**A Peer Review of “Forest Reserves and Mineral Resources Areas in Ghana by Mandela Kwame Gadri”**

By Tressa Hobbs

Overall, I really enjoyed this project. I think that the content was delivered in a really informative and easy to understand way. I loved that there were links included to a webpage on the national parks in Ghana and to the Wikipedia page for the mining industry in Ghana. Since I had no previous experience on the topic it was a nice introduction and overview to both things. I also like the use of the two-column layout for when there is a map and then information relevant to what the map is about. I also liked the inclusion of a story map into the project. I think this was a great way to breakup the layout of the webpage and include more photos of the mining process, its effects on the environment, and the animals that call the forest reserves home. I liked that Mandela used many different data forms including charts and different types of maps and map layers (different overlays, clear use of symbology for different minerals, etc.) to present his findings. I also appreciated that he broke down the impacts of mineral resource mining into sub sections as it made it easier to follow.

This project has taught me a lot about the issues surrounding the mining industry and forest preserves in Ghana that I previously had no idea existed. I had no idea that illegal mining was such a large issue that the country may have to start importing water from other countries soon due to the pollution of drinking water by mining. This was extremely shocking to me, not only that the extend of the negative effects of illegal gold mining were this large but also that it hasn’t received global attention as a serious issue. This has the possibility to not only wreak havoc on the plants and animals that depend on untreated river and lake water to survive, but also the human population through the shutting down of water treatment plants and the reduction of the underground water table.

Overall there are a few things that I would have liked to have seen done differently in this project. The biggest would be having the legends for the natural resources map and the type of nature reserve map to be permanently displayed instead of on hover. I think this would’ve made the maps, especially the natural resources map easier to understand and use especially when the other map functions are being used like the search bar. Another thing that I would’ve changed was to change the overlay layers of the OpenStreetMap, stamenToner, and Esri World Imagery into base layers instead of overlays so that only one could be selected at one time. I think a good compliment would be to combine the heat map of mining activity with the natural resources map to see which minerals are being targeted the most so that if a new deposit were to be found in the future a determination of the risk level the surrounding nature and forest reserves could be estimated.