

Using Google Earth with the BLM Overlay Maps and your GPS tracks.

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Overlay Maps

Download the Overlay files from the website using the “Right Click...Save As...” method to save the “Map C/D Google Earth Overlay” files to your computer. The files will have a “ZIP” extension which is a compressed file containing the “KMZ” file that you will load into *Google Earth*. You will have to un-zip the overlay files before you can use them.

Open the “KMZ” files, one at a time from *Google Earth* using the File/Open choices from the Menu. Select the file and click Open. The Overlay map will load into the “Temporary Places” of *Google Earth* in the sidebar on the left of the screen. If the checkbox to the left of the file is checked the Overlay should show up (it may take a few seconds). Using the checkbox, uncheck/check it to turn off and on the Overlay map. Only one Overlay should be on at a time. Once you have both Overlays loaded, close *Google Earth* and you will get a prompt “Save – Discard – Cancel”, select Save to save and move the overlay files from the “Temporary Places” folder to your “My Places” folder. The next time you load *Google Earth* the overlay files will be here and you will not have to load them again unless a new version is released.

When an Overlay map is on and selected, the slider bar below the selection can be moved to the left to make the Overlay transparent if you want to see the *Google Earth* image beneath the Overlay.

GPS Tracks

Loading your GPS tracks is almost the same process as above but you will need to provide the GPS track files. *Google Earth* will open many GPS files directly. *Google Earth* can open “GPX” and Garmin “GDB” files which I use. If you do not have a Garmin or can not create “GPX” files check the Help system in *Google Earth* to see if it can open your file type. Once you have the track files needed open them the same as the overlay files above.

Tip- Keep your GPS track files clean and containing only the tracks or waypoints that you need.

BLM *Google Earth* file

The Overlay maps are good to see everything in relation to your tracks but for detail work you need to download the “trails_HavasutMP_AltC.kmz” file from the BLM website to obtain the best detail for the “HN” routes. The process is the same as downloading the Overlay files. What you get are fine red and green lines that will look like your tracks. You can click on them and a popup window will appear that will show you information about the route.

Google Earth will do many cool things once you learn how to use it. Use the GE help system for more information.

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