How To Customize Your Online Property Map

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This information will show you how to customize an online property map that you purchase from us by adding your own information. The link below is an example of a customized property line map. Click each symbol to see a balloon with more information. You can also click the light blue line but not the other lines.

https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&q=https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_4.txt

Don't be spooked by this just because it is computer stuff. I am going to walk you though it.

> **Note:** The best way to copy data from this pdf file is to first download this file to your computer and then open the file from your harddrive. If you let your browser open this file and then try to copy something you might get a bunch of highly annoying line breaks.
>
> **Note:** You should see **four equal signs** in the above link. If you do not, then download this file to your harddrive and open it with adobe acrobat.

There are two kinds of information you can add to the map:

1. **Symbols**. These are small jpg or png images. Symbols can display a popup balloon with information when they are clicked.

2. **Lines**. You can make lines that are any color and any width. You can also make dashed lines.

In general, here are the steps needed to customize your map.

1. Convert your approximate property corner coordinates into a text (i.e. txt) file.
2. Put this original text file online and display it. I will give you step-by-step instructions for using Google Sites which provides free hosting.
3. Add waypoints to your text file.
4. Add lines to your text file.
5. Put your edited text file online and display your custom map.

Below are details for each step.

1. Convert your approximate property corner coordinates into a text file

Below is an online map I made up for around 160 acres. This land is actually part of a state forest in Michigan. I am making up the data that I am going to add to this map. None of this data is real! If you purchase our service then one thing you will receive will be an online map link like the following except your coordinate data will be different.

https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&markers=//Not_a_survey___Coordinates_are_approximate||description=plm2||label=on||line=on||44.532989,-85.154000^1||44.532916,-85.143812^2||44.525631,-85.143592^3||44.525692,-85.153689^4||44.532989,-85.154000^1

Copy and paste your online map link into any kind of editing program that lets you make text (i.e. txt) files. Personally I use the program Notepad++ (only available for PCs.) This is *not* the notepad program that comes with windows.

Divide your online map link into two parts like so:

Part 1:
https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off

Part 2:
&markers=//Not_a_survey___Coordinates_are_approximate||description=plm2||label=on||line=on||44.532989,-85.154000^1||44.532916,-85.143812^2||44.525631,-85.143592^3||44.525692,-85.153689^4||44.532989,-85.154000^1

Part 1 starts the **Gmap4** enhanced Google map viewer that I developed and provides a few parameters that control how the map looks when it opens on your screen. To see all the various parameters that you can include in a Gmap4 link, please go to the Gmap4 Help page and download the pdf file **"Link Parameters"**.

Part 2 includes the coordinate data that produces your approximate property lines. The characters || represent the end of a line. The character ^ separates different fields of information. The characters // mark a comment line. Blank lines are OK.

Break **part 2** of your online map link into separate lines as follows. Do not include the word "markers".

//Not_a_survey___Coordinates_are_approximate
description=plm2
label=on
line=on
44.532989,-85.154000^1
44.532916,-85.143812^2
44.525631,-85.143592^3
44.525692,-85.153689^4
44.532989,-85.154000^1

Save just the above 'part 2' lines as a text file. Give your file a name that does not have any spaces. **Use an underline character instead of a space.** I named the above file customize_map_1.txt

Tip: Online property maps purchased from us include the statement "Not a survey" in the upper left corner and have a link titled "About this map". In order for that same information to appear on your customized property map, your text file must include the following line:

//Not_a_survey___Coordinates_are_approximate

2. Put this original text file online and display it

Before starting to customize your data, I recommend you put your original text file online so you get comfortable with that process. For step-by-step instructions for using free Google Sites to host your text file, please go to the Gmap4 Help page and download the pdf file **"Working With Files"**. Search that file on **"Google Sites"**.

When I put the above text file online using Google Sites, I got the following download link:
https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_1.txt?attredirects=0&d=1

I **eliminated everything after "txt"** so now the link pointing to my text looks like:
https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_1.txt

Now modify "Part 1" of your online map link so it looks like:
https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&q=_____

Paste the link to your text file over the underline. Now your link looks like:

https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&q=https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_1.txt

Check to make sure there are **no spaces** in the above link.

Paste the above link into a browser. You should see the same online map that you see when all the data for the map is part of the Gmap4 link.

3. Add waypoints to your text file

Below is the same text file that I showed you above, but with some edits added. The edits are discussed below. I named this file customize_map_2B.txt

```
//Not_a_survey___Coordinates_are_approximate
// ================================
//    Symbol table
// ================================
symbol=https://propertylinemaps.com/p/png/square/13x13x1_box_aqua.png  name=corner
symbol=https://maps.google.com/mapfiles/kml/paddle/grn-stars-lv.png  name=feature
symbol=https://maps.google.com/mapfiles/kml/pal3/icon48.png  name=camp
//
// ================================
//    Approximate property lines
// ================================
label=on
line=on
44.532989,-85.154000^1^^corner
44.532916,-85.143812^2^^corner
44.525631,-85.143592^3^^corner
44.525692,-85.153689^4^^corner
44.532989,-85.154000^1
// The last coordinate is the same as the first one.  This 'closes' the property boundary.

// ================================
//    Waypoints
// ================================
label=off
line=off
44.530290,-85.149981^ Tree stand^ <em>44.530290,-85.149981</em><br>This stand is 15 feet off the ground with good views of the trail in both directions^ feature
44.531445,-85.144960^ Beaver dam^ <em>44.531445,-85.144960</em><br>Wildlife come here to drink late in the summer after other water sources have dried up^ feature
44.531392,-85.151596^ Cabin^ <em>44.531392,-85.151596</em><br>This cabin sleeps 6. There is no electricity.  Water comes from a hand pump and the bathroom in an outhouse.^ camp
```

Below is a Gmap4 link that displays the above text file. You can click the three symbols that were added to the map and a popup will appear.
https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&q=https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_2B.txt

The file customize_map_2B.txt has the following edits.

A. Use comment lines to add section headings

Adding comments to your text file will help you remember how your text file is organized. Any line that begins with // is a comment line.

B. Delete the line: description=plm2

The line "description=plm2" is a special command that tells the Gmap4 program to always use a small light blue square for **every symbol** on the map. Since you want to customize your map you need to delete this line from your text file.

C. Add a symbol table

Each different png or jpg symbol that you want to use on your map needs to have one line in the symbol table. Each line in the symbol table looks like:

symbol=_____ name=_____

Replace the first underline with the http link to where your image file (png or jpg) is online. Replace the second underline with a short name that you make up.

Here is a webpage that contains links to many symbols that Google is hosting.
https://hohonuuli.blogspot.com/2007/09/list-of-paddle-icons-for-kml-z-letters.html
The get the http link for any symbol, rightclick the symbol and select "copy link location".

I like the small symbols at the bottom of the above page. For example the small black star on a green background is online at: https://maps.google.com/mapfiles/kml/paddle/grn-stars-lv.png

You can also download any of the symbols on the above page and then upload them to your Google Sites account. **If you do this then remember that when you get the link to your image on Google Sites, the link is too long.** You need to modify the link by deleting everything after the "?". Your image link must end in "jpg" or end in "png".

If you want a symbol to appear at each of your approximate property corners, then you have to include that symbol in the symbol table. You are welcome to use the small light blue square that I made and here is a link to that symbol:
https://propertylinemaps.com/p/png/square/13x13x1_box_aqua.png
You are welcome to use this symbol but please download it and host it yourself at the same place that you are hosting your text file online. If you link directly to the symbol on my server then your map will break the next time I reorganize the files on my server.

D. Add waypoints

Each location where you want a symbol to appear on the map will have a line in your text file like this:

_____^_____^_____^_____

Replace the underlines as follows:
1. latitude,longitude in decimal degrees
2. A name that will appear on the map if (a) the Gmap4 program has "labels=on" under the Menu button and (b) labels are *not* suppressed in the text file via the command "labels=off". This name will always appear if you hover your cursor over the symbol.
3. Text for the balloon (i.e. description) when this symbol is clicked.
4. This is the short name you made up for the symbol that you want to appear at these coordinates. This short name must be specified in the **symbol table**.

Spaces are OK in your text file.

Your coordinates must be in the WGS84 datum (default on consumer GPS gear) and latitude longitude **decimal degrees**. Such coordinates look like: 44.530290,-85.149981

Look at your coordinates closely. If your coordinates have **four parts** like so:
44 31.817 -85 8.999
then they are in the format degrees and decimal minutes. You will need to change them to decimal degrees. If you need help with that conversion then you can use any Gmap4 map. Click Menu ==> Search. The search bar will open above the map. Paste in your coordinates and click "Search". The map will center at that spot. The lower right corner of the map displays decimal degrees for the center of the map.

I made up descriptions for each of the three waypoints I added. The tags will make text bold. The
 tag is a line break.

Now look at the map displayed by the file **customize_map_2B.txt** and click on an approximate property corner. Nothing happens.

Each property corner is simply a waypoint that happens to be connected with a line. If you want to have a balloon appear when you click on a property corner waypoint then you need to add a description to each of those waypoints.

Here is how to make the property corner balloon show the same information that it shows on the online map link that you purchased from us. Use the following as the description for each property corner waypoint. **Be sure to change the corner number and coordinates so they are correct for each corner.**

Corner 1
Datum WGS84
Approximate Latitude, Longitude
44.532989,-85.154000
This is not a

survey
Produced by PropertyLineMaps.com

I added the above description to each property corner and save a new text file. Here is a map that displays this new text file. You can click on any property corner and a balloon will appear with information.
https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&q=https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_3.txt

If you want to download version 3 of this demonstration text file then here is the link:
https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_3.txt

4. Add lines to your text file

The following link displays version 4 of the map that I have been customizing. This version includes two solid lines and one dashed line.
https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=s&label=on&tilt=off&q=https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_4.txt

If you want to download version 4 of this demonstration text file then here is the link:
https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_4.txt

Just like the coordinates for your waypoints, the coordinates for lines also have to be latitude longitude decimal degrees in the WGS84 datum.

The line coordinates can appear in two places:

1. Directly in the text file.
2. In a KML file.

The version 4 example map linked above uses both methods.

4.1. Putting line coordinates directly in a text file

Each time the text file has a line that says “line=on” then a new line will start and connect the following coordinates. To stop the current line and start a new line add “line=on” to the text file followed by the coordinates for the second line.

You can also stop the current line with the command “line=off”.

The “line” command can include settings to control width, color and dash. The following two lines are equivalent:

line=on
line=on width=2 color=ff0000 dash=off

The second line shown above gives the default values for these settings.

Colors are specified in hexadecimal notation. If you are not familiar with this, you can google:
what is hex color
Also check out http://www.colorpicker.com/

Here are a couple of examples
To specify a line 3 pixels wide, yellow and solid, use the command
line=on width=3 color=ffff00 dash=off

To specify a line 3 pixels wide, green and dashed, use the command
line=on width=3 color=00ff00 dash=2,30
You can change the appearance of the dashes by changing the two values.

Usually points on a line will not have any name, description or symbol. But they can if you so wish. The syntax for these features is the same for all coordinates whether or not they are connected with a line.

There are two primary ways to get coordinates to put directly into a text file.
1. Use Gmap4's "Draw and save" feature
2. Convert an existing file such as a GPX file.

To use Gmap4's "Draw and save" feature, click Menu ==> Draw and save.
Accept the default of "Linepoint" and click Continue.
Click the map to draw a line. Each point is draggable.
When you are done drawing your line, rightclick any point and select "Gmap4 link - No description". Copy the coordinates and paste them into your text file one coordinate per line.
Delete the characters that are not part of the coordinate.

To learn more about Gmap4's "Draw and save" feature please go to the Gmap4 Help page and download the pdf file **"Trip Planning and Custom Maps"**.

Another way to obtain coordinates for a line is to extract them from a GPX file that you recorded with a GPS. To convert a GPX file to plain text you can use this online tool http://www.gpsvisualizer.com/convert_input. There is a setting that allows you to convert only trackpoints. You can import the results into a spreadsheet and then create a new column that has just **latitude,longitude**. Be sure your data includes the comma. Copy those latitude longitude values and paste them into your text file.

4.2. Putting line coordinates in a KML file

A Gmap4 text file can specify a maximum of five KML files. Each such file will display its data on the map. Here is the syntax:
file=_____
Put your KML file online and replace the underline with the http link to your KML file.

Download this text file to see a sample of this syntax:
https://sites.google.com/site/propertylinemaps/p/demo/customize_map_4.txt

One **advantage** of KML files is that they can include a **description that will appear when the line is clicked**.

Warning! Do not specify GPX files in a Gmap4 text file. While it might appear to work this is not dependable and is the road to ruin. So don't do it.

Various programs, including GPS Babel, can convert your GPX files into KML files. Be certain that you specify the output to be KML and not KMZ. (A KMZ file is a KML file that has been compressed.) However, you will usually get a KML file that is full of junk tags. **Below is a solution.**

Version 4 of the text file you have been reading about includes the following line:
file=http://www.propertylinemaps.com/p/demo/plm_demo.kml

Use the following link to download that KML file and use it as a **template** for your own KML files:
https://propertylinemaps.com/p/demo/plm_demo.kml

Convert your GPX file to KML using whatever tool you prefer. Open the resulting KML file. Any editing program that can work with html files will open your KML file. Your line coordinates are inside <coordinates>.....</coordinates> tags.

Copy your coordinates and paste them over my coordinates in the template KML file.

Also in the template file, change the <color>, <width>, <name> and <description> to suit your needs. Save the edited template KML file with your own name and put it online. You now have a proper KML file without a lot of junk tags.

Add the "file=_____" command to your text file and replace the underline with the link that points to where your KML file is online.

Tip: KML files must be saved as txt files but with the kml file extension. They must also be saved with **encoding** set to "UTF-8 without BOM". If your editing program does not let you specify the encoding then you need to use a different editing program. Any program intended to edit html files will work fine. I use Notepad++ (PC only). This is *not* the notepad program that comes with windows.

For more information on Gmap4 and KML files, please go to the Gmap4 Help page and download the pdf file **"Working With Files"**. Be sure to also look at the **appendix** in that pdf file.

5. Put your edited text file online and display your custom map

I recommend you use the following link to display your custom map.
https://mappingsupport.com/p/gmap4.php?t=h&label=on&tilt=off&q=_____

- Replace the underline with the http link to your text file
- Use the t parameter to specify which basemap will be used
  - t=m Google road map
  - t=s Google aerial
  - t=h Google aerial with labels
  - t=t4 High resolution USGS topographic map

Notice that this recommended map link does not include any parameters that specify either the center of the map or the zoom level. When those parameters are *not* included in the link then Gmap4 will automatically center and zoom the map such that all of your data is on the screen.

When you are making a text file and putting different versions online you might want to include a version number as part of your file name. For example: customize_map_3.txt

If you are hosting your text files on Google Sites and you keep seeing an older version of your map, then save a new version of your text file with a **new file name**. Doing so will avoid some secret file caching that Google is doing (this is *not* the same as your browser's cache) and your map should now display fine.

How to get more information

Gmap4 understands a delimited file syntax. When you make a text file and display it with Gmap4, you are using that delimited file syntax.

For full documentation of this delimited file syntax and lots of examples, please visit the Gmap4 Help page and download the pdf file **"Delimited Text Data"**.

That pdf documentation file will show you how to:

- Add **photos** to the balloon that appears when you click a symbol
- Make **fancy labels**, including labels without any related symbol
- Add a **title** to your map
- And more...

- end -