

Last year in Canon City, a ten year operation to thin the forests around the Wet

Mountain peaks began. The operation is supported by a collation that includes the United States Forest Service (USFS), several private companies, and a collection of concerned citizens from the Canon City area.

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The coalition's priority is to cut the trees before burning them. Recent United States forest management policies, which include heavy logging and elaborate fire suppression, have been ineffectual, allowing Southwestern Ponderosa forests to become overgrown. Such conditions create high risk of forest fires. The Canon City community was scarred in 2002 when a large fire, a result of similarly overgrown forests, burned much of the region. Recent dry winters, coupled with the continued abundance of fuel, add to the risk factor.

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However, according to Joe Schlobotnik, program director for Canon City Trust,

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"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 acres surrounding the Wet Mountain Peaks, there are some areas where as much as 90% of the forest will be cut down. Unfortunately, Canon City Trust plays a large roll in what happens in the management of the future forests of Canon City. Their goals seem counter to those of the coalition, an organization dedicated to averting destruction on a much larger scale.

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