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<http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2926/>

Aerial application of grass seed to begin on Little Bear fire area

Ruidoso, NM (July 6, 2012) The burned area assessment report has been completed for the Little Bear fire, and all Burned Area Emergency Response treatment recommendations and funding requests submitted to date have been approved.

Aerial application of grass seed will begin during the week of July 8, 2012. Aerial seeding will occur in two or more phases, starting on approximately 12,000 acres of heavily burned lands within Lincoln National Forest. Once the grass seed has been spread by fixed wing aircraft, straw mulch will be placed by helicopter on a portion of those seeded areas where slope and terrain allow.

Aerial seeding in high elevations has been found to be very successful in the Southwestern Region. Straw mulch protects the grass seed and encourages germination by retaining moisture, in addition to providing immediate ground cover on heavily burned areas where vegetation has been lost.

The grass seed mix is certified weed-free and is mostly comprised of annual grass that can germinate in just a few days with moisture. Grass growth slows runoff, reduces erosion and improves water absorption. This treatment is very effective in restoring vegetation and reducing the impacts of runoff on values and property downstream.

BAER work to armor and recondition roads is progressing well. However, repairs to roads will be ongoing throughout the monsoon season as flows produced by heavy rains continue to impact roads in and around the fire area. Culverts are being cleaned and maintained to remove debris. Rolling dips and water bars have been installed on several Forest roads that are frequently used by the public to carry water away and reduce washouts.

Removal of hazard trees is about 90% complete along roads and in areas that are critical to public safety. The toilets in the public restrooms at Forest Service campgrounds have been pumped to prevent them from contaminating the water runoff during heavy rains.

Suppression rehabilitation is nearly complete on 39 miles of dozer line, which is also being treated with grass seed; and on 34 miles of line constructed by hand.

Lincoln National Forest is working alongside numerous agencies and organizations including Lincoln County, Village of Ruidoso, Mescalero Apache Tribe, City of Alamogordo, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), NM Dept. of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Upper Hondo Soil and Water Conservation District, NM Department of Transportation, and NM Environment Department to lessen the impacts from heavy rains and help residents prepare for flooding and debris flows. For more information on services available to residents or for help with treatment on private lands, please visit <http://littlebearrecovery.org/> or our InciWeb page at <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2926/>.

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