

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service
Coronado National Forest
Supervisor's Office
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For Immediate Release

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HORSESHOE 2 BAER ASSESSMENT TEAM PRESENTS RECOMMENDATIONS TO CORONADO NATIONAL FOREST

Tucson, AZ (July 1, 2011) – The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team assessing the Horseshoe Two Fire burning on the eastern portion of the Coronado National Forest in the Chiricahua Mountains and in Chiricahua National Monument, met Thursday with Coronado National Forest Supervisor Jim Upchurch, to present its analysis of burned watershed conditions and treatment recommendations from the assessment phase of stabilization efforts.

Key Facts from the BAER assessment team presentation:

- Total number of acres burned by the Horseshoe Two Fire -- 222,954
- Soil burn severity for the fire:
 - ✓ Unburned - - 44,093 (20%)
 - ✓ Low -- 84,852 (38%)
 - ✓ Moderate -- 66,226 (30%)
 - ✓ High - 27,730 (12%)

An important component of the BAER assessment is the soil burn severity map, which shows fire-caused changes to soils. Soil burn severity is based on the level of the effect the fire has on the soil. The higher the soil burn severity, the more likely the soil is damaged and will repel water, increasing the rate at which it will run off slopes. The map identifies areas where post-fire soil conditions present the potential for accelerated post-fire erosion or flooding. It is a tool the Forest Service and cooperating agencies used to identify critical canyons and drainages as they relate to increased awareness, concern, and coordination with other agencies to implement recommended treatments of identified down-stream values-at-risk, and to plan for emergency notification to residents of potential flood and debris-flow risks. Due to the steep terrain and the large amount of moderate and high burn severity, the potential is high for debris flows with rain events.

Preliminary BAER funding has been secured and crews have begun work on clearing debris and rock from culverts and under bridges to allow for increased runoff in the Cave Creek Drainage and other parts of the burn area.

Fire crews working on fire suppression repair work reported that the light rains which occurred over portions of the fire on Wednesday caused debris flows and flooding along Forest Road 42 in the Turkey Creek and Pinery Canyon drainages.

Residents downstream of the burned areas are encouraged to coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Cochise County Department of Emergency Management to prepare for the upcoming monsoon storm season.