

# Creating and Printing Large Format Posters

## Creating a Large Format Custom-sized PowerPoint Slide

The easiest way to create a large format poster is by making a single custom-sized slide in PowerPoint. When you first open PowerPoint, it will open a standard title slide (see Figure 1).

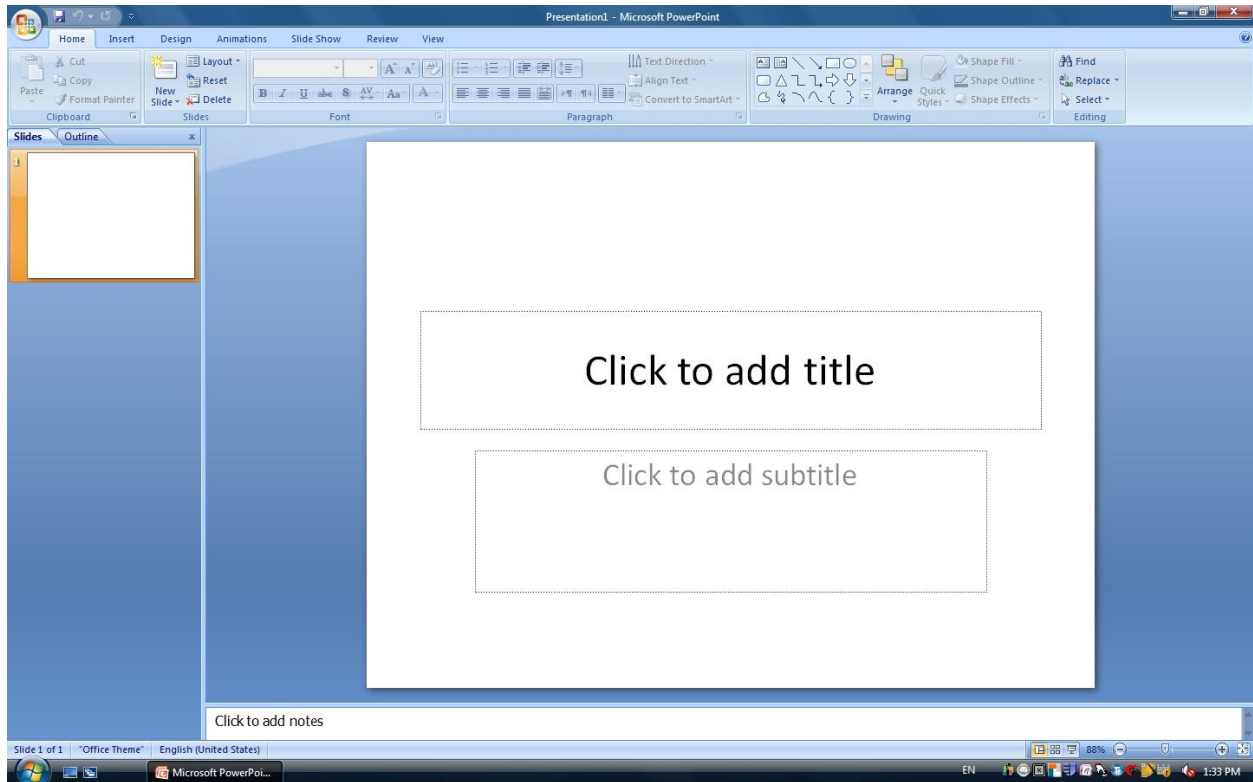


Figure 1.

In the “Slides” panel at the top, click the “Layout” pull-down menu and click on “blank” to remove the existing text boxes (Figure 2).

Now you must **set your “slide size” to the actual size of your poster** (this is VERY important!). Choose the “Design” tab at the top, and then on the “Page Setup” panel on the top left, click on the “Page Setup” icon. The “Page Setup” window will now open (Figure 3). Set the “Slides sized for:” to Custom. Set your width and height to the size you want your poster. Be sure to set your “orientation” for *both* “Slides” and “Notes, handouts & outline” to either portrait or landscape depending on the dimensions you’ve chosen (this printer can automatically print the poster sideways to fit on the paper depending on the orientation you’ve chosen so just be consistent and the printer will take care of the rest). The HP DesignJet 500 plotter only has rolls of paper 42” wide, so although either width or height may be greater than 42”, don’t make both dimensions larger than 42”. So you don’t waste paper and have to cut off excess, set one of your dimensions to 42”. One nice size for many posters is 42” wide by 30” or 36” tall. Click “OK” and now start creating your poster!

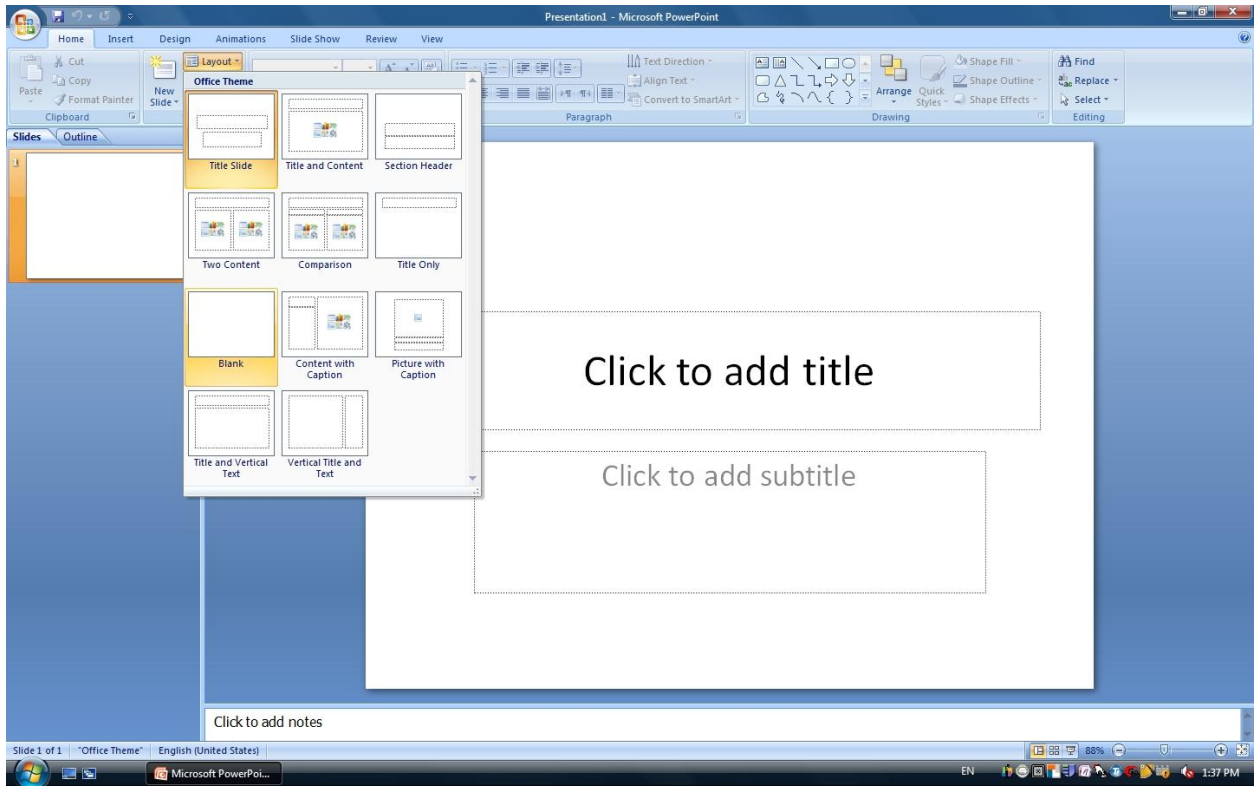


Figure 2.

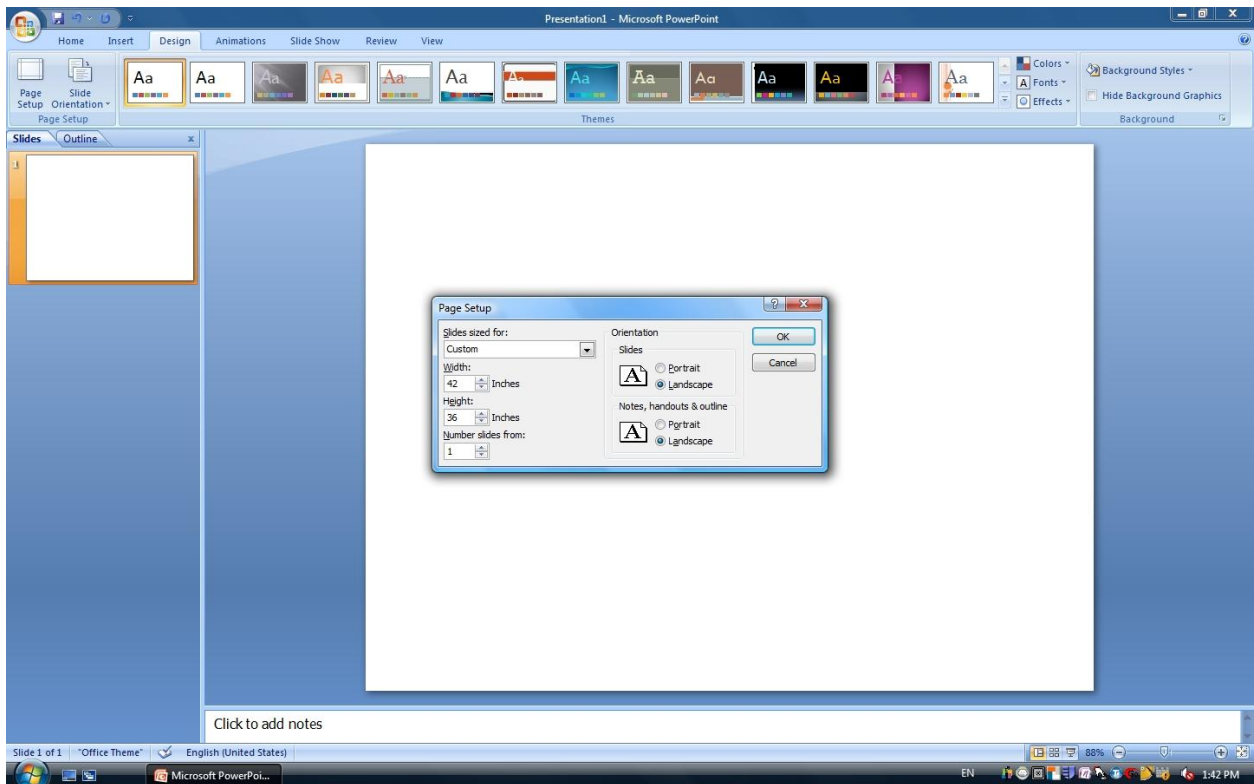


Figure 3.

To create your poster, simply “insert” (not “paste”!) pictures and text into “text boxes”, and format them any way you’d like. You can always print a test print for proofing to a local 8 ½” x 11” printer, simply check the “Scale to fit paper” box when printing. A good rule of thumb is that if you can’t read the text of your poster on an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper, the text will be too small to read during a poster session at large format as well. **Please DO NOT use colored backgrounds as these really use up the ink, and printer cartridges for the large format plotter cost over \$50 each and it needs four of them!** Also, DO NOT put any objects closer than 1” to the edge of your paper as they may not print.

## Printing Your Large Format Poster

Large format HP plotters are located in the Document Center (in Main) and the GIS Computer Lab (Valders 377) for use only by approved faculty/staff/student users from the science division. Valders 377 has networked Vistas windows machines with USB slots, CD-ROM, and network access to your H drive. The plotter has regular draft paper, although departments may provide their own rolls of high-gloss photo paper for printing for professional meetings. Extra ink cartridges and rolls of draft paper are kept locked in the closet behind the door of V377.

Once you’ve opened your PowerPoint slide for printing, recheck your “page setup” under the “Design” tab (Figure 4) to be sure of your poster dimensions. Then click “OK”.

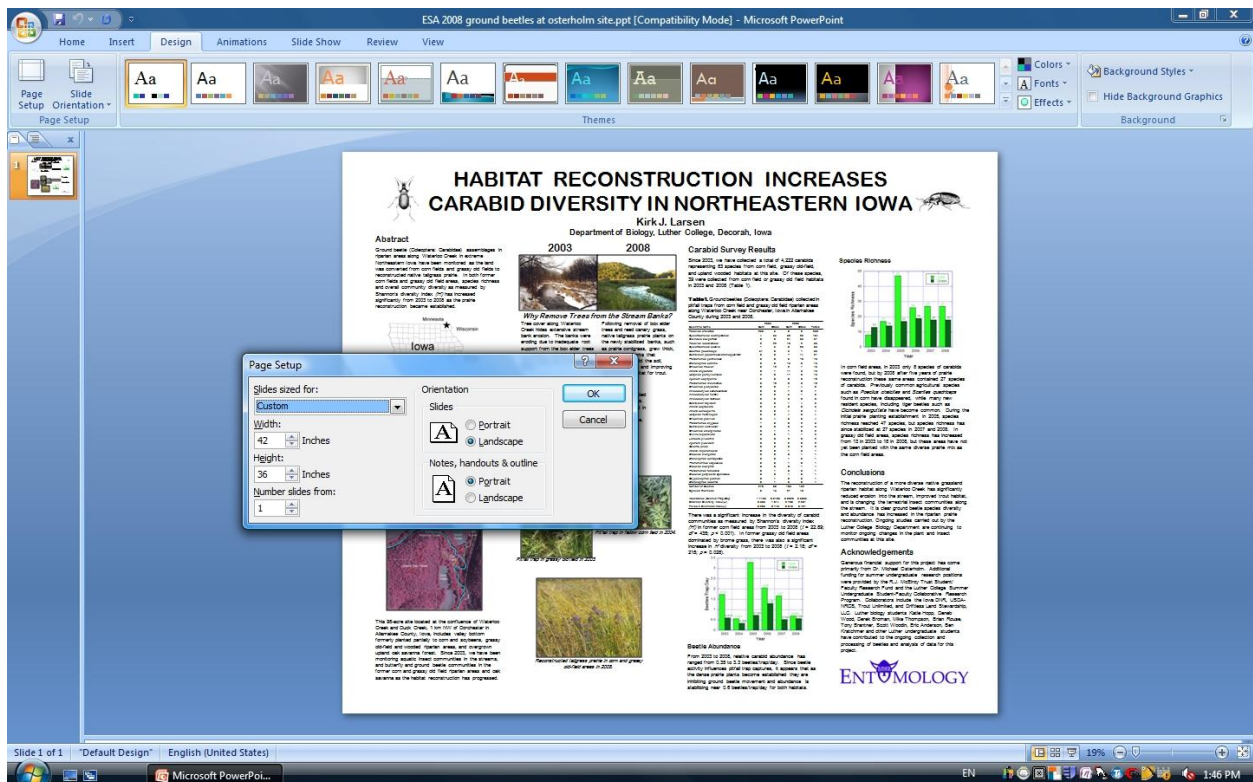


Figure 4.

Select “Print” and a new “Print” screen (Figure 5) will appear. Under Printer “Name” select the “GIS Plotter” (note this name may be different at other locations on campus). Then click the “Properties” box.

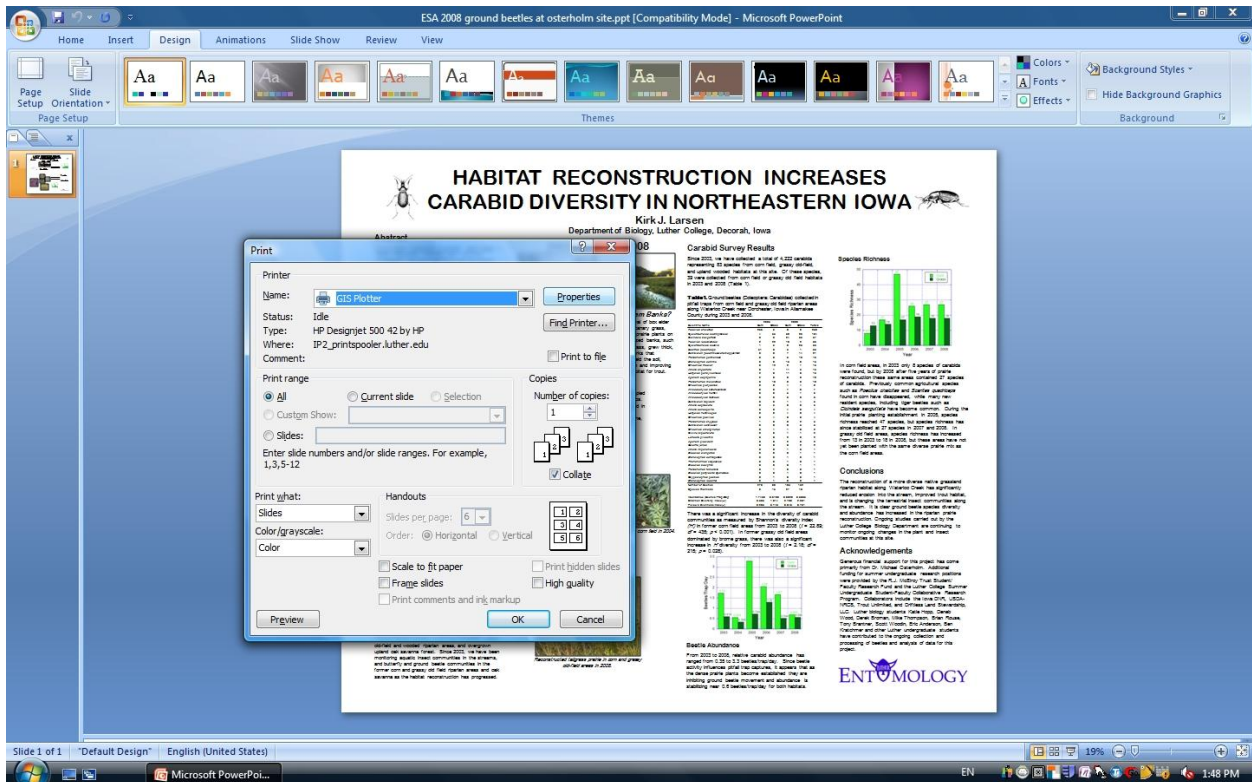


Figure 5.

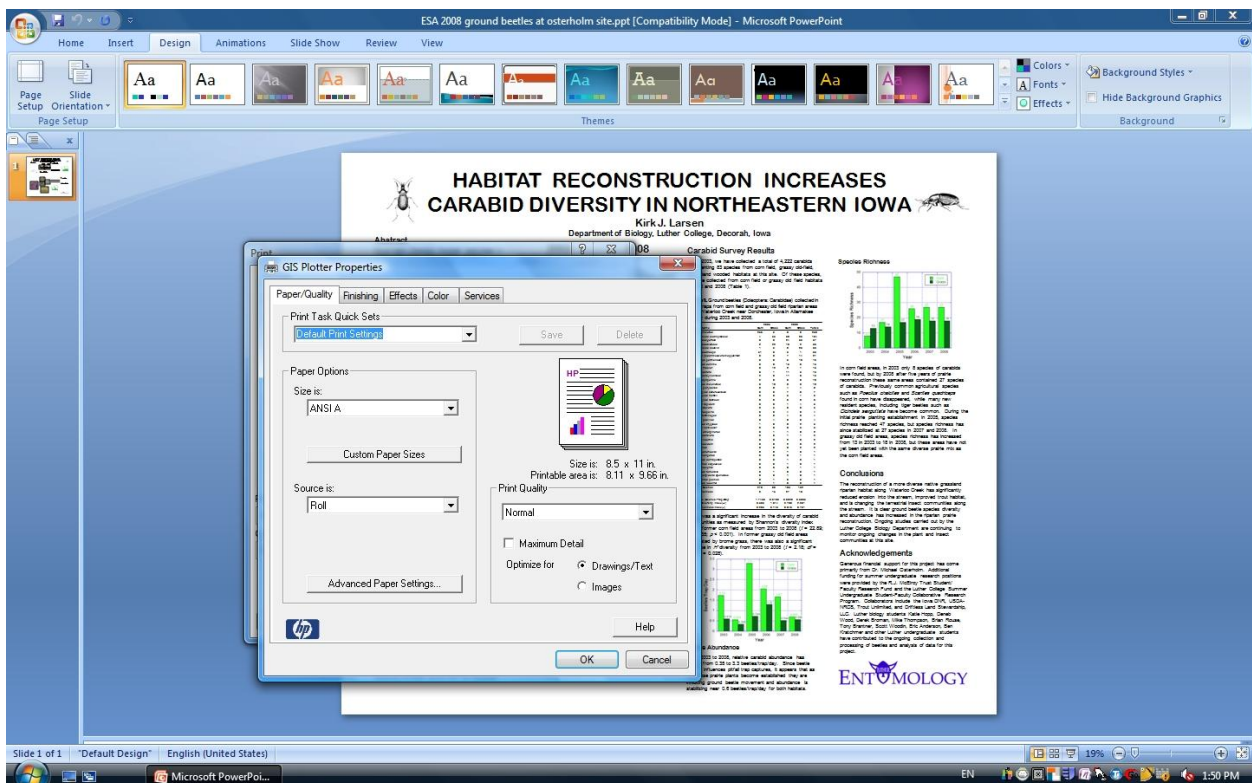


Figure 6.

This will open another window titled “GIS Plotter Properties” (Figure 6). In the “Paper Options” box, click on the “Custom Paper Sizes” button. This will open a “Custom Paper Sizes” window

(Figure 7). Change the width and height here to the actual dimensions of your poster (this is why you rechecked the dimensions under “Page Setup”!).

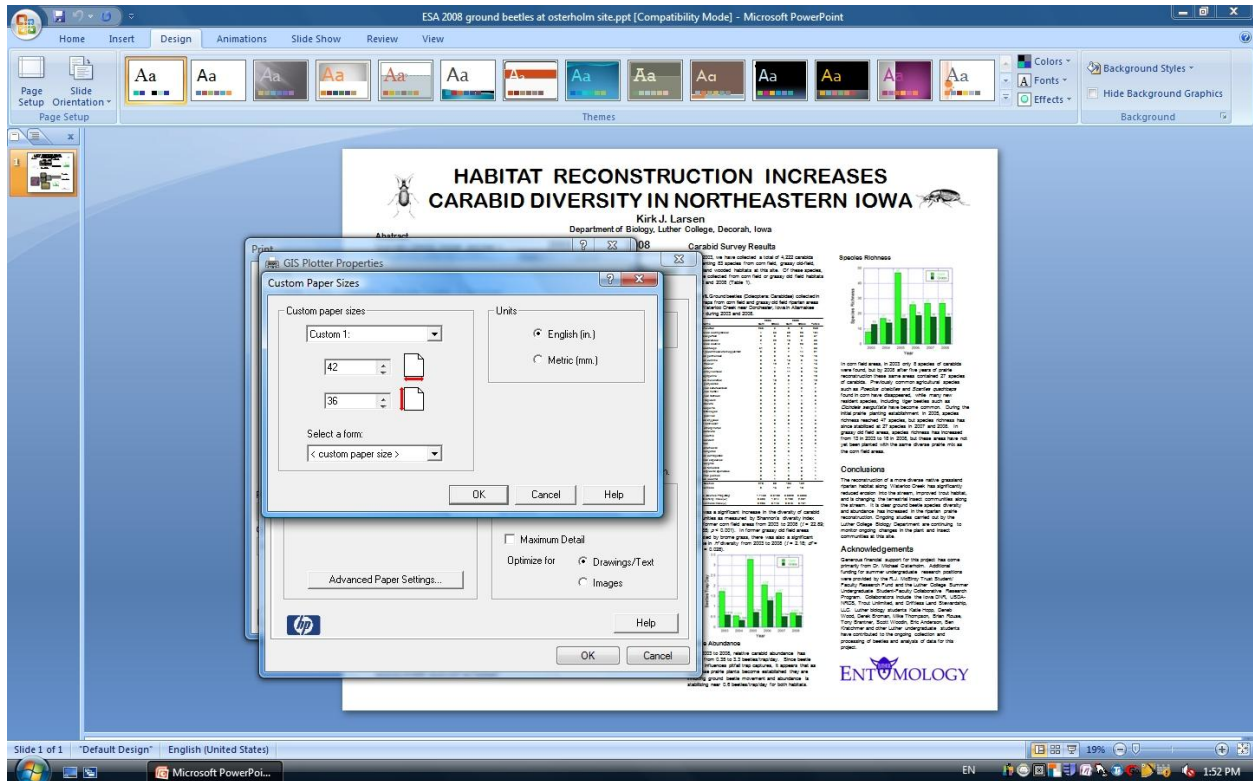


Figure 7.

Then click “OK” on the “Custom Paper Sizes” window to return to the “GIS Plotter Properties” window (Figure 8). “Print Quality” should be “Normal”. (There is no need to change print quality as it will take twice as long to print and photo quality under “normal” is excellent).

In the “GIS Plotter Properties” window (Figure 8), in the “Paper Options” box, the “Size is” should now read: “Custom 1: *your height* x *your width* in.” (that is: *your height* and *your width* should be numbers!) Click “OK” to return to the “Print” window. As long as the plotter is now listed as the “Printer Name” and you’ve properly set the “Properties”, you should now be able to simply hit “OK” and the poster will be spooled to the plotter and printed.

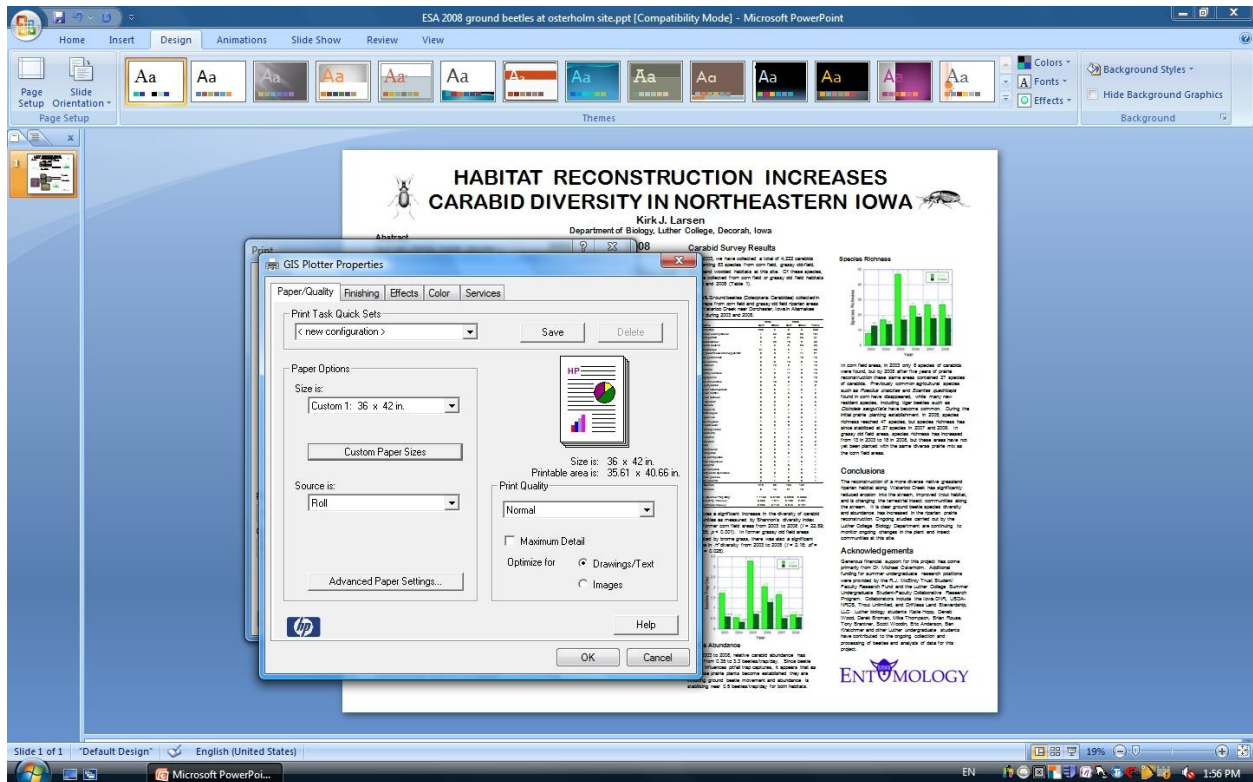


Figure 8.

Plotting takes TIME! This is an “ink jet” printer. At normal quality, it prints about 1 ft of poster every 5 minutes. High-gloss photo paper also smears VERY EASILY so be sure not to touch the ink until you’ve given the poster at least 30–45 minutes to dry after printing is complete.

## Possible Problems

**The computer won’t find the plotter.** Try rebooting the computer.

**Printing out a (partially) blank poster** – somehow a couple people have had a “ghost” overlay background inserted into their PowerPoint slides, and these have resulted in printing only a small portion of the poster, but wastes LOTS of paper. You need to find the overlay background and remove it.

**Images or Graphs printing in “strips” in inverted order** – some types of images (not sure which) do not print properly (even though they *appear* OK on your screen). Delete the image from your poster, resave the image in an outside graphics program as a jpeg or tiff image and insert it into your poster. This seems to happen with images that are *copied* from other programs and *pasted* into the poster slide, rather than using the insert option.

**Out of ink or out of draft paper.** Supplies are kept in the closet behind the door of V377. If you use the last of any item, please notify Lynn Williams immediately so supplies are available when others need them.

## Advice

Give yourself time so if you do encounter printing problems, you have time to deal with it, rather than being rushed and frustrated at the very last minute. Good luck!! 😊

Revised by Kirk Larsen, 11 August 2011.