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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a 7 year resident of Placitas with serious concerns about the proposed prescribed burns for Las Huertas Canyon & the surrounding area in the Sandias. I regularly hike & bike in the canyon & cherish this area for its relative solitude, wildness, & beauty.

Some background: I worked as a seasonal employee for the USFS for 12 seasons in fire management in Washington, Idaho, & Montana, so I have knowledge & experience with wildfire management & prescription burning.

My primary concern is that prescribed burning in the steep terrain of Las Huertas Canyon, with its significant fuel buildup, and given the relatively poor track record of the Forest Service in managing prescribed burns resulting in catastrophic fires in/near Los Alamos & Las Vegas, is too risky & dangerous to carry out successfully.

Since other methods like mechanical thinning are available, why take the risk of causing yet another catastrophic fire? East downcanyon winds are a regular occurrence in the Las Huertas area, and if a 'controlled burn' got out of control when such conditions arise the result would be catastrophic for the community of Placitas.

The large fire scar in the canyon dating back to the 1960s) above the Presbyterian Conference Center testifies to the prevalence of fire in the Sandias. I do not question the need for fuel reduction in the canyon, the question is what would be the safest & most effective means of achieving this goal.

Las Huertas Canyon is a very precious resource in near proximity to a large metropolitan area. It contains one of the few perennial streams on the west slopes of the Sandias. Please manage & protect this jewel by practicing safe & effective fire management strategies.

Thank you for considering my comments.