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Comments: The new "Orphan Well and Abandoned Mine Project Environmental Assessment" Plan (EA) must not be adopted. Instead of requiring protection of old-growth forests, endangered Indiana bats, wetlands, and "sensitive species habitats," it would allow the Wayne National Forest to exempt itself from these requirements. The project proposal does not give adequate information about the details of the project or its environmental costs and benefits.

The public must be given information about this project and that there be timely and transparent consultation with the public before site-specific decisions are made. Such information includes:

1. Specific information about the condition, costs, and effectiveness of wells capped or plugged, as well as the consequences of these measures to the soil, wetlands, and vegetation.
2. Data about the environmental costs and benefits of each intervention.
3. A plan for how the public can weigh in to assure that destruction of old-growth trees, bats, and other sensitive species habitats and wetlands will not occur.

With increasing evidence of the role of old trees to forest health and climate protection, the USFS cannot allow any degradation of their already inadequate 2006 Plan to inform decision-making. We insist that the Wayne National Forest takes all possible measures to protect our fragile and important public forest.

Sincerely, Peggy Gish