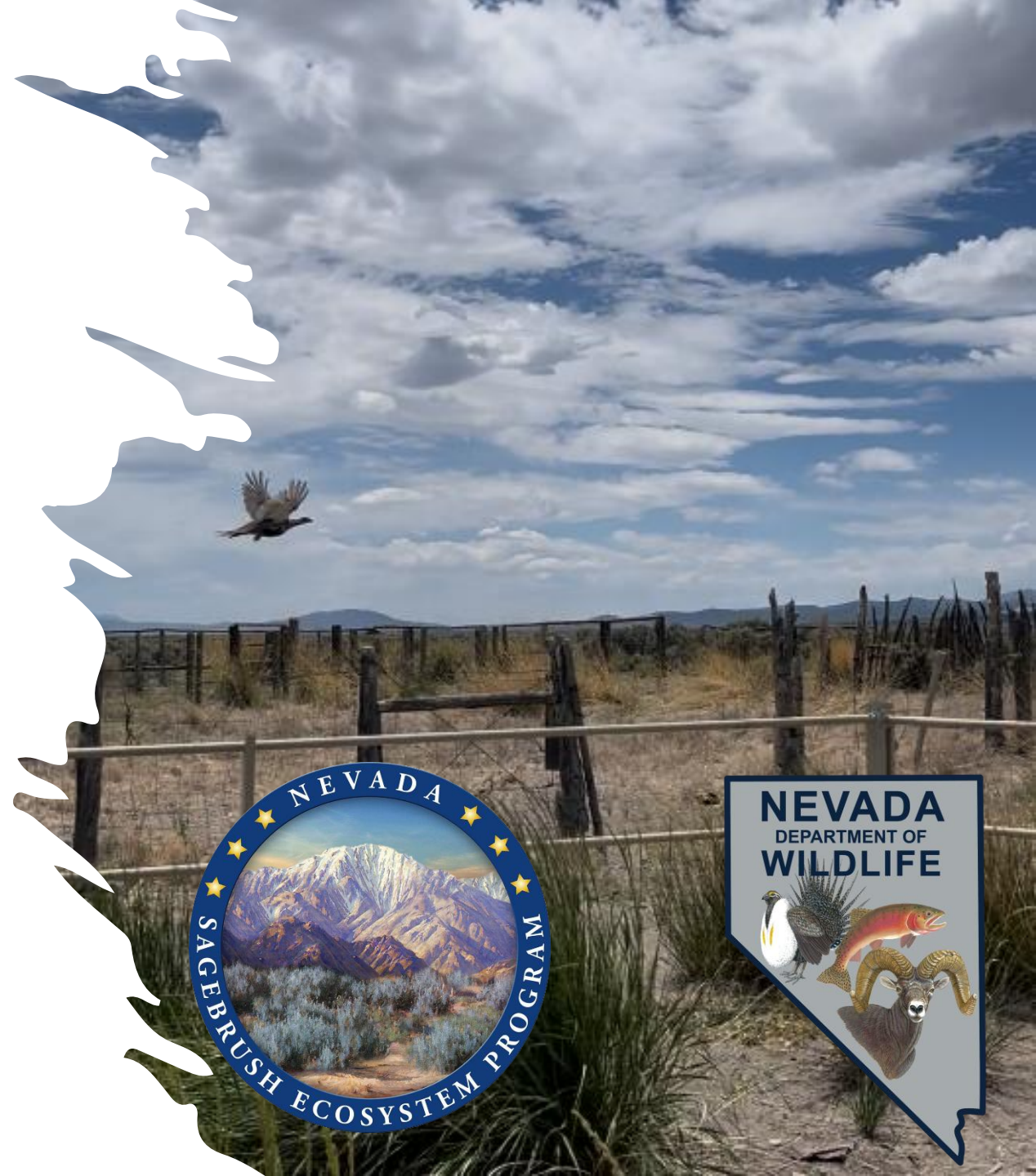


SETT Roles and Responsibilities:

Nevada Department of Wildlife Representative

Presented by: Cheyenne Acevedo

Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Meeting
April 17, 2025

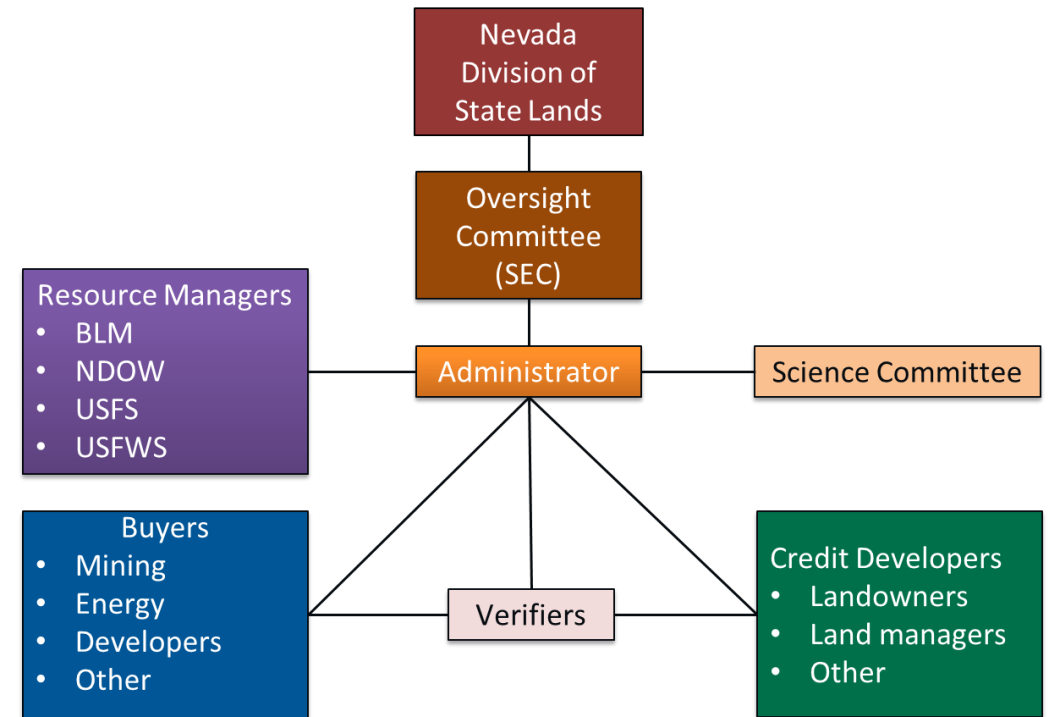


Today's Topics

- NDOW Roles and Responsibilities
- General Overview of the Debit Project Process in the CCS
- Run through the GIS and HQT tools for a Debit Project

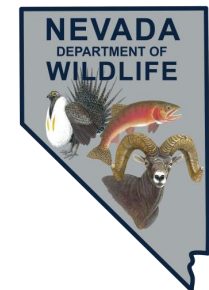


Organizational Structure



SETT Structure

- **Multidisciplinary team** established to implement the Nevada Conservation Credit System
- Composed of representatives from three state agencies:
 - **Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**
 - Director's Office – **Program Manager**
 - Division of Forestry – **Team Member**
 - Division of State Lands – **Team Member**
 - **Nevada Department of Agriculture – Team Member**
 - **Nevada Department of Wildlife – Team Member**



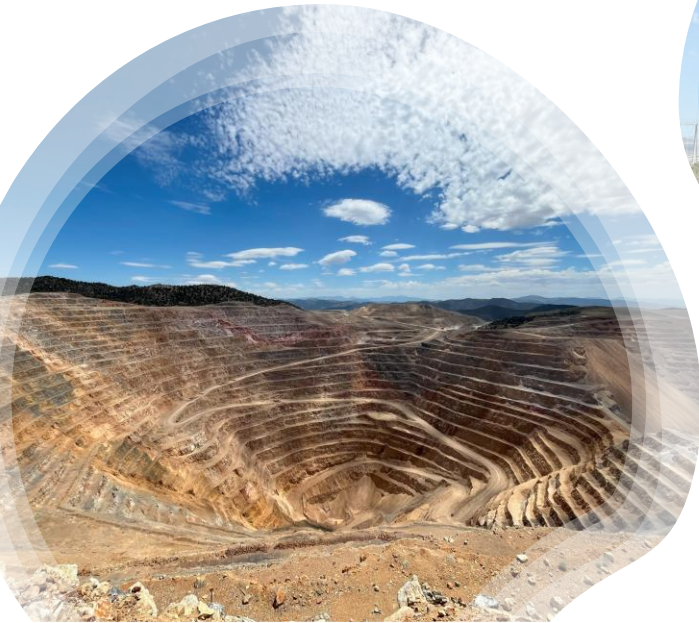
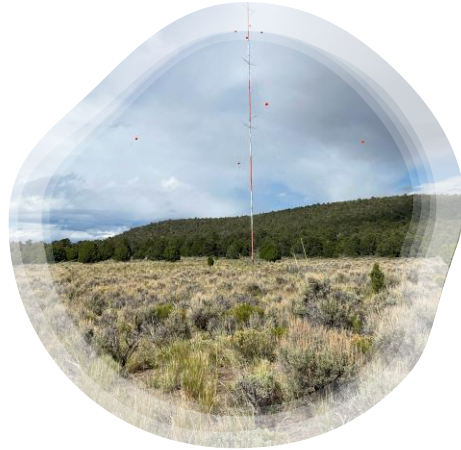
General Responsibilities – NDOW Member

- Debit Projects
- Strategic Action Plan
- Greater Sage-grouse Expertise
- Collaboration (e.g., WAFWA, Mitigation Summit)
- Debit Projects End-of-Life Management (Closure/Rehabilitation)
- Update the User's Guide, HQT, and Data Package (Debit)
- Annual Layers Updates for HQT Tools
- CCS/Tools Science Updates



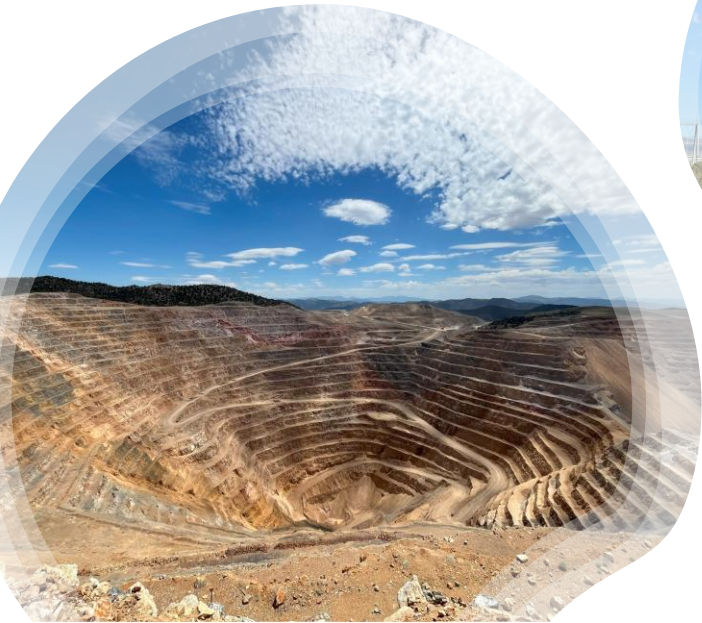
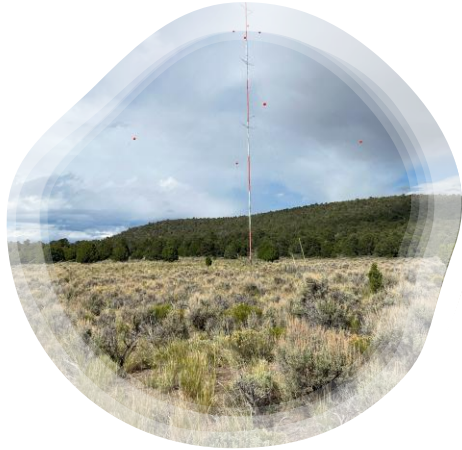
Debit Project Involvement

- Attend cooperating agency meetings during project planning (discussing project aspects, NEPA timelines, project siting to reduce impacts, etc.)
- Provide relevant comments on NEPA documents during administrative and public comment periods
- Enter projects into the CCS once an NOI is filed
- Provide clarification on project qualification and initial debit estimates to project proponents
- Conduct pre-field QA and generate transects for fieldwork
- Perform full desktop analysis if the proponent opts out of field verification
 - Assume Greater Sage-Grouse habitat quality is 100%
 - Beneficial for small-impact projects where fieldwork costs outweigh the cost of offsetting the maximum possible debit amount



Debit Project Involvement

- Conduct post-field QA for projects that choose field verification
- Issue the final debit estimate upon NEPA finalization
- Log transactions/transfers and assist with paperwork
- Issue Notification of Compliance with NAC 232.400–480
- Work with proponents on reclamation (not yet reached this stage for any projects)





Strategic Action Plan

- The Strategic Action Plan (SAP) complements the 2019 State Plan by outlining its implementation through the Sagebrush Ecosystem Program over the next 5–10 years.
- The SAP provides a framework for:
 - **Planning and goal setting**
 - **Prioritizing rehabilitation, restoration, and conservation projects**
 - **Guiding best management practices to improve sagebrush ecosystem habitat and support Greater Sage-Grouse (GRSG) populations across Nevada**
- Updated approximately every five years
- Serves as the SETT's guiding document
- Next updated draft expected in late 2025

Greater Sage Grouse

- Sage-grouse expert on SETT
 - Responsible for tracking the latest research and conservation science
- Attend **WAFWA's Greater Sage-Grouse & Columbia Sharp-tailed Grouse Conference** every two years
- Use emerging research to inform:
 - CCS & HQT tool updates
 - Science advancements in the program
 - Strategic conservation planning
- Collaborate with agencies, researchers, and partners to integrate best practices for GRSG conservation



Debit Projects End of Life Management

Closure and Rehabilitation Requirements

- Debit Projects must restore the land to **pre-project habitat quality** at closure.
- **Closure and rehabilitation procedures** for the CCS are **in development**.
- A formal **rehabilitation plan** will be required as part of project decommissioning.

In Development:

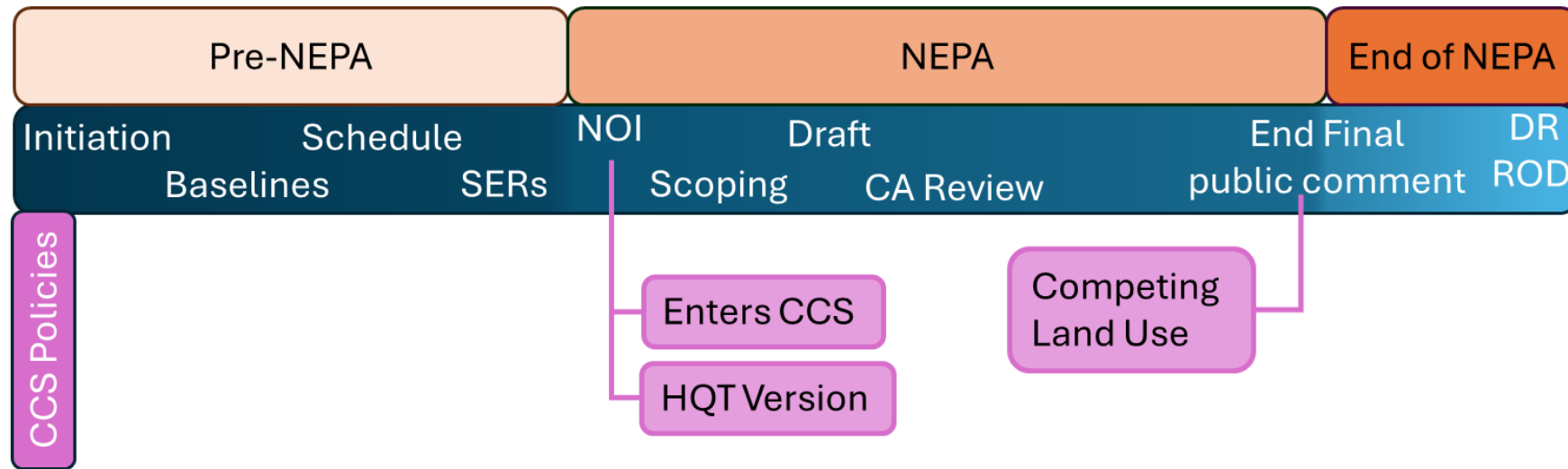
- Criteria for successful habitat restoration
- Monitoring and adaptive management expectations
- Coordination with land management agencies
- Timelines for restoration and verification





Debit Project Process Overview

- CCS policies and the NEPA process
- General Estimate
- Pre-field Submission
- Field Work
- Post-field submission
- Final Debit Estimate & QA
- Debit Project Compliance
- End of Life
- GIS and HQT Tools



CCS Policies and the NEPA Process

- Debit Project **enters the CCS and commits to an HQT version** at the time of public notice (start of the NEPA clock).
 - If a new HQT version is released before a final debit obligation is issued, the proponent **may opt to update** but is not required to do so.
- Projects become a **Competing Land Use, and debits are finalized** at the end of the final public comment period (end of the NEPA clock).

Debit Projects and the CCS Timeline

- Major Milestones and deadlines
 - **January** – Verifier Selection
 - **March 15** – Pre-field project package submission
 - **April 15-June30** – Conduct Fieldwork
 - **October 31** – Post-field project package submission
 - Flexible depending on completion of NEPA



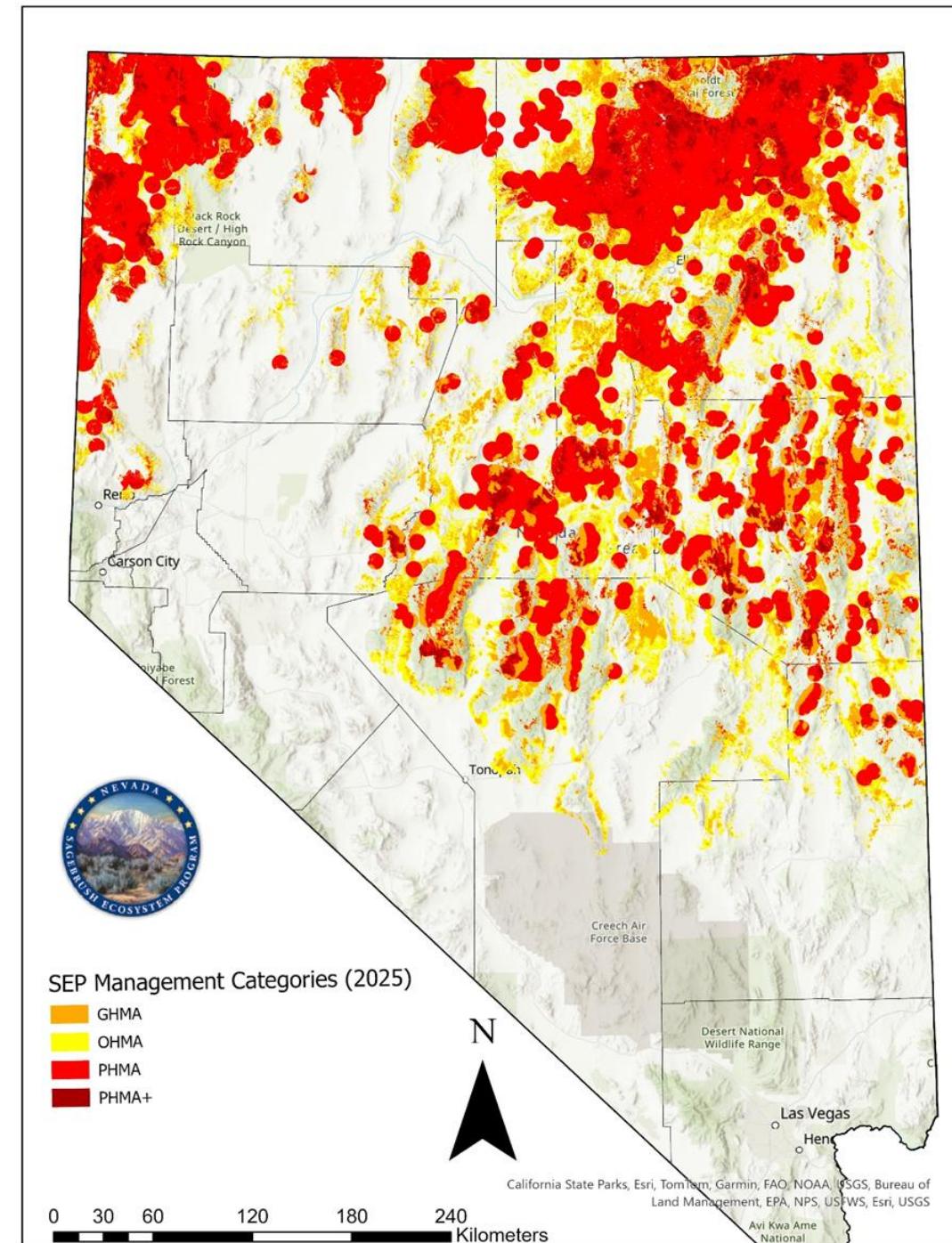
When CCS Applies to Debit Projects

Applicability Criteria (NAC 232.400-480):

- Projects that cause **anthropogenic disturbance**
- Occur **on public lands**
- In or within **6 km of Greater Sage-grouse habitat**

Exemptions may apply to:

- Private lands or local/tribal jurisdictions
- Projects approved before CCS adoption
- <5-acre mineral exploration
- Routine agency activities or emergencies
- Public health and safety projects
- Projects with **de minimis** impacts



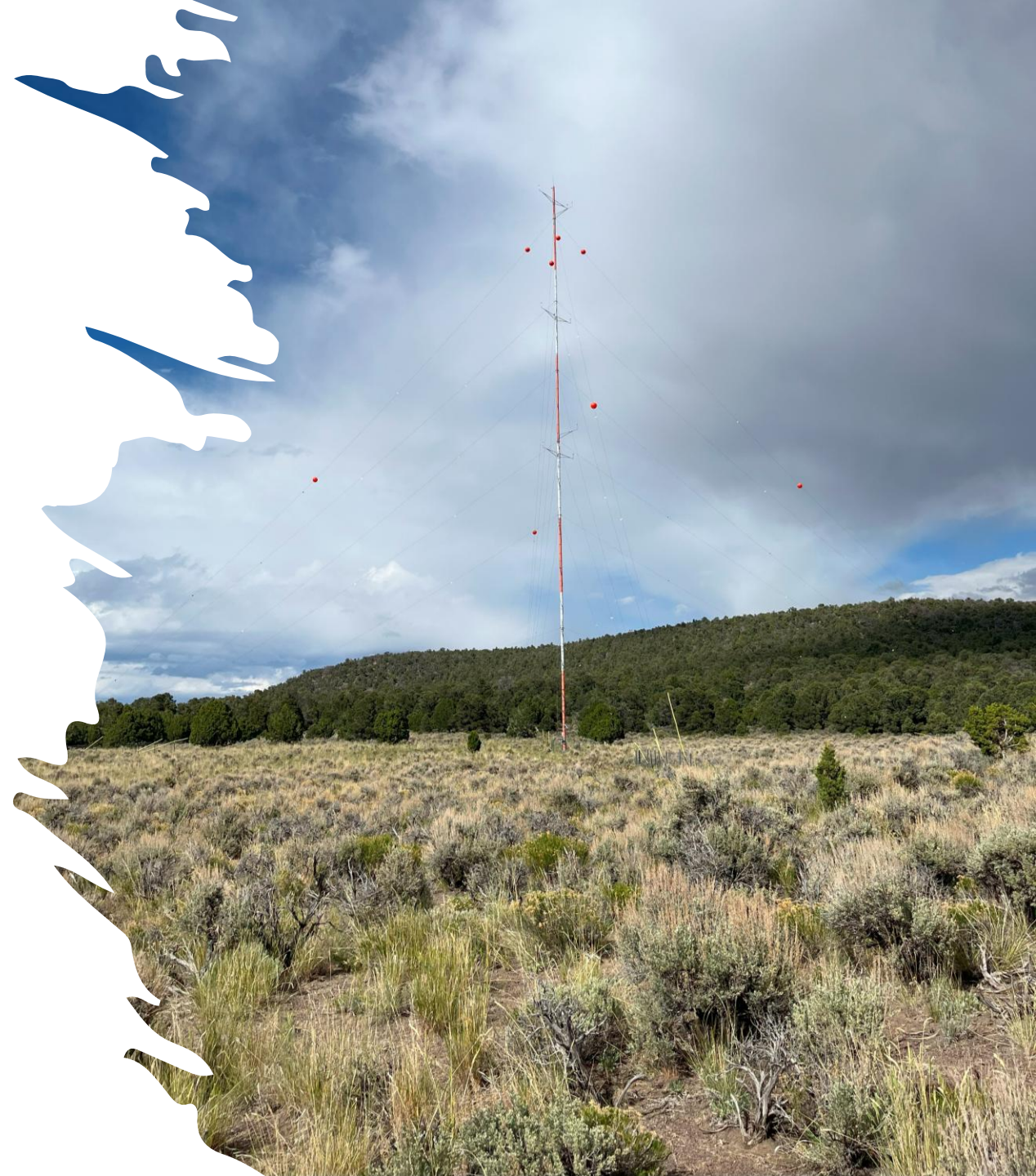
Coordinating with the SETT During NEPA

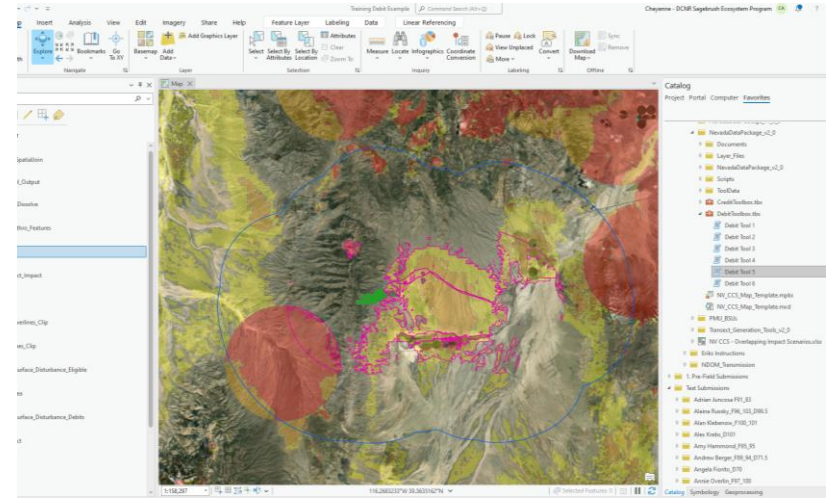
- Coordination typically begins during **NEPA planning**
- Projects submit **boundary and disturbance footprint**
- SETT reviews for CCS applicability under **NAC 232.400–480**
- Official CCS process starts with **NOI or NEPA Public Notice**
- Required for eligible projects on **public lands**



General Debit Estimate

- Initiated once a project boundary is provided
- Layers run through HQT tools and calculator
- Produces a general debit estimate
- Helps inform NEPA avoidance/minimization strategies





Pre-field Submission & QA

- Verifiers submit by **March 15**
- Includes:
 - Conflict of Interest form
 - Debit Project Review Form Part 1
 - Pre-field debit calculator
 - Map unit shapefiles
- SETT conducts pre-field QA and generates transects

NEVADA CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM

PRE-FIELD SUBMISSION QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

This form is intended for use by the SETT to ensure that pre-field submissions for proposed credit and debit projects undergo a consistent Quality Assessment (QA) process. This pre-field QA process is intended to ensure project footprints, map units, and transects provided by certified verifiers are assessed by the SETT following the same process prior to the commitment of significant resources to complete field work.

SIGNATURE

The pre-field QA process has been completed and the information provided in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Credit System Administrator Name

Credit System Project Lead

Date of Completion

QA SUBMISSION STATUS

Please mark the applicable QA submission status below.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Acceptable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Requires revisions (describe) |

PROJECT INFORMATION

| | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------|----|
| Project Name | | | |
| County | | State | NV |
| WAFWA Zone: | | Biologically Significant Unit: | |
| | | Population Management Unit: | |

PROJECT PROPONENT INFORMATION

Field Season

- Field work: April 15 – June 30
- Transect measurements:
 - Forbs, grasses, shrub cover
 - Species ID (including invasives)
- Map unit and anthropogenic features may be updated



Post-field Submission & QA

- Submitted by the end of October
- Includes:
 - Final debit calculator
 - Field datasheets
 - Photos
 - Updated map units
- SETT conducts a detailed QA review
- The QA process is a collaborative effort between the SETT, field verifiers, and GIS verifiers

NEVADA CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM PAGE 1

NEVADA CONSERVATION CREDIT SYSTEM
DEBIT PROJECT QUALITY ASSESSMENT FORM

This Quality Assessment (QA) process is intended to validate a project's debit estimate provided by certified verifiers. The following debit estimate has been confirmed by the SETT and is valid for five years, under the current HQT version listed below, from the date of the earliest field collection. Any changes to the proposed disturbance footprint will require an updated HQT analysis to verify potential changes in calculated debits. Any revisions within the five-year time frame will be completed in the HQT version listed below. A formal QA letter will be issued during the final stages of the NEPA process (to ensure additional HQT analysis is no longer required) that will incorporate the debit calculation, range of credit obligation, and other project details.

SIGNATURE

The full Quality Assessment process has been completed and the information provided in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Credit System Administrator | Credit System Project Lead | Date of QA Completion |

QA SUBMISSION STATUS

| | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | Debits calculated (Term/Perm) |
| _____ | Version/Year of Earliest Field Collection |
| _____ | Acres Direct/Indirect |

PROJECT INFORMATION

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Project Name | _____ | | | Term Length | _____ |
| County | _____ | State | _____ | | |
| WAFWA Zone: | _____ | Biologically Significant Unit: | _____ | Population Management Unit: | _____ |

PROJECT PROPONENT INFORMATION



Final Debit Estimate & QA

- A **final submission** may differ from the post-field submission
- Final assessments can be **desktop-only** or **field-based**
- The SETT conducts a **Final Quality Assessment (QA)** after receiving the submission
- **Final debit obligation is locked** only after:
 - The close of the Final EIS/EA comment period, or
 - Signature of a CX/DNA by BLM, or
 - State equivalent (for state-owned land)
- Final submission must include:
 - Project shapefile (matching NEPA docs)
 - Project Assessment Submission Form
 - HQT calculator + field data (if applicable)
- SETT issues:
 - **Final QA Form (signed)**
 - **Formal QA Letter with final debit amount (signed)**
- Once issued, a **credit transaction can occur**

Debit Project Transactions

- **Transactions for debit projects are generally more straightforward** than for credits
- **Debit Review Form 2** completed after Final QA—summarizes projected term and permanent debits
- **Credit obligation \neq Total debits**—due to proximity ratio
- **Proponents must coordinate with the SETT** when selecting credit sources
- **Credit Purchase Agreements and Debit Review Form 3** finalize the transaction
- **Transactions occur between parties**—outside of SETT and Registry systems
- **Phased credit purchasing is allowed**, but must follow a defined structure
 - One-third of term + all permanent debits required before breaking ground
 - Up to two additional phases allowed
 - All credits must be acquired within 10 years or within 1/3 of the project term





Debit Project Compliance

- **Compliance Letter issued** after initial and final credit purchase
- Confirms compensatory mitigation obligation has been fulfilled
- **Proponent is in full compliance** with NAC 232.400–232.480
- No additional sage-grouse mitigation quantification required by SETT
- **Future phases or new disturbance** require updated HQT analysis

Debit Projects End of Life Management

Closure & Rehabilitation

- All **Debit Projects** require credits for their duration, plus an additional **10 years** for reclamation
- **Temporary disturbances (<10 years)** have a **minimum 10-year term duration**
- Debit Projects can be **term-based** or **in-perpetuity**, depending on whether they are expected to restore pre-project **GRSG habitat function**
- For **term debits**, third-party verification is required to ensure habitat recovery to pre-project function
 - If rehabilitation is incomplete, **additional credits** are required to cover the remaining impact
 - If verification shows that a term **Debit Project** has not been fully rehabilitated, the Administrator will require **additional credits** for an extended term
- The **closure and rehabilitation process** is still being developed for the CCS





GIS - HQT Tools and Process



Conservation Credit System

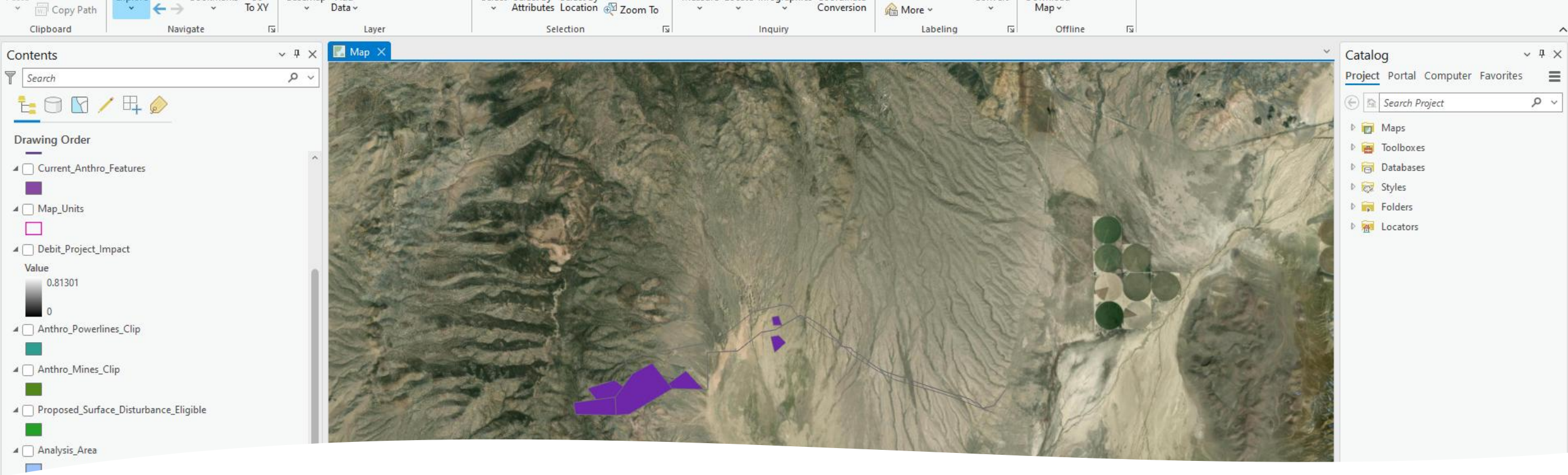
USER'S GUIDE

January 2025

Version 2.0

What Happens Behind the Scenes

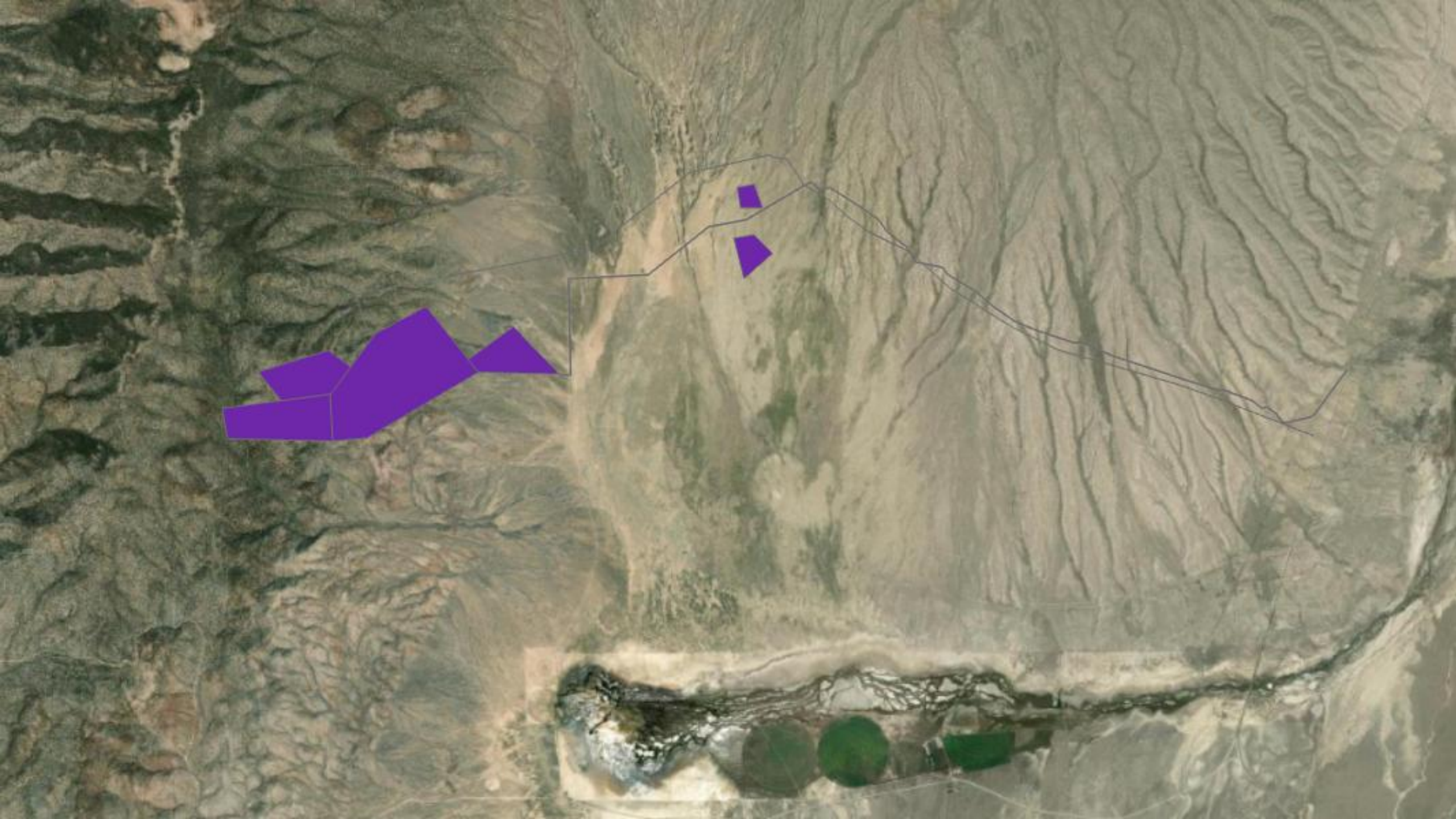
- A quick look at the GIS side of the CCS and how debits are generated
 - Using the HQT Tool & Process
 - SETT and verifiers
- More detail available in the ***HQT Version 2.0 User's Guide***

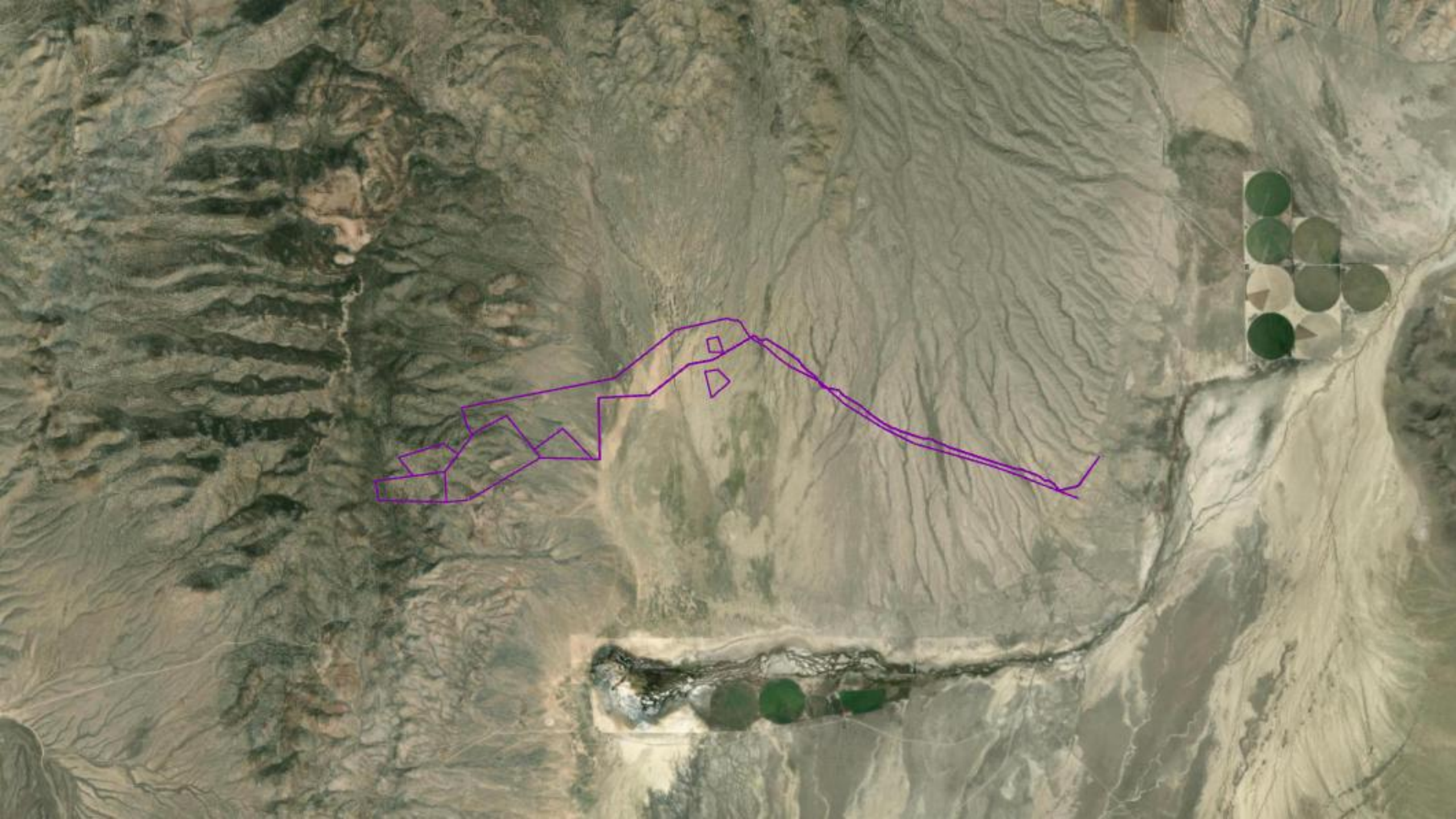


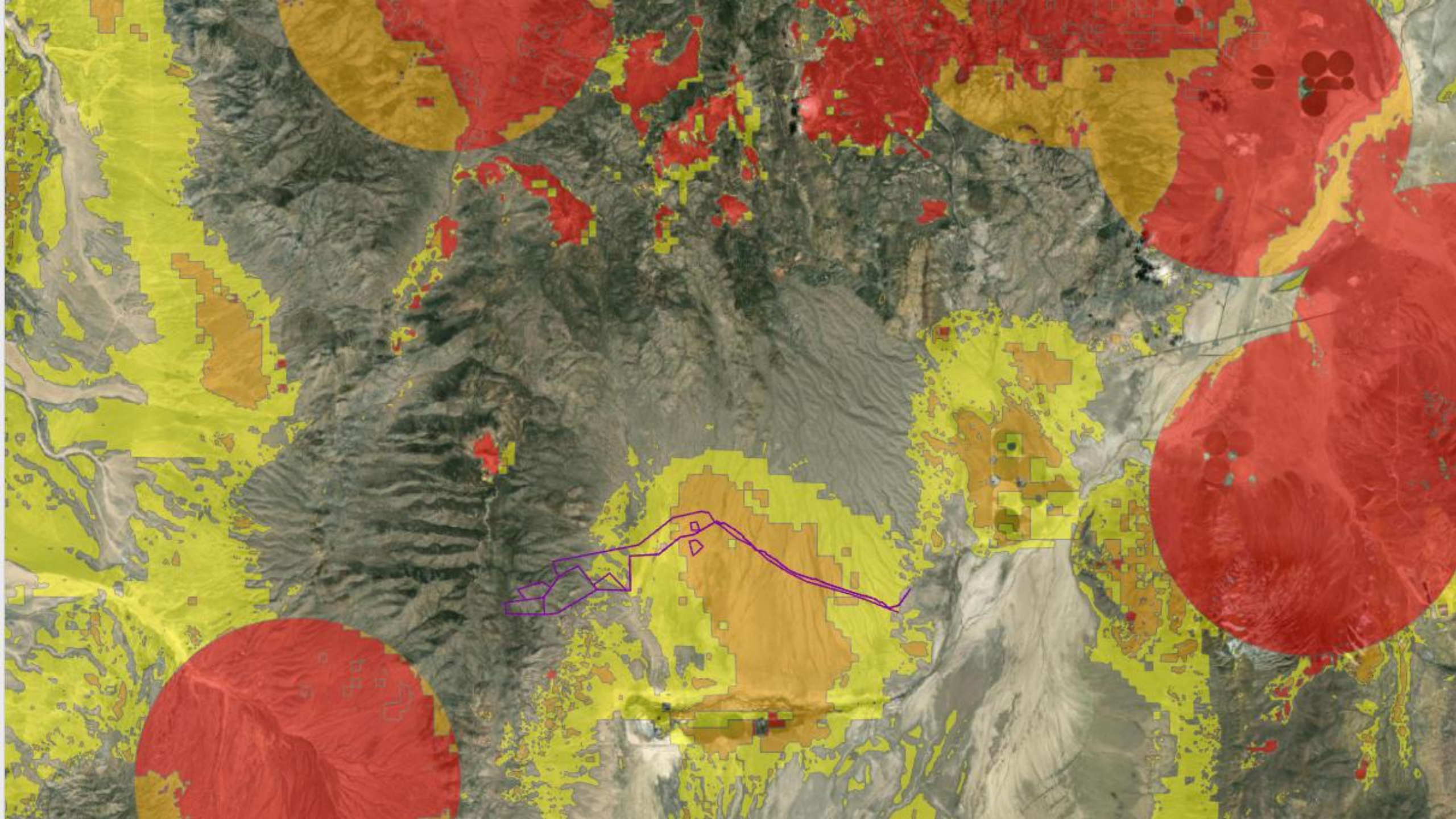
Starting a GIS Review – Project Footprint

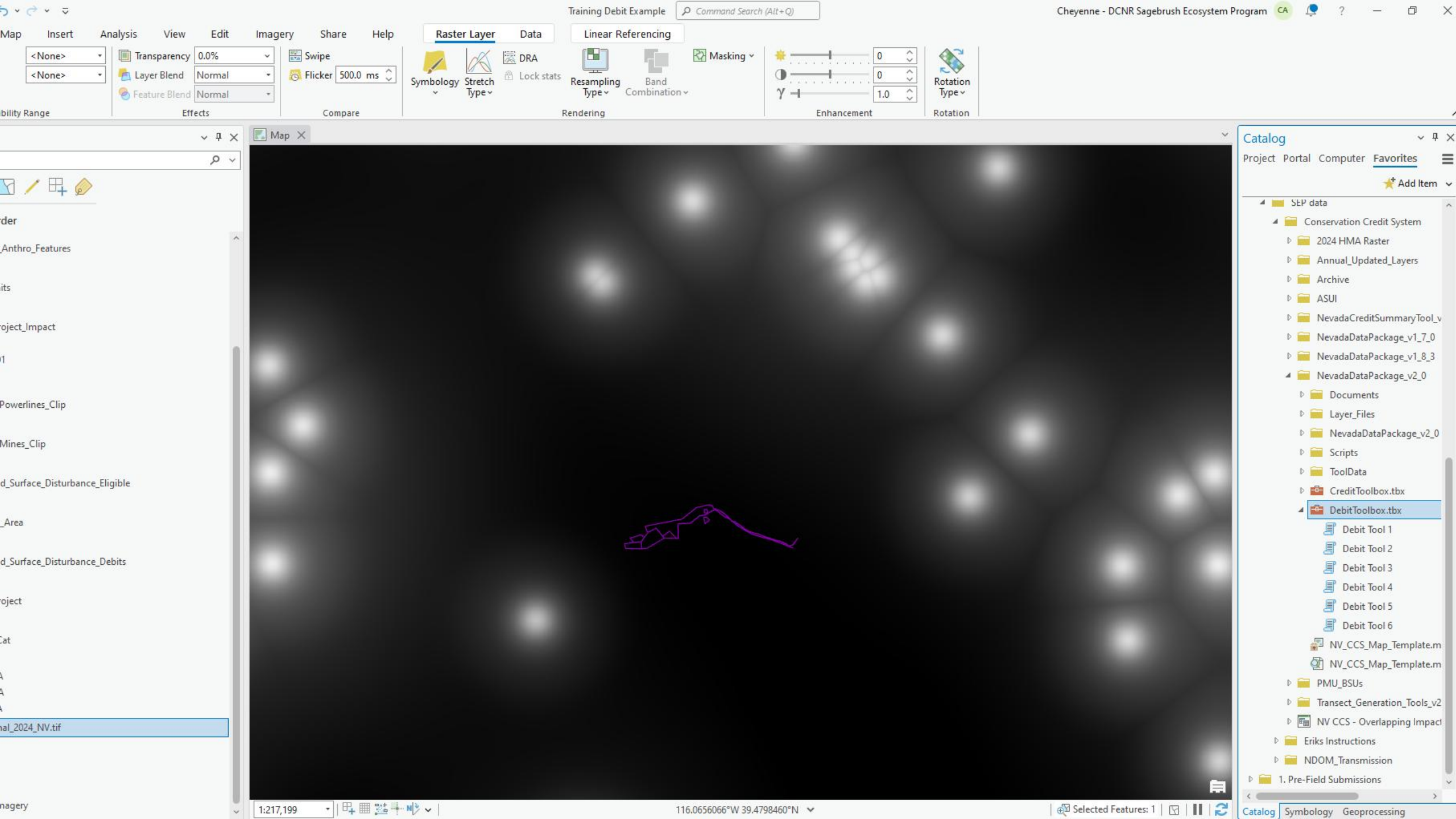
Proponent submits:

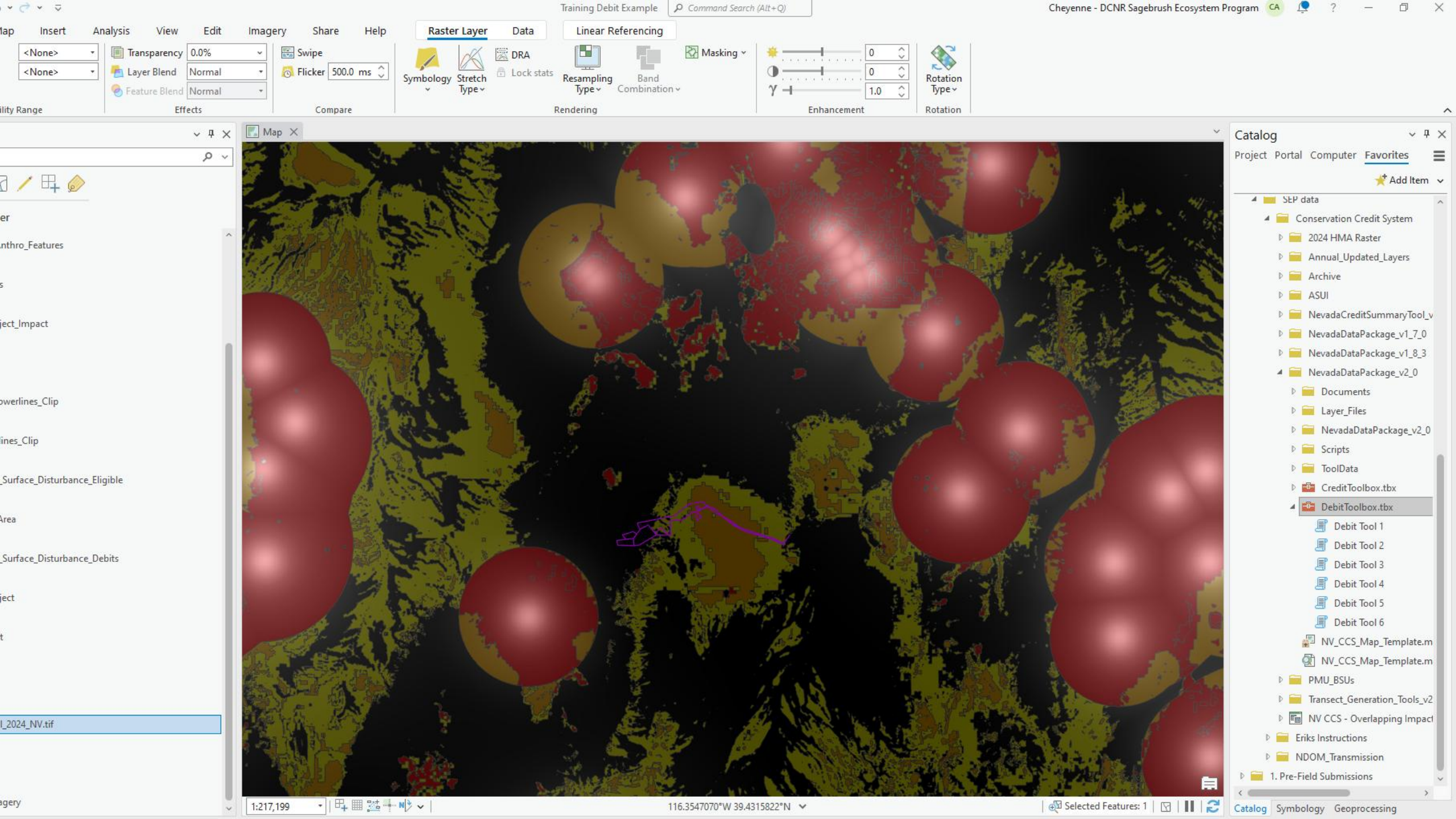
- Project boundary & direct disturbance footprint
- GIS shapefile showing all relevant features
- SETT pulls project into GIS for spatial review
- Example shown: Proposed **mine site** (in dark purple)

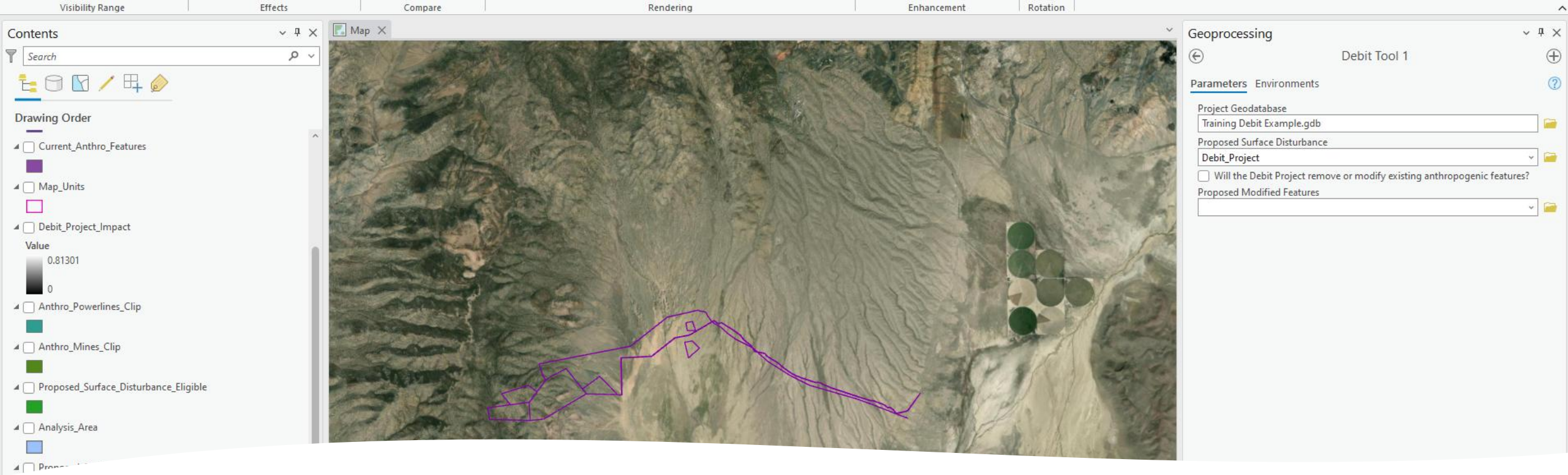












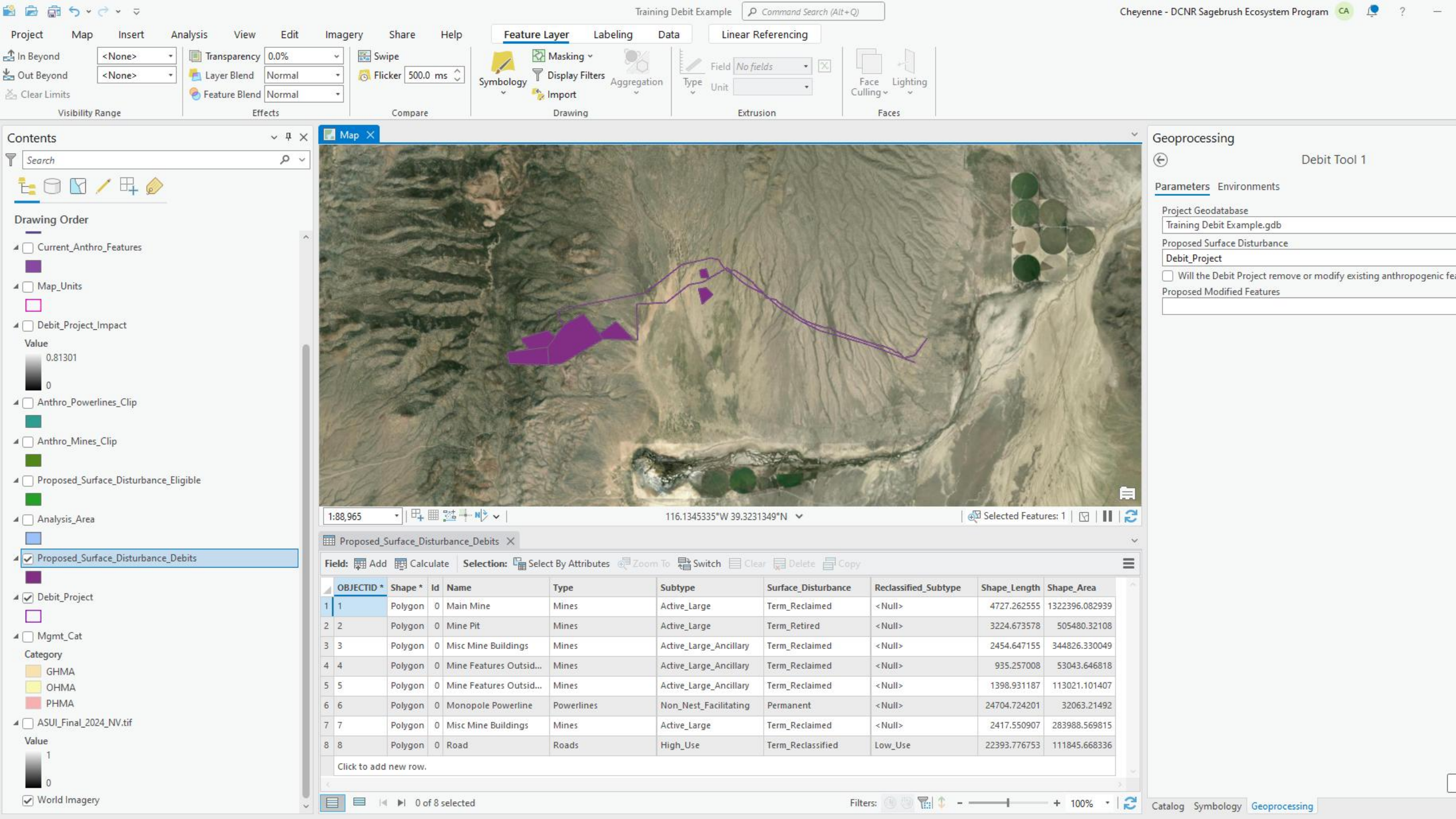
Debit Tool 1

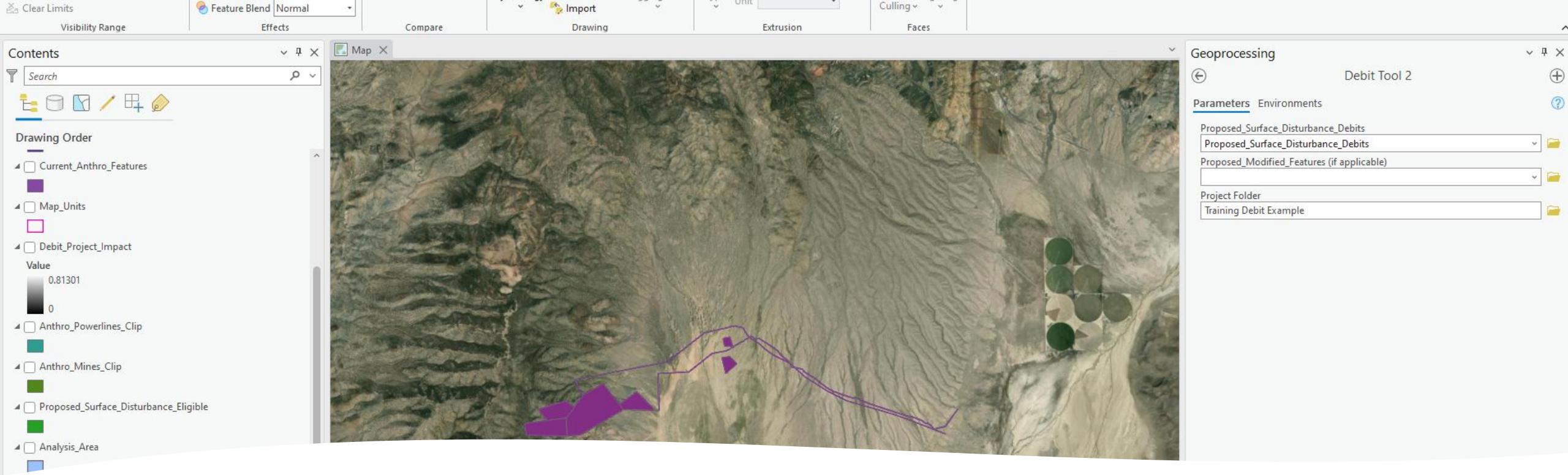
Input:

- ID project geodatabase
- Proposed Surface Disturbance shapefile
- If applicable, a shapefile of any anthropogenic features proposed to be modified or removed by the project.

Output:

- Proposed_Surface_Disturbance layer: a template for digitizing and categorizing proposed surface disturbance
- Proposed_Modified_Features layer (if applicable)





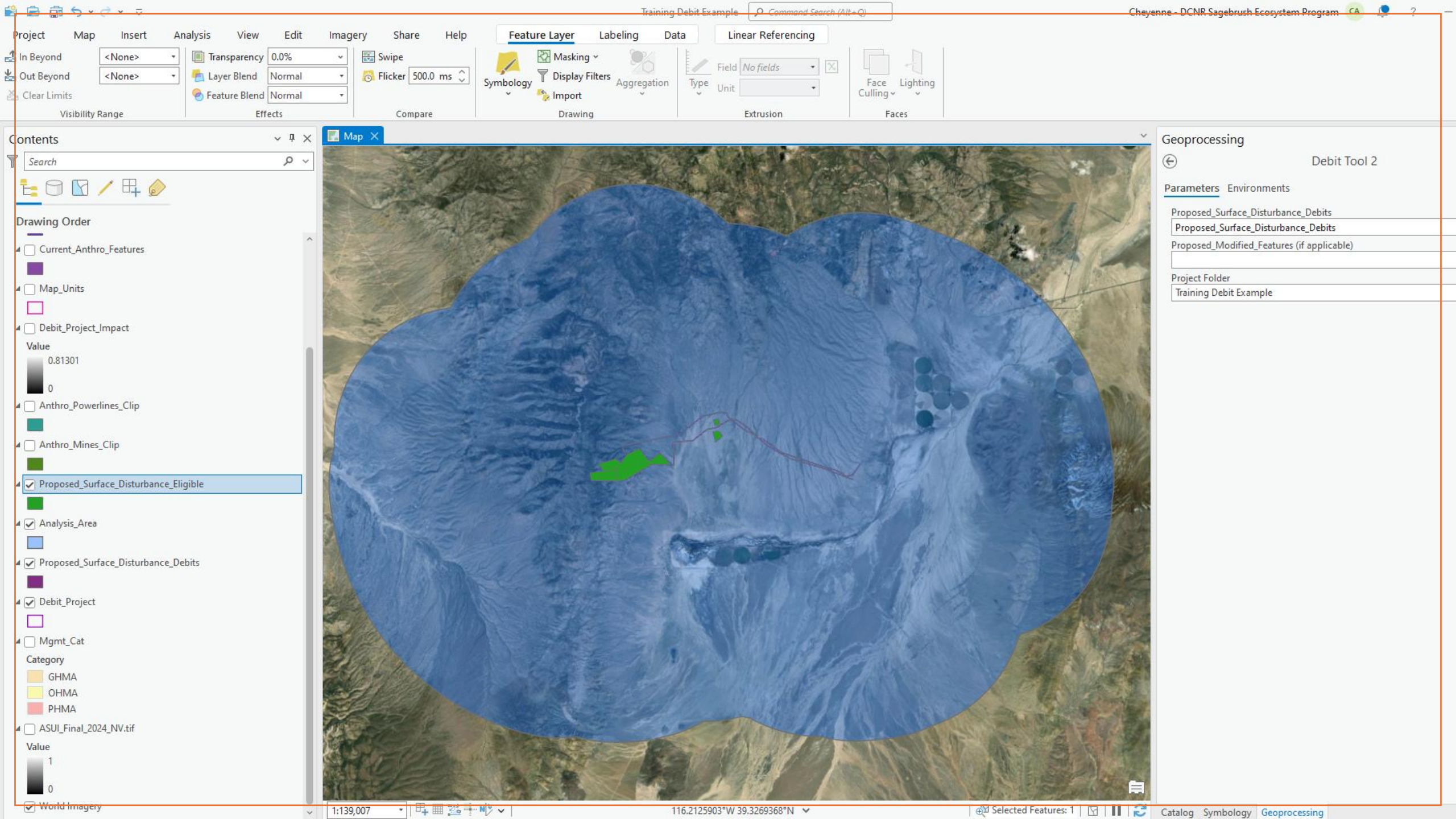
Run Debit Tool 2 – Generate Analysis Area & Eligible Layer

Input:

- Proposed_Surface_Disturbance_Debits
- If applicable, Proposed_Modified_Features

Output:

- Proposed_Surface_Disturbance_Eligible (removes private land)
- Analysis_Area





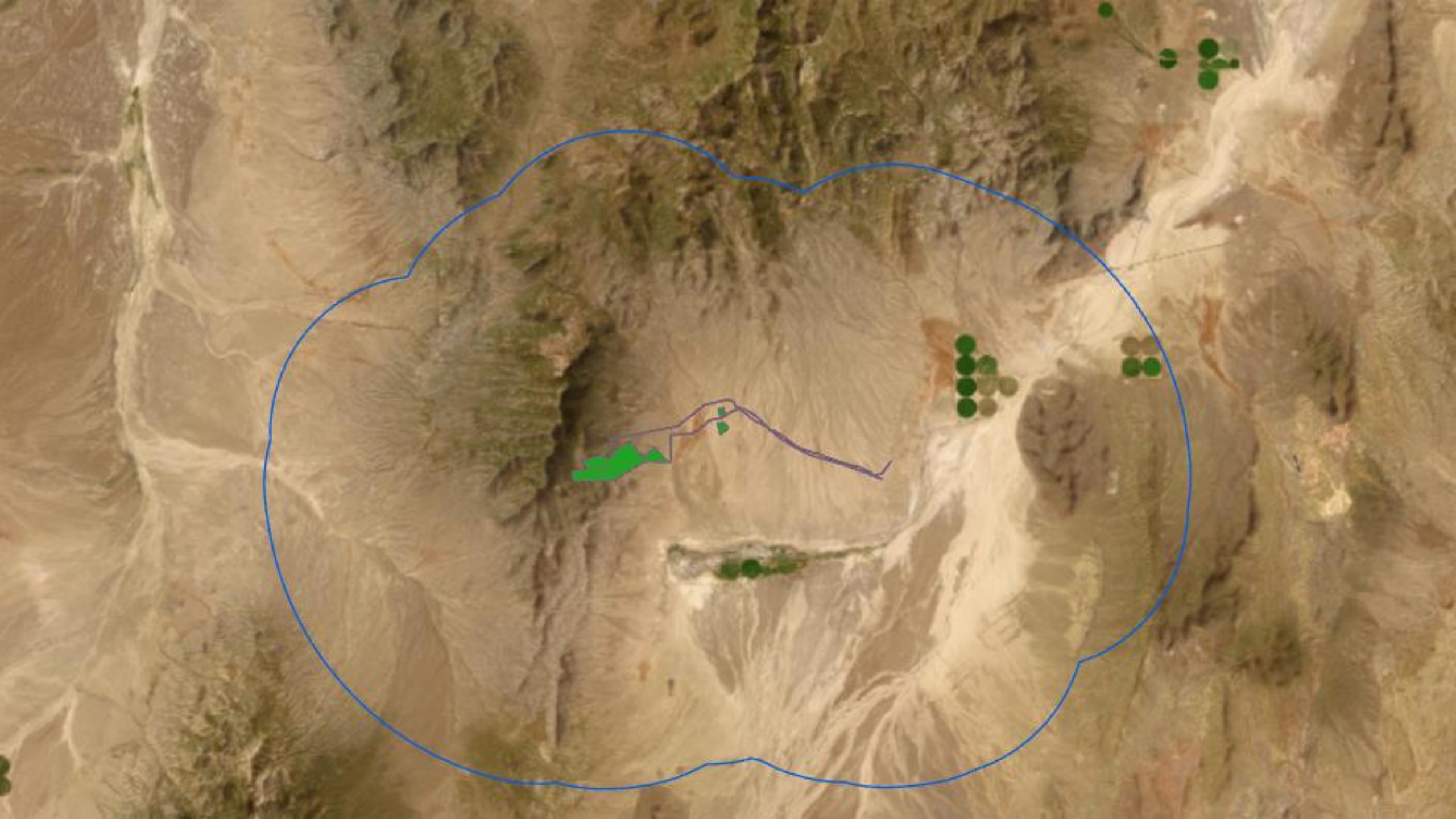
Run Debit Tool 3 – Current Anthropogenic Features

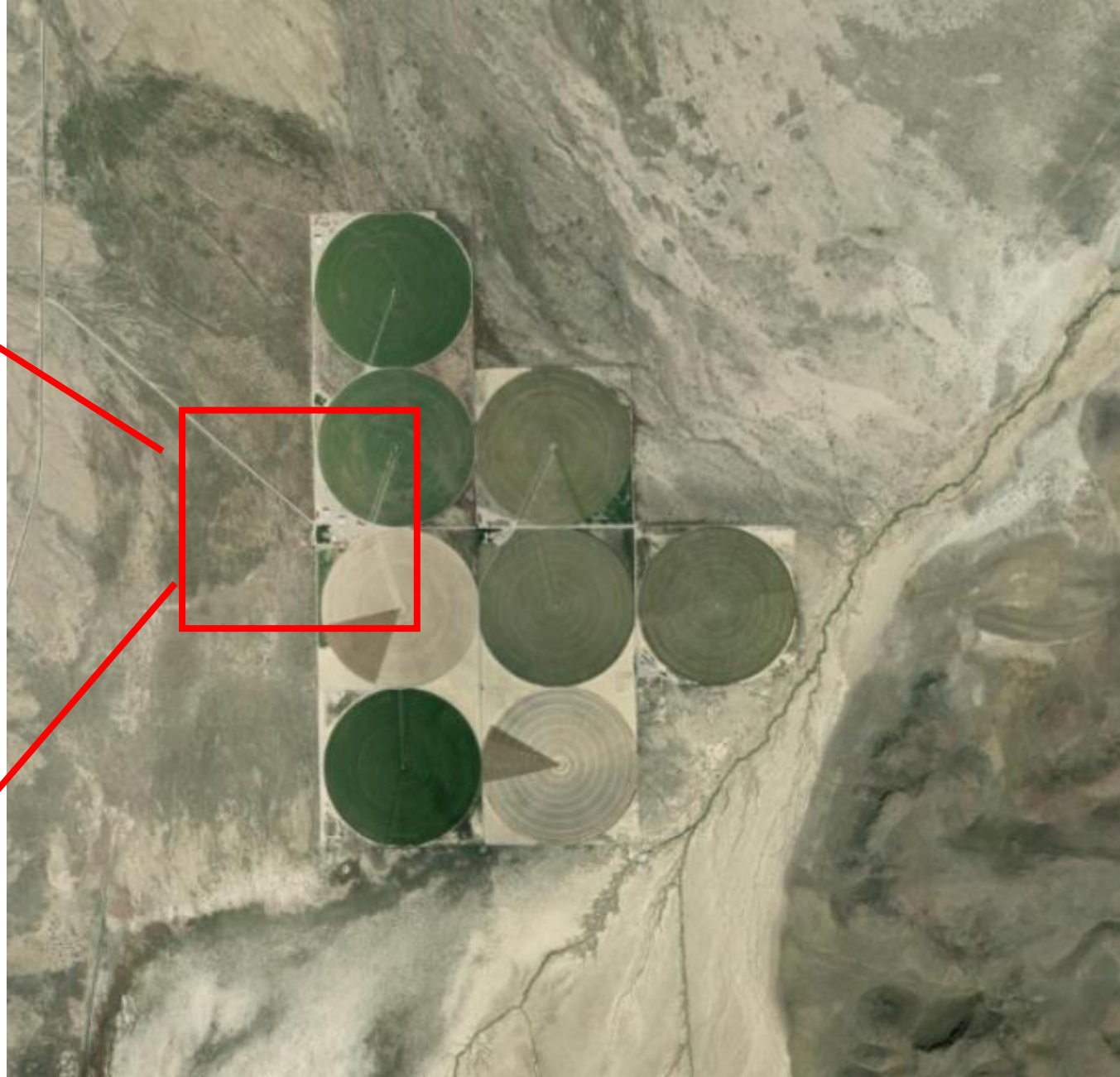
Input:

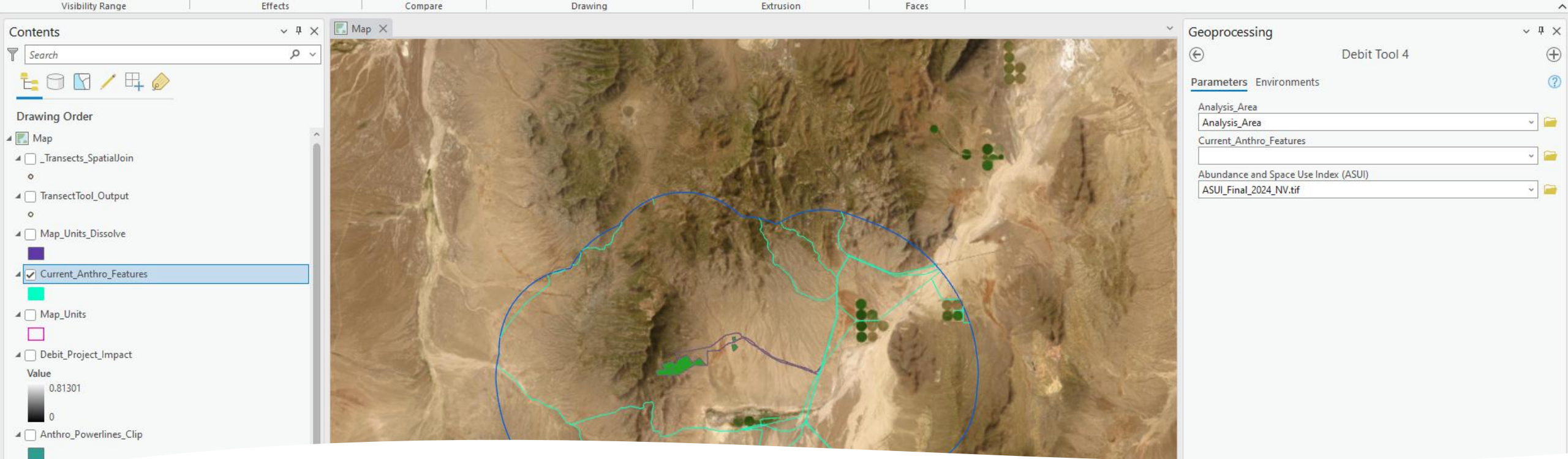
- Proposed_Surface_Disturbance_Eligible

Output:

- Anthro_*feature type*_Clip layers







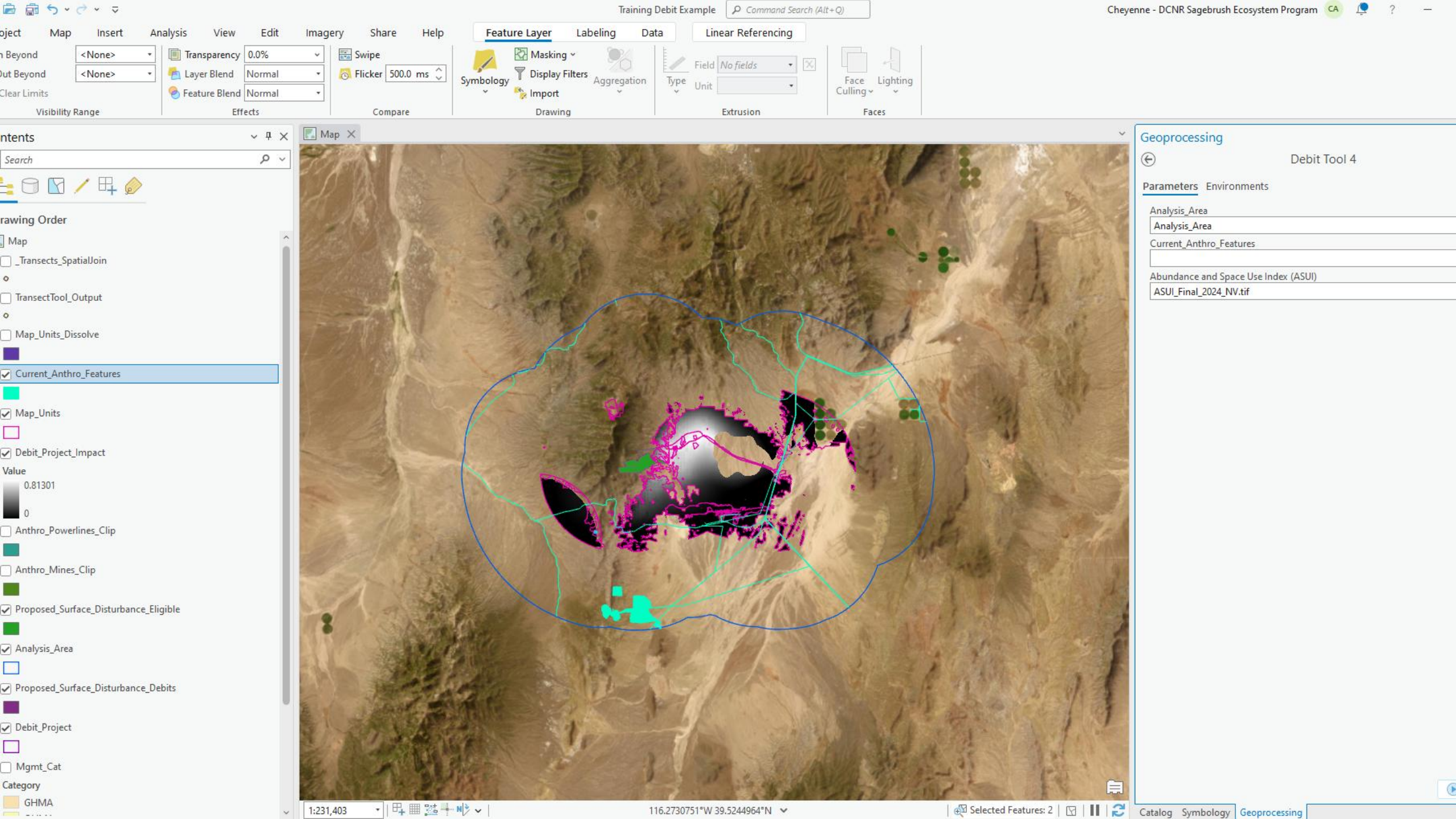
Debit Tool 4

Input:

- Analysis_Area
- ASUI (must request from NDOW)

Output:

- Map_Units layer (template for refining map unit delineation)
- Debit_Project_Impact raster (can help with adjusting project location)
- Current_Anthro_Features layer and Current_Anthro_Disturbance raster
- Projected_Anthro_Features layer and Projected_Anthro_Disturbance raster
- Permanent_Anthro_Features layer and Permanent_Anthro_Disturbance raster



ProjectMapInsertAnalysisViewEditImageryShareHelp

Visibility Range

Transparency0.0%

Layer BlendNormal

Feature BlendNormal

Effects

Swipe

Flicker500.0 ms

Compare

Feature Layer

Labeling

Data

Linear Referencing

Symbology

Masking

Display Filters

Import

Drawing

FieldNo fields

Type

Unit

Extrusion

Face Culling

Lighting

Faces

Contents

Search

Drawing Order

Map

☐_Transects_SpatialJoin

☐TransectTool_Output

☐Map_Units_Dissolve

☒Current_Anthro_Features

☒Map_Units

☒Debit_Project_Impact

Value

0.81301

0

☐Anthro_Powerlines_Clip

☐Anthro_Mines_Clip

☒Proposed_Surface_Disturbance_Eligible

☒Analysis_Area

☒Proposed_Surface_Disturbance_Debits

☒Debit_Project

☐Mgmt_Cat

Category

GHMA

Map

1:231,403

116.2730751°W 39.5244964°N

Selected Features: 2

Geoprocessing

Debit Tool 4

Parameters

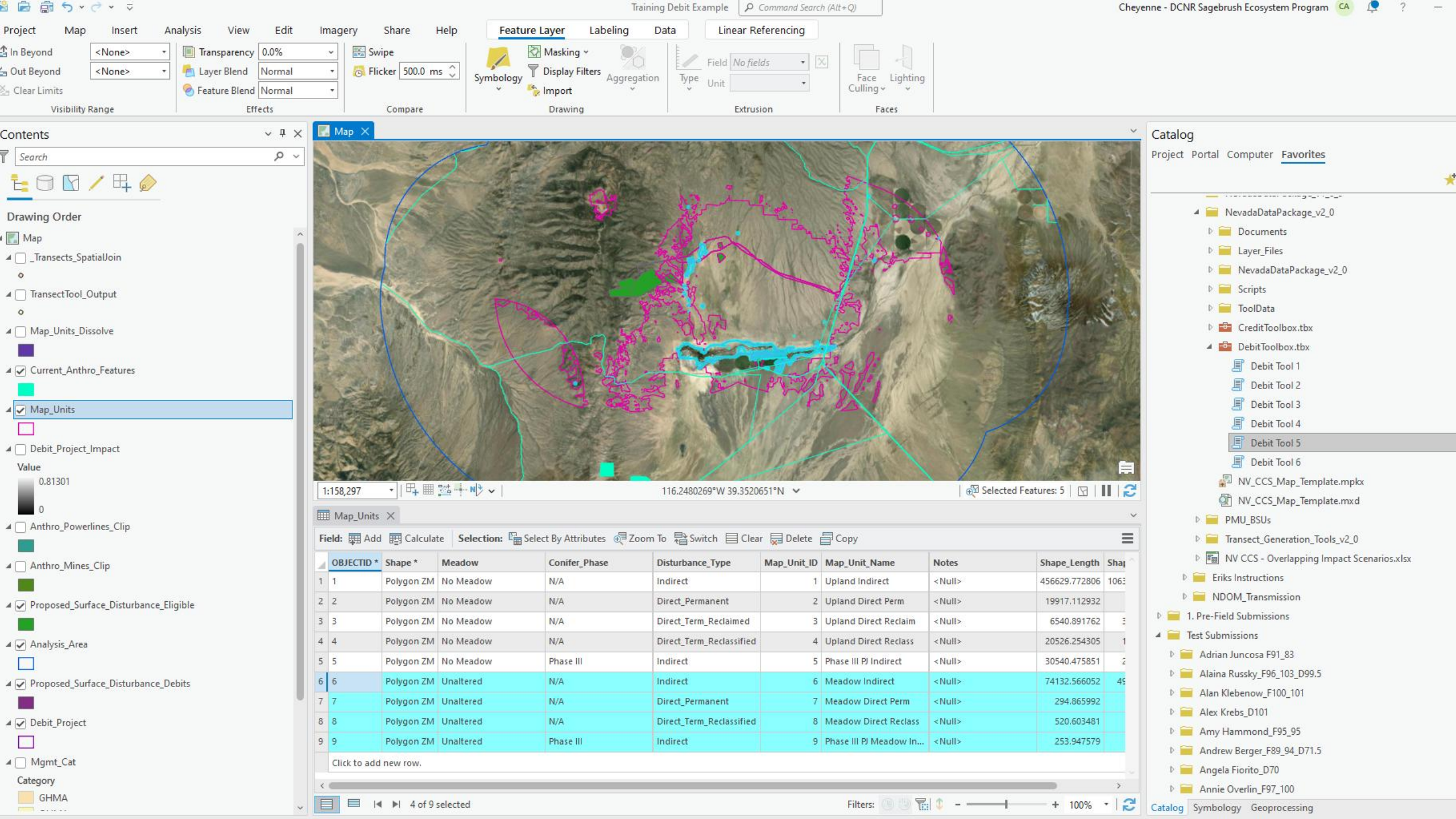
Analysis_Area

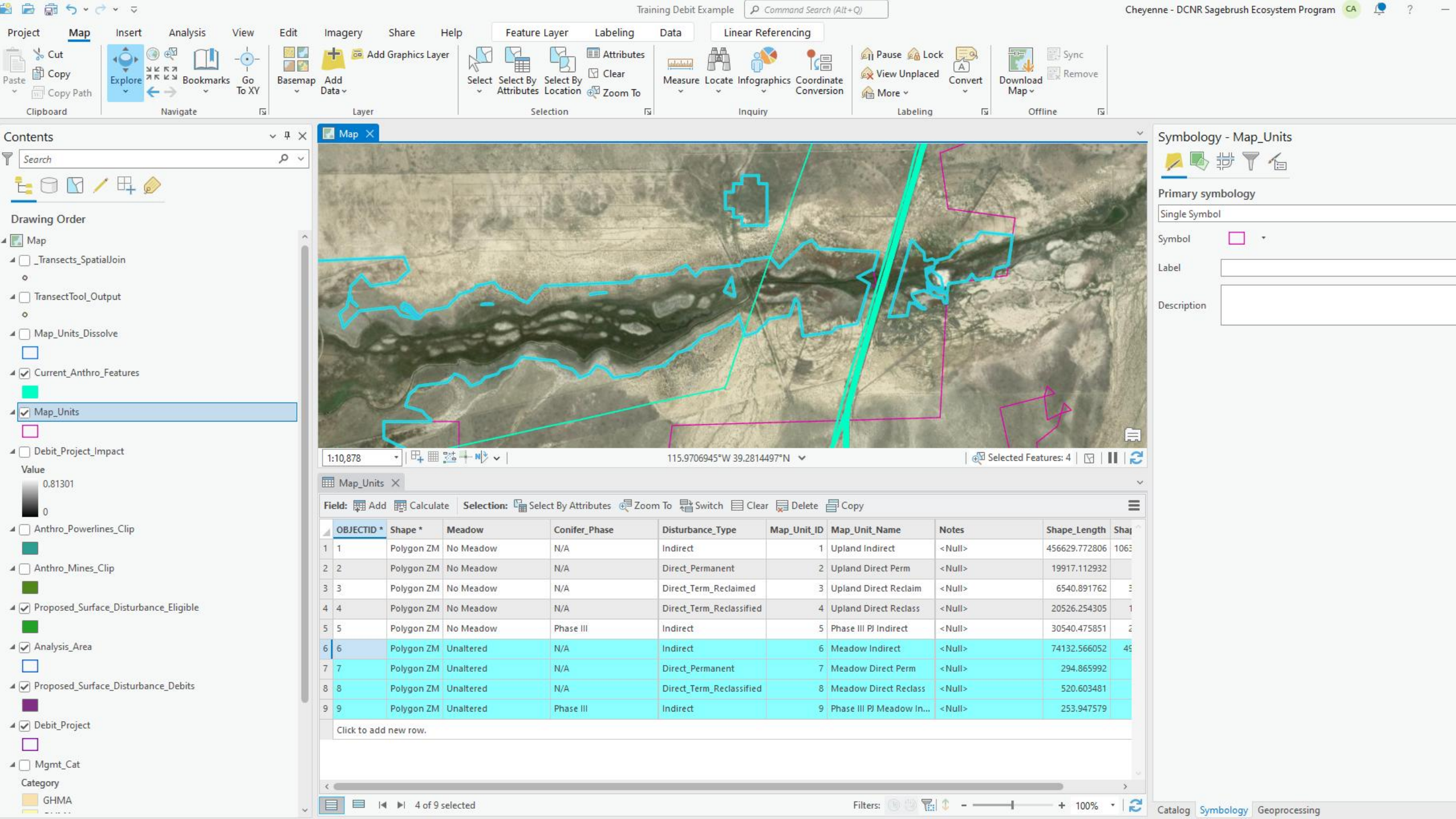
Analysis_Area

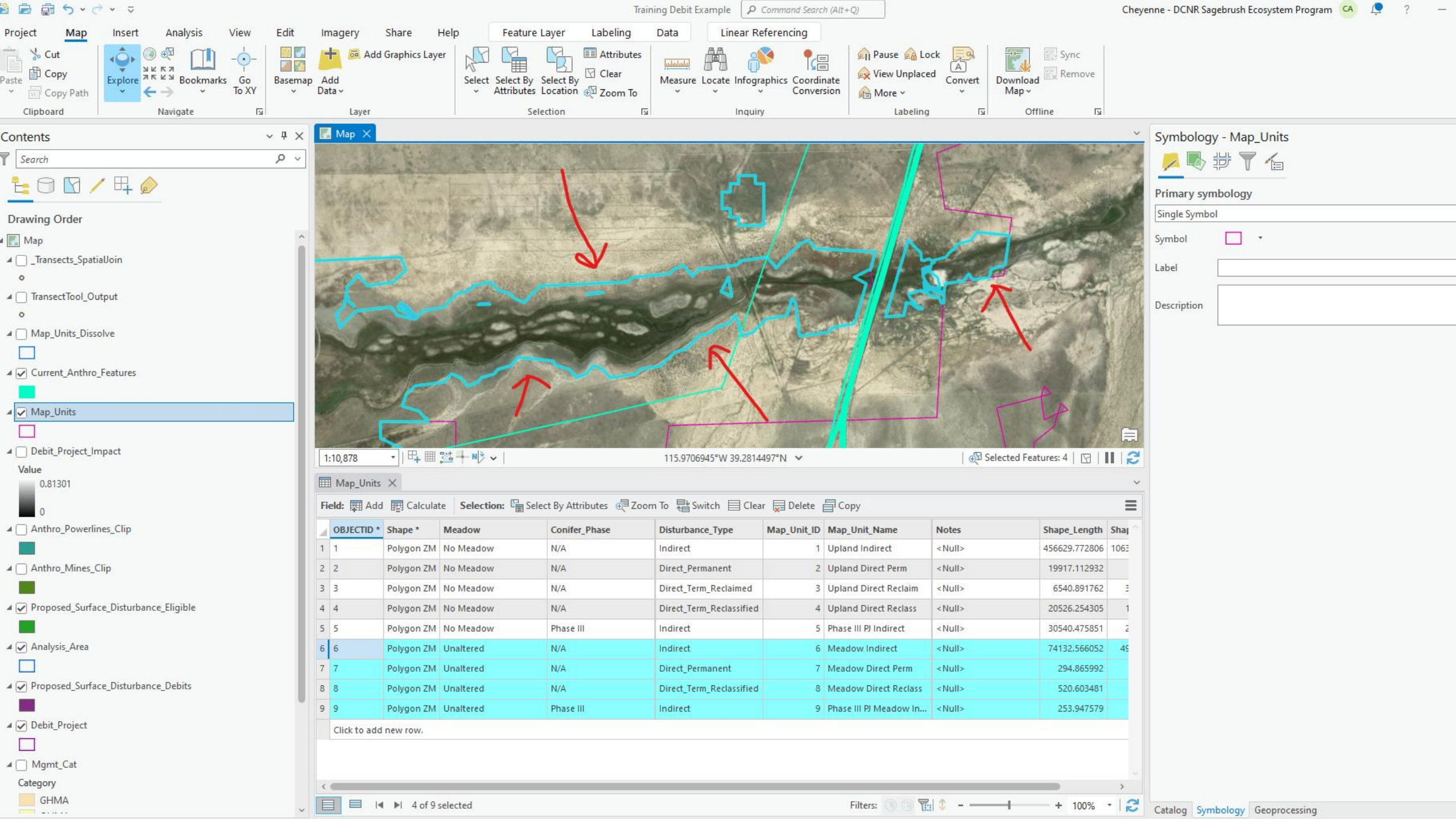
Current_Anthro_Features

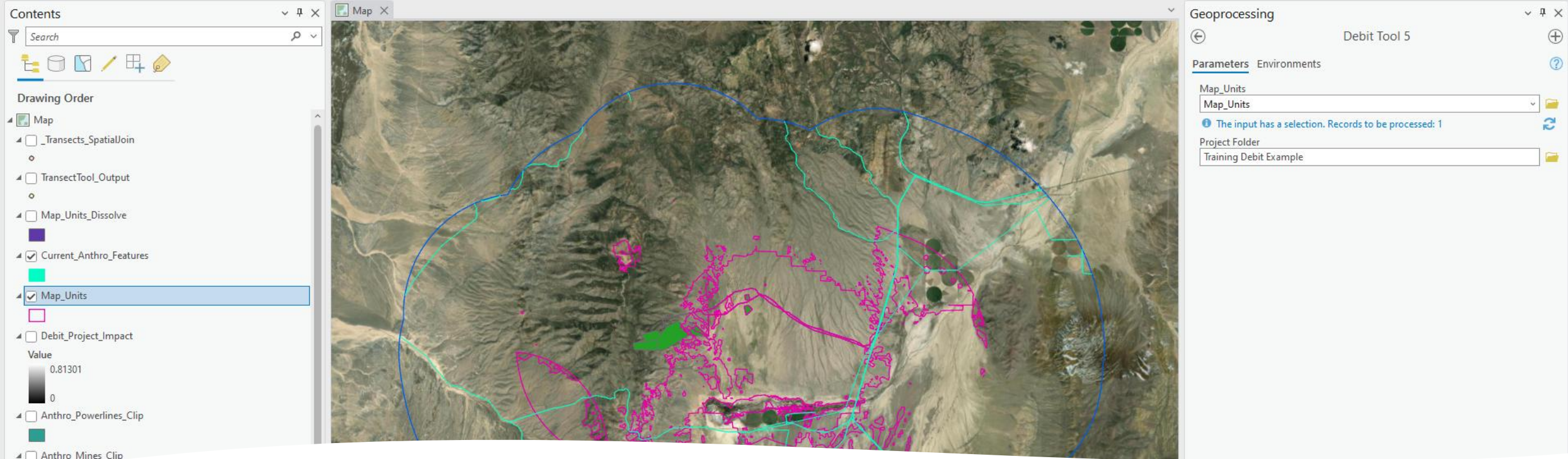
Abundance and Space Use Index (ASUI)

ASUI_Final_2024_NV.tif









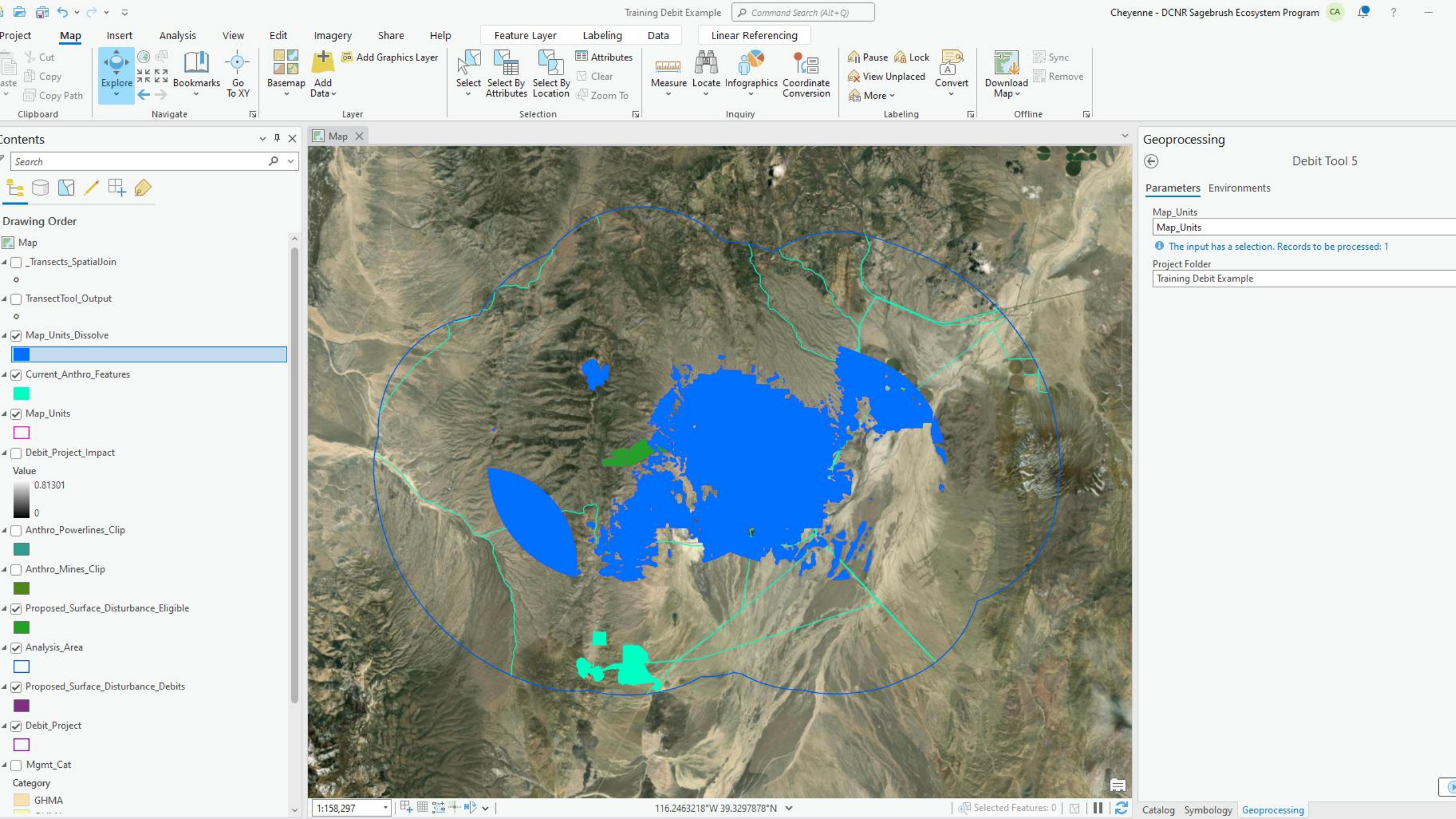
Debit Tool 5

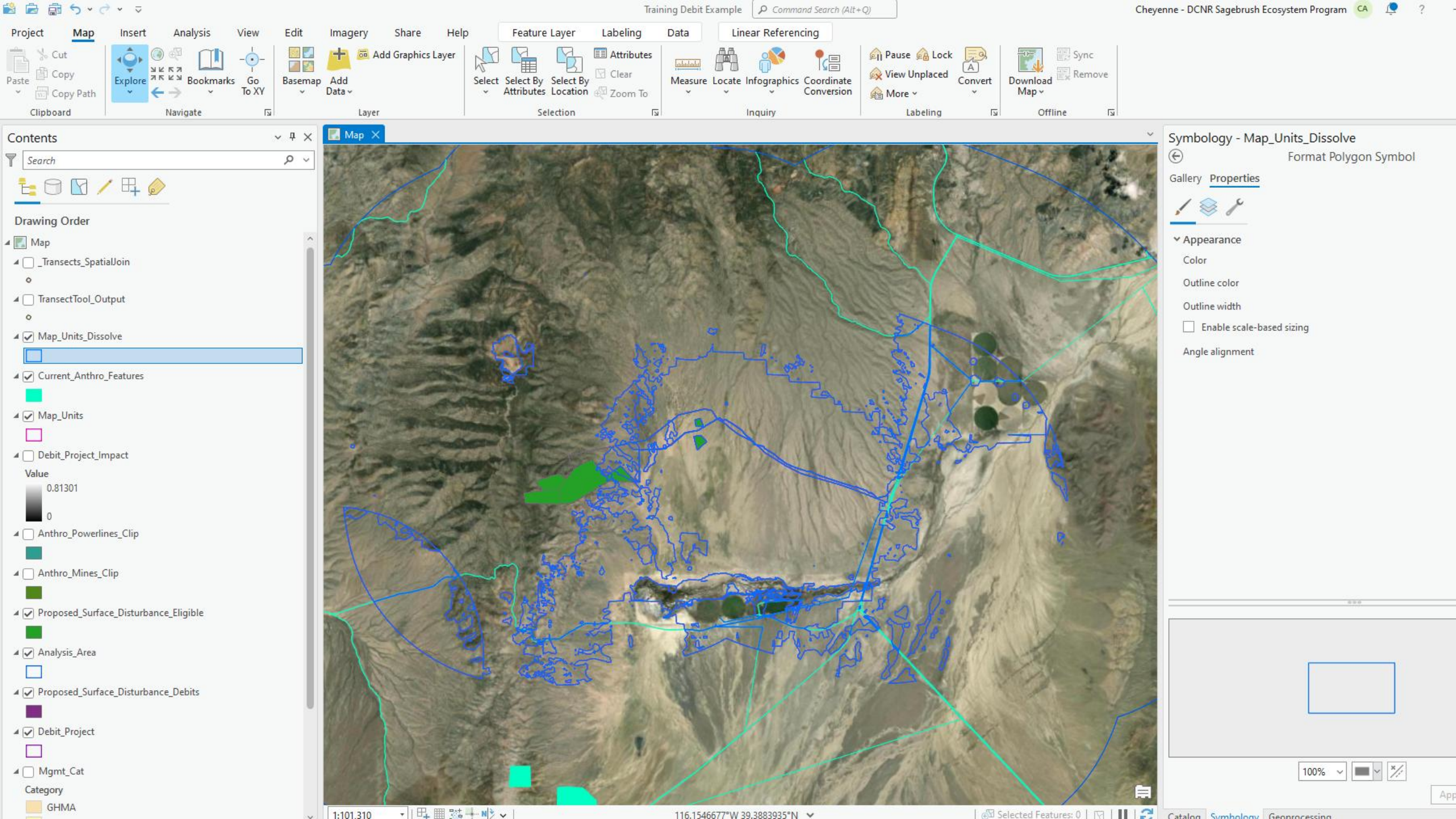
Input:

- Map_Units
- Identify Project Folder (where excel files will be exported to)

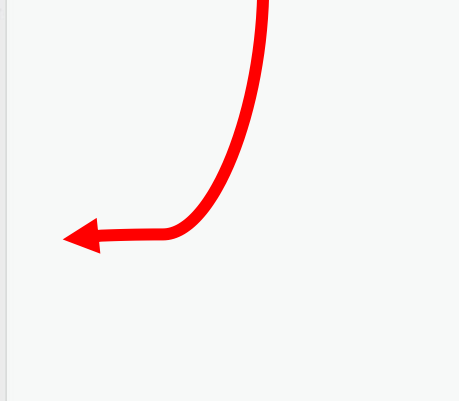
Output:

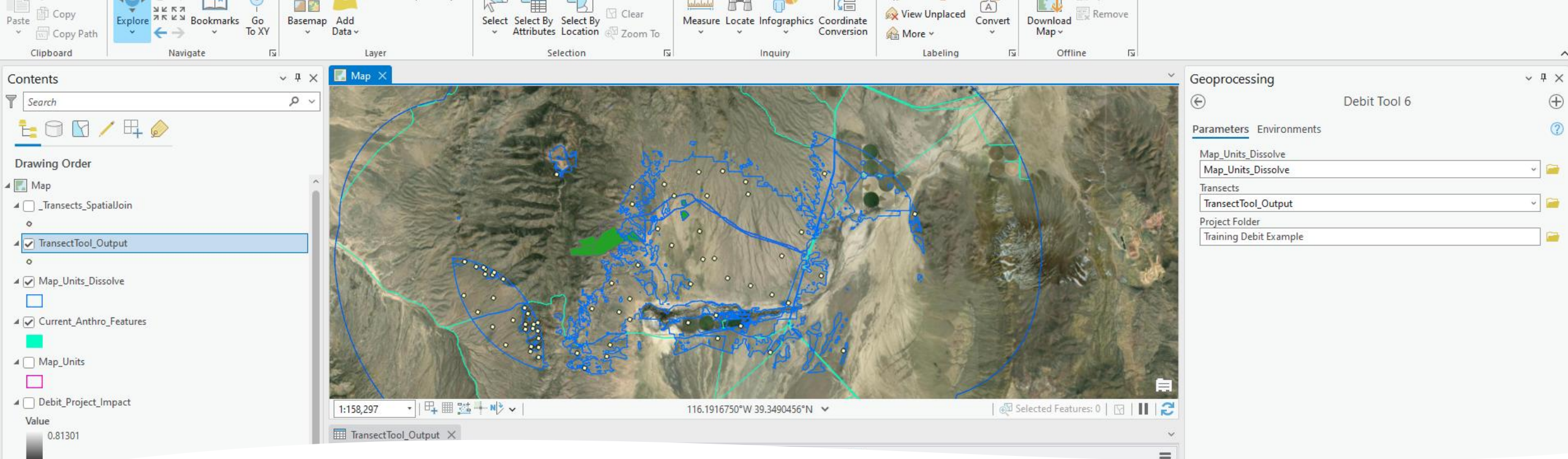
- Map_Units_Dissolve layer
- Excel files for Debit Project Calculator (Map_Units_Dissolve, Current_Mgmt_Cat, Current_Precip, Current_PMU, Current_WMZ)





Catalog **Symbology** Geoprocessing





Debit Tool 6

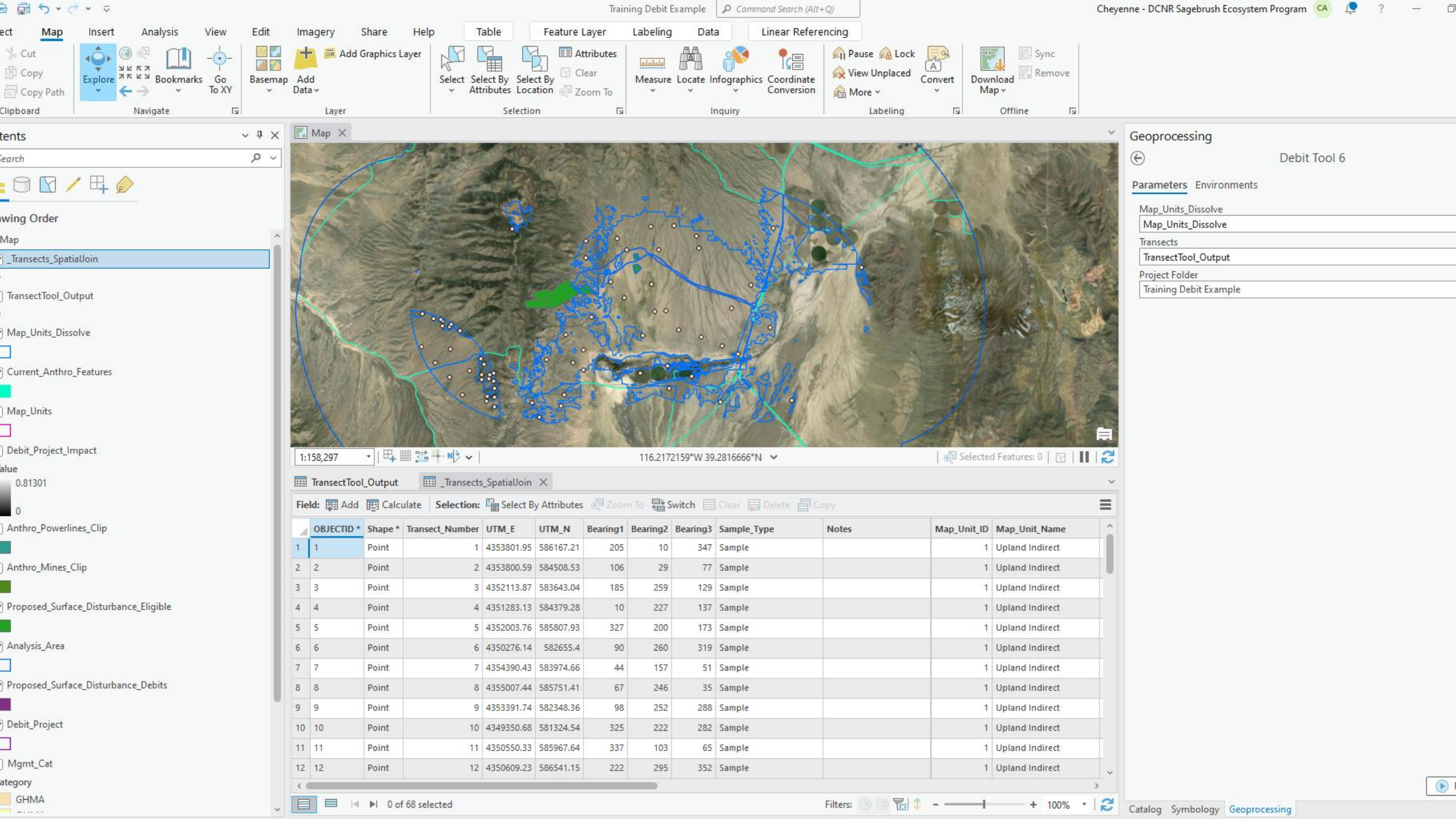
Input:

- Map_Units_Dissolve layer
- Transects layer (generated by the SETT)
- Select Project Folder (where you want output to go)

Output:

- Transects_SpatialJoin (excel file that will be copied into the calculator)

Note: you do not need to run Debit Tool 6 if conducting a desktop-only debit analysis
(no fieldwork involved, so no need for transects)



Add Exported Data to Debit Calculator

- The HQT will have outputs that are then imported into the Debit Project calculator.
- Field Data is entered into the calculator if applicable.
- You can see the Term and Permanent debits generated by a project.
- These amounts are then communicated to the proponent.
- Depending on the stage of evaluation can move on to the credit transaction.

The screenshot displays the 'Debit_Project_Calculator_v2_0 - Excel' spreadsheet. The interface includes a standard Excel ribbon with tabs for File, Home, Insert, Page Layout, Formulas, Data, Review, View, Automate, Help, and Acrobat. The Home tab is active, showing options for Paste, Cut, Copy, Format Painter, and various formatting tools like Font, Alignment, and Number.

The spreadsheet content is organized into several sections:

- PROJECT INFORMATION**: Includes a field for 'Project Name'.
- DEBIT ESTIMATE SUMMARY**: A table summarizing various metrics.

| Metric | Value | Metric | Value |
|---|----------|---|-------|
| Total Area (acres) | 28,133.9 | Current Area-Weighted Average Habitat Function (%) | 34% |
| Current Area-Weighted Average Habitat Function (%) | 34% | Projected Area-Weighted Average Habitat Function (%) | 22% |
| Projected Area-Weighted Average Habitat Function (%) | 22% | Permanent Area-Weighted Average Habitat Function (%) | 31% |
| Projected Functional Acres below Current (f-acres) | 3,228.5 | Permanent Functional Acres below Current (f-acres) | 792.2 |
| Projected Area-Weighted Average Multiplier (multiplier) | 0.98 | Permanent Area-Weighted Average Multiplier (multiplier) | 1.24 |
| Term Debits Generated (credits) | 3,163 | Permanent Debits Generated (credits) | 986 |
- VERIFICATION AND TRACKING**: Includes fields for 'HQT Version', 'Lead Verifier', 'Date of Assessment', and 'Final Submission by Verifier (YES or NO)'. Below this, a section titled 'To be Filled Out by SETT' includes fields for 'SETT Lead on QA', 'Date of SETT QA', and 'Final Project Calculator (YES or NO)'.

At the bottom of the spreadsheet, there is a navigation bar with tabs for 'Instructions', 'Summary', '1.1 Enter Map Unit Data', '1.2 Enter Transect Data', '1.3 Enter Mgmt Cats Data', and '1.4 Review Desktop'. The 'Summary' tab is currently selected.

Questions?

- Cheyenne Acevedo
- (775) 687-2002
- cacevedo@sagebrusheco.nv.gov

