Introduction to GSAK V8.2 (Geocaching Swiss Army Knife)

The Basics

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The Basics

This tutorial will cover the basics of GSAK.

- ❑ What is it?

- ❑ Where do you get it?

- ❑ How do you install it?
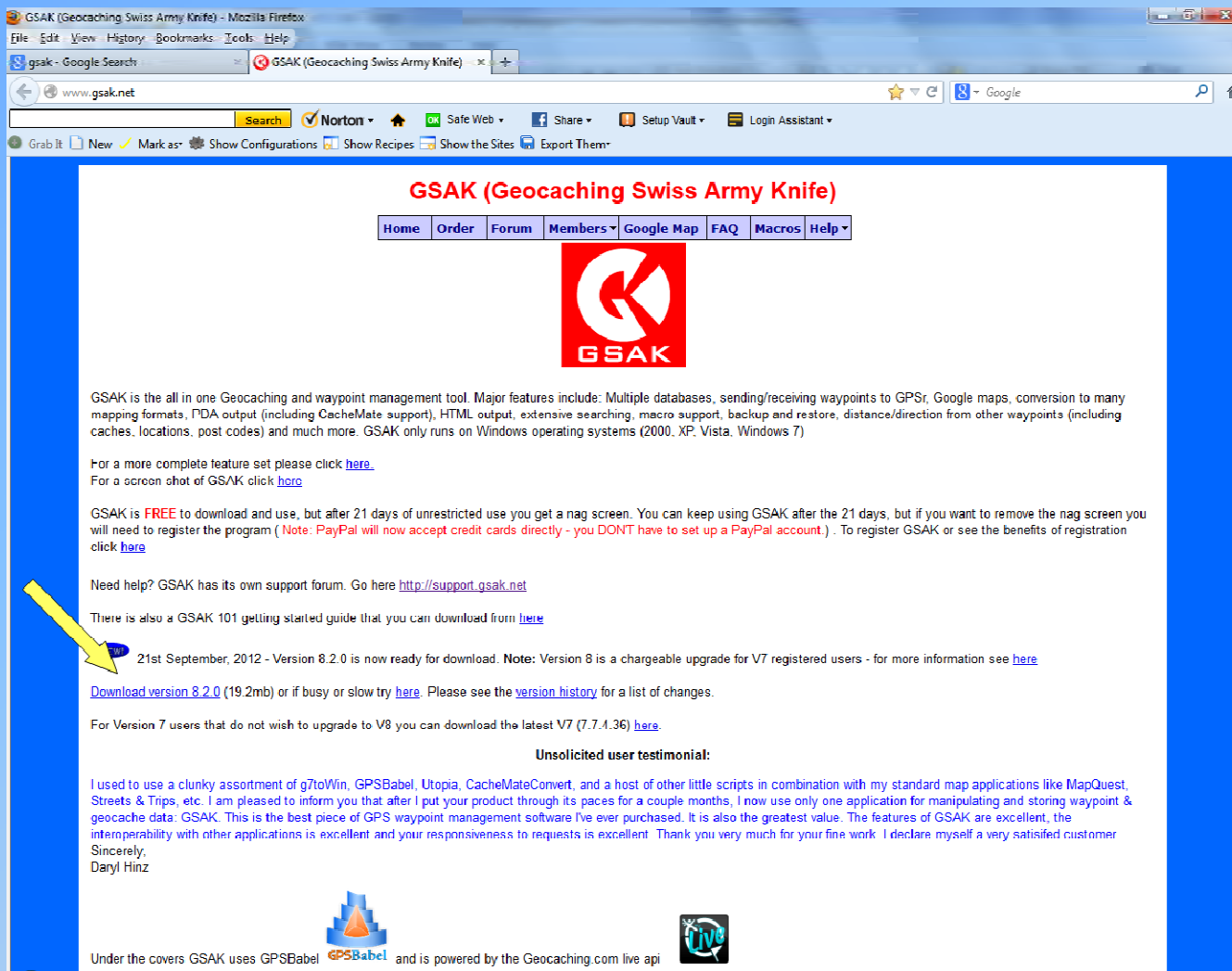
- ❑ How do you use it?

- ❑ Why use it?

What is GSAK?

- Offline database program tailored to Geocaching

- Support for multiple databases and views

- Extensive filtering, sorting, and searching capabilities

- Displays waypoints using Google Maps

- GPS device input and output

- Highly configurable

- Extendable through powerful macros

- $30 per user license (can be installed on multiple computers)

- Free but after 21 days Nag Screen

Where Do You Get It?
From www.gsak.net

Install

Download the file (GSAK820B11.exe) and then double click on the file.

It will default load to C:\Program Files (x86)\gsak on Windows 7 (C:\Program Files\gsak on Vista and XP).

With Windows 7 it will also install a folder on the App Data folder in the user folder (User\App Data\Roaming\GSAK) – This is the location where all of the backups, data and macros will go for Windows 7 since the Program Files folder is restricted. For Vista and XP data and macros will be stored in the Program Files\gsak folders.

Pre-Setup Information

Before you use GSAK you will need to configure your profile at Geocaching.com as well as get some important information to insert into GSAK.

Go to http://www.geocaching.com/account/default.aspx

Get the following information and switch the settings to GPX 1.0.1

Your Profile   Edit | Change Password
Username: Allyn56
Member ID: 123456
Full Name:*   Allyn56
Address:*

Occupation: Tupperware Finder
Location: Las Vegas, NV
Forum Title: Premium Member
Signature: Review Forum Signature

*This information is not public

Your Preferences   Change
Language: English
Time Zone: Eastern : Eastern Time (U.S. & Canada)
                 Show Daylight Savings Time
Display Units: Use Imperial Units
Instant Message: None Specified
Friend Requests: Allow Friend Requests
GPX Version: GPX 1.0.1   Must be set to GPX 1.0.1 to get Attribute Information

GSAK

Initial Setup

Find the shortcut for GSAK on your computer and double click to open the program. At the top of the main page you will see a tab for Tools. Click that tab and then click on Options. Under the General Tab in the top left corner you will see a spot for entering your GC ID#.

Enter your User ID number from Geocaching.com and click on the User ID # button as shown. Also this is where you can change your units to miles or leave as kilometers. This page also gives you the ability to change many other settings in the future.

Setup User ID#

User ID#

Setup Options & Folders

On the same page you can also see the location of the folders holding:

- ❑ Your Databases
- ❑ Application Data
- ❑ Backups

You can also adjust the frequency on backups for the system. This will backup your settings, databases and other important information. I have mine set at 1 which is the default and it does not impact performance.

Setup Options & Folders

Setup Home Location

You will also need to set your home location in order to take advantage of some key filtering in GSAK.

On the Options page click on Locations to open that window and enter your home location.
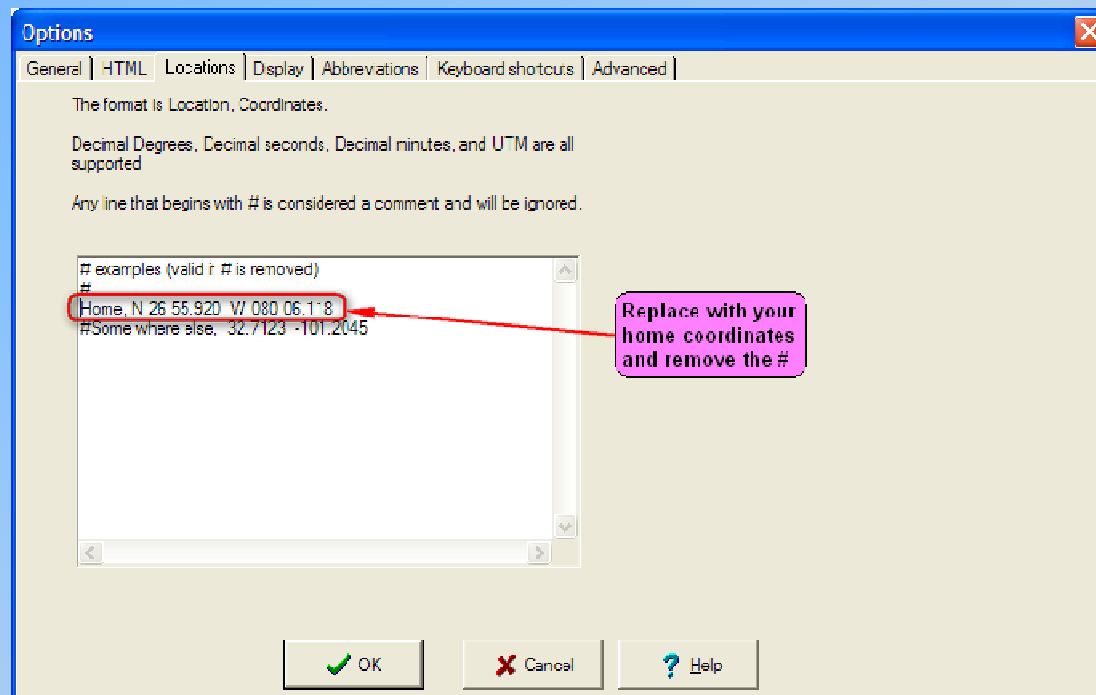
Setup GPS

In order to take advantage of GSAK you need to let it know what type of GPS unit you use and will connect to the computer.

On the main tab on any page click on "GPS" and you will get a pull down menu with "Setup" at the top. Click on that tab and you will get a screen that asks for your Make of GPS unit and another for your Model. I have a Garmin Montana 650t so the following page will reflect that.

If you don't see your Model just use the Generic USB tab.

Setup GPS
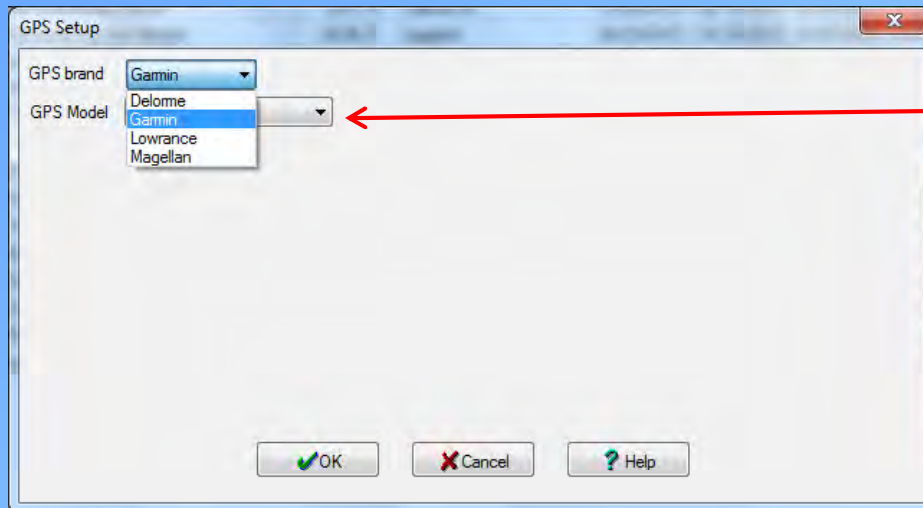
Select Model Here

Select Make Here

Databases

You are now setup to begin using GSAK. The power of GSAK is that you can use multiple databases to store and sort your GPX files that you download from GC.com via the cache page or through pocket queries.

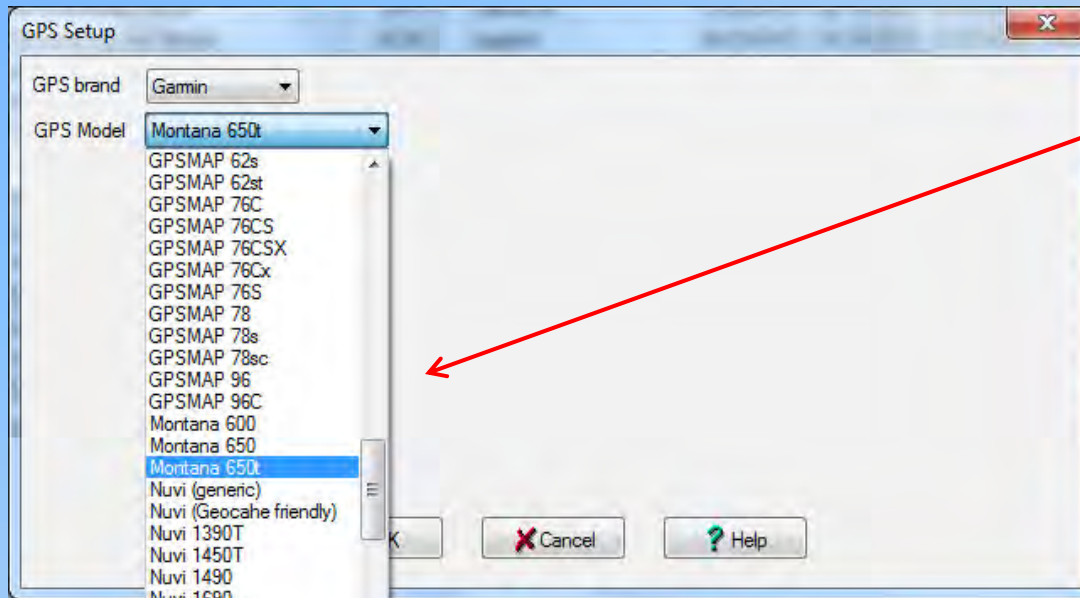GSAK starts with one database which is "Default". I have added several to manage my files and to also make it easier to load only the GPX files I want when I head out on the hunt.

The databases include those caches you have not yet found, the ones you have found (very important for later use) and your placed caches.

Select Databases

On the main tool bar at the top of any GSAK page click on Database, the click on select. This is a partial view of how mine is setup. I use Temp databases per location to give me better access on my GPSr. Not shown is a database for My Finds (caches I have found are kept in their own database) and My Caches (the ones I own)..

GSAK
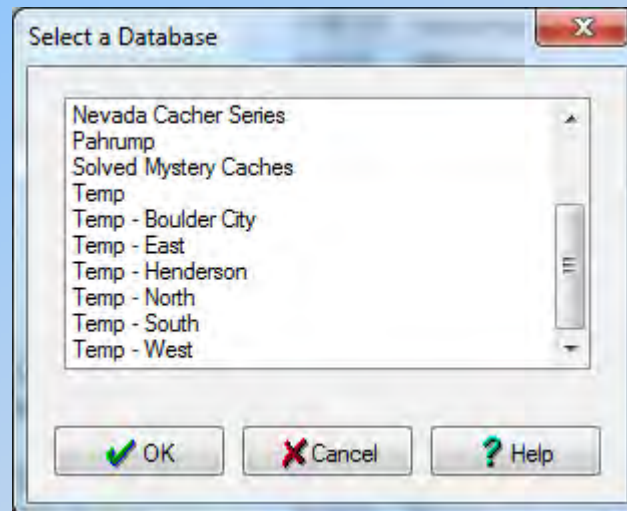
Create Databases

To create your own database, click on the "Database" tab and then select "New" to get the following page. Enter a name for your database and click on "Create". Do this as many times as you want. The Database Select window is fixed so if you have more than you can view you will have to scroll down.

Database Name

Using Databases

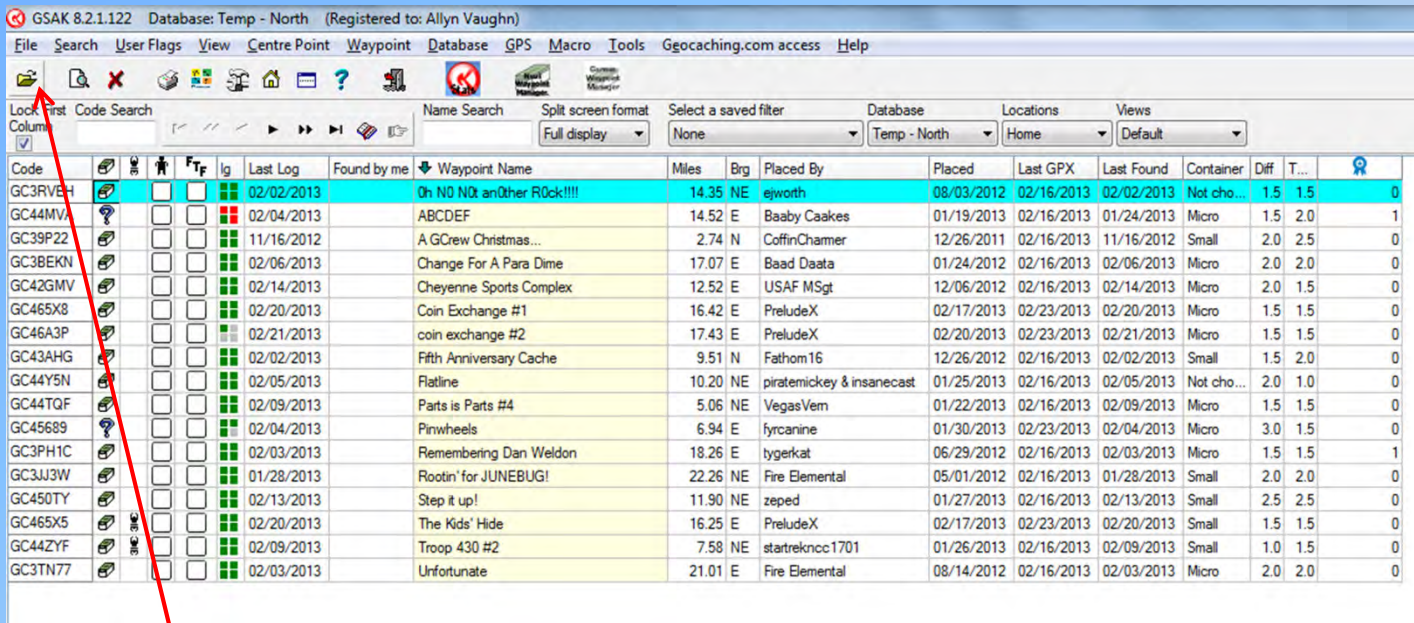Now it's time to add files to your database. I do it in two ways.

The main way is I load individual GPX files I download from GC.com into a folder on my computer that is associated with my database. (Temp East folder for Temp East database).

The second way is I can download a pocket query from GC.com and load that into a database specific to the pocket query. You can do it anyway you like.

Loading Databases

Below is a database I have setup for the North side of town. It has some caches already loaded in and when I want to add, I click on the "Open" folder button as shown at the red arrow.

Open Folder

Loading Databases

The following slide will show the pop up window where I can load files into the database. This works for all type of files. I can enter:

❑ Individual files – one at a time by clicking on the Load Type Files button. This works for either single files or pocket queries.

❑ Multiple single files that reside in a folder by clicking on the Load type Folder button shown.

At the top find the location of the folder or file on your computer you want to load. Once you find it click on the "OK" button at the bottom.

Loading Databases
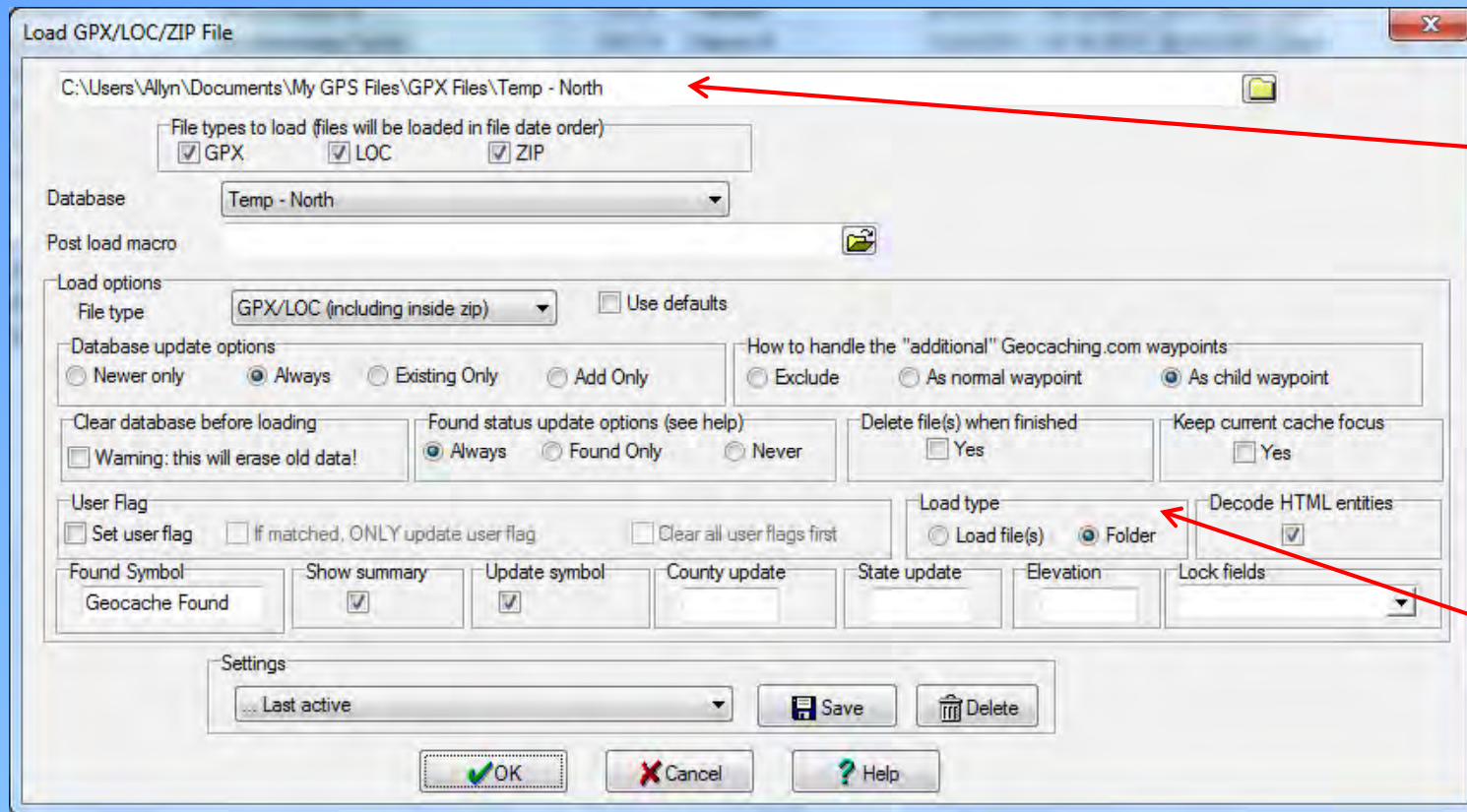
Location of File Folder or File Name

Load Type: Either a File of Folder within Files in it

Loading Databases

Once you load the files into your database you will get the following screen. It will tell you how many caches were loaded, how many were new and how many were existing. It will even tell you how many existing ones were updated by this load.

Using the Database

Now that you have populated your databases it is time to use them. You can use them to:
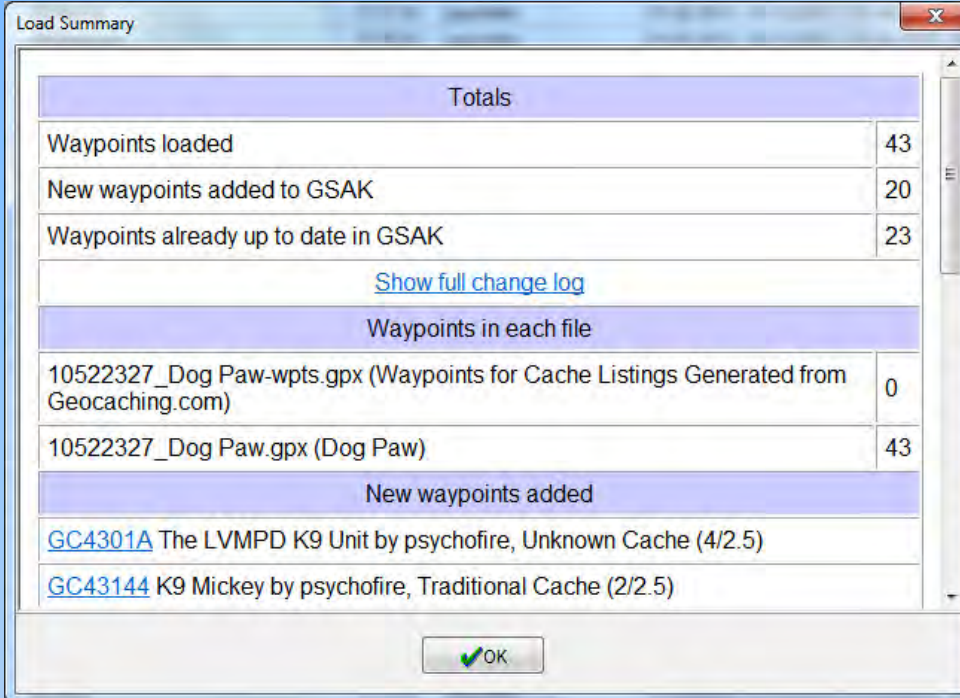
❑   Sort caches by type, location, distance from home, status, etc.

❑   You can use filters to manage certain files.

❑   You can see which ones have been found, not found, archived or disabled.

You can also manage the type of information you want to see in the columns. You can add or delete columns as you desire.

Columns

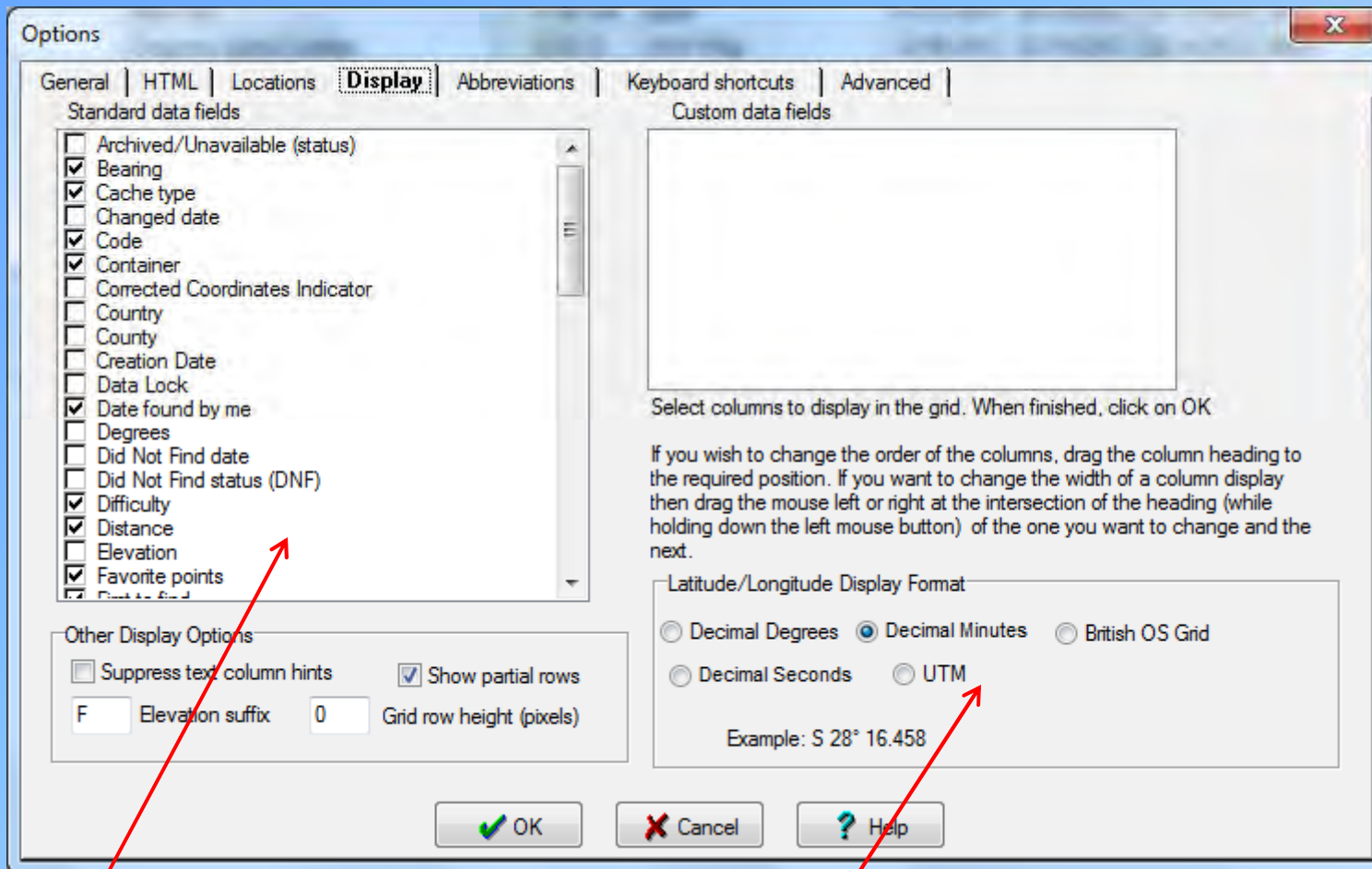On the Options page select "Display" and you can see the various choices you have for columns. The furthest left column for can be fixed or you can unlock to add or delete that view. You can add or delete any other the others as you please by checking the appropriate box.

The Display box also allows you to set the format you want for your coordinates.

Columns

Choice of Colum Views

Coordinate Format

Database Views

By default your database is set to split view. I don't care for this view but you may like it. It allows you to see the cache information (cache page data and map) of the highlighted cache.

If you want to get rid of it click on the "View" tab at the top of the page and then unclick the "Split Screen" tab.

You can also play around with other views if you want and select columns in this tab as well.

I have another tutorial that is dedicated to views and filtering if you want to explore this more.

Split Screen

Database View

The following page shows a database of mine without the split screen option. It has various columns and is sorted by distance from my home location. That is known because that column is highlighted. I can sort by any of the columns by clicking on the column heading.

My columns include among others:

GC Code	Type of Cache (icon)
Travel Bug Noted	FTF
Last four logs	Cache Name
Miles from Home Location	Bearing from Home
Placed by	Date Placed
Last Log Date	Last Found Date
Container Size	Type of Container
Difficulty and Terrain Ratings	Favorite Points

GSAK

Database View

Deleting Caches

At some point in time you will want to delete or move caches from your databases.

To delete caches you can highlight the individual cache and either right click your mouse and choose delete waypoint or click on the waypoint menu tab at the top of the screen and select Delete Waypoint(s).

The Delete Waypoint(s) option gives you more options to delete the cache(s) as well. It will allow you to delete the highlighted cache, all caches in a filter, all caches that have been selected using the User Flag (that funny looking guy on the top of the column) or all caches in the database.

Deleting Caches

Options for deleting
caches include:

The highlighted
cache

All in a filter you set

Any ones that have
a User Flag on them

All in the database
(be careful with this
option!)

Delete 1 waypoint

○ This waypoint only   ○ All waypoints in filter   ○ User checked   ○ All waypoints in database

☐ Also stop future imports adding back in   ☐ Prevent locked waypoints from being deleted

This waypoint will be deleted from the current database. Are you sure?

Settings
. Last active ▼   💾 Save   🗑 Delete

✔ OK   ✘ Cancel   ❓ Help
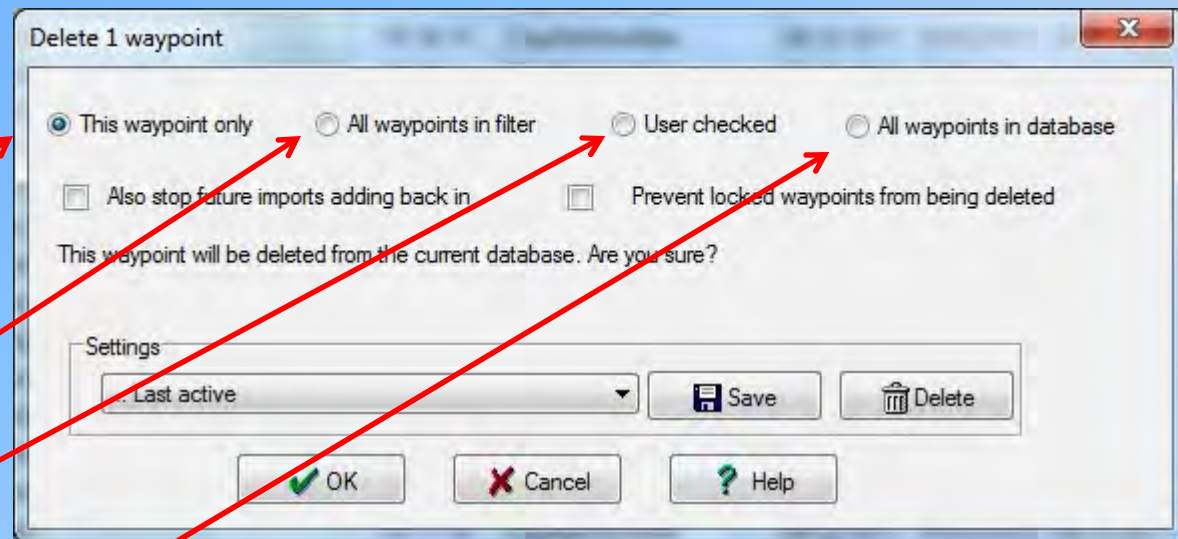
The current option is set to delete
only the highlighted cache and
this is the default option

GSAK

Deleting Caches

You can also move or copy caches from one database to another.

❑ To do this, select the Database tab from the main menu on the top.

❑ Select Move/Copy Waypoints and a menu will appear.

❑ From that menu select whether you want to move or copy the waypoints in your current view (you need to either have a filter set for the ones you want to move or copy or all in the database will be moved or copied).

❑ Select the database where you want them moved or copied to.

❑ Review the others settings to see if you want to change any (I use the defaults on these).

❑ Click on the go button.

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❑ Select the database where you want them moved or copied to.

❑ Review the others settings to see if you want to change any (I use the defaults on these).

❑ Click on the go button.

Moving or Copying Caches

Select the database to Move or Copy your caches to.
Those in the current view will be impacted.

Select Move or Copy.

Review these features.

Click on the Go button.

Move/Copy 30 Waypoints

This action will be performed on all waypoints in your current subset

Destination database

Solved Mystery Caches

Warning: Move will delete waypoints from your source database regardless of the following options

Move or copy waypoints?
○ Copy   ● Move   ☐ Add to ignore list (source database)

If waypoint already exists in the destination database?
● Replace   ○ Replace and flag   ○ Only flag   ○ Ignore
☐ Merge logs   ☐ Merge child waypoints

If waypoint does NOT exist in the destination database?
● Add   ○ Add and flag   ○ Ignore

Custom Data - If tables have different formats?
● Synchronize   ○ Ignore   ○ Halt with error

Settings
... Last active   💾 Save   🗑 Delete

☑ Display destination database when finished

⚡ Go   ✖ Cancel   ? Help

GSAK

Loading the Files

So how do you load your GPX files into your receiver? There are many ways. You can use the basic load feature or macros.

The basic way within the program is to go to the "GPS" tab at the top middle. Click on the "Send Waypoints" tab and a popup screen will appear that will allow you to load all of the waypoints/GPX files in the current database.

Make sure your GPSr is connected to your computer and hit the "Send" button.

You can also use the "Export" feature if you want through the "File" tab. Or once you have the hang of it, download a macro specific to your GPS unit and use the benefit of that feature to make you life much easier.

Conclusion

This tutorial was intended to give you an overview of :

What GSAK is.

- ❑ How to install it.
- ❑ How to do the basic setup to use it.
- ❑ How to setup and use a database.
- ❑ How to load files into a database.
- ❑ And finally how to load them onto your GPS unit.

Need More Help?

Go to the Forums on GSAK to get specific help with any question you have.