

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)



Post-Fire BAER Assessment

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BAER Information: (707) 853-4243

INTERAGENCY BAER TEAM BEGINS POST-FIRE ASSESSMENT OF WASHBURN FIRE

An interagency Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team has been established by the National Park Service (NPS) and Sierra National Forest (NF) to begin a joint burned area assessment of the Washburn Fire that recently burned on NPS and Forest Service federal lands. The Sierra NF BAER team leader is Todd Ellsworth, Forest Service Soil Scientist, and Chris Holbeck, a biologist with the National Park Service leads the Department of Interior NPS BAER team. Together, the interagency BAER team will produce their findings in two assessment reports for each of their respective agencies.

In addition to working and coordinating with each other's federal agencies, the teams also coordinate with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Weather Service (NWS), US Geological Survey (USGS), and other federal, state, and local agencies as they assess potential post-fire impacts to the burned watersheds.

BAER surveys are rapid assessments that evaluate the burned area to identify watersheds having increased potential for post-fire flooding, sediment flows and rockslides, and assist land managers prepare the burned area for the upcoming monsoon rains. The team focus is on potential emergency impacts to life, and safety on federal land but model hydrologic response throughout the burned area and share the team's findings with the responsible downstream agencies.

BAER teams may consist of scientists and specialists including hydrologists, geologists, soil scientists, road engineers, botanists, biologists, archeologists, and geographic information specialists. BAER teams collect field data during their burned area surveys to analyze through GIS and computer models and present their findings along with recommended BAER emergency stabilization treatments in a BAER assessment report.

BAER teams utilize satellite imagery and specialist data to analyze and produce a runoff map that shows the levels of hydrological potential flows during rain events. This is the first step in assessing potential watershed impacts from wildfires to any federal values that may be at-risk from potential increased flooding, sedimentation, debris flows, and rockslides. BAER teams produce a report that describes potential threats associated with the burned area's post-fire conditions sometimes including recommended emergency stabilization measures and actions. BAER emergency response efforts are focused on the protection of human life, safety, and property, as well as critical cultural and natural resource values such as the water quality of streams and wetlands on federal lands.

BAER reports are shared with interagency cooperators who work with downstream private home and landowners to prepare for potential post-fire flooding and debris flow impacts. Homes or businesses that could be impacted by flooding from federal land that resulted from wildfires may be eligible for flood insurance coverage from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Information about NFIP is available through FEMA at www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program, or www.floodsmart.gov/wildfires. Other flood preparedness information is available at www.ready.gov/floods at www.floodsmart.gov/.

BAER SAFETY MESSAGE: *Everyone near and downstream from the burned areas should remain alert and stay updated on weather conditions that may result in heavy rains and increased water runoff. Flash flooding may occur quickly during heavy rain events – be prepared to act. Current weather and emergency notifications can be found at the **National Weather Service** websites: www.weather.gov/sto/ and www.weather.gov/hnx/.*

Washburn Post-Fire BAER Assessment information is available at: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8272/>

