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First name: Katherine

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Sando,

I am writing to provide public comment on the Encino Vista Landscape Restoration Project Draft Environmental Assessment document and the EVLRP project.

I have called Cañones my home for 44 years and my husband and I raised our children here. I've been able to learn about this place from my husband and his family, especially from my father-in-law who was a bilingual educator and traditional logger who learned this practice and grazing from his father and grandfather. He loved this place. My husband loves this place and chose to be a traditional logger to stay here and make his living, instead of moving for work elsewhere like many in current generations have to.

I did not receive notice about this project and only found out about it a week ago from another community member who took it upon themselves to let others of us know. I would have liked to attend a presentation from someone speaking local Spanish to better understand this project. It feels intimidating to walk into a meeting where I have to understand maps and figure out what to ask without someone helping me understand.

I encourage the Forest Service to hire somebody well qualified in communication so they can reach out to local communities and let them know what you are planning to do to with their watersheds. The Forest Service has said that they have held many meetings and have let people know about these. However, very few people in our community know what is going on with this Project.

These villages that depend on the watersheds where the Forest Service is wanting to conduct these prescribed burns have been well established for centuries. The Juan Bautista Valdez Land Grant, for example, since 1807 . The people here have been farming and working the land for generations and really deserve to be heard, respected, and for the Forest Service to be in continual communication with regard to the watershed.

My greatest concern with prescribed burns is the very poor track record of the Forest Service and past "control burns" here in New Mexico. I strongly suggest instead of conducting prescribed burns that the Forest Service open up the Forest to small contractors to harvest materials for use in building traditional homes and for firewood.

The people here love these mountains, they are not going to carelessly destroy them. You can trust them and need to show them that they can trust you.

Sincerely,

Katherine Salcido Salazar