

Last year in Canon City, a ten year operation to thin the forests around the Wet Mountain peaks began. The operation is backed by a coalition that includes the Forest Service, several private companies, and individuals from the surrounding area. The coalition is working from a "use 'em or lose 'em" policy of cutting trees before burning them. Forest management in the United States, which includes heavy logging and elaborate fire suppression, has allowed Southwestern Ponderosa forests to become overgrown and fire-prone. These overgrown, fire-prone forests scarred the Canon City community in 2002 when a large fire burned much of the region. With the recent dry winters and continued build-up of fuel, new fires could occur.

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According to Joe Schlobotnik, program director for Canon City Trust, "the peaks are the signature of Canon City, and if all that was just one big empty place, this town's economy would really suffer." Gertrude Hornswaggle, an employee of Canon City Trust, said that in the 100,000 acre area around the Wet Mountain Peaks, there are some areas where as many as 90% of the forest will be cut down. It may not be in the town's best interest that Canon City Trust plays such a large roll in what the future forests of Canon City will look like.

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