The Forest Service, Lincoln National Forest has released a summary of its post-fire assessment for emergency stabilization measures and actions on National Forest System (NFS) lands burned by the Nogal Canyon Fire. The emergency treatments and activities are designed to decrease possible impacts to critical values from the burned area such as: life and safety, property, critical natural resources, and cultural resources.

The Nogal Canyon Fire began on April 12, 2022, burning 6 primary residences and 8 outbuildings approximately 12 miles west of Capitan, New Mexico. The cause of the fire was determined to be a downed power lines. The fire grew to approximately 420 acres and burned primarily in Nogal Canyon, the bottom and steep slopes outside of the White Mountain Wilderness. The fire burned in grassland, Juniper grassland, Pinyon-Juniper woodland, Interior Chaparral, mixed Conifer and Ponderosa Pine forest. Of the 420 acres burned, 371 acres were National Forest System (NFS) lands and the remaining acres were private lands.

Core team members of the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) assessment team deployed into the field on April 23, 2022. The team consisted of specialists in soils, hydrology, wildlife, biology, roads, recreation, botany, weeds, cultural resources, geographic information systems (GIS), and public information (PIO).

The BAER assessment team's emergency stabilization objectives for the Nogal Canyon burned area are to protect, mitigate and reduce the potential for identified post-fire threats, including potential increased soil erosion/sediment yield and water runoff on steep slopes, to: 1) downstream human life and safety, and property; 2) Forest Service infrastructure and investments such as roads and trails; 3) critical natural resources; and 4) native and naturalized plant communities from new noxious weed infestations.

In addition to on-Forest efforts to reduce the threats to National Forest resources, the BAER team and the Lincoln National Forest warn users of Forest Service roads and trails of hazards present in the burned area.
The BAER team and Lincoln National Forest continues to communicate and coordinate with other agencies such as the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), NOAA National Weather Service, state agencies, and counties to assist private entities and communities including private residents, domestic water suppliers and public utilities to achieve post-fire recovery objectives.

The BAER team’s assessment report which includes the BAER assessment team’s analysis of the burned areas within the Nogal Canyon and recommended emergency treatments, was recently submitted to the Southwest Region (Region 3) Regional Forester by the Forest Supervisor for the Lincoln National Forest.

A copy of the Nogal Canyon post-fire BAER assessment executive summary can be accessed as a linked PDF document below under the Related Information Header.

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 website: https://www.weather.gov/abq/.

Nogal Canyon Post-Fire BAER Assessment information is available at: https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8072/