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Comments: I strongly support the Forest Service choose Alternative C (No New Oil and Gas Leasing) for the Conecuh National Forest EA. As the Conecuh is already a small National Forest, and is incredibly valuable ecologically, recreationally, and culturally, I believe it is unacceptable to add the proposed 11-15 wells. There are far too many threatened, endangered, and priority species and habitats (Red-cockaded woodpeckers, Eastern indigo snakes, gopher tortoises, gopher frogs, pitcher plant bogs, riparian zones, upland sandhills, etc.) that will certainly be negatively affected in some way not just by any drilling itself, but also the increased traffic and presence of heavy equipment in the forest. This would also limit the ability of us as public landowners to access the forest for recreation and hunting.

While a new Alternative D has been proposed as more of a middle ground between A/B and C, I find that this alternative is still not robust enough to deter me from Alternative C. In the draft document, it seems Alternative D would be likely to have fewer impacts on Vegetation Communities, Wildlife, Water Resources, Soils, Recreation, Cultural Resources/Tribal Interests, etc., but the entire forest is still open to leasing. This alternative could and SHOULD be strengthened by actually fully excluding sensitive areas from leasing altogether, if leasing were to happen. Areas with gopher tortoise populations, indigo snake project-related areas, red-cockaded woodpecker populations, riparian zones, and wetland zones should all be fully excluded. And where was Alternative D to begin with, and why is it not now the "preferred" action instead of Alternative B? Why in this Alternative D is the entire forest still open to leasing?

Again, I most strongly support Alternative C. Until there is an alternative with leasing proposed that completely closes sensitive ecological, water, and recreational areas of the forest to any leasing, I support Alternative C - No New Oil and Gas Leasing. The Conecuh is worth far, far more as a haven in America's Amazon for threatened and endangered species, recreation, and hunting than as a site for oil wells, no matter the number.