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First name: Rich

Last name: Williams

Organization: National Wild Turkey Federation

Title: Arizona State Chapter President

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Coronado National Forest, Safford Ranger District

Attn: George Garcia, District Ranger

711 14th Avenue, Suite D

Safford, AZ 85546

RE: SCOPING COMMENTS - PINALEÑO FIRESCAPE PROJECT

Dear District Ranger Garcia:

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) is proud to be one of the most active national partners to be engaged with the Forest Service, dating back to the establishment of the Making Tracks Program in 1986. The NWTF has been actively engaged in forest management on the Coronado National Forest through our work on the Pinaleño Ecosystem Restoration Project, or PERP Stewardship project to help enhance habitat for wildlife, fish, and overall forest health.

We understand the need for this fire scape project to: reduce hazardous fuels, create wildfire resilient conditions and increase firefighter safety on these fire-adapted forest types, protect the unique values on the forest including: cultural heritage sites, wildlife habitat (including habitat for threatened and endangered species), protect water, wildland-urban interface (WUI), and recreational opportunities. Specifically, we would like to see prescriptions that protect the limited number of roost tree groups for Gould's wild turkey. We understand the need to reduce the ladder fuels in the project area, but hope that the prescriptions would allow for a mosaic that would provide residual areas of oak for mast production.

In reviewing your proposal, we are pleased to see you using a variety of tools to achieve objectives, including: prescribed and managed natural fire, hand thinning, mechanical treatments, herbicide application, regeneration treatments, and erosion control measures. The NWTF supports active forest management and understands that it is necessary to move our western forests toward fire resilient landscapes.

Based on the information in the scoping letter, it is our perspective that the Coronado National Forest, Safford Ranger District has comprehensive understanding of the analysis going into the Environmental Assessment. Considering the broad range of values on the landscape, tools proposed and how they interact under the conditions on the forest should allow the Forest to adequately analyze alternatives.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments during this scoping period and look forward to seeing the analysis and more importantly, seeing you make progress toward your important goals.

Sincerely,

Rich Williams

Rich Williams, Arizona State Chapter President,

National Wild Turkey Federation