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Geodesy and State Plane Zones

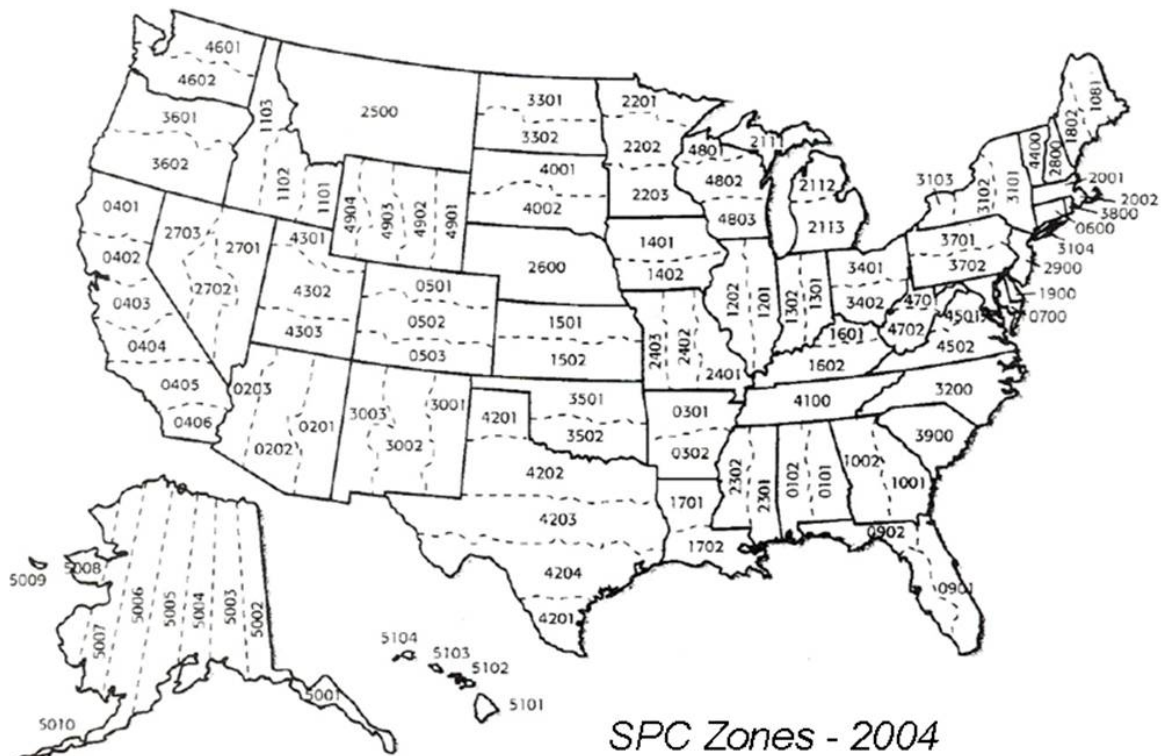
By Joe Burnett

All too often, we receive calls about 'Which State Plane Zone is my Project in?' or 'I used the wrong State Plane Zone.' There are several websites that have very good maps showing the boundaries of the State Plane Zones:

FIGURE 1. http://gis.depaul.edu/shwang/teaching/geog258/Grid_files/image002.jpg



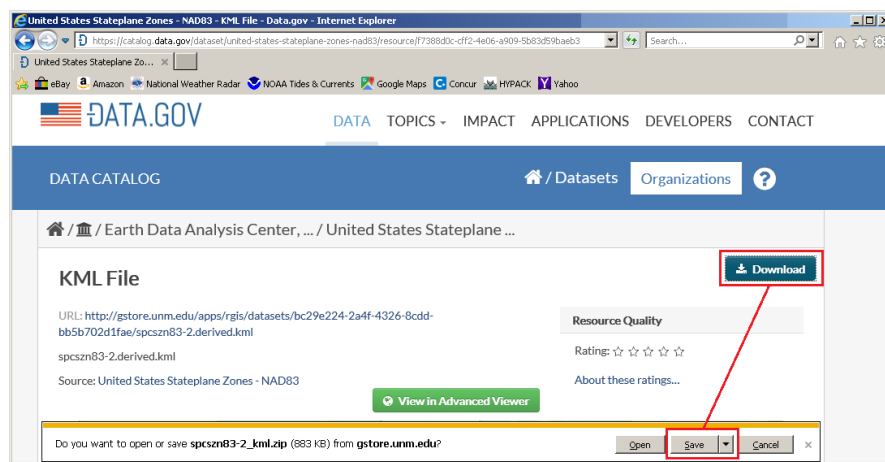
FIGURE 2. <https://gis.tulaliptribes-nsn.gov/home/frequentlyaskedquestions.aspx>



And there are numerous more that have maps that will show each State and their Zones. However, there is a much simpler solution to this problem. Recently, I was shown how GoogleEarth can help you determine *exactly* which state plane zone your project is in.

1. **Download and unzip the KML files from the following websites:**
 - NAD-83 <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/united-states-stateplane-zones-nad83/resource/f7388d0c-cff2-4e06-a909-5b83d59baeb3>

FIGURE 3. NAD-83 Download



- NAD-27: <https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/united-states-stateplane-zones-nad27/resource/b12c008f-a23d-41cc-bd88-51c08c5ec4f3>

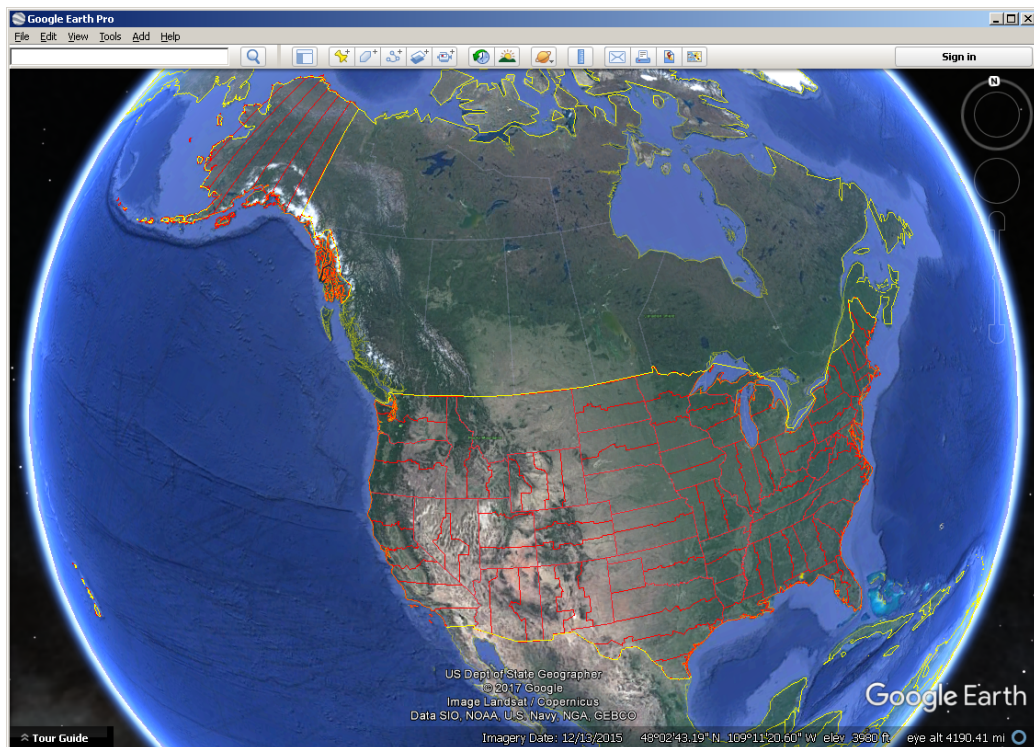
FIGURE 4. NAD-27 Download



IMPORTANT: These two downloads are different. One is for the NAD83 State Plane Zones and the other is for the NAD27 State Plane Zones.

2. Double-click on the KML file and it will open up in GoogleEarth.

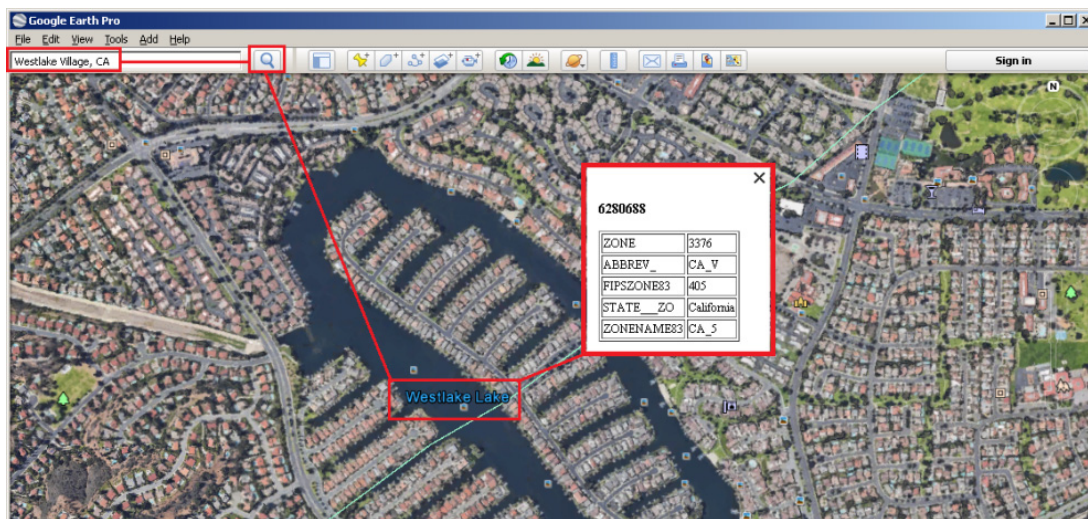
FIGURE 5. State Plane KML in Google Earth



In this example, you can now see the NAD83 KML Grid. All 50 States and their Zones are included in these KML files.

3. **Search for your location on Google Earth** and allow it to zoom in. Simply left-click on the map and a box will appear with the state plane zone information:

FIGURE 6. Searching a Location in Google Earth



This procedure can be repeated for any location across the U.S. However, what happens when a location crosses multiple zones within a state or multiple states?

FIGURE 7. Lake Tahoe Straddles Zones in Two States

