Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/14/2024 2:39:16 AM
First name: Joan
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: To Whom It May Concern:

The responsibility of the Forest Service to protect the Sandia Mountains from fire danger is most appreciated. The approach used to protect this area, which includes Placitas, must be delicately handled. My family and I moved to the canyon of Placitas in 1975, and my husband's family has lived here for generations. We have enjoyed the peacefulness, have had gardens, irrigated by the acequia, had horses, a donkey, and have hiked the mountain. We have enjoyed the Las Huertas Arroyo, which, when running, provides irrigation.

I, as well as neighbors, have long been concerned about the canyon, the undergrowth, and falling trees. The state of the road makes the accessibility to the upper mountain and picnic areas difficult, and we have often worried that it would be difficult for first responders like firefighters to use that road. Despite our concerns about the lack of care by the Forest Service to prevent forest fires, it seems our voices have been ignored.

Now, it appears the Forest Service wants to do controlled burning in our area. We have seen the devastation in Northern New Mexico, with such procedures that escape control, creating unlivable circumstances, destroying properties, homes, and people's lives. There must be other alternative answers such as clearing on foot, eliminating underbrush, possibly chipping, removing this dead fuel. We have a wood burning stove, and we would gladly use this wood to heat our home.

Please do not take the chance of destroying this beautiful habitat, our homes, and livelihoods. Hear our voices now. Do not proceed with controlled burns. We are on the edge of the wilderness area, with steep slopes as one proceeds up the canyon. The small village of Placitas is at the northwest base of the Sandias. This community desires to save the mountain and habitat in a manner that does not destroy all that we know and love.

Sincerely,
Joan Lucero