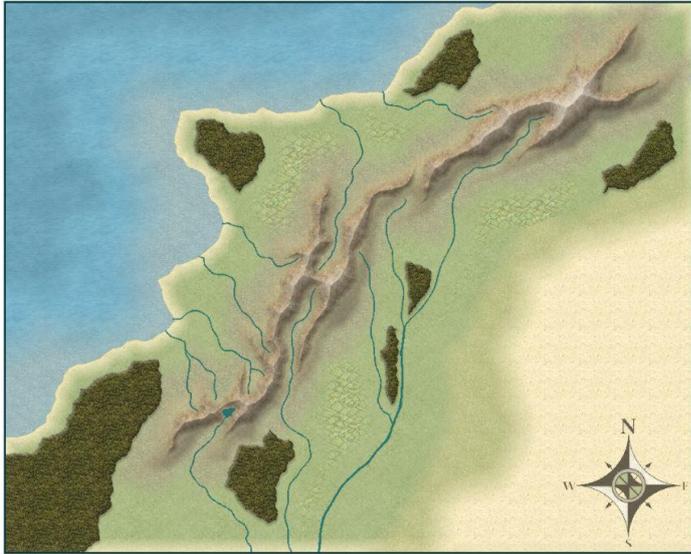


How I do lighted bevel mountains

By HadrianVI

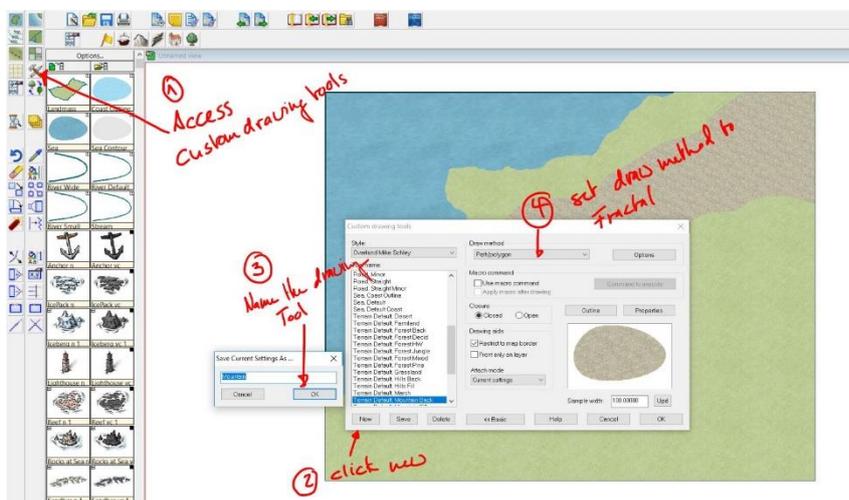
I got asked a couple of times how I do my mountains. Therefore, I decided to make a short tutorial to show you guys how I do it. Together we are going to create this map:



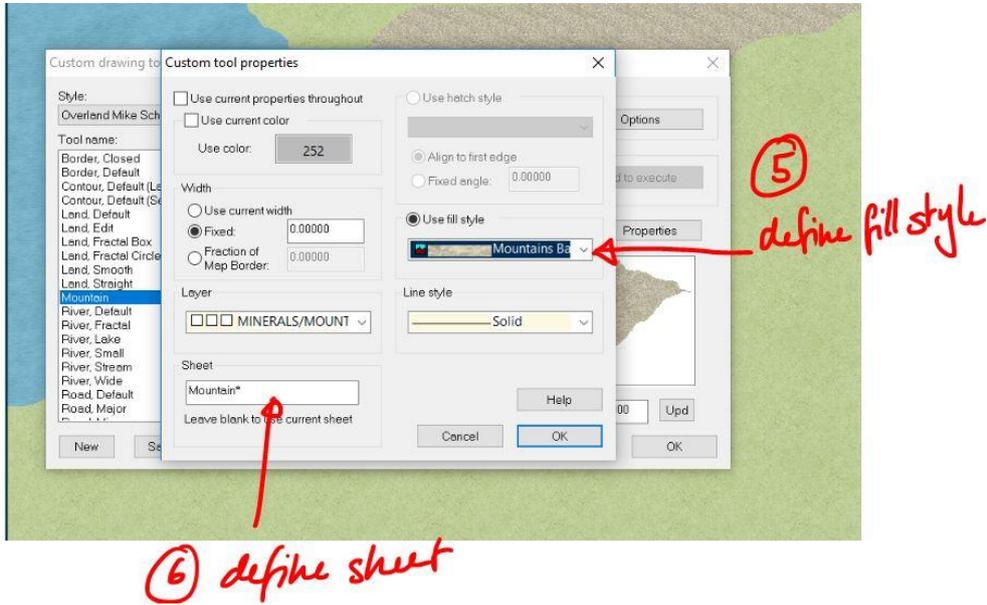
1. Preparation

There are three ways to draw the actual mountains this: Either create a new drawing tool, edit an existing one or just use the fractal poly. Either way, what we want to have is a fractal drawing tool with a different fill style than the mountain background texture that ends up on a separate sheet.

For the purpose of this tutorial we are going to create a new drawing tool. We access the custom drawing tools (1), go to 'Advanced' and press 'New'(2). We save the new drawing tool under the name "Mountain" or (whatever else seems fit) (3). Then we make sure that the draw method is Fractal (4). If the drawing tool is displayed as a circle or box, use the 'draw method options' window to change the type to Polygon/Path.

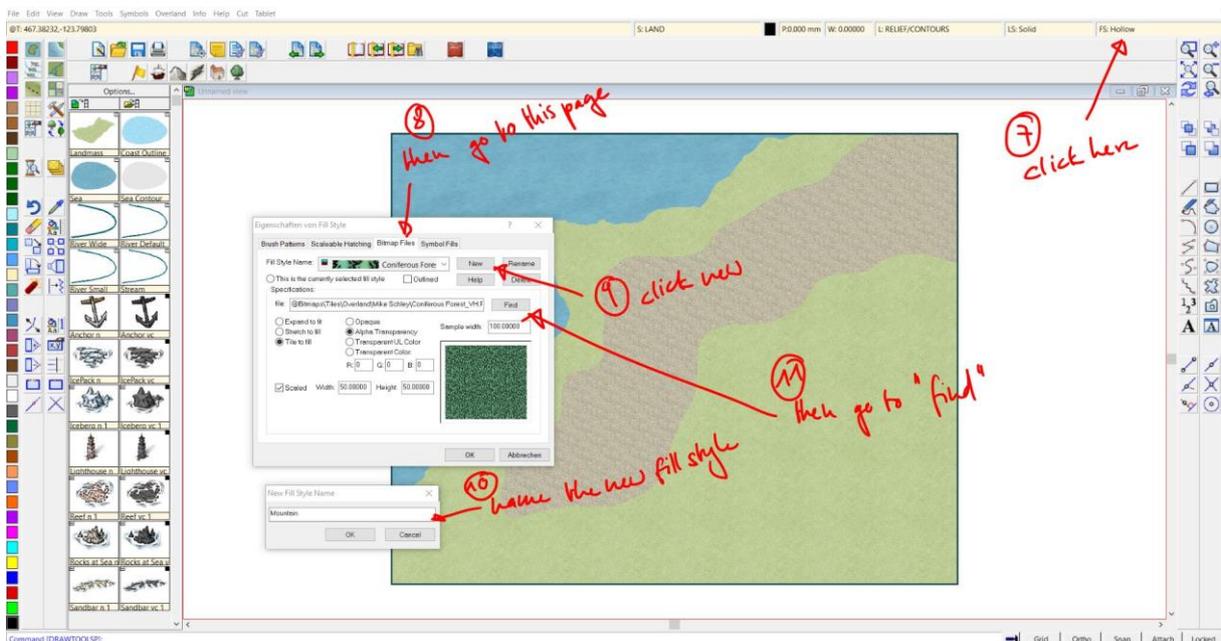


Now we go to 'properties' and select a fill style (5) and define the layer and – more importantly – the sheet (6).



If you do not find a fitting fill style, then you might want to create a new one by following these steps: Click the FS Bar in the top right corner of your screen (7). This will open the fill style window on which you go to the Bitmap Files Page (8). Then create a new Fill Style and Name it (9 & 10). Once this is done go to 'Find' (11), which will open a window that lets you browse your files and allows you to select any given .png file. For the purpose of this tutorial we will use standard CC3+ fills that can by default be found here:

C:\ProgramData\Profantasy\CC3Plus\Bitmaps\Tiles\Overland .

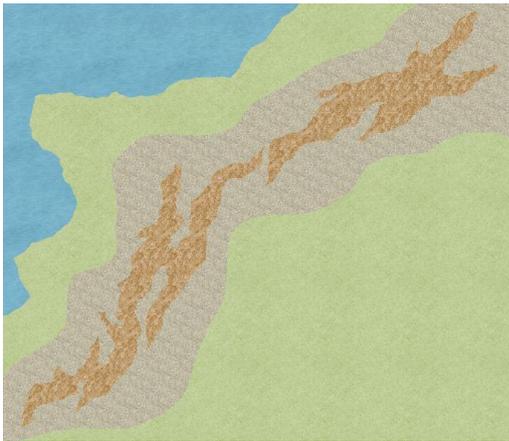


I personally like the standard mountain brown light texture, so I choose this one. When we are done, we hit okay. Now we can go back to the drawing tools and just select the Mountain Fill in the 'Properties' window. We can now save the drawing tool and begin with our mountain range.

2. Drawing Mountains

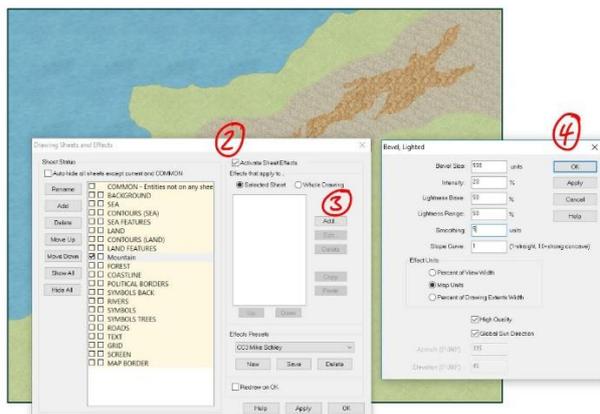
a) Drawing the basic shape

Now we can start drawing our mountain range. What is important here, is to draw the ranges rather long and not too wide. If you want to have valleys you need to draw the surrounding mountains. We draw something like this in the following picture.

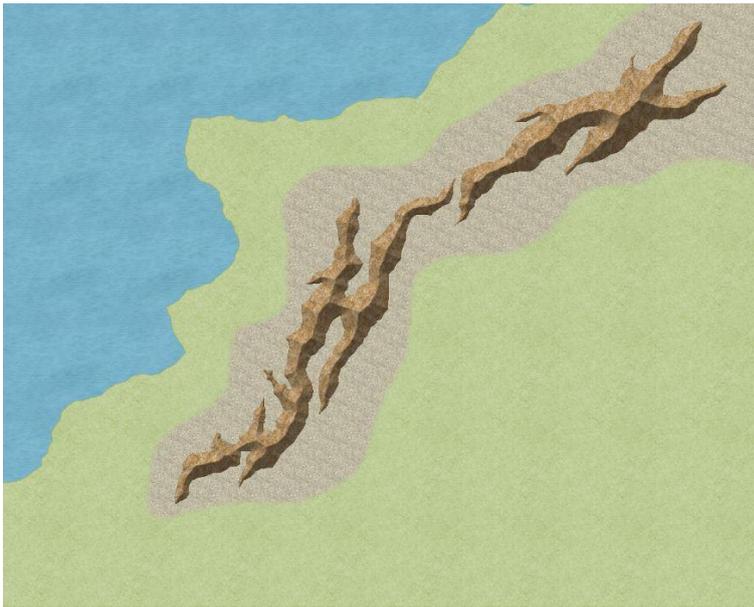


Now we can go to sheets and effects **(1)**. First we move the Mountain Sheet upwards so it ends up being on the right spot, so the mountains do not cover up things they are not supposed to. Since in our case the 'mountain background' is still on the "Land Features" sheet, we move the mountains right below it. Now we activate sheets and effects **(2)** and add a lighted bevel effect **(3)**.

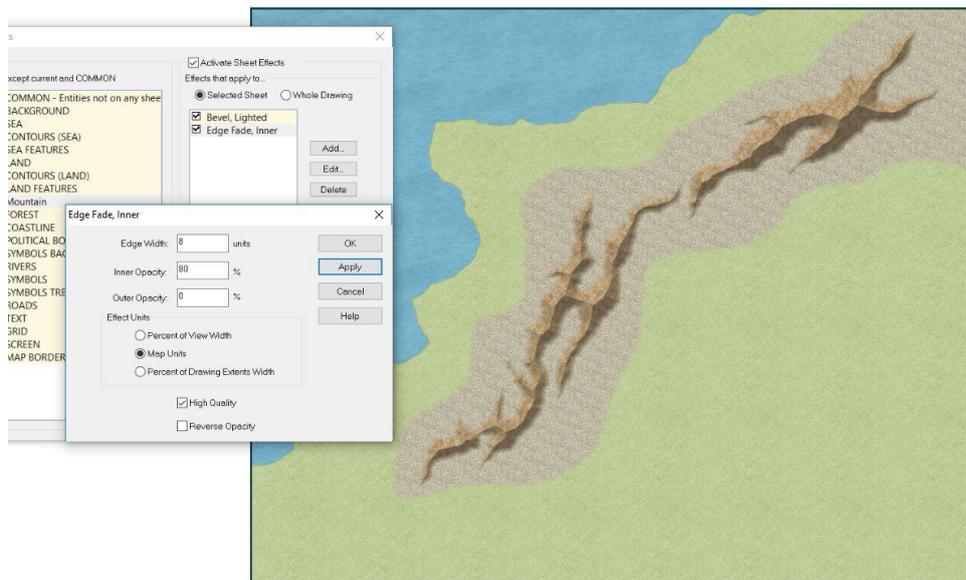
We set the bevel size to a high value (for example 500), intensity to about 15-25, smoothing to 5 and make sure effect units are map units (the other options may work as well but I personally am most comfortable with map units). Then we hit okay **(4)**.



The map will now look like this:



Now, this is a start but we are still far away from the result we want to get. So, we go back to sheets and effects and add an 'edge fade, inner' effect. We set the Edge Width value to



somewhere between 6-12 and we can reduce the Inner Opacity to 80% (this is just a personal preference, but I think the mountains look smoother, if they are a bit transparent). If we do now click apply, the map will look like this:

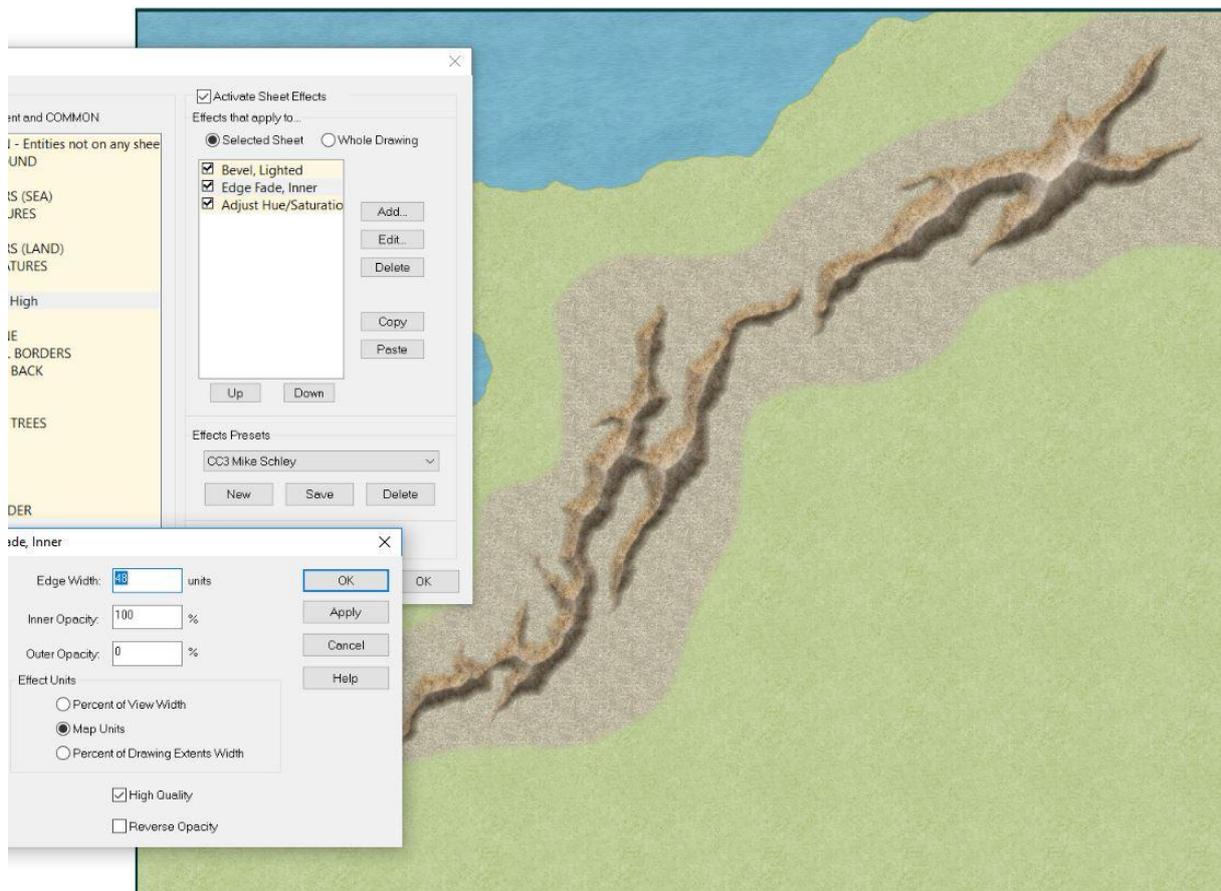
Now we have laid down the basic shape of the mountains. But for them to look well, we are going to take some additional steps. The following steps do not have to be done in the following order.

b) Adding mountain tops

This step is very simple: We create a new sheet that we call 'Mountain High' and move it just below the mountain sheet. We then right click the copy button on the left-hand-side of the monitor and select copy to sheet. Now we select our mountain range and hit "Do it".

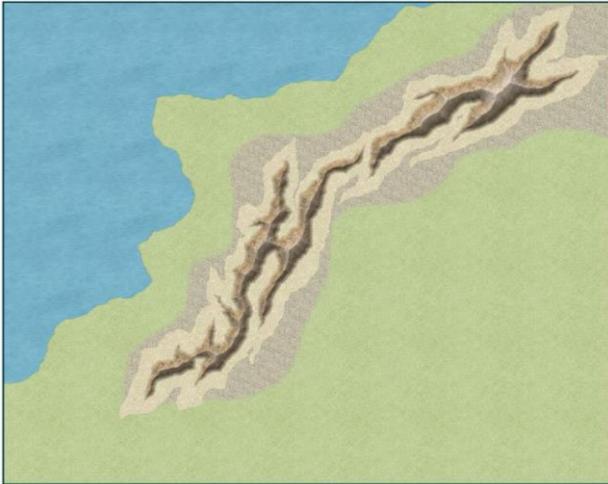
Now we have copied the mountains to another sheet. Now we go back to 'sheets and effects' and copy the effects from the 'Mountain' sheet to the new one. Before we start editing them, we add an Adjust Hue/Saturation effect and add some lightness (in our case 100). This will make sure that we see the effects of the changes we make now. Alternatively, we can also change the fill style (to a snow fill) using the 'Change Properties' tool.

We can leave the bevel lighted effect as it is, or we can increase the intensity a bit. But the main effect we are focusing on here is the edge fade inner effect. We increase the Edge Width, so only the tops of the mountains will be visible. In our case, decided to go with 48 units (and I also increased the opacity back to 100% to increase the visibility). The right value needs to be figured out in each individual case, so just try out a few settings until you are happy with it. Now we see that the top of the mountains turned brighter. Note that this step can be repeated and stacked, if needed.

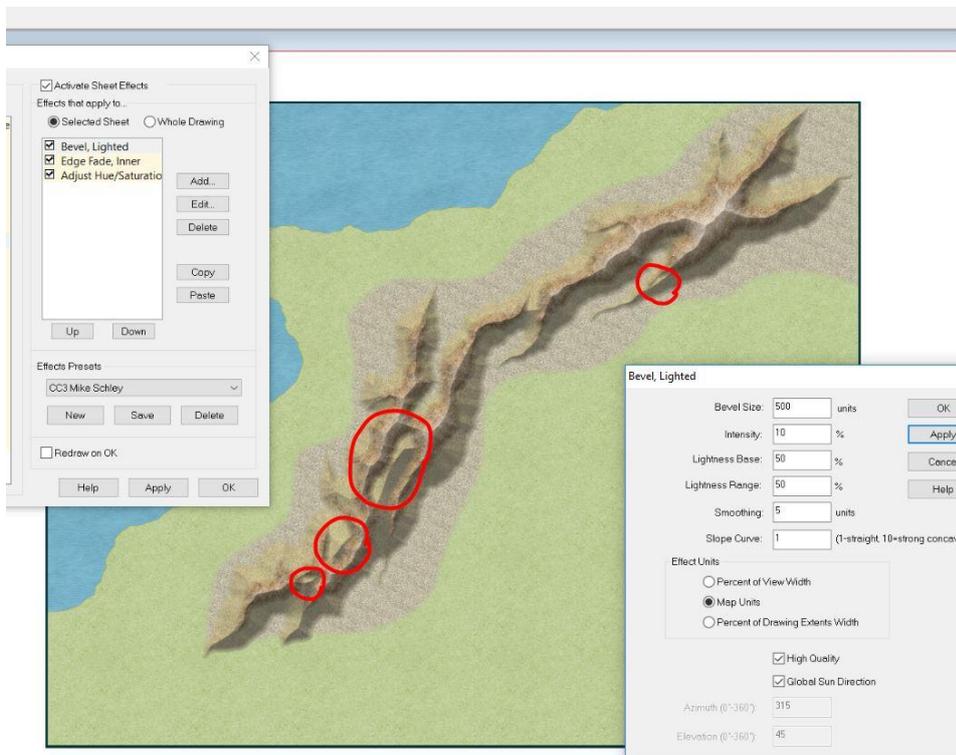


c) the foot hills

We start by preparing our drawing tool. We want to draw the lower mountains or foot hills on a separate Sheet, so we either create a new drawing tool, edit an existing one or we create a new sheet and use the fractal poly tool to draw the mountains. Also, we may want to have a specific texture fill we may need to import (here we use the Hills Background fill from the Schley Overland Style). Once we are ready we draw the lower mountains around the 'normal' mountains, so the map looks like this:

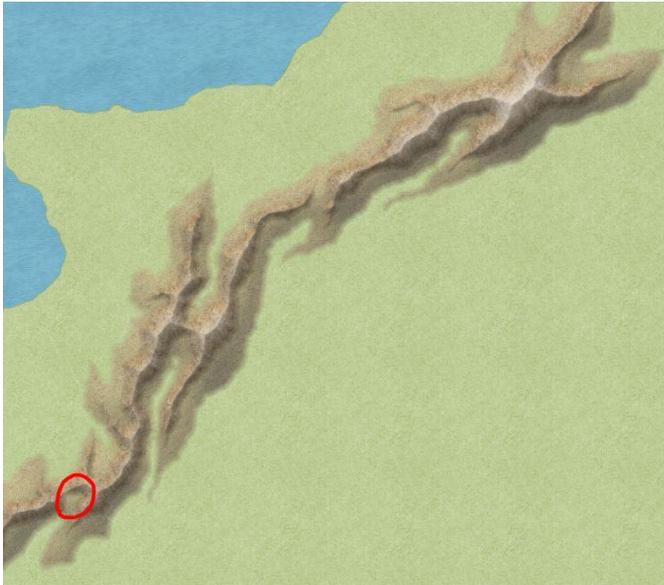


Now we go to Sheets and Effects and copy the effects from the 'Mountain' Sheet to the new sheet. We probably want to adjust Hue/Saturation, so the fill looks the way we want. But more importantly, we want to edit the 'Bevel, lighted' effect. In order to make the foot hills look less steep, we decrease the intensity to about 10%. Having done that, we press apply. The map will now look like this:



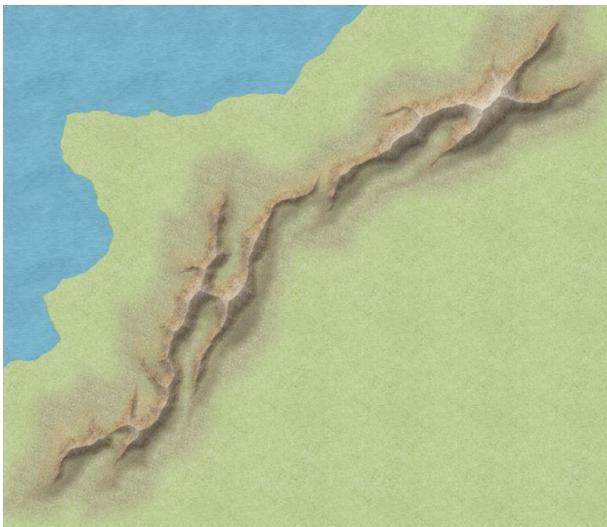
As you can see there are now some areas, where the bevel effect does not match with the one from the 'Mountain' sheet. In those cases, where just the end of a ridge does not match (as in the circle in the top right corner), we edit the shape of the foot hill entity until it fits more or less.

Then there is quite an easy way to hide the remaining issues: Increase the Smoothing to a high level. Now, this is certainly no perfect way to deal with the issue. But it helps to get a relatively good result rather quickly.



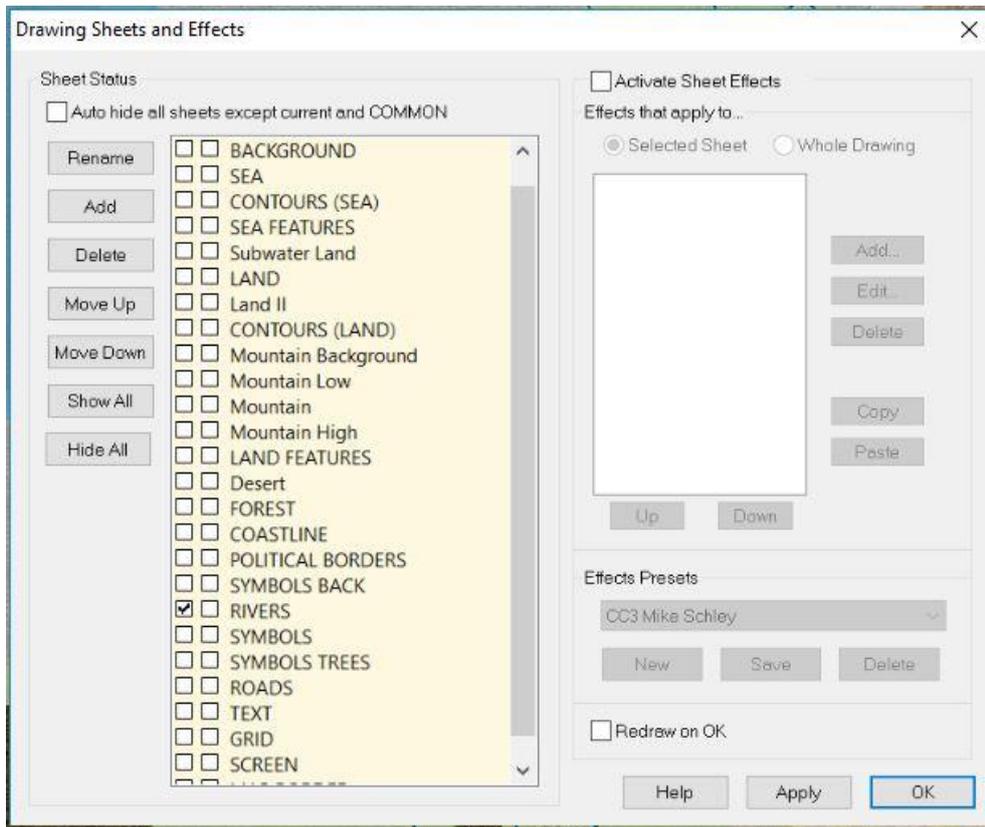
As you can see, we managed to get rid of most of the issues, but some still remain. But in the case of the remaining issue, it would probably be best to just cover it with a lake or forest or something, instead of going great lengths to get rid of it.

Now having done all that, we want to do some fine tuning. We adjust the hue/saturation of the mountain background and work with the edge fade inner effect of the mountain sheets. Now, it is very hard to tell you what values to set or use, because it depends on each map. You'll need to toy around a bit until it looks good. But you may want to keep in mind that less is sometimes more. In regards of lighted bevel mountains, this means, that you probably want them to be a bit transparent so they blend in nicely with the surroundings.



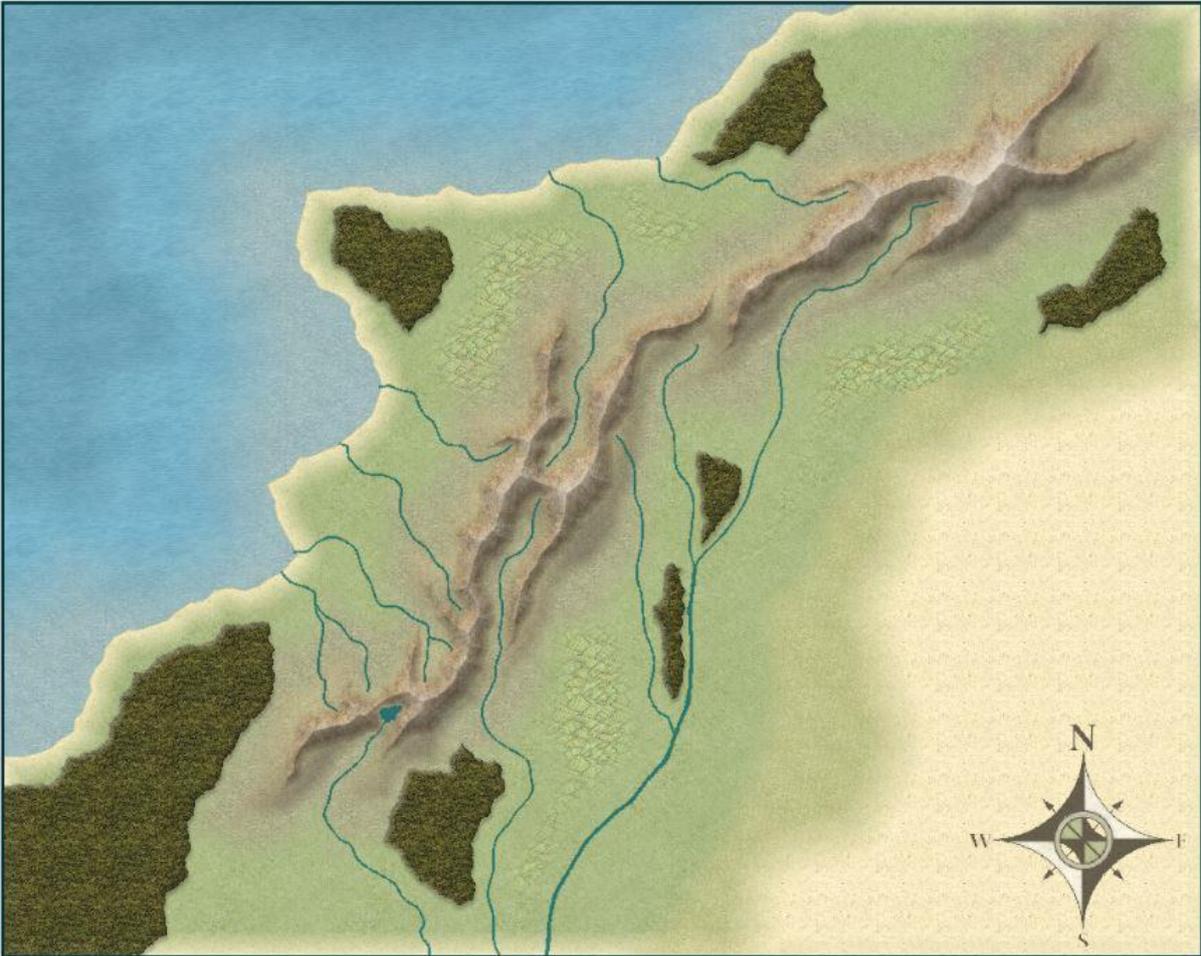
You may have noticed that the Mountain Background has also been edited quite a bit to blend in more nicely. This is what I have done: Added an edge fade inner effect and put edge width to 24 (map units) and opacity to 65%. Then I used Hue/Saturation to get it a bit darker (lightness: -15%). And since we are going to add more things to the map that will eventually be placed on the “LAND FEATURES” sheet, I moved the Mountain Background to a “Mountain Background” sheet, to which I copied the above-mentioned effect.

The final sheet order therefore looks like this:



(The one that has been cut off at the bottom is the MAP BORDER sheet.)

All we have left to do now is adding rivers, forests, farmland ect. And in the end we get something like this:



Thanks for reading, I hope you liked it.