Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/15/2024 9:35:39 PM First name: Brian Last name: Nowicki Organization:

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Comments: These comments are submitted on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity regarding the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Peloncillo FireScape Project. The Center supports the restoration of functional fire regimes at landscape scales, and we support the overall objectives of the Peloncillo FireScape Project to restore fire across the project area. However, the Draft EA proposes a project that is dominated by herbicides and mechanical thinning, and fails to adequately disclose and analyze the impacts of these actions. The Draft EA proposes the application of a large volume of a large number of herbicides across 53,799 acres, and mechanical treatment across 42,885 acres, equivalent to 63% and 50% of the landscape, respectively. We urge the Forest Service to revise the proposed action to greatly reduce the area subjected to mechanical thinning, eliminate the application of herbicides in wildlands, and focus on the actions necessary to safely and effectively restore fire at the landscape scale.