Thompson Ridge Post-Fire Response
http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3430/

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)

BAER Information: (707) 853-4243

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE BAER ASSESSMENT

- A federal **BAER** assessment team is working for the **Valles Caldera National Preserve** (www.vallescaldera.gov/) and coordinating with the **Forest Service** and other local agencies to strategically assess post-fire impacts to the watersheds in the burn area of the recent **Thompson Ridge Fire** that burned 24,000 acres of the **Valles Caldera National Preserve**.

- The **BAER** assessment team is evaluating watershed conditions to determine the level of potential risks to human life, safety, property, natural and cultural-heritage resources, and determine if there are appropriate and effective emergency stabilization measures that can be implemented on federal lands in a timely manner to reduce unacceptable risks from potential flooding and debris flow threats.

- The **BAER** assessment team conducts field surveys and uses science-based models to rapidly evaluate and assess the burned area.

- **BAER** assessment teams are staffed by specially trained professionals that may include: hydrologists, soil scientists, engineers, biologists, botanists, archeologists, and others who evaluate the burned area and prescribe temporary emergency response actions to protect the land quickly and effectively.

- **BAER** assessments usually begin before a wildfire has been fully contained.

- The **BAER** assessment team generates a "**Burn Severity**" map by using satellite imagery which is then validated and adjusted by **BAER** team field surveys to assess watershed conditions and watershed response to the wildfire. The map identifies areas of soil burn severity by categories of low/unburned, moderate, and high which corresponds to a projected increase in watershed response.

- The **BAER** team presents these findings in an assessment report that identifies immediate and emergency stabilization actions needed to address potential post-fire risks to human life and safety, property, cultural-heritage and critical natural resources.

- The **BAER** report describes watershed pre- and post-fire response information, areas of concern for human life, safety and property, and recommended short-term emergency stabilization actions for federal lands that burned.

- In most cases, only a portion of the burned area is actually treated. Severely burned areas, steep slopes, places where water run-off will be excessive, fragile slopes above

homes, businesses, municipal water supplies, and other valuable facilities are focus areas and described in the **BAER** assessment report as values-at-risk.

- The **BAER** assessment team and the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** work together and coordinate with other federal and local agencies, and counties that assist private landowners in preparing for increased run-off and potential flooding.

- Federal assistance to private landowners is the primary responsibility of the **NRCS** through the **Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program** (www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ewp/ewp.html).

- **NRCS** conducts damage survey reports for the private land adjacent to and downstream from the burned areas. **NRCS** uses these reports, along with the **BAER** team's assessment report, to develop recommended emergency measures for businesses and private home and landowners to reduce the impacts to their property from potential increased water and mud flows.

- If the **BAER** assessment team determines there may be potential emergency situations, the short-term goal is to have flood and erosion control protection measures completed before the first large, damaging rain events.

- Time is critical if **BAER** emergency response actions are to be effective.