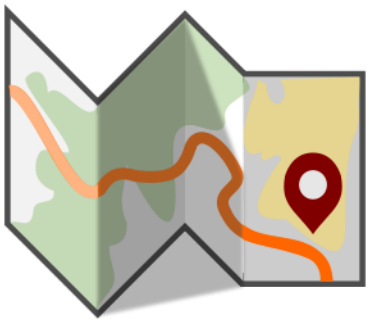
Using the QGIS Browser

QGIS Tutorials and Tips



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Using the QGIS Browser

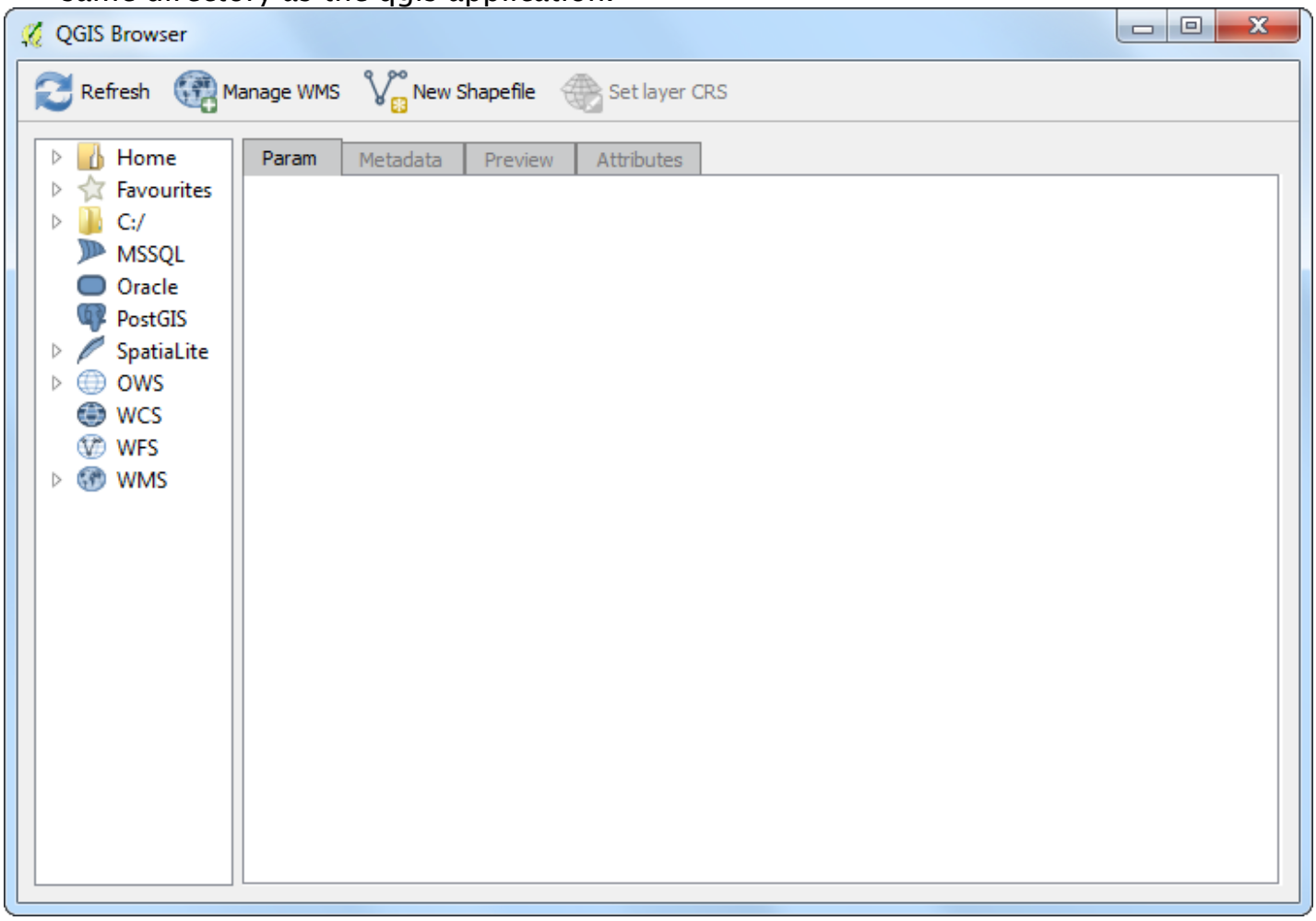
QGIS comes with a standalone application called QGIS Browser. This is a useful companion tool to QGIS and helpful in managing GIS datasets. ArcGIS users may think of it as an application similar to ArcCatalog.

Locating the QGIS Browser

QGIS Browser Standalone Application

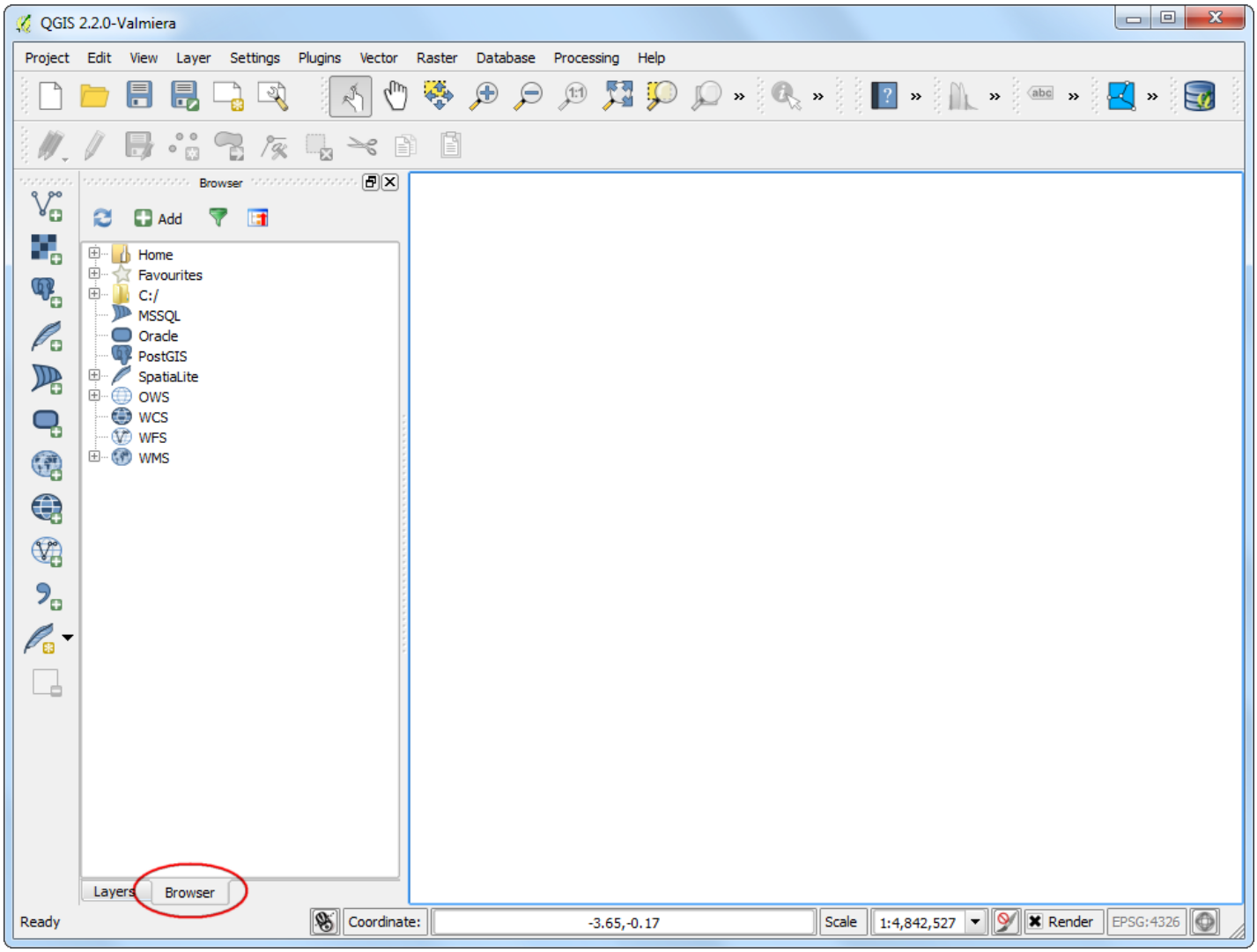
QGIS Browser is part of the standard install of QGIS.

- Windows: If you installed QGIS via OSGEO4W installer, you will see ***QGIS Browser*** in your start menu.
- Mac: The application is located at ***QGIS.app/Contents/MacOS/bin/QGIS Browser.app***. You can create a symlink to this app. Navigate to the Application folder, right-click the QGIS icon and select Show Package Contents. Browse to MacOS ‣ bin ‣ QGIS Browser. Right-click the ***QGIS Browser*** icon and select Make Alias. Drag the ***QGIS Browser alias*** to the Applications folder. Now you can access the ***QGIS Browser*** like any other application.
- Linux: You can launch the QGIS browser by the command ***qbrowser***. It is located in the same directory as the qgis application.



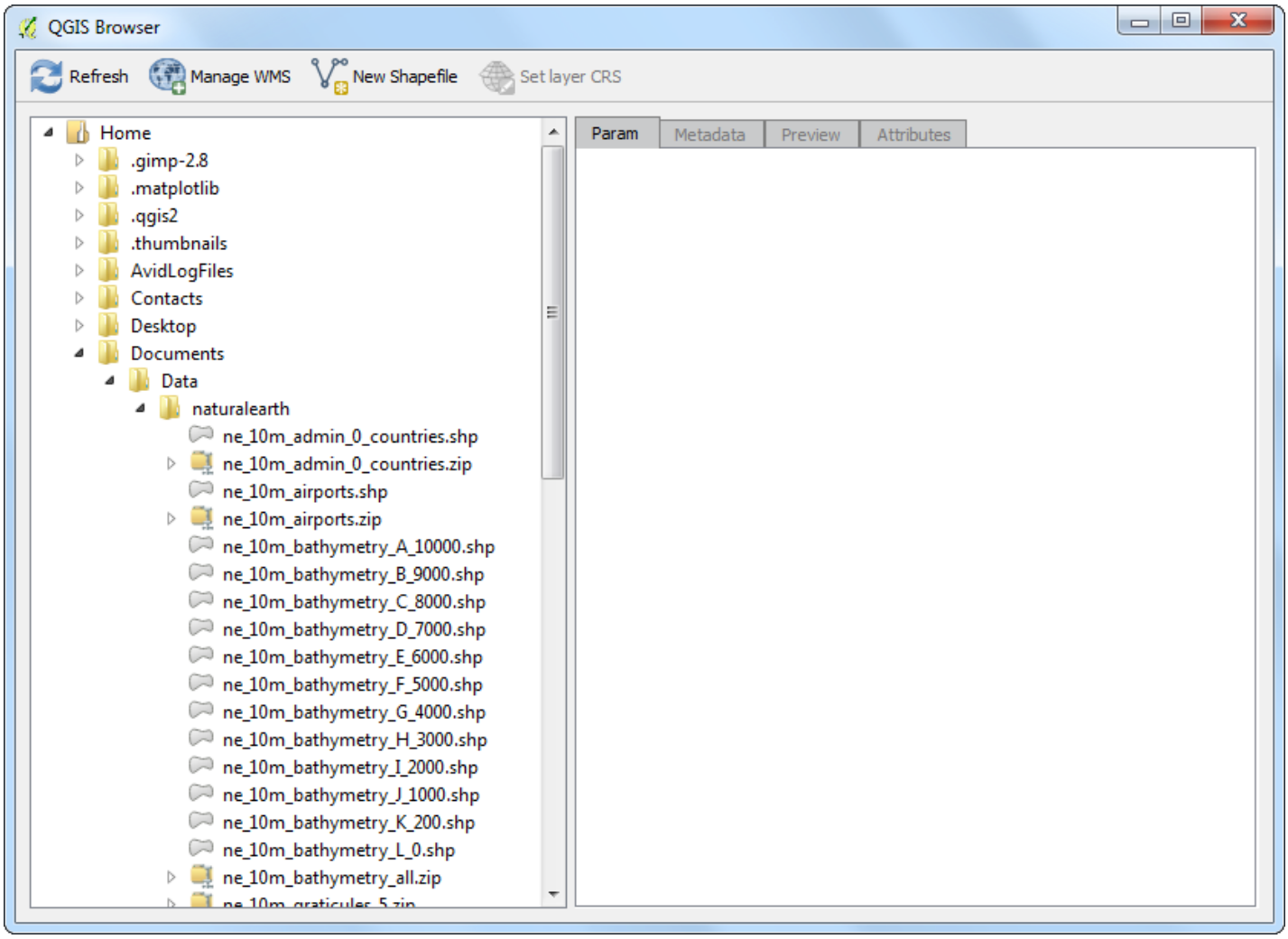
Browser Panel in QGIS

A convenient way to access the QGIS Browser is from within the main QGIS Desktop application itself. The browser panel is located at the bottom of the left-hand panel in QGIS. Click on the Browser tab to open the QGIS Browser. If you do not see the Browser tab, enable it by doing to View ▸ Panels ▸ Browser (Windows and Mac) or Settings ▸ Panels ▸ Browser (Linux).

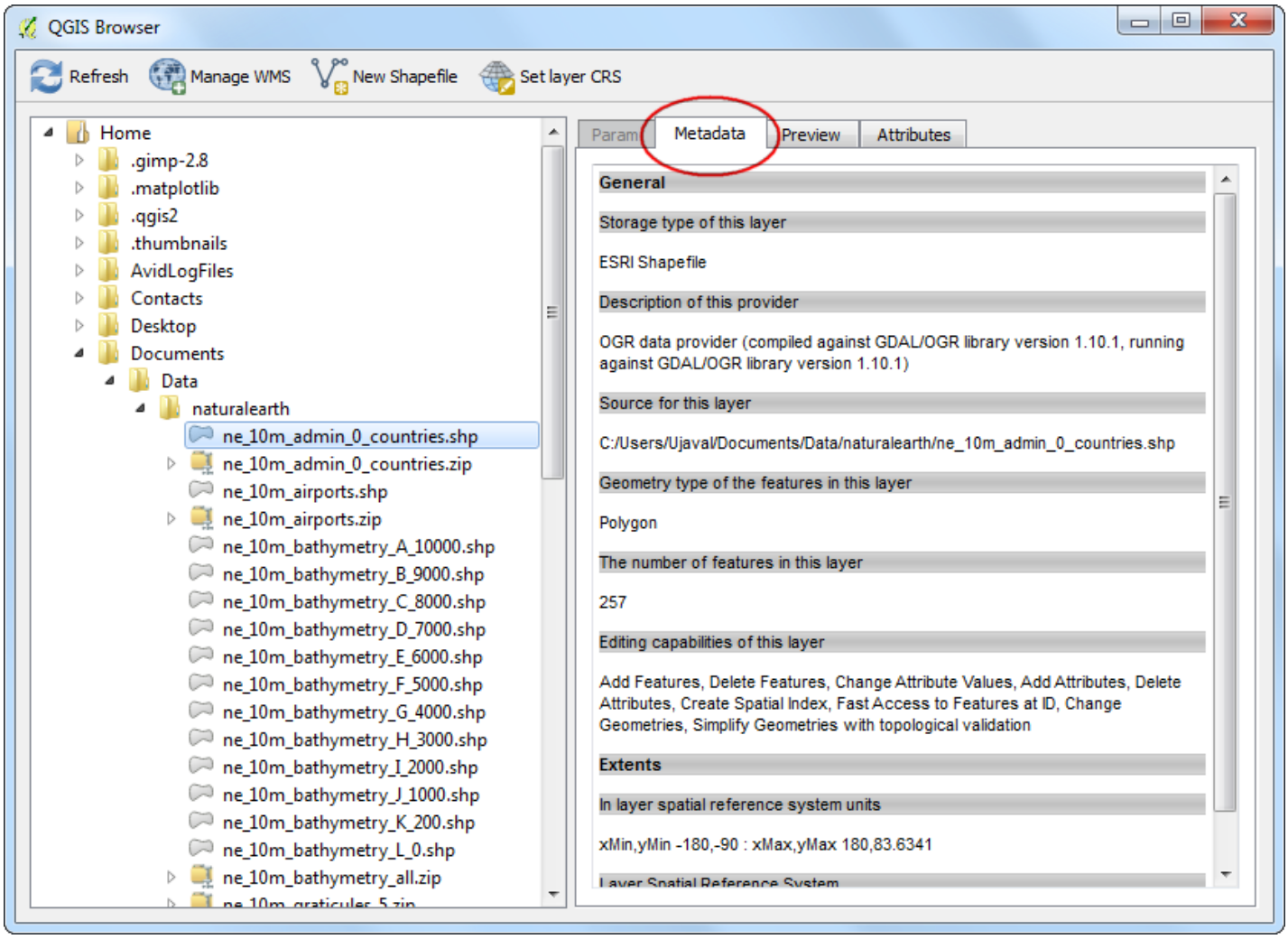


Procedure

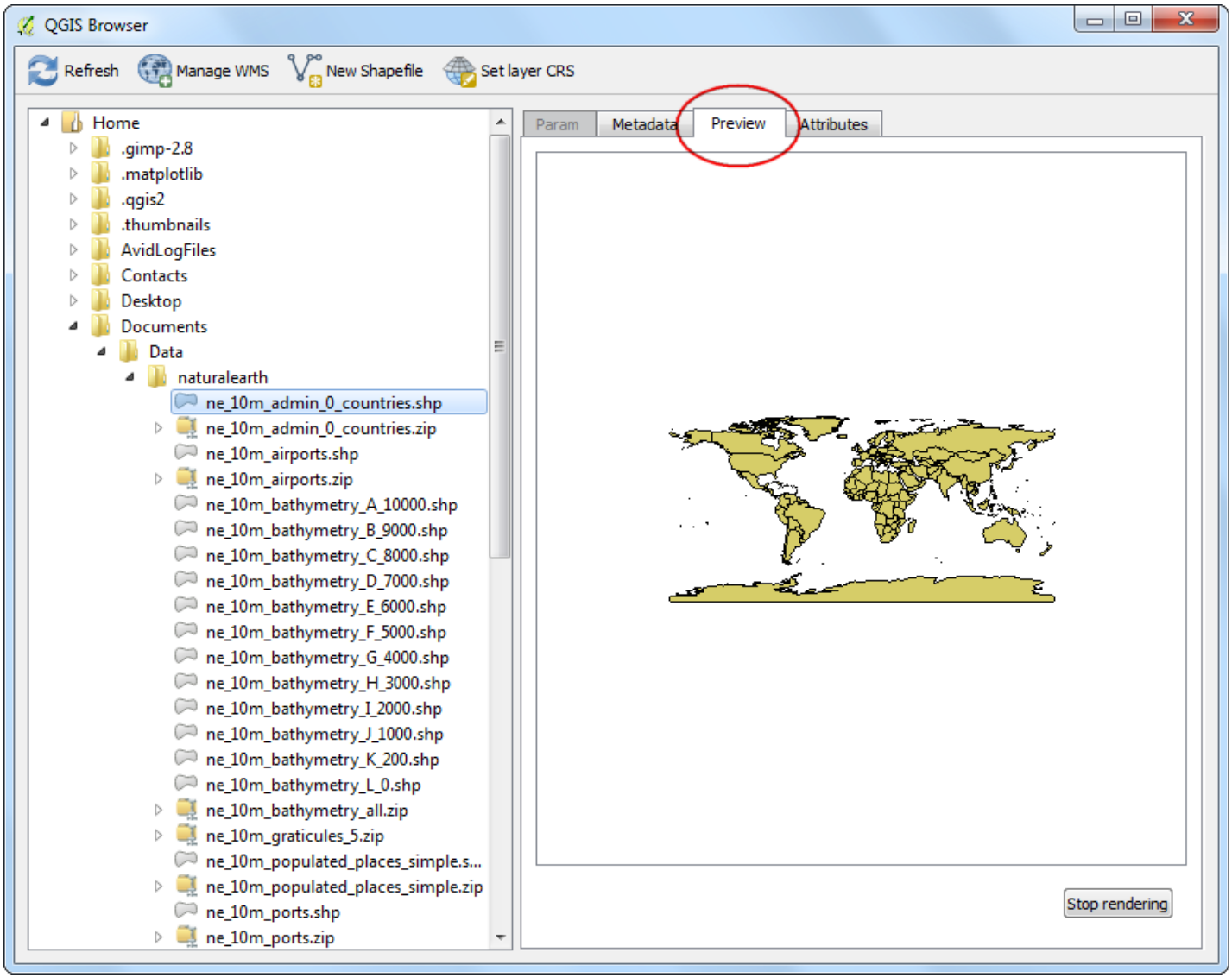
1. Now let us explore some features of the QGIS Browser. Switch to the standalone QGIS Browser application. Browse to a directory on your system where you have some GIS data. You will immediately notice the advantage of using the Browser. Instead of seeing all support files and non-spatial data, you see only the spatial layers that are supported by QGIS. Click on a layer to select it.



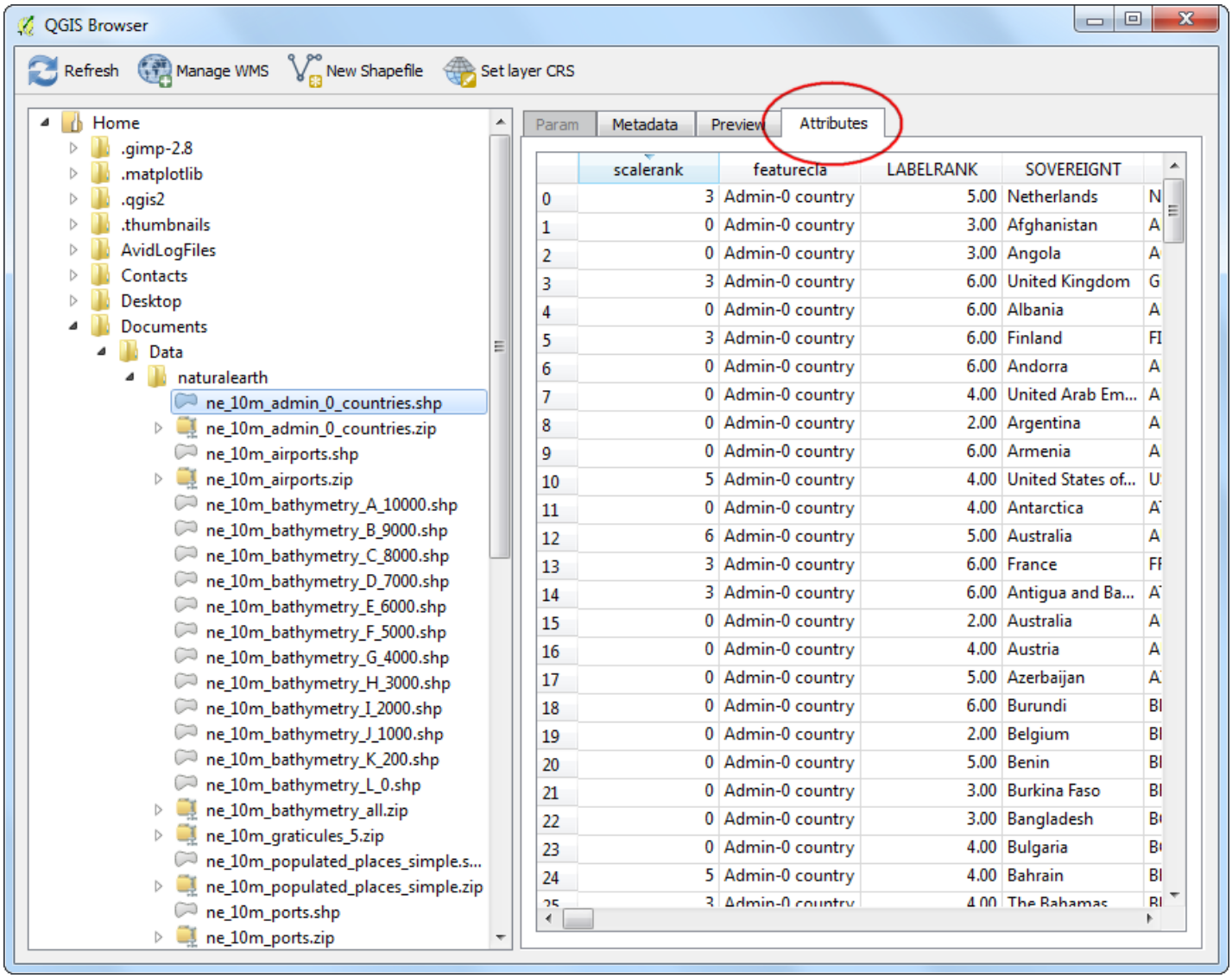
2. As you select a layer, you will see the Metadata in the first tab on the right-hand panel. You can quickly gather basic information about the dataset from this panel, such as number of features, projection etc.



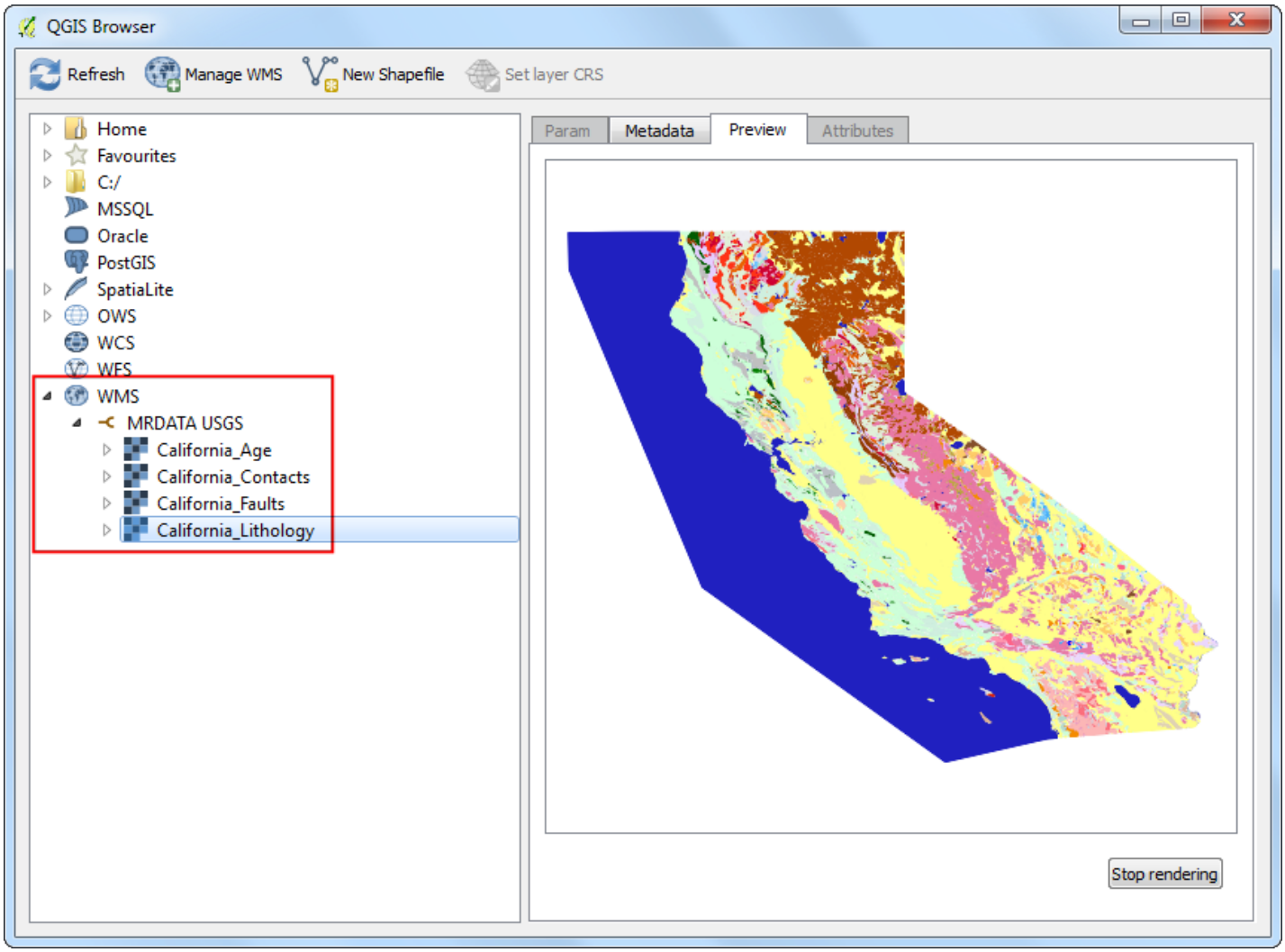
3. If you switch to the Preview tab, you will a preview of the dataset. This is a quick way to determine how the dataset looks before opening it in QGIS.



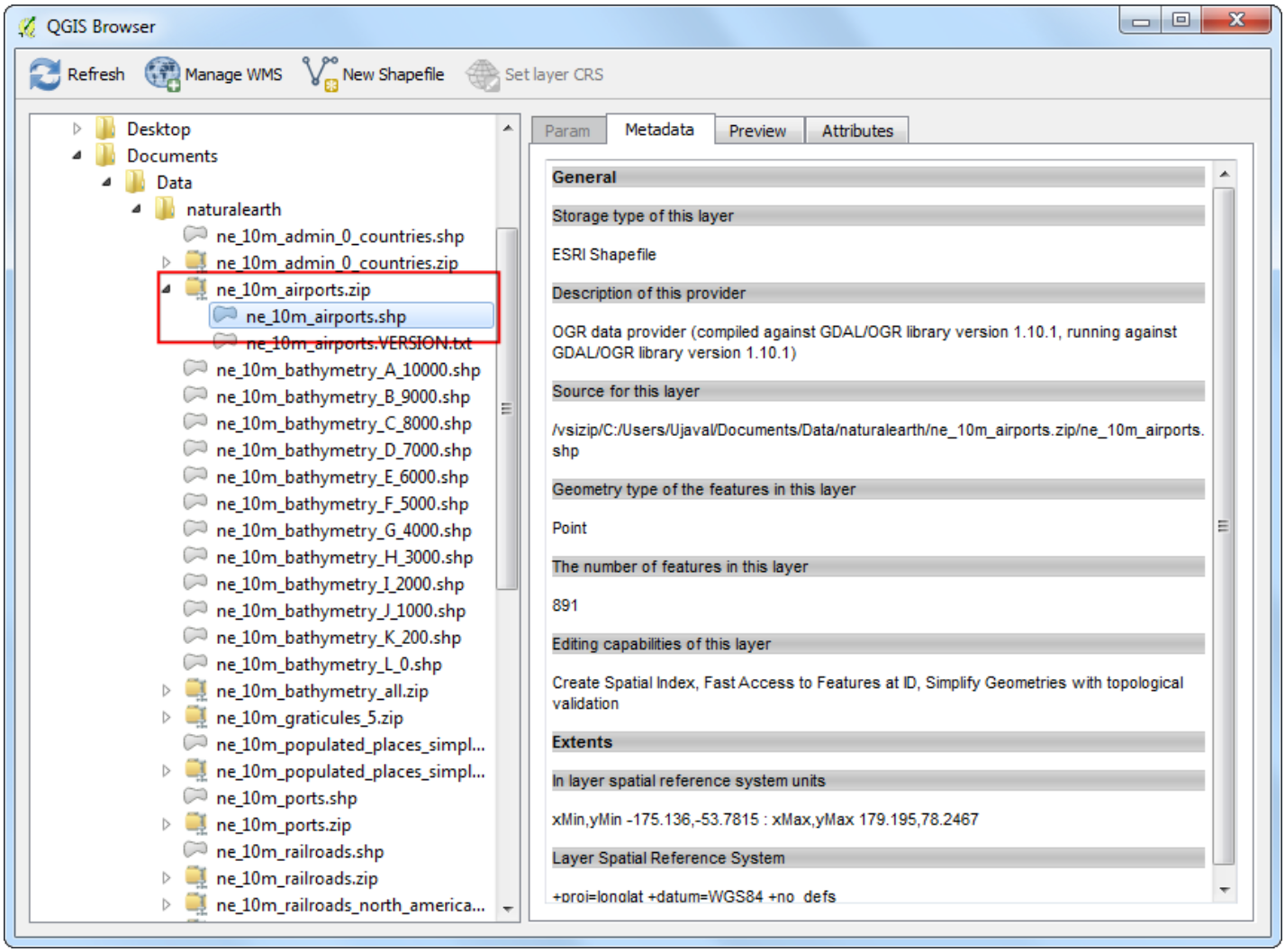
4. The last tab is the Attributes tab. Here you can see the attribute table of the dataset to get an idea of the fields available and their values.



5. The QGIS Browser not only gives you access to vector and imagery layers on your system, but also databases and network resources. If you use any online data via WMS, you can quickly preview it within the browser. Just expand the WMS location and you will see the resources you have setup. Similarly, if you have PostGIS, SpatialLite or MSSQL databases available, you can access those as well.



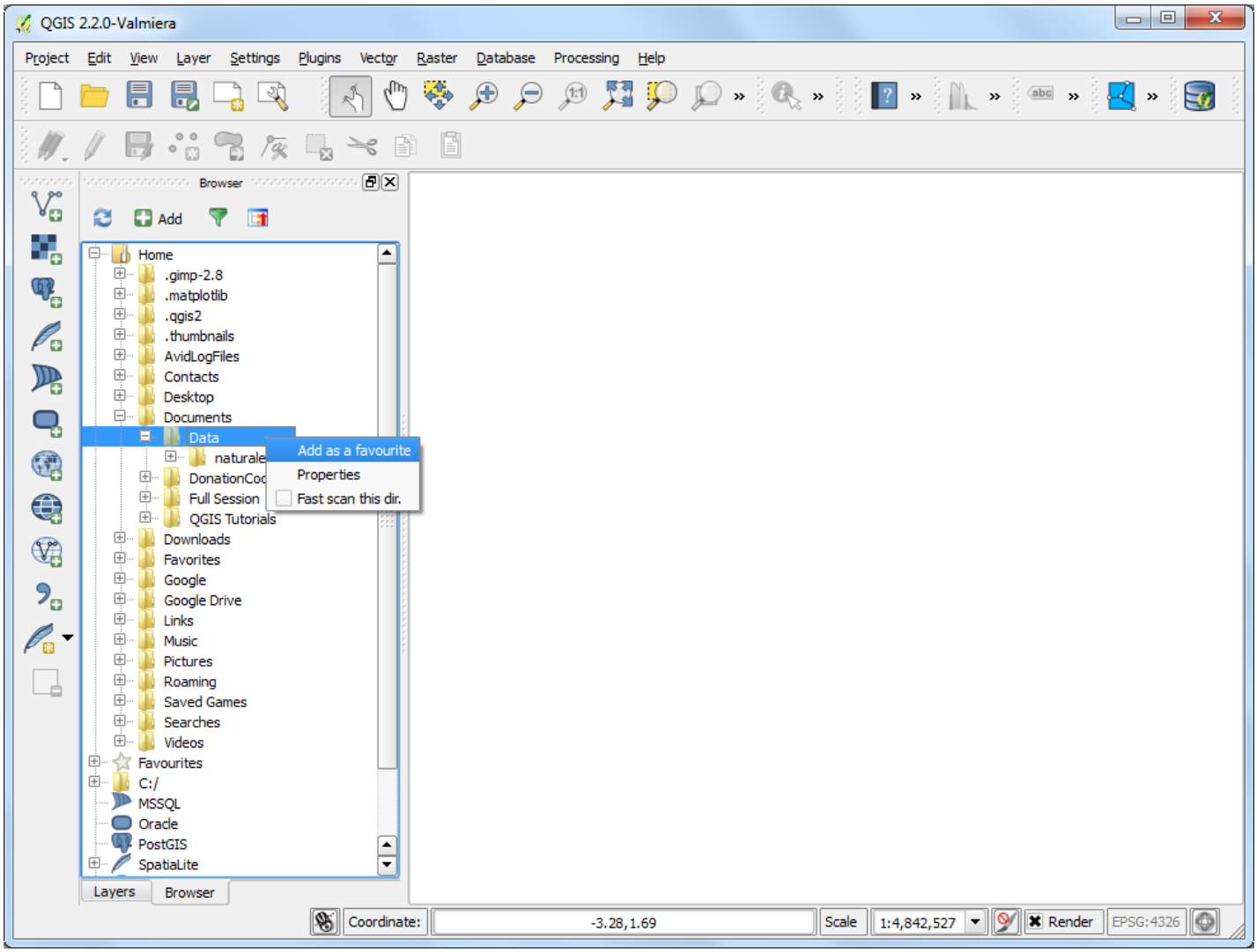
6. QGIS Browser has the ability to browse and open zip files directly. Navigate to any folder containing zip files. You will see that the zip files also appear as a supported dataset and you can preview it just like any other dataset.



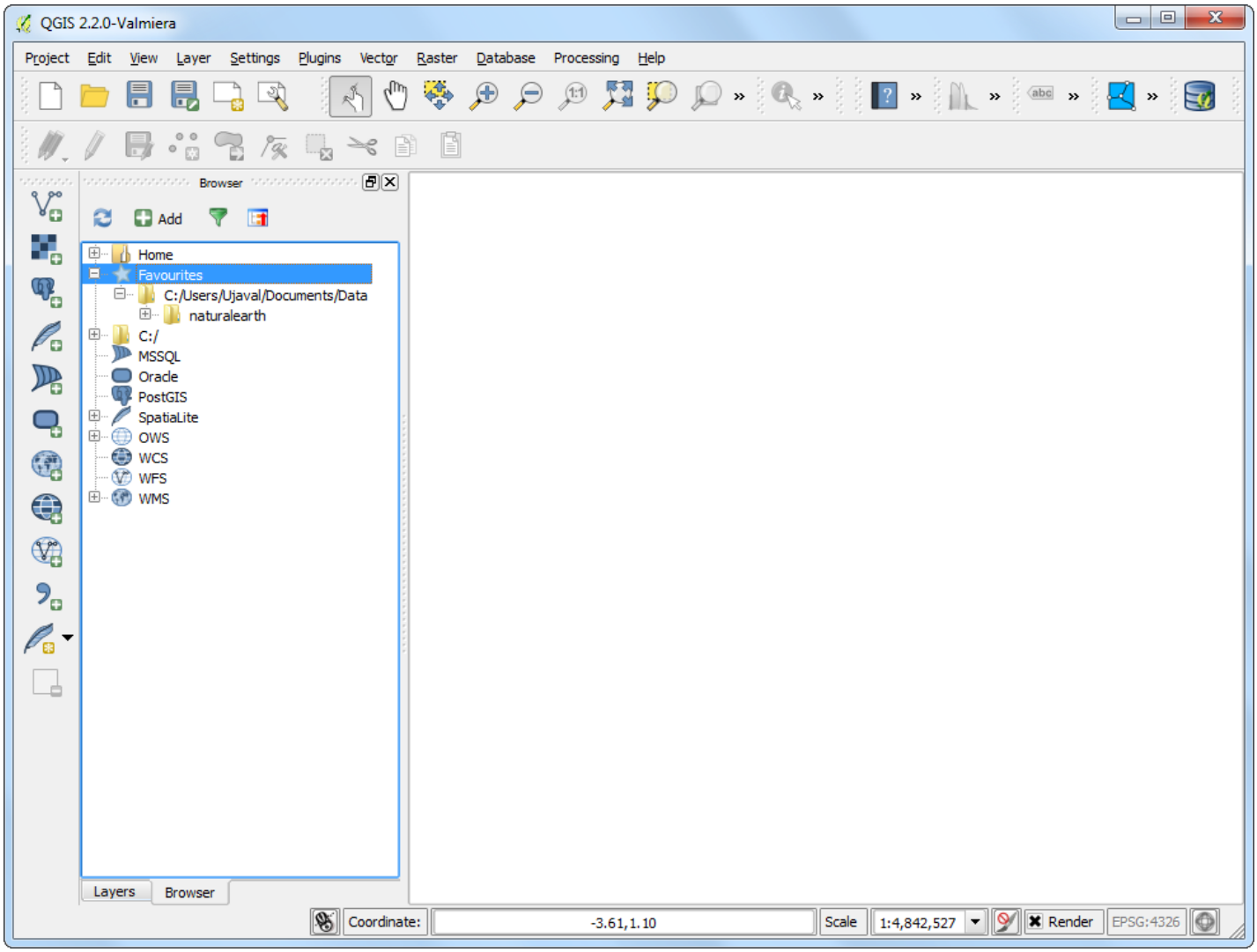
7. Another useful feature is to add certain folders in your system as Favorites. Right-click any folder and select Add as a favorite.

Note

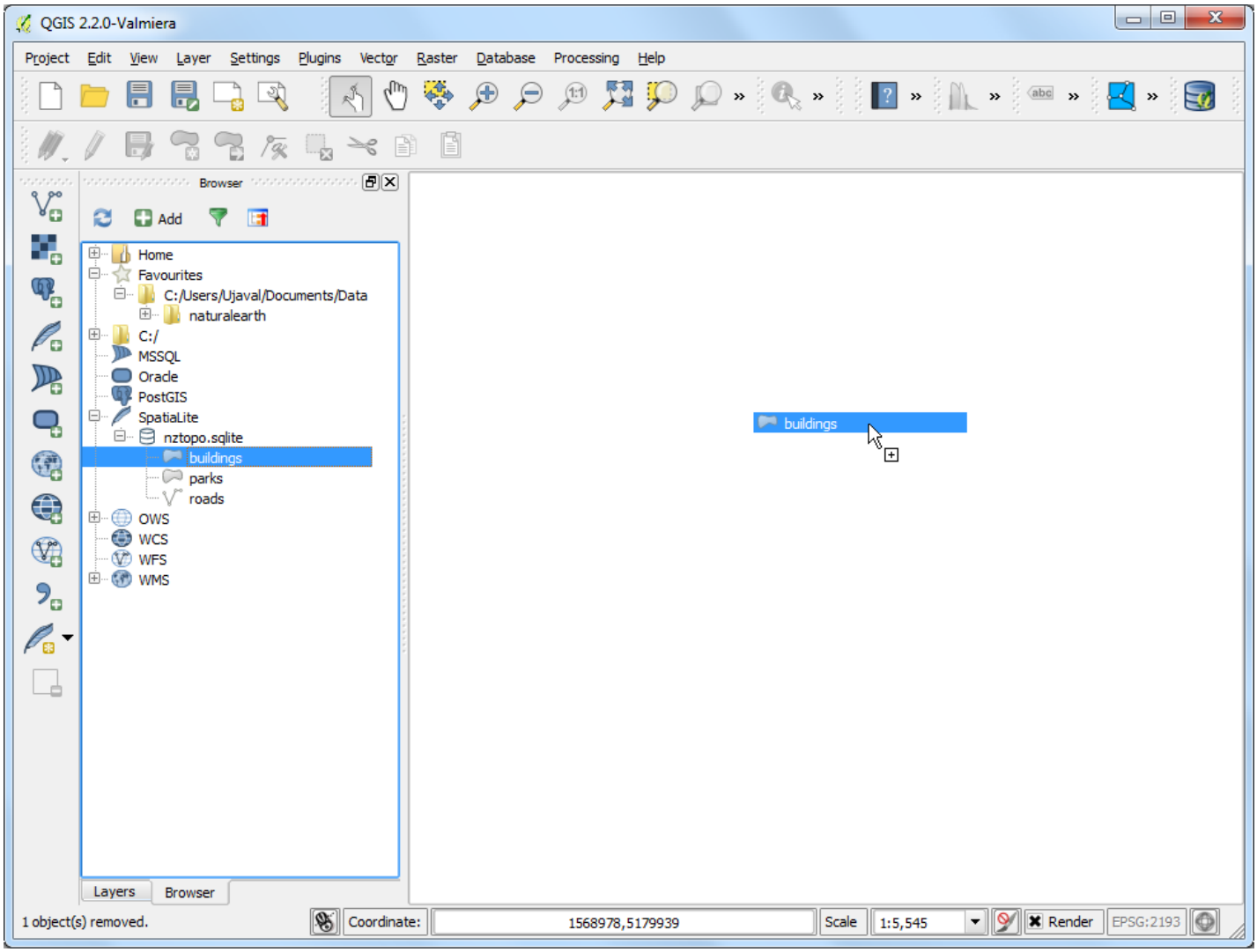
Adding a folder to your favorites list currently works only from the Browser panel in QGIS. This feature is not available in the standalone application.



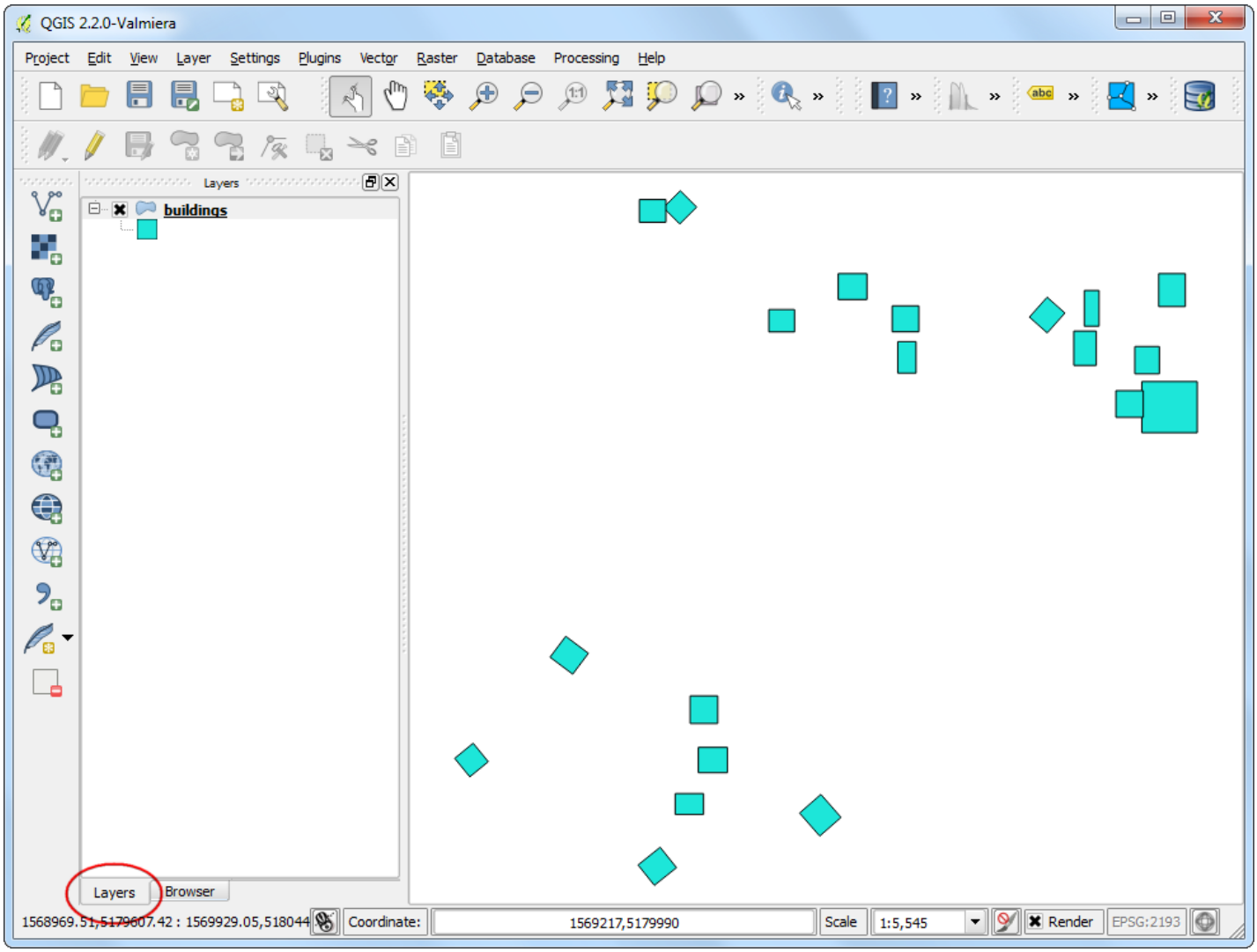
8. After adding the location as a favorite, it can be quickly accessed from the Favorites folder in the browser.



9. Once you have selected the layer, you can double-click it to add it to the QGIS canvas. You can also drag-and-drop the layer to the QGIS Canvas.



10. You can switch back to the Layers panel from the bottom of the left-hand panel in QGIS to view the added layer.


QGIS 2.2.0-Valmiera
Project
Edit
View
Layer
Settings
Plugins
Vector
Raster
Database
Processing
Help
Layers
buildings
Layers
Browser
1568969.51,5179607.42 : 1569929.05,518044
Coordinate:
1569217,5179990
Scale
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Render
EPSG:2193