
File Code: 1950
Date: February 14, 2024

Dear Friends and Neighbors of the Coronado National Forest,

The Coronado National Forest, Douglas Ranger District, is seeking comments on a draft environmental assessment for the Peloncillo FireScape project in Cochise County, Arizona, and Hidalgo County, New Mexico. This project proposes ecosystem restoration treatments, including wildland fire (planned and unplanned), prescribed cutting, mastication and grubbing, selective herbicide use, planting, and soil stabilization on approximately 85,129 acres of National Forest System lands in the Peloncillo Mountains. The purpose of this project is to improve and/or maintain desired vegetation conditions in the Peloncillo Ecosystem Management Area, with the goal of decreasing the risk of uncharacteristic high-severity wildfire by reducing vegetive fuel loading, therefore promoting improvement in ecosystem health.

The draft environmental assessment and other supporting documentation can be accessed on the project webpage at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=58434>.

The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and not authorized under the HFRA and is subject to 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B.

How to Comment and Timeframe

Specific written comments (§218.2) on the proposed project will be accepted for **30 calendar days** following publication of a legal notice in the *Herald/Review* (Cochise County, AZ) and *Hidalgo Herald* (Hidalgo County, NM). If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Those wishing to comment should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project and signature or other verification of identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments



submitted. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Electronic comments including attachments may be submitted using the Public Comment Form at: <https://cara.fs2c.usda.gov/Public/CommentInput?project=58434>. Written comments may be submitted via mail to: Mindi Lehew c/o Douglas Ruppel, ATTN: Peloncillo FireScape Project, Coronado National Forest, 300 West Congress Street, Tucson, AZ 85701.

Contact Information

If you have any questions concerning this project, please contact Mindi Lehew, Environmental Coordinator, at mindi.lehew@usda.gov. If you would like to stay informed of this project as it progresses, please self-subscribe to the project mailing list using the “Subscribe to Email Updates” link on the project website.

Thank you for your interest in the management of your national forest.

Sincerely,



DOUG RUPPEL

District Ranger

cc: Mindi Lehew