp, sometimes referred to as the “main file”. The whole

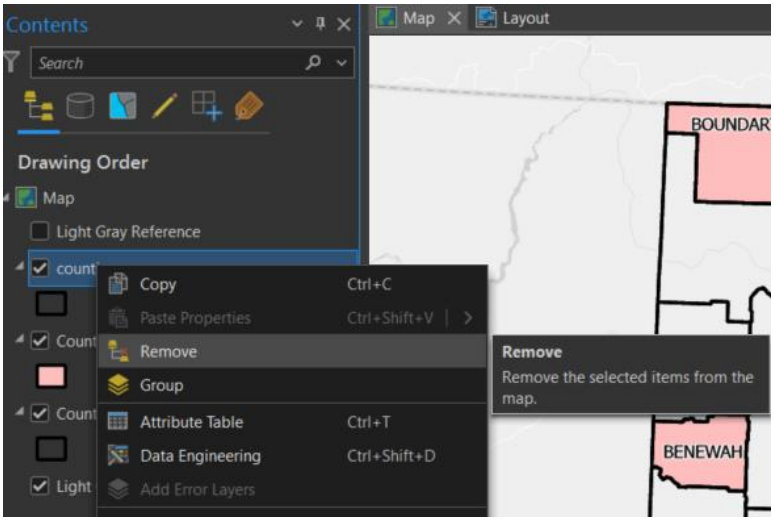
shapefile is a collection of files (usually 5 – 9). The file extension .prj stores the projection information, .dbf stores attribute table information, .shx is an index to quickly reference geometries (helpful when you have a lot of shapes). **The .shp, .shx, and .dbf are necessary for someone to use the data. However, all files are helpful and add context and should be included.** Almost always, when someone mentions a "shapefile", they are referring to the collection of files.

The 3 lock files just mean that the file is currently in use. You will not be able to zip the files or use the files in a different program when lock files are present. To remove the lock files:

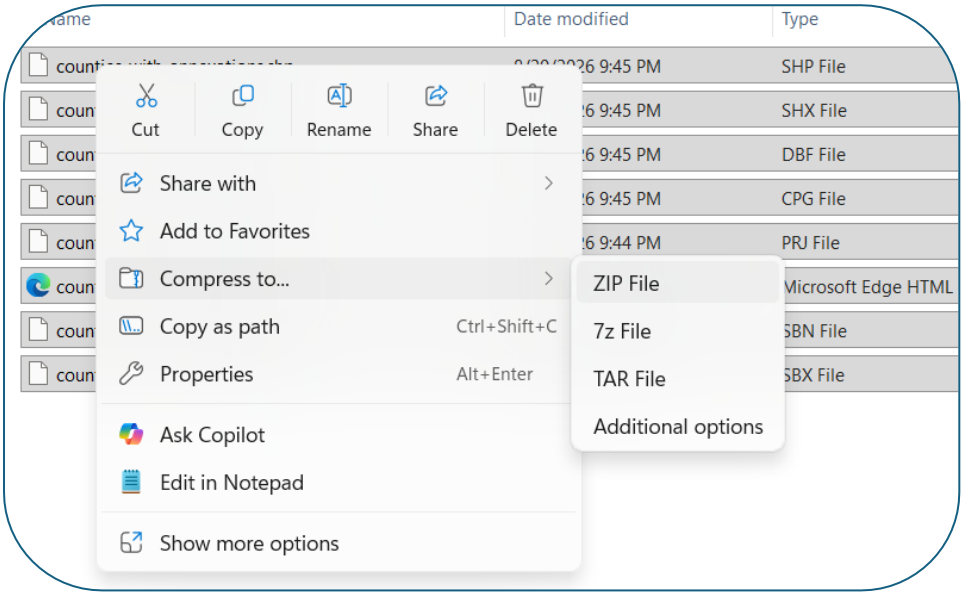


Name	Date modified	Type	Size
counties_with_annexations.shp	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	SHP File	464 KB
counties_with_annexations.shx	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	SHX File	1 KB
counties_with_annexations.dbf	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	DBF File	32 KB
counties_with_annexations.cpg	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	CPG File	1 KB
counties_with_annexations.prj	8/20/2026 9:44 PM	PRJ File	1 KB
counties_with_annexations.shp	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	Microsoft Edge HTML D...	26 KB
counties_with_annexations.sbn	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	SBN File	1 KB
counties_with_annexations.sbx	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	SBX File	1 KB
counties_with_annexations.shp.TAX-5RZ85H4.11772.31...	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	LOCK File	0 KB
counties_with_annexations.shp.TAX-5RZ85H4.7740.316...	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	LOCK File	0 KB
counties_with_annexations.shp.TAX-5RZ85H4.25540.31...	8/20/2026 9:45 PM	LOCK File	0 KB

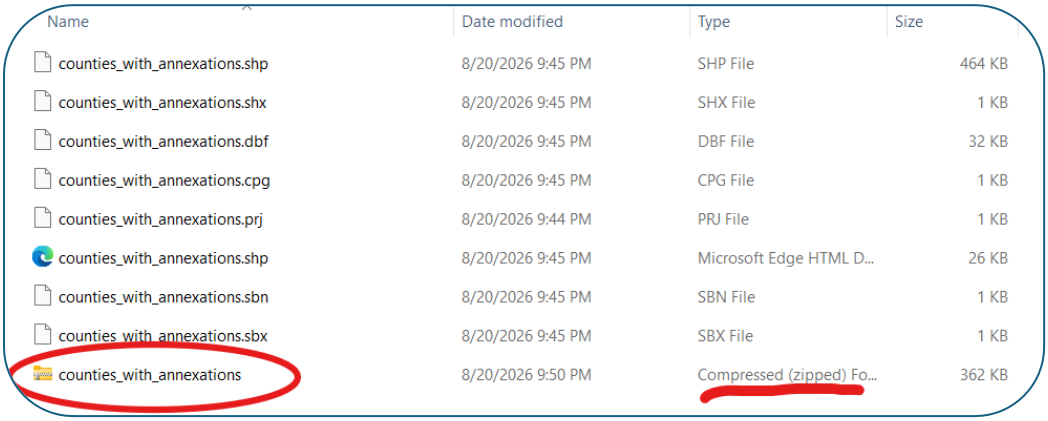
a) Remove the layer from your map. Right Click -> Remove (3rd from top)



8) Once the lock files are removed: highlight all the files -> right click -> Compress to -> click Zip file

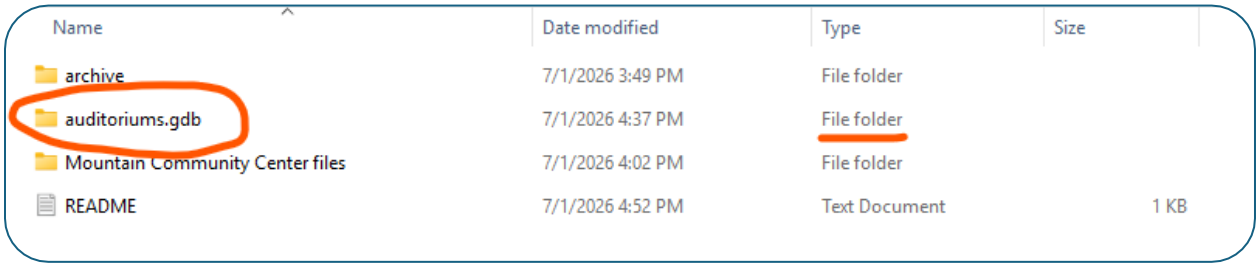


9) The result will be a folder with the name of the layer and a zipped folder symbol on the left. You can upload this zipped folder to an email and send it to someone so they can use the data

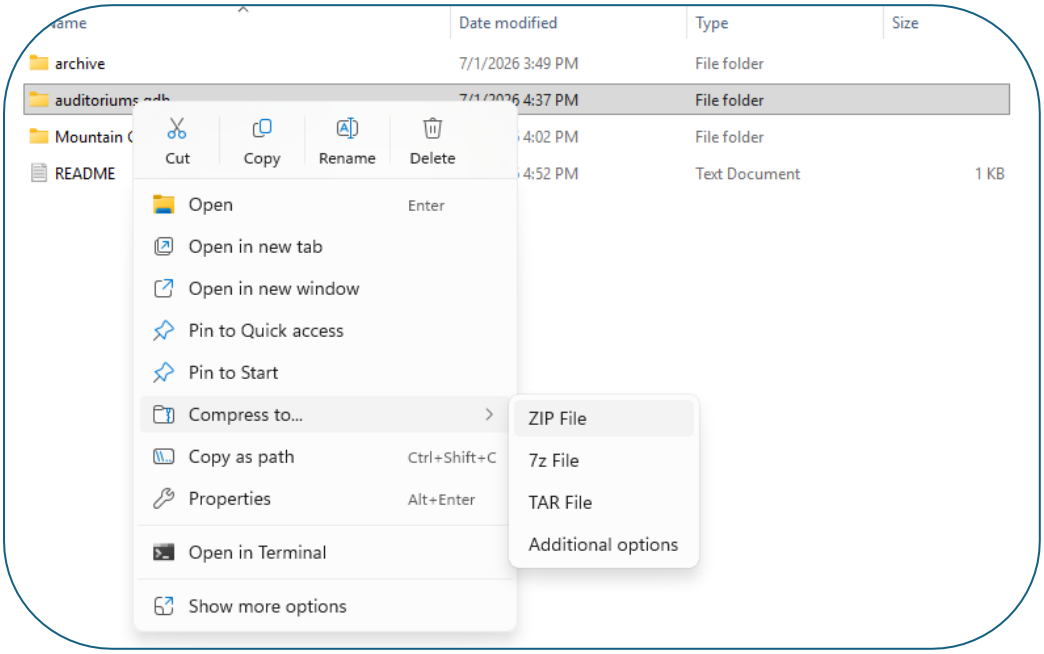


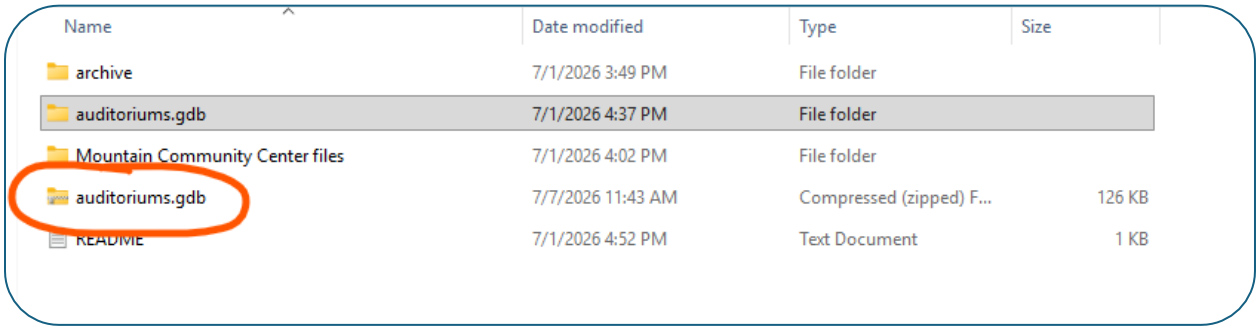
Feature Class to Geodatabase

Geodatabases have more capabilities than shapefiles. Shapefiles are limited to 2GB, cannot contain domains, spatial relationships, or topology rules, and are limited to one spatial type (points, lines, polygons). Geodatabases are stored in a folder, and, when in file explorer, they look like normal folders with a .gdb extension.



Geodatabases can be zipped and sent via email, like any other folder. Right click on the geodatabase -> Compress to... -> ZIP File (alternatively, you can go into the geodatabase folder, highlight all the files, and compress to zip file)

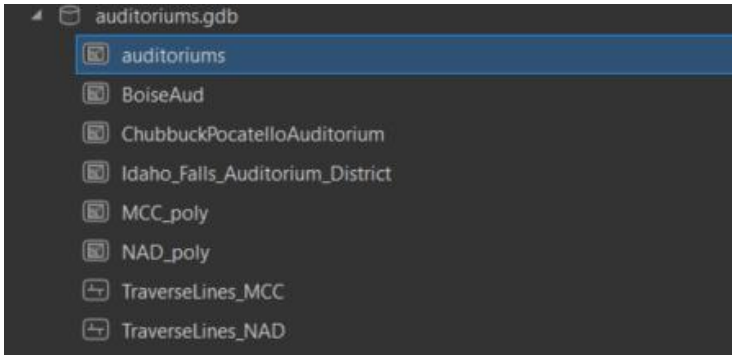




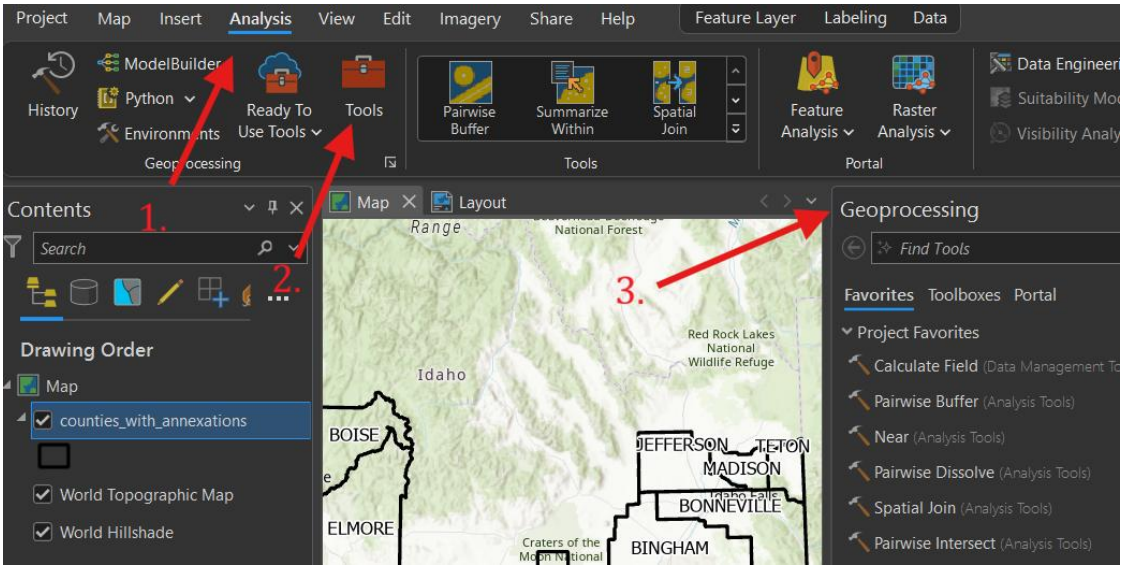
However, let's say that the data you want to share will someone is in a geodatabase with other files and you do not want to share all of them. If you open the .gdb folder, you will see there are ~100 files that make up the geodatabase. You cannot just pick and choose which feature classes you want to send from File Explorer. You have to use Feature Class to

Geodatabase to create a new geodatabase and select which feature classes you want within the new geodatabase.

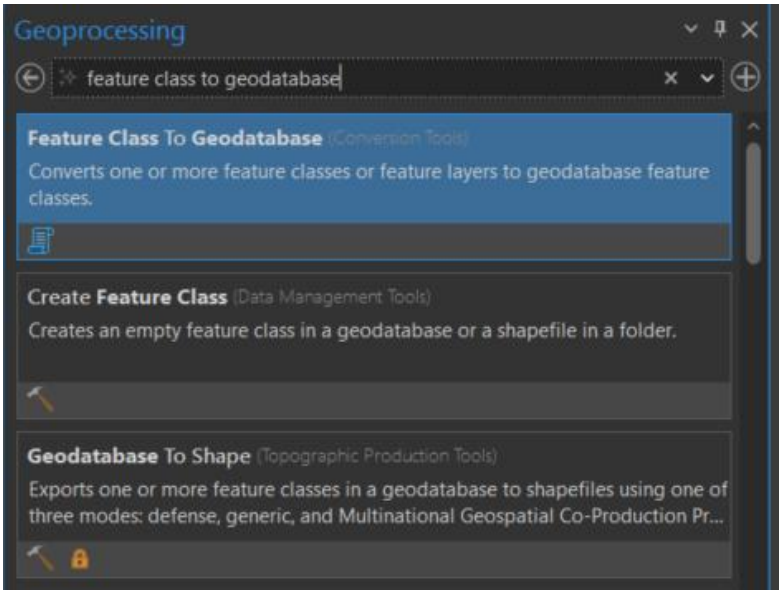
Example: Let's say we have a geodatabase labelled "auditoriums" that contains a feature class of all the auditorium districts in Idaho and feature classes of individual auditorium districts. We only want to send someone the feature class with all the auditoriums.



1) Go to Analysis (in Top Ribbon) -> Tools (red toolbox symbol). The geoprocessing pane should open in the right pane

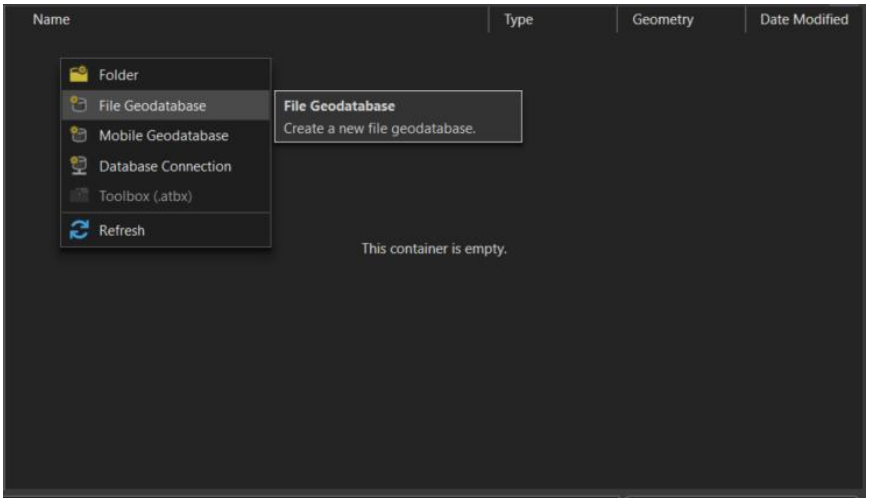


2) In the geoprocessing pane, search Feature Class to Geodatabase. Click on the Feature Class to Geodatabase tool

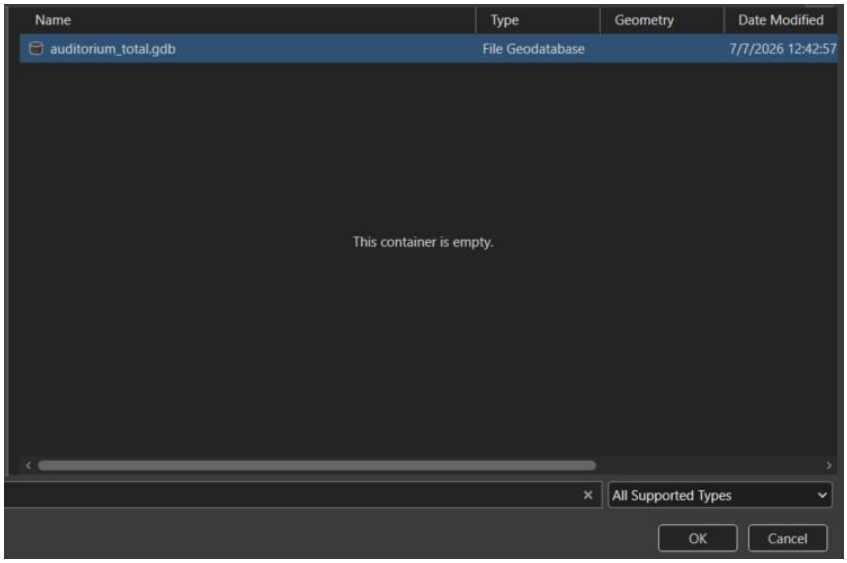


3) Input Features = the files you want to export into a new geodatabase
   a. If the features are in your map, they should appear in the dropdown
   b. If the features are <u>not</u> in your map, use the yellow folder symbol on the right to navigate to the files you want
   c. NOTE: you can select multiple files from multiple geodatabases
   d. HINT: Ctrl (or Shift) + Click each file to add multiple files at once

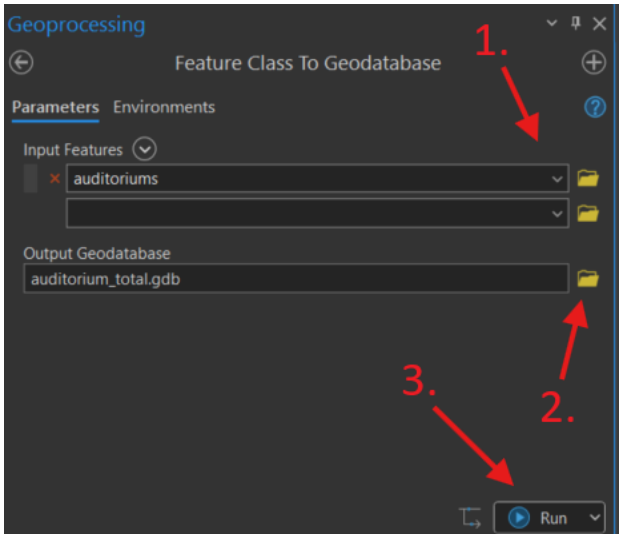
   Output Geodatabase = the new geodatabase path and name
   e. Click the yellow folder on the right and navigate to a folder where the new geodatabase will be stored
   f. Right Click -> File Geodatabase



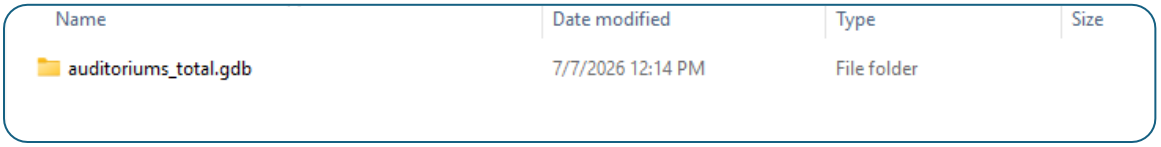
g. Rename the geodatabase (keep the .gdb at the end) -> Click OK



h. Click Run



4) There should now be a specified .gdb folder in the correct pathway (and in your Catalog pane)



5) You may zip and email the folder as needed

Right click on Folder -> Compress to... -> ZIP File (alternatively, you can go into the geodatabase folder, highlight all the files, and compress to zip file)

