IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Importing ColorBrewer Style Ramps into ArcMap

Welcome to the Essential ArcGIS Task Sheet Series. This series supplements the Iowa State University GIS Geospatial Technology Training Program short course series, "Essential ArcGIS Tutorial Series." The task sheets are designed to provide quick, easy instructions for performing specific tasks in GIS.

ColorBrewer 2.0 is a diagnostic tool for evaluating the robustness of individual color schemes. Developed by Cynthia Brewer of Pennsylvania State University, the tool is designed to help you test the distinguishability of color schemes and classes as well as offering usability advice for color blind, color printing, photocopy, and LCD friendliness. This task sheet will cover the steps it takes to import the color scheme ramp style options into ArcMap.

1. ColorBrewer 2.0 Web Tool

a. In a web browser, navigate to http://colorbrewer2.org/.

b. Test out the tool controls. To get a better understanding of how to use the map diagnostic tool, click on **how to use** at the top of the page.

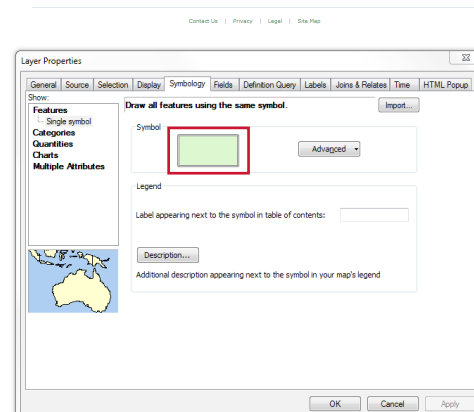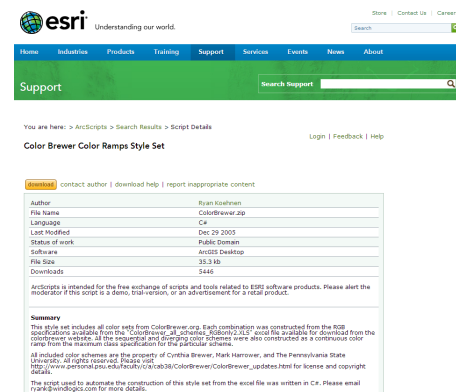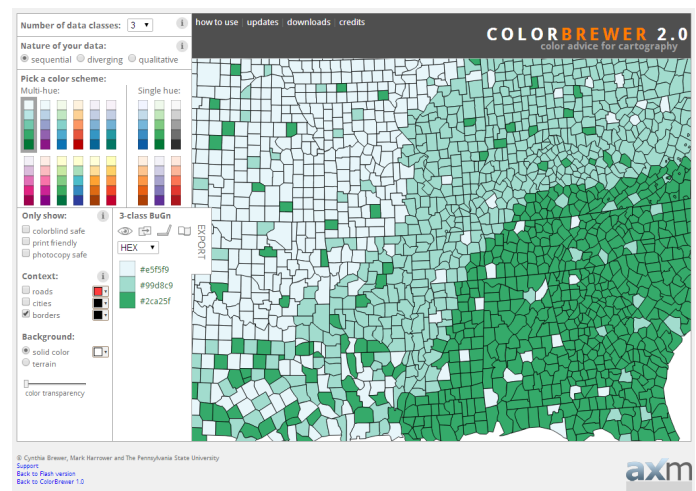## 2. Download the Color Brewer Style Reference

a. Download the ColorBrewer style file. Click **downloads** at the top of the page. Under the ArcGIS section click on **>>Download styles**.

⚠️ If the file is not available, you can also download it from https://github.com/ISUEOGTP/GISTaskSheets

b. Another page will open to http://arcscripts.esri.com/details.asp?dbid=14403. Click the **download** button. Select **I agree**, then click **download**. A zipped folder named **AS14403** will be downloaded.

c. Open the folder and save the **ColorBrewer.style** file in a permanent folder. *Example: Program Files > ESRI > ColorBrewer.style.*

3. Open ArcGIS and Add the Style Reference

a. Once the download is complete, open a blank ArcMap document. Click **Start** > **All Programs** > **ArcGIS** > **ArcMap**.

b. Add any shapefile to the blank ArcMap document. This step is necessary in order to get to the Style References window. *Example: I added an Iowa counties shapefile.*

c. Double-click on the layer in the table of contents to open the **Layers Properties** window. Select the **Symbology** tab and click **Features** in the show box on the left side of the window. Choose **Single symbol** underneath **Features**.

d. Click in the **Symbol** box, displaying the layer symbology. In the **Symbol Selector** window, click **Style References**.

e. The **Style References** window will open up. Click on **Add Style to List** and browse to the location of the **ColorBrewer.style** file downloaded in step 2. Select the file and click Open. In the Style References window, the ColorBrewer.style file should be added to the top of the list. Make sure it is selected with a check mark and click **OK**. Click **OK** in the Symbol Selector window.
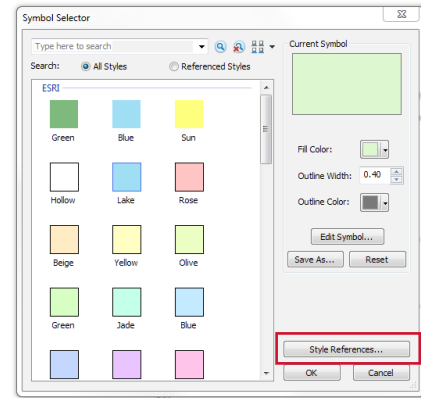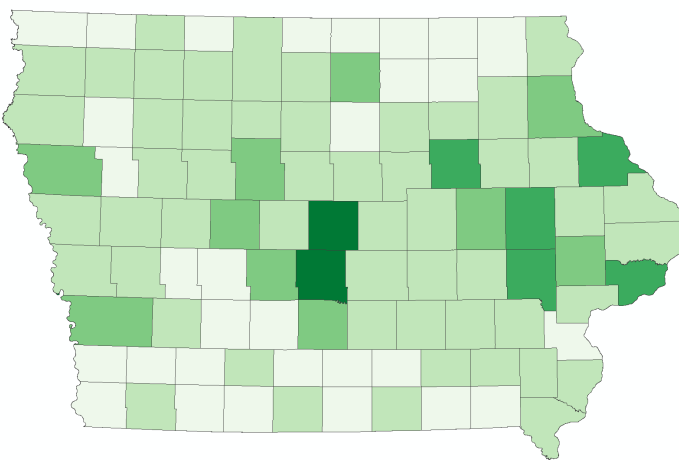
4. Test the Color Brewer Style Ramps

a. In the **Layer Properties** window, click on **Categories** or **Quantities** within the **Show** box. Click on the drop-down arrow next to the **Color Ramp** box. If the style was added correctly, you should now see new color ramp styles in the drop-down menu.
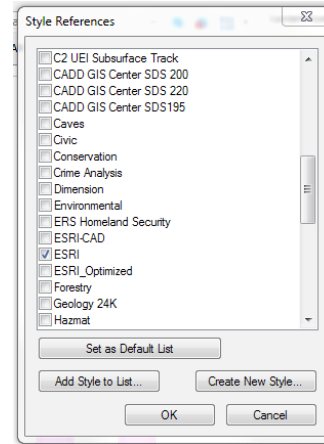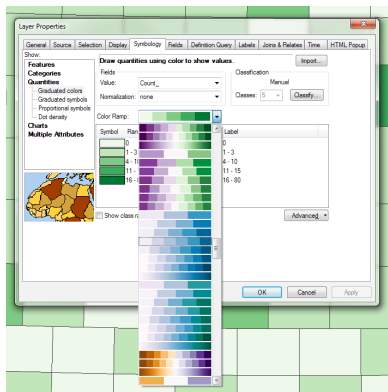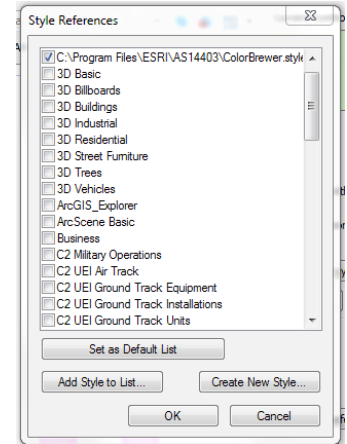
Before   After
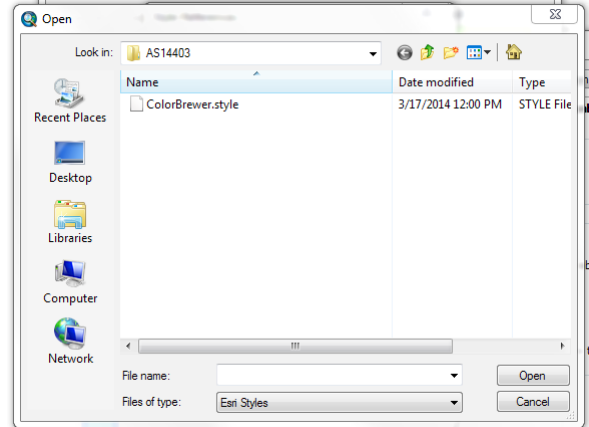
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Bailey Hanson bahanson@iastate.edu, 515-520-1436 or Associate Professor Christopher J. Seeger, ASLA, GISP cjseeger@iastate.edu, 515-509-0651 for more information about the Geospatial Technology Program. This task sheet and more are available at www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/gis