Kelsey Van Selous; CRP 558 Peer Review of Final Projects

Peer Review 1: “Air Quality across Iowa and Illinois” by Samantha Utley

Overview:

Samantha’s project compared air quality across Iowa and Illinois by using a series of graduated symbols to display the air quality index, ozone, Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Dioxide, Sulfur Dioxide, and Particulate Matter. She used a layer control to turn Iowa data on and off, as well as to turn Illinois data on and off. She also used popups to show the location of the graduated symbols and provided background information for each layer. She navigated between her maps by using buttons along the left-hand side of her map. Her maps used bright well-chosen colors and incorporated informative legends.

Likes and learnings:

I enjoyed reading about Samantha’s topic, as I do not have much familiarity regarding air quality measurements. I found it interesting that Ottawa-Peru, IL had a safe median air quality index but high percentage days of Sulfur Dioxide exposure. I enjoyed comparing these measures across cities and states and liked how she decided to turn the states on and off to allow for interactivity. I also liked how she provided links to other websites and an image displaying information related to air quality.

Areas for future development:

In the future, this project may benefit from adding additional layers of analysis. Additional data, such as air quality information across time or population density, would have allowed the viewer more interactivity and points of data to help understand her topic of interest. It would have also been interesting to see her data presented in different formats, potentially with a heat map or choropleth map to see how her data compares nationally. I also would have been interested in a link to her code and final report. I think it would have been interesting to read more about Samantha’s experience with this project, background, and learn more about how she developed this map.

Peer Review 2: “Des Moines Parks Population Analysis” by James Thompson

Overview:

James’s project used ArcGIS online to perform a series of analysis related to parks in the city of Des Moines, Iowa. His analysis included calculating the population surrounding 1 mile of the parks, the population per acre of the parks, and the walking times to parks. He then used choropleth mapping to map this information for his population layers and polygons to map the walking time layers. His legends turned on and off with his layer control and he named his layers based on questions he had related to his findings. For example, he labeled his population per acre layer ‘parks for social distancing?’ and his layer population around 1-mile of the park his ‘parks with the most litter?’ layer.

Likes and learnings:

I enjoyed seeing his data visualized as choropleth maps within the boundaries of the parks. I tend to use choropleth mapping for state and county boundaries and had not thought about other applications of this type of style. I also liked the ‘expand’ tool he had in the left corner of his map that allowed his map to be expanded to the full screen. It was interesting for me to see the different population ranges, as I had anticipated that the parks in the city center would have had the most population within 1 mile of the park, but the map shows that the parks in the west of the city boundary had higher population density. This could be because there are less residential units in the city center than compared to the western part of the city.

Areas for future development:

In the future, this project may benefit from popup information that tells the user what each boundary or polygon represents. This could include the park name or data as it pertains to that layer and park. This map may have also benefitted from the information boxes being turned on and off with the layers, as the map appeared crowded with all of the information and I originally did not see that the information in the boxes changed when the map was activated. I also think consistent labeling between the legend and layer would have helped the reader to understand the mapping layers more efficiently.