



## Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)

BAER Information: (530) 303-2457

### FOREST SERVICE BURNED AREA EMERGENCY RESPONSE (BAER) PROGRAM

Soils and watersheds are two of the many resources that maybe affected by wildfire. While many wildfires cause minimal damage to the land and pose few threats to the land or people downstream, some fires cause damage that requires special efforts to prevent problems afterwards. Loss of vegetation exposes soil to erosion; water run-off may increase and cause flooding; and sediments may move downstream and damage houses or fill reservoirs putting endangered species and community water supplies at-risk.

The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program assesses watershed conditions to identify post-fire threats to human life and safety, property, and critical natural or cultural resources on National Forest System lands, and take immediate actions to implement emergency stabilization measures to reduce or manage unacceptable risks.

#### BAER PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Rapid assessment of post-fire watershed conditions and response, map burn severity of soils, identify values-at-risk, and potential threats to those values.
- Rapid assessment of overall changes to soil productivity, hydrologic function, and watershed response to precipitation events within the burned watersheds.
- Determine where and what kind of soil and watershed emergencies exist related to human health and safety conditions, and natural and cultural resources.
- Alleviate emergency conditions to help stabilize soil; control water, sediment and debris movement; prevent impairment of ecosystems; and mitigate significant threats to health, safety, life, property, and downstream values-at-risk.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of emergency stabilization measures.

#### KEY POINTS

- Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) addresses immediate post-fire emergency situations with the goal of protecting human life and safety, property, and critical natural and cultural resources.
- Forest Service BAER teams are directed—by policy directives—to complete the initial assessment report within seven days after the fire is declared 100% contained. BAER assessment teams are assigned as the fire nears full containment.
- The BAER program's priority is to identify potential emergency threats to values-at-risk and implement emergency stabilization measures on Forest Service System lands to mitigate the emergency.
- Initial assessment reports are reviewed for approval by the Regional Forester's Office. Some assessment reports require Washington Office review and approval.
- The BAER treatments recommended in assessment reports may be adjusted as new information is received during implementation. Emergency stabilization measures primarily focus on severely burned areas where water run-off may be excessive in order to mitigate potential threats to human life, safety, and property.
- Implementation of the recommended treatments is started as soon as it is safe and materials and resources are available. BAER implementation teams aim to install the treatments before the first damaging storm or other events that may threaten human life, safety, and property or critical resource values needing protection. BAER treatments must be implemented within the first year from the fire, but may require maintenance or repair up-to three years.

King Post-Fire BAER Assessment information is available at <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/4126/>.

