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Comments: Our community meeting on 4/24/24 in Placitas was packed with concerned community members, most who had only just heard of the Forest Service "North Sandia Fuels Reduction" plan in the days leading up to the meeting. The room was overflowing with people urging the Forest Service to consider and take on responsible action for our forest. We are thankful to the Forest Service for finally agreeing to attend our community meeting.

After hearing the Forest Service plan, I would like to request that the "tool" of prescribed burning be removed from any part of the plan for the Las Huertas Canyon area. It was expressed by the Forest Service that prescribed burning is the "most economic" means of cleanup but does this make this "tool" the most responsible choice for the delicate Las Huertas Canyon ecosystem that has been neglected for decades? The Forest Service also shared maps illustrating the dangerous state our forest area in Las Huertas Canyon is in. Per the information shared with us, with the current state of the Las Huertas Canyon, if a "natural" forest fire were to occur, is at high risk for a serious fire. The dire state of the North Sandia area, especially the Las Huertas Canyon, is not new information to our community. While we appreciate that the Forest Service is finally, after years of community members voiced worry and urging for action, discussing a plan of action. We were told that no action, not even the absolutely needed manual clearing of fuel, would even start for 3 to 4 years? This seems counterintuitive given the state of the forest and the looming danger of a devastating "natural" fire per the maps and data Forest Service shared with us. Much of the community attending expressed willingness to help with cleanup but were told that this process would also take time and permitting? Do we have that time? Can the Forest Service take more immediate action helping educate and initiate community clean up efforts? Even if done on our own private properties first and then hopefully in Las Huertas Canyon? We ask that you work with us and give us the "tools" we need to take action ASAP. Many groups withing the community of Placitas came together to diligently get the word out in a very short time period for this meeting. The majority of the Placitas community did not learn of the Forest Service plan from the Forest Service. There is clearly a need for improved future outreach and communication by the Forest Service to any and all communities laying within any boundary of any plan. I feel it is imperative that the Forest Service improve their communication with the public. When will we be hearing from you again? What is your short term plan and when and how will we learn of it? Will you reach out to us this time to meet with the community and make us a part of the decision process? Will you extend the public comment period as unanimously requested at the meeting last night? Will you make effort to create more user friendly ways for the public to voice their concerns and get questions answered? Our community meeting was sponsored Coronado Soil and Water Conservation District, the Las Huertas Community Ditch, Las Acequias de Placitas and the San Antonio de Las Huertas Land Grant. There are many other entities that were reached out to during the process of planning the meeting in Placitas. We have a network of communication that is ready to help the Forest Service get communication out to our communities. We ask that, moving forward, you start to communicate with us in a more direct way. When can I expect to hear back from the Forest Service in regards to my questions? I've not received a response to my first comment submitted on 4/15/24 so I am submitting this comment as I was directed to by the Forest Service at last night's meeting.