

Converting Excel Spreadsheets or Comma Separated Values files into Database File or Geodatabases for use in the USGS Metadata Wizard

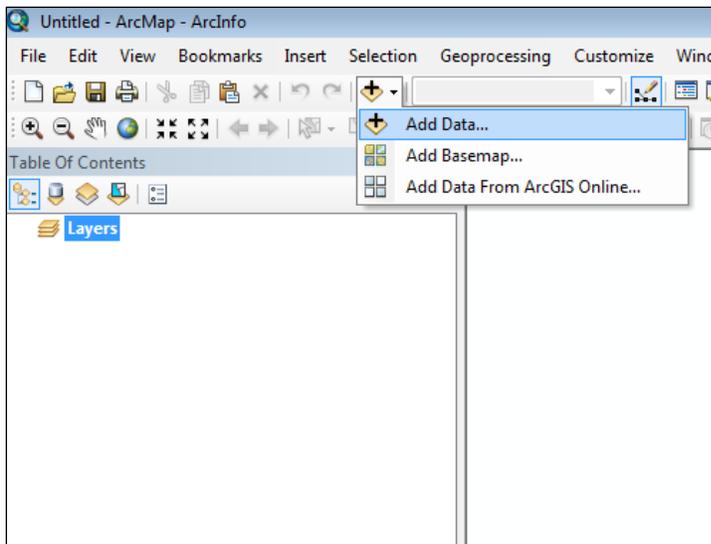
The [USGS Metadata Wizard](#) does not ingest native Excel (.xlsx) or CSV (.csv) files to create [FGDC CSDGM](#) compliant metadata. These files must first be converted into ESRI compatible files such as a Database File (.dbf) or an ESRI geodatabase (.gdb) for use in the Metadata Wizard.

A. Clean up the existing Excel or CSV file before the conversion.

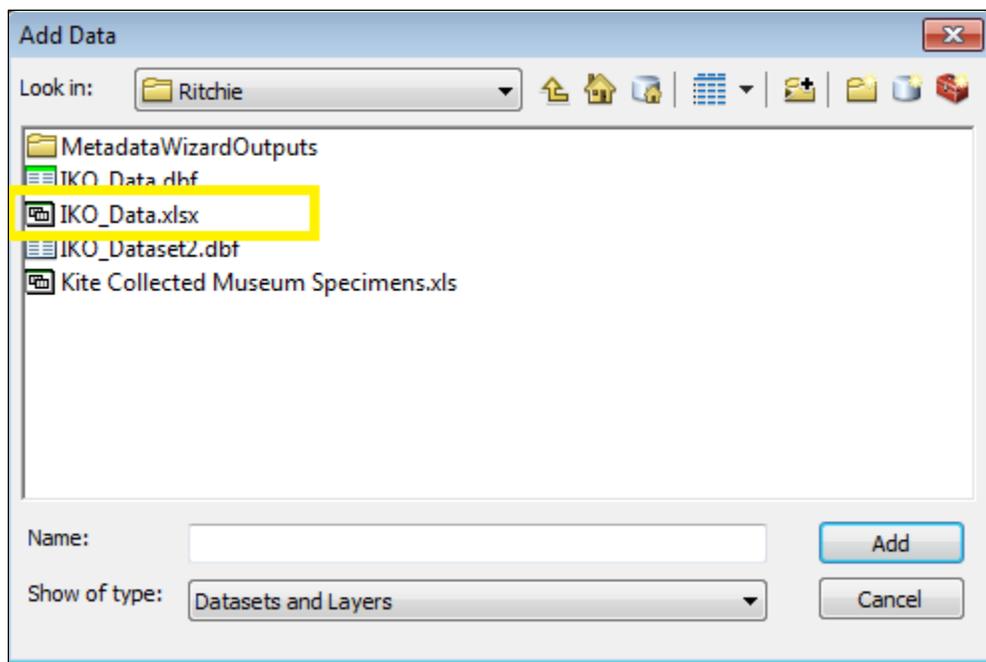
- Limit column headings to 12 characters or less. Truncation can occur with longer column headings which may be undesirable. If longer column headings are needed, consider migrating the table into an ESRI geodatabase (.gdb) instead of a .dbf, as these types of files can support longer column names (*Skip to Section C*).
- Ensure column headings do not contain spaces, hyphens or any other character symbols. Underscores are OK.
- All column values should contain plain text. The 'formatting' supported by Excel can prevent successful conversion to a .dbf file. Pay special attention to date fields, numerical field formatting, string fields that contain numbers or number fields that contain strings. Ideally, the table should contain all numerical and text 'string' values with no special formatting. This step may be a little tedious but it will ensure a successful conversion to .dbf and is a best practice for sharing data. A simple .dbf file at the end of the process will also be much easier for downstream users to work with in different software packages.

B. Convert the Excel or CSV file to .dbf

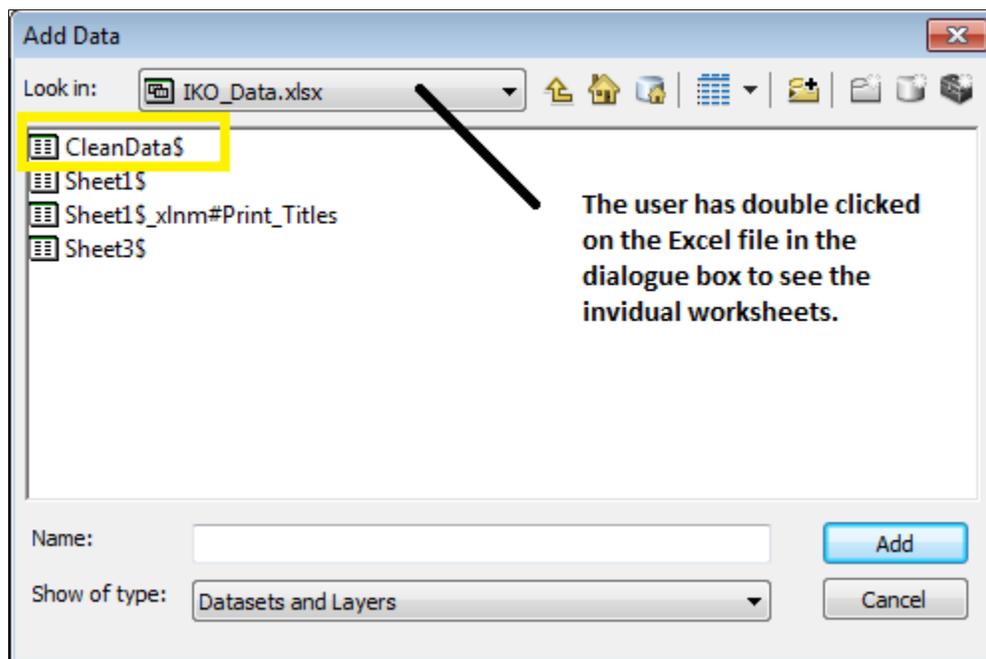
Open up an ArcMap document. Add the cleaned Excel (or CSV) file using the dialogue shown. Click on the 'Add Data' icon in ArcMap.



Navigate to where the Excel file is saved.

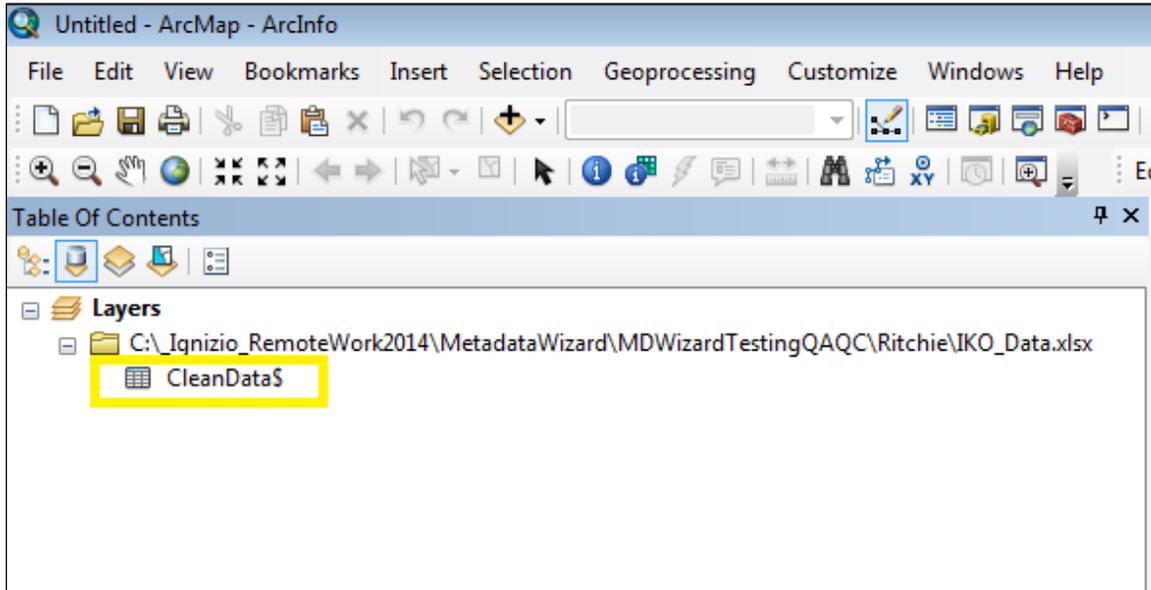


A user can only add a single sheet from an Excel file at a time in ArcMap. So, next navigate to the sheet within the Excel file that needs to be converted to a .dbf.

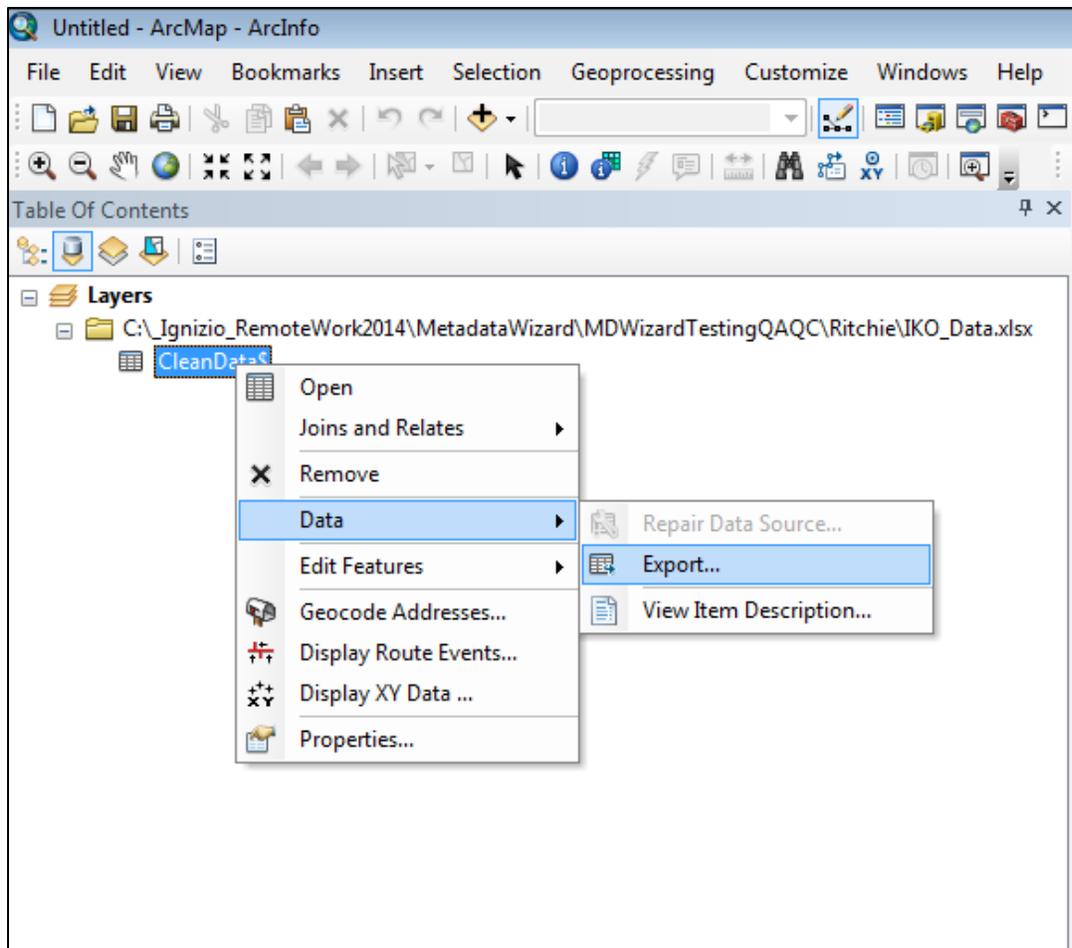


Click on the individual worksheet within the Excel spreadsheet.

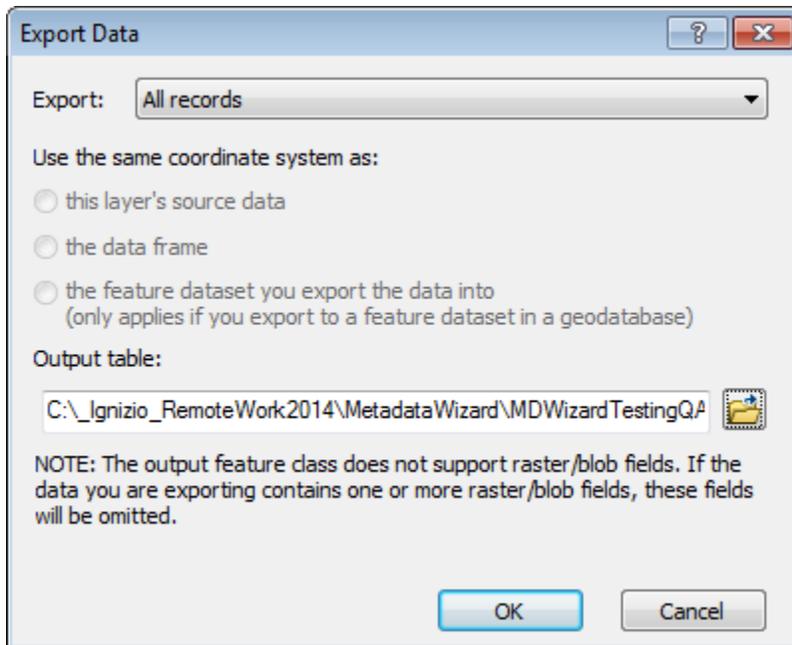
The Excel file should now show up in the Table Of Contents (usually the left-most pane) within ArcMap.



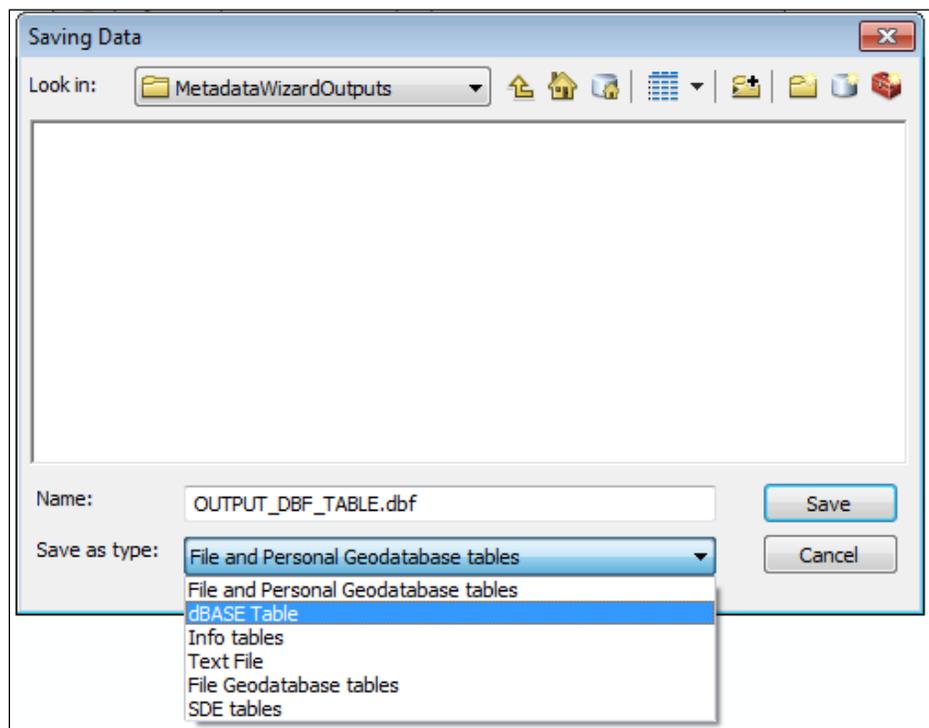
Now, right click on the table. A dialogue box will open. Hover over 'Data,' then select 'Export.'



ArcMap will now prompt a user for details on how to export the table.

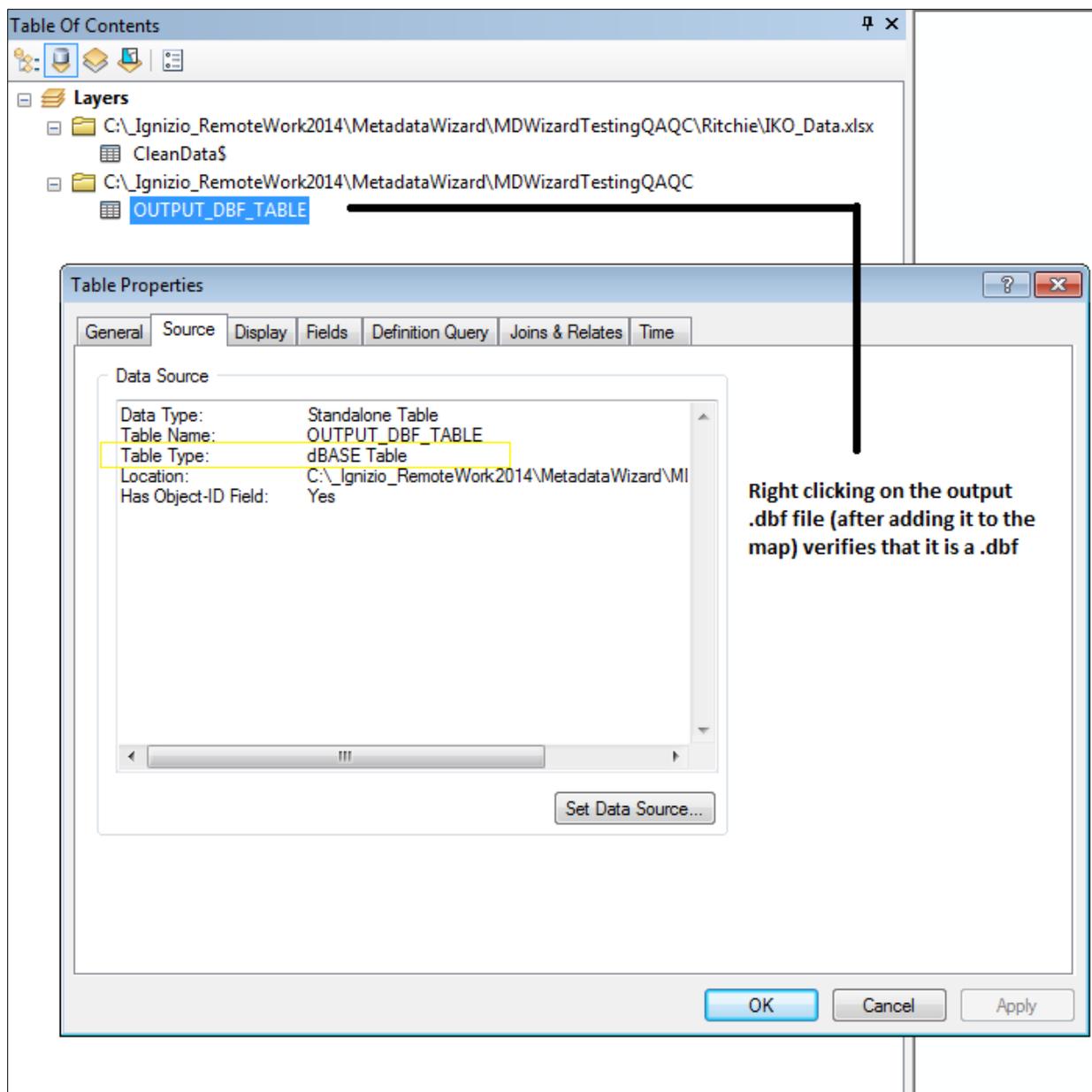


Specify a location to save the newly created .dbf file. Name the file.



Be certain to select 'dBASE Table' from the dropdown for the 'Save as type' option.

After running the Export command, a user can 'add' the newly created .dbf file to the current map document.



The end result will be a .dbf file on the user's system.

This file can now be provided as an input file to the Metadata Wizard tool.

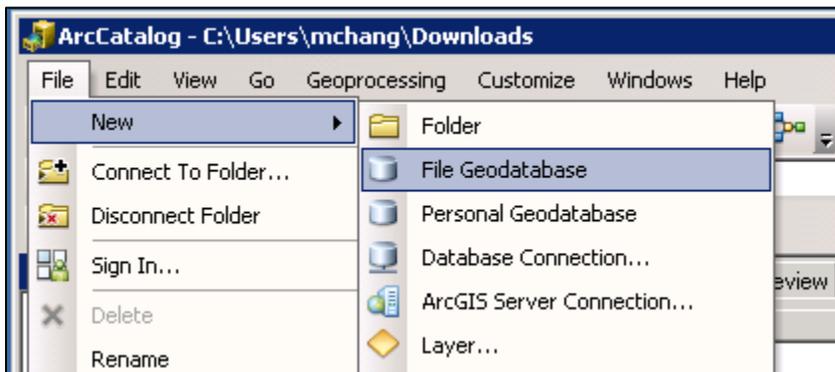
Trouble shooting:

- Be sure the file is absolutely clean. Scour column headings of spaces, strange characters, and specially-formatted values in the rows in the table. 90% of the time, this is the problem. The problems can be hard to identify, so look here first.
- Be sure to specify 'dBASE Table' when saving the output file from the Export process in ArcMap. An error result if a user tries to use the 'File and Personal Geodatabase tables' that ESRI will select by default.
- *Note that the 'File and Personal Geodatabase tables' option can be a good choice for users who have very large tables (or columns that need additional characters). If a user wishes to create a file or personal .gdb table, be aware that the output cannot be given a name that ends with '.dbf' however. Tabular data in file and personal geodatabases in ESRI are also valid inputs to the Metadata Wizard tool.

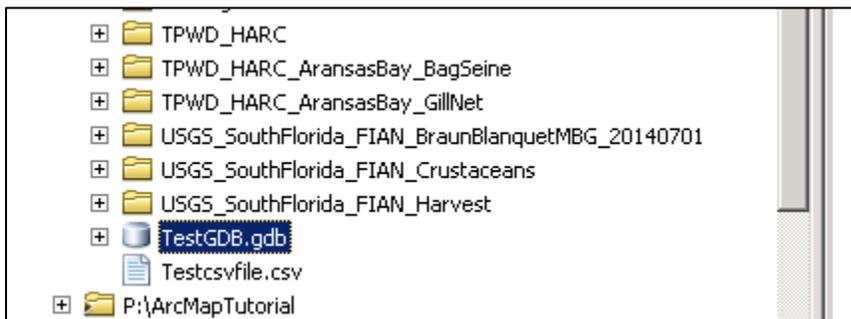
C. Convert the Excel file or CSV to a table within an ESRI Geodatabase (.gdb)

Open up an ArcCatalog document.

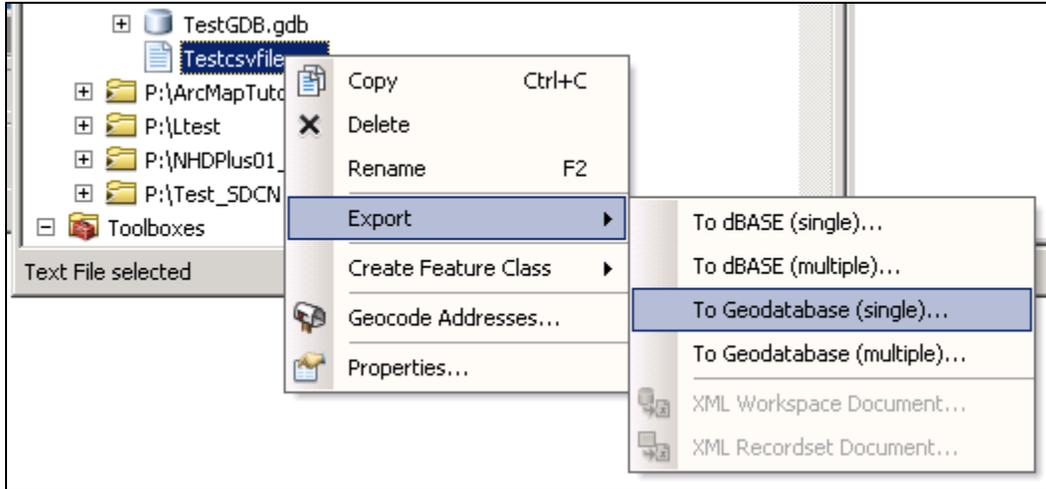
Create an empty geodatabase by clicking File -> New -> File Geodatabase.



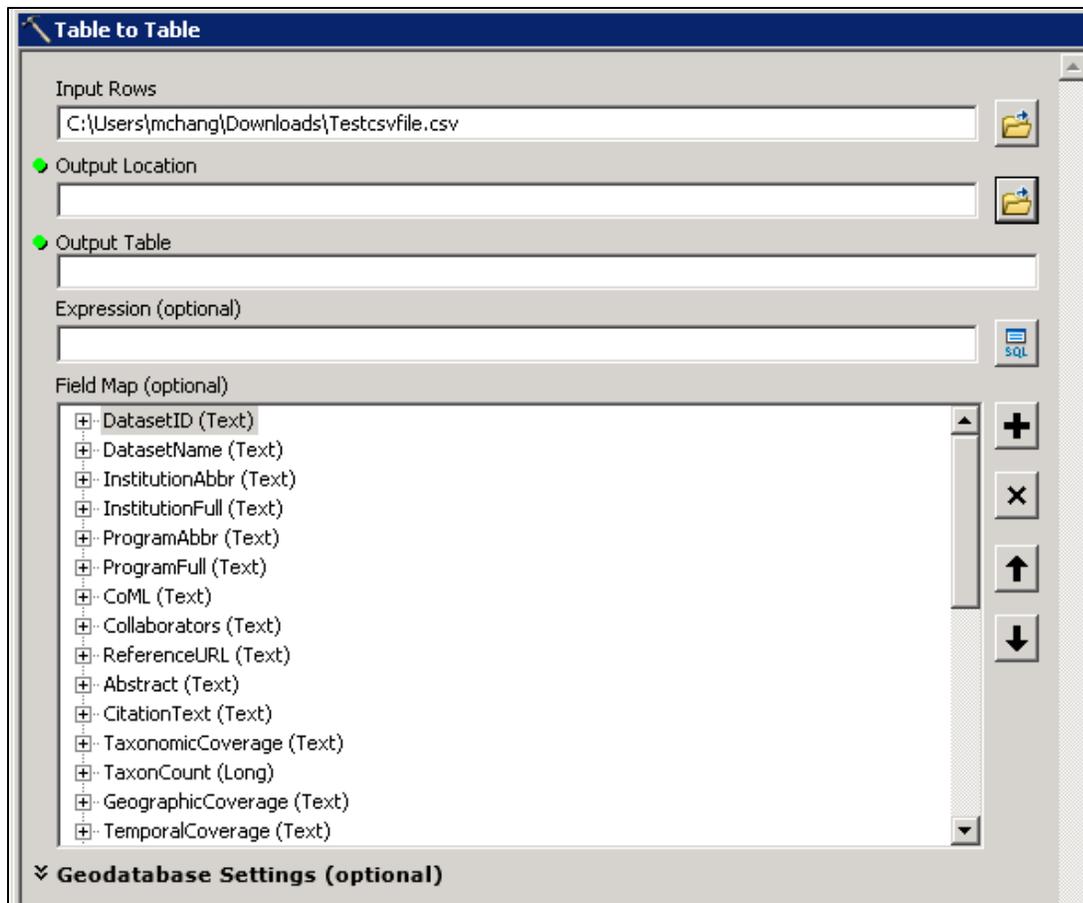
On the left pane of the Catalog Tree, name the Empty Geodatabase.



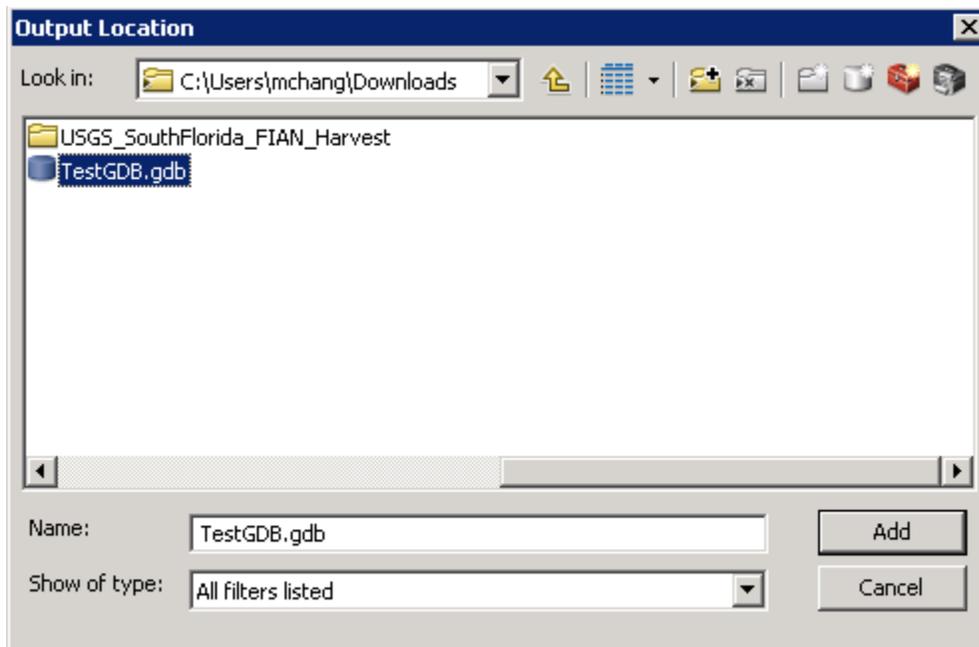
Navigate in Catalog Tree to your CSV file. Right click on the file and select 'Export' then 'To Geodatabase (single)'



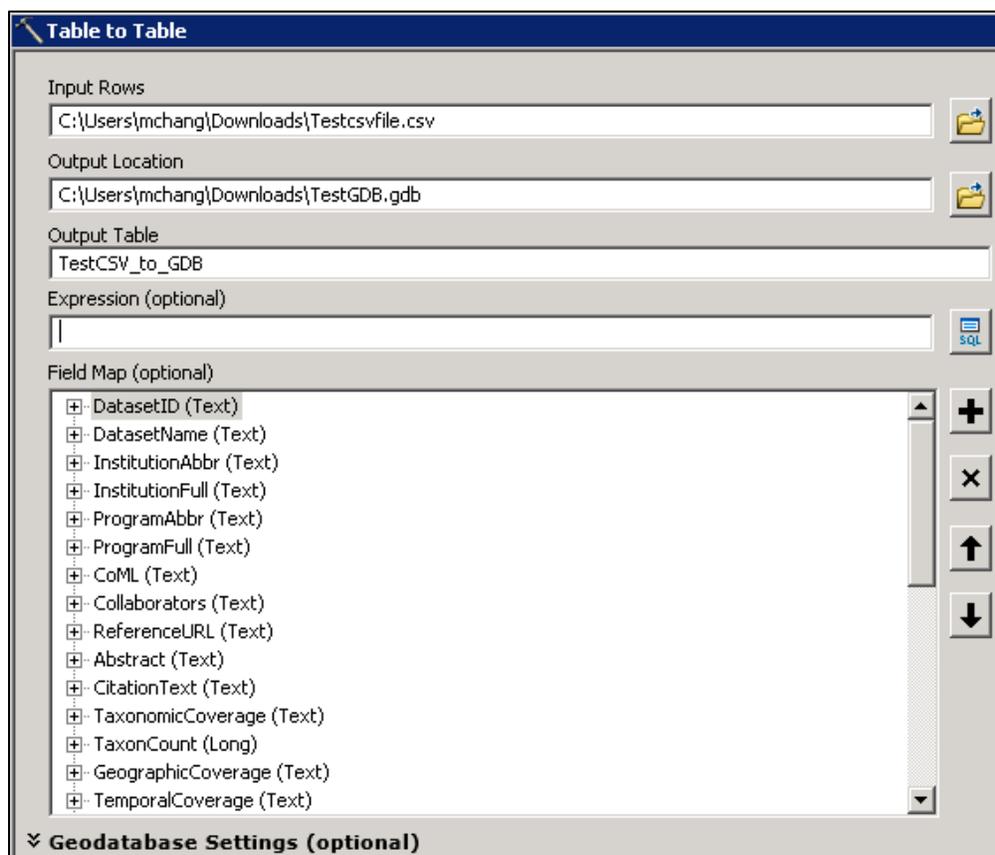
A Table to Table Tool will appear.



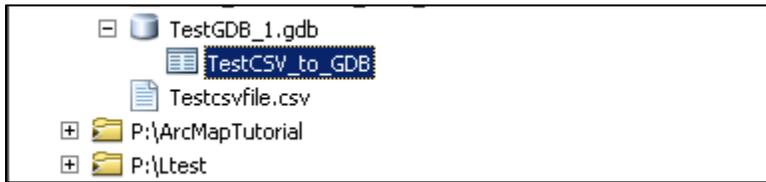
Select your 'Output Location' to the empty geodatabase you created.



Name your newly converted file in the 'Output Table' entry and click 'OK'



After the tool runs, the newly converted file should be found within the geodatabase



This file within the geodatabase can now be provided as an input file to the Metadata Wizard tool.