



Contact- Yvonne Jones – 916-718-8648

Robyn Broyles – 208-596-0767

Bernie Pineda – 360-931-3109

Craig Martin - 505-695-4350

biabaer2011@gmail.com

Las Conchas BAER Team Update

July 13, 2011

North Zone-Santa Clara Canyon and North

On Tuesday, watershed specialists and a Dam Safety Specialist visited Santa Clara Canyon to assess the stability of Santa Clara's most western dam. Initial assessments indicate there could be a dam failure due to the hardening coat being removed and not replaced after damage from previous wildfires. Five fence lines were cut and removed at creek crossings to allow debris to flow freely without causing additional damages to streambeds. All concrete barriers at the Santa Clara Pueblo have been placed, and by Friday, all sandbagging efforts should be completed. Historic debris flows have been examined to understand potential flow patterns. Today the watershed group will be in Rio Del Oso canyon collecting data.

Team members met with three representatives from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to discuss the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. The Pueblos do qualify and can be their own sponsors. They can also contribute 25 percent matching funds with in-kind activities.

The North Zone BAER watershed group will complete its draft burn severity map Wednesday. Following that, the two BAER teams' watershed specialists will meet on Thursday morning to develop the final burn severity map.

Hazard tree felling and marking continued yesterday and is scheduled to be completed Thursday in Santa Clara Canyon. The road is now open to Division D making access possible between the east and west sides of the fire. Intermittent road closures will occur as trees are felled across the road.

At Jemez, the vegetation specialist examined mixed stands of Pinion Juniper, Ponderosas Pine and Doug Fir and found low burn mortality, which indicate higher soil stabilization. Due to active fire, the specialists had limited access to do further assessments.

The Biologists met with the Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss what has been found to this point for Section 7 consultation. At this time, there will be no need to have the biological assessment reviewed. The Team will keep the Fish and Wildlife Service informed of any other findings. Today wildlife specialists plan to visit Forest Service land to review the Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout.

The assessments at Nambe Pueblo are complete and treatment recommendations are in the process of being written. Archeologists determined there were no cultural resource concerns at Nambe and will continue to do spot checks of sites at other locations.

Initial funding requests have been submitted and approved for the implementation of urgent emergency stabilization treatments on Pueblo lands.

The Las Conchas North BAER group expects to have their initial assessments and recommendations for treatments completed by Sunday, July 17th.

South Zone-South of Santa Clara Canyon

South Zone team members completed about 70% of a draft burn severity map for the South Zone of the fire. Soil specialists continued documenting water-repellant soil in critical watersheds above Cochiti Pueblo and Los Alamos. Other soil scientists calculated expected erosion rates to predict the amount of sediment likely to be transported from major watersheds.

BAER hydrologists evaluated forest roads in the southern Jemez Mountains for post-fire stability. They identified and documented culverts, bridges, and elevated road segments that may be at risk during flood events. Members of the team also met with the County of Los Alamos, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and the State Engineer's Office to assist in developing a path forward for handling post-fire floods at the Los Alamos Reservoir.

Archeologists continued their evaluation of cultural resource sites on Bandelier National Monument and the Santa Fe National Forest. In Bandelier, archeologists continued surveys in Sanchez Canyon, visiting seven sites. In Frijoles Canyon, resource specialists determined that installing point flood protections at major pueblos would likely cause more damage than projected flood waters. The pueblos are also at a higher elevation than many of the historic buildings in the canyon.

Infrastructure evaluations of water supplies, roads, culverts, and pipelines are on-going. Biologists met with North Zone natural resource advisors and began to write their reports. Team members made trail assessments on the southern portion of the fire.

Team members met with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to share data and initial flood projections. The NRCS can apply to Congress for Emergency Watershed Protection funding to assist private landowners affected by the fire and post-fire flooding. This is a long-term program that can provide technical assistance, supplies, and materials to landowners.

The initial request for implementation funding was submitted to the regional forester for approval. A similar request has been submitted for work on Bandelier National Monument.

The Las Conchas South BAER group expects to have their initial assessments and recommendations for treatments completed by Monday, July 18.