

ASM-PACE Sierra Leone

Location: Kenema, and Kailahun mining districts, Sierra Leone
Year: 2013
Partners: GRNP, RSPB and ELL
Funders: Tiffany & Co. Foundation and GRNP (in kind)

This case study is part of an international project 'Artisanal and Small Scale Mining in and around Protected Areas and Critical Ecosystems' (ASM-PACE) co-founded by WWF and ELL. Funding generously from the Tiffany & Co. Foundation. See www.asm-pace.org



Can mining and conservation co-exist? A case study of ASM in and adjacent to Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest National Park

Summary

This study focuses on ASM in the vicinity of Sierra Leone's Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP). The study describes reasons for, and the challenges with, illegal ASM and provides recommendations that can help GRNP's management to resolve unsustainable practices.

The study investigates the miners' motivations, potential pull and push factors, and local ASM dynamics in park-adjacent communities. The findings can inform future strategies by the GRNP and its partners to conserve and sustainably manage this biodiversity hotspot.

Methods

Desk research,, scoping visit that included focus groups and multi-community workshops

Existing Situation

Mining of any type is strictly prohibited by Sierra Leonean law within the National Park. Despite rangers patrolling the National Park and an active engagement with local

communities, sometimes miners still enter the park to illegally mine.

This was the case in November 2011, when miners were illegally mining gold and diamonds at night within the National Park. Miners therefore faced arrest and prosecution by Sierra Leonean police and authorities.

Results

"Push" and "pull" factors for artisanal mining in the park include:

- High un(der)employment, especially youth;
- Known reserves of diamonds and gold in the forest in shallow deposits based on pre-war discoveries and rumors;
- Tradition of artisanal mining in the area;
- Lack of understanding about the value of the forest
- High degree of poverty

Recommendations

- Promote dual enforcement and engagement with community-based miners;
- Start a managed mining pilot

site outside the park and a co-management pilot inside the park;

- Encourage further alternative and supplementary livelihood programs;
- Enhance environmental education outreach programs that make conservation profitable;
- Coordinate with regional bodies and initiatives to address cross-border issues
- Work to transform the forest-edge communities into environmental stewards.

Since the Study

GRNP is now part of the Gola REDD Project. The project has followed principles of free, prior and informed consent. It has been validated in 2014 to two leading standards on the voluntary carbon market to benefit biodiversity and an estimated 24,000 people.

You can find the report [here](#). For more information about the GRNP and Gola REDD Project, see www.golarainforest.org