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Organization:

Title:

Comments: According to the USDA Forest Service, its motto is: Caring for the Land and Serving People.

Apparently, the USDA Forest Service needs to change this motto to: We don't give a flip about the land, nor the people who use it, nor adjacent bodies of water; cash is king.

Also according to the USDA Forest Service, its mission is: ...to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Apparently, the USDA Forest Service needs to change its mission to: ...to enable private enterprises to permanently damage the forest floor, decimate the forest's natural resources, and pose significant threat of contamination to not only the forest, but also to its adjoining bodies of water.

The National Forest & Grasslands in Texas (a division of the USDA Forest Service) wants to undertake a study about exploring for and potentially producing energy resources in the Sam Houston National Forest. Production would likely take the form of fracking. The energy industry always claims innocence when fracking chemicals leech from their pits and contaminate water supplies. Those who would develop in the Sam Houston National Forest (adjacent to Lake Conroe and over the Gulf Coast Aquifer) would no doubt claim innocence should the fracking chemicals contaminate Lake Conroe, Caney Creek, and the Gulf Coast Aquifer. No amount of post-fracking litigation or settlement would enable the residents of Conroe and Houston to restore the health of Lake Conroe and its drinking water supply. Are you aware that Lake Conroe is a source of water supply for Houston, Texas? For this reason, I ask that you cancel your plans for the study, save my taxpayer dollars, and abandon the idea of energy exploration/production in Sam Houston National Forest.

It is interesting to the residents of Conroe, Montgomery, Willis and Houston that National Forest & Grasslands in Texas has kept its intent to study leasing relatively secret, no doubt to avoid objection. To those of us who pay taxes to keep our forests protected, this is viewed as underhanded.

If The United States of America faced an energy shortage, then perhaps an argument could be made for drilling/producing in a national forest; the opposite, however, is true. The United States of America is now an energy exporter.

A national forest is a classification of protected and managed federal lands. Note the word, "protected." National Forest & Grasslands in Texas would be relinquishing its responsibility to protect the Sam Houston National Forest and Lake Conroe, should they proceed with the study of permitting leasing in the Sam Houston National Forest.

We pay for the protection of our national forests. Our tax dollars pay for the salaries of the USDA Forest Service employees. We expect these employees to do their jobs and protect our national forests, and the bodies of water that adjoin them. I call on you to cancel the project and prohibit National Forest & Grasslands in Texas from leasing the property of the American taxpayers for the purpose of energy exploration/production in the Sam Houston National Forest.