



August 25, 2020

Safford Ranger District
Attn: George Garcia, District Ranger
711 14th Avenue, Suite D
Safford, AZ 85546

Electronically submitted to:

<https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=56958>

RE: Pinaleño FireScape Project

Dear Mr. Garcia:

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Pinaleño FireScape project to authorize restoration actions to achieve multiple resource benefits through planned vegetation treatment using a mix of fire and non-fire to improve conditions by decreasing vegetative fuel loading and promoting ecosystem health. The Department has cooperated and coordinated with the Safford District on numerous projects including planning the original Pinaleño Ecosystem Restoration Plan (PERP). Since that time fire has dramatically changed habitat conditions in the Pinaleño Ecosystem Management Area and the Department expects fire to be the primary agent of change on the mountain for the foreseeable future.

To that end, the Department offers our support for continued active management of the mountain's vegetation to increase resiliency and decrease the threat of catastrophic wildfire. The Department encourages the US Forest Service to call on us to provide assistance as needed to further the goals of PERP and offer our assistance in reviewing specifics on the project relative to effects on wildlife, habitat, and recreational access. The Department is particularly interested in effects on aquatic and riparian habitat in Ash, Frye, Grant, and Marijilda Creeks and on Mount Graham red squirrel habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on Pinaleño FireScape. For further coordination, please contact John Windes, Habitat Program Manager for Region V at 520-388-4442.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raul Vega".

Raul Vega
Regional Supervisor, Tucson

AGFD # M20-08033451

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