Dear USFS Administration,

1/20/2022

**Re:** **The Orphan Wells & Abandoned Mines Project #60618**

I think that you are making a wrong choice on your multiple decisions over the past few years regarding continued fracking and wastewater storage operations on our public lands in southeast Ohio. The overriding issues, of course, being to maintain clean air and water for our southeast Ohio denizens in perpetuity. As Wayne National Forest is the only national forest in Ohio, and because it had already been logged to the ground during the development of the charcoal furnaces (a fascinating fact I think) for the budding pig iron industry so much desired back in the day, I think that it needs and extended time of renewal to better restore a large resilient forest.  
  
More recently in the 20th century, of course, southeast Ohio had been mined for coal and the industry helped to raise many families. Unfortunately, the legacy of coal has left us with acid mine drainage which we will be treating in perpetuity – not to mention the black lung disease that has killed or made so many workers ill for the rest of their lives.  
  
For these two major reasons, I feel that you should drop the whole idea of further development of natural gas development on Wayne National Forest grounds – to protect the valuable watersheds draining into the Ohio River. And the deep underground waste-water fracking fluids remaining safe and secure for so long? I am not feeling confident that that is what will happen. In addition, there is the associated problem of the huge draw of surface waters from the numerous streams dissecting our hills.

There are many others locally who can attest to the details of how the USFS is in non-compliance with the 10-year plan at Wayne National Forest. If you expend so much energy into developing the plan, then please stick with it. Many people that I know are very unhappy with your lack of commitment to a good strategic plan into our future.

In my opinion, you should probably focus more on restoring a resilient forest for at least another 20 -30 years. Do minimal timber harvesting and focus more on providing habitats for All of Our Relations! There are plenty of people around these amazing forests who would love to see that happen and who have skill sets that can accomplish the work.

Respectfully,

William Rucker

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