

WEST BAER NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service
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Supervisor's Office
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Contact: Rebeca Franco (623) 670-9223
E-mail: coronado.west.baer@gmail.com



Pena Blanca Lake

Photo taken by Rebeca Franco

MURPHY FIRE BAER WORK NEARS COMPLETION

Nogales, AZ (July 14, 2011) – Most of the five West Coronado Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) implementation team projects slated for the Nogales Ranger Station's Murphy Fire have been completed.

“Once we had the contracts written, materials ordered, and crews on board with the labor needs, we were able to move steadily on the assessment team's recommendations for the Murphy Fire,” said Paul Garnaccia, Murphy BAER team leader.

The Murphy Fire BAER projects completed are:

- Ronquillo Pond—protection of the threatened Chiricahua leopard frog from sediment accumulation; placement of 300 linear feet of waddles by the Forest Service engine 52 crew.
- Peck Well in Peck Canyon—primary source of water for livestock and wildlife; using heavy equipment to reinforce and repair an embankment from continual erosion which would eventually affect the well.
- Atascosa Lookout and trail—protection of the watershed from the burned lookout's hazardous debris by the placement of wattles on the hills surrounding it; weatherizing the trail by out sloping, cleaning and installing water bars, and using other methods of dispersing water.

The task of laying 1500 feet of wattles in key areas around Pena Blanca Lake is near completion. This is designed to protect the Chiricahua leopard frog's habitat and reduce sediment flow into the lake. Native grass seeds will also be dispersed in the area to further stabilize the soil.

The final task of the Murphy BAER effort is to install 19 warning signs on local roads and trailheads.

The BAER assessment team used on-the-ground science to determine “values at risk,” and recommended effective emergency treatments to minimize potential damage from sediment run-off or flooding. The implementation team is the action arm of the BAER, where stabilization projects are executed.

For West Coronado BAER information, contact Rebeca Franco at (623) 670-9223 or at coronado.west.baer@gmail.com. Additional fire information is available at www.inciweb.org.