

# HORSESHOE 2 BAER UPDATE

USDA Forest Service  
Coronado National Forest  
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*For Immediate Release*

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## BAER IMPLEMENTATION TEAM CONTINUES BURNED AREA STABILIZATION EFFORTS

**Willcox, AZ (July 10, 2011)** – The Coronado National Forest's Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) implementation team has been working within the burned area of the Horseshoe 2 wildfire for the past 10 days installing emergency stabilization treatments the BAER assessment team prescribed in its findings report.

Fire crews have removed coarse woody debris from stream channels to minimize debris dams and obstruction of bridged crossings which decreases debris masses that could impact bridge and culvert structures. These efforts allow the passage of water and muddy material in streams and drainages and prevent overland flooding that could divert channel flow.

"We will have fire crews and two Southwest Conservation Corps crews working to improve low water crossings on approximately over 100 miles of trails within the burned area," Horseshoe 2 BAER implementation leader Nadia Aslami said. "The crews are installing waterbars, low water crossings, removing berms and constructing log checks along trails to facilitate the flow of water and prevent any wash-outs. Fire crews have been busy keeping culverts and roads clear of debris and their efforts will be reinforced with roads contractors on Tuesday. These contractors will be working to improve drainage features on approximately 80 miles of road."

The severity of burn in watersheds, combined with road location, high possibility of flash flooding and debris flow increased the risk to road users. The purpose of the road stabilization treatments is to increase roadway stabilization to pass large water flows and decrease the chances of washing road fill into adjacent drainage structures and flow channels. Rolling dips and low water crossings are placed downstream from culverts that were identified by the BAER assessment team with a high potential for failure. In situations where placement of rolling dips or low water crossings is not feasible, the culvert will be replaced and upsized to manage the increased flows.

Due to the potential threat for public safety within the burned area, affected Forest roads will be closed to vehicle traffic, especially roads that are located in watersheds that have a high to moderate burn severity. These areas have the potential for increased flows and pose a threat to existing roads and water crossings. There is an immediate and future threat to travelers along these roads within the burned area due to the increased potential for rolling and falling rock from burned slopes, flash floods, and mudflows. With the loss of vegetation, normal storm frequencies and magnitudes can easily initiate rill and gully erosion on the slopes and it is likely that this runoff will cover the roads or cause washouts.

The BAER assessment team also recommended that during rain events, storm patrol crews identify road problems such as plugged culverts and washed-out roads and to clear, clean, and/or block those roads that receive damage. Residents are encouraged to use extreme caution when

traveling in the vicinity of the Horseshoe 2 fire area and to use caution when driving on roads downstream from the fire area to avoid crossing swift flowing water. Team Leader Aslami is also mobilizing crews that will stabilize the burned structures within the burned area to reduce the possibility of hazardous materials contaminating streams and soils during a rain event. Structures within Upper Turkey creek burned area have been stabilized, and additional structures in the Rustler Park area are scheduled for stabilization as additional supplies arrive.

Areas within Horseshoe 2 wildfire have the potential of soil erosion resulting in loss of soil productivity. To mitigate this potential issue, the BAER assessment team evaluated areas that burned with moderate or high severity and varying soil types and determined which burned areas were suitable for the seeding treatment to protect soil productivity. Team leader Aslami and another BAER implementation leader, Barbara Drake, are working with Forest Service contracting officers to begin the aerial seeding on approximately 5,600 acres within the burn area. The BAER implementation team leaders expect to begin the aerial seeding operation next week.

**Special Notice:** The public is invited to attend public meetings hosted by the Natural Resources Conservation District on Wednesday, July 13, at 6:00 p.m. (Arizona time), at the Rodeo Community Center, in Rodeo, New Mexico, and Thursday, July 14, at 6:00 p.m. at the Sunizona Ash Creek Community Center which is located on Sunizona Drive behind the Mustang Mall in Sunizona. The Horseshoe 2 BAER assessment findings will be presented at these two public meetings.

For Horseshoe 2 BAER information, contact Cathleen Thompson at (707) 853-4243 or Ron Kaczor at (520) 558-2221.

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