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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing as a concerned resident of the Village of Placitas & a member of Las Acequias de Placitas. I have called this place home since 1961 and I am intimately familiar with the terrain of Las Huertas Canyon through hiking, fishing & occasionally collecting firewood left on the roadside by the highway department. I understand the latter activity is illegal, but I recognize that action is needed to reduce the fuel load in the canyon to make it defensible against fire.

My civil disobedience of collecting firewood is done in the spirit of that goal & provides winter heat in my house. A win-win situation in a truly "controlled burn." I know my efforts are a drop in the bucket compared to what needs to be done.

That said, several things should be very apparent after the 4/24 community meeting.

****Despite little advance notice, my community can mobilize into an overflow crowd using just the grapevine to get the word out.**

****We don't trust the decision-making process used to "implement" such projects. This is understandable given recent catastrophes caused by such undertakings.**

****We trust the forest management science, much of which is obvious to even a casual observer, but don't agree with the proposed solutions drawn from those studies.**

****We don't agree at all on the action that needs to be taken.**

****We are a vocal group who won't hesitate to offer input & organize community-led efforts.**

THESE ARE MY SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGING THE OPTICS OF WHAT MY COMMUNITY CONSIDERS AN ILL-CONCEIVED PROPOSAL:

~~Transparency & public outreach. Give advance notice of actions to be taken.

~~Foster a robust two-way conversation. Develop a mailing list of stakeholders. Use it to inform them in a timely fashion of upcoming projects. Hold frequent informational meetings to gather feedback. Notices posted on the Post Office bulletin board will help ensure broader outreach.

~~Partner with community & entrepreneurs. Contact A-1 or Pete's Firewood or some of the private roadside vendors that sell near the freeway. Charge for permits if necessary, since they will profit by hauling it away.

~~Offer stewardship & training workshops.

~~Issue permits to community. I pretty much guarantee that if you left a pile of thinnings bucked up into truck-length pieces & put up an announcement at the post office, that pile would be gone within a week.

~~Do a more thorough examination of potential impacts on the watershed. We depend on that water.

~~Not to mention the 50+ year old natural gas pipeline crossing the Crest of Montezuma. Or the towers on the Crest. Worst case risk assessments of plausible unfavorable outcomes.

~~Cost/benefit analysis comparing proposed project budget with consequences of project failure or fighting a naturally occurring fire by comparing past suppression efforts.

~~Phasing of project in low-key, long term & ongoing efforts. Rather than viewing it as a large scale once-and-done project, break it into sections manageable by smaller crews. This avoids the dangers of gathering massive resources & deciding to greenlight an action despite less than favorable conditions.

We need to use common sense here, not forecasts & models.