

What are BAER Teams?

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Teams are part of a wildfire response, and these teams are brought in before wildfires are fully contained. The Ferguson Fire burned in the Sierra and Stanislaus National Forests, as well as Yosemite National Park, but the need for a BAER team evaluation is the same in all three areas.

The BAER team is currently evaluating soil and watershed conditions to determine the level of potential risk to human life, safety, and property, as well as critical natural and cultural resources. As part of this assessment, the BAER team will use satellite imagery and field reports to generate a "Soil Burn Severity" map. The map will be used to address and put in place solutions for post fire risk areas that meet the categories listed above.

Recently burned areas can produce severe flash floods and devastating debris flows with enough moisture. Please remember to stay off closed sections of roads or trails. Pay attention to weather reports and forecasts. This is especially true for visitors with upcoming vacation plans. If you are caught in a flood, move to higher ground. If you are driving do not attempt to cross water moving over the roadway.

Taking this pause to plan and safely prepare will ensure an enjoyable experience for you and your family.



From left to right: Hydrologist and soil scientist for the Bass Lake District of the Sierra National Forest, Samuel Prentice; geologist at the Supervisor's Office for the Sierra National Forest, Kellen Takenaka; botanist for Yosemite National Park, Mark Mendelsohn; biologist for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, David Campbell; and supervisory botanist for Yosemite National Park, Garrett Dickman, decide on vegetation cover and tree viability in a high-severity burn area (USFS).



Kellen Takenaka and Samuel Prentice look at the BARC (Burned Area Reflective Classification) map to ensure they're surveying the correct areas (USFS).



Samuel Prentice measures soil hydrophobicity in a high-severity burn area on the Ferguson Fire with his colleagues on the BAER team. After creating different depths in the soil, he pours droplets of water onto each depth to determine the extent of how much water soaks into it (hydrophilic) or rolls off of it (hydrophobic). This ultimately tells resource advisors on the BAER team which types of soil erosion control measures need to be taken for the area (USFS).



BAER team members from the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service agree on methods of surveying soil hydrophobicity (USFS).