Jaroso Post-Fire Response
http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/3491/

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)

BAER Information: (707) 853-4243

PREPARING FOR RAIN STORMS

PECOS, NM (July 5, 2013) – The **Jaroso Fire** is currently burning in the rugged, steep, deep canyons of the Pecos Wilderness on the **Santa Fe National Forest**. It is burning in mixed-conifer, heavy dead and down, woody material with pockets of bug-killed trees, and in a 1,300-acre area of 2007 blown-down timber.

The wildfire has increased the potential for flash flooding, mud and debris flows that could impact several communities, homes, roads, and other infrastructures adjacent to and downstream from the burned area. Monsoon season in New Mexico often brings heavy rain, and upper and lower Pecos Canyon residents should remain alert to possible flooding.

A **Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)** team is working with the **Santa Fe National Forest** (www.fs.usda.gov/santafe/) to assess the condition of the watersheds that were burned in the **Jaroso Fire**. The **BAER** assessment team identifies potential emergency threats to critical values-at-risk, and recommends emergency stabilization response actions that are implemented on federal lands to mitigate the emergency.

One of the most effective **BAER** strategies is interagency coordination with local cooperators who assist affected businesses, homes, and landowners prepare for rain events. The **Forest Service** 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 private lands adjacent to and downstream from burned areas. **NRCS** use these reports, along with the **BAER** team's assessment report, to develop emergency measures to reduce the impacts from potential increased water and mud flows, and assist private landowners with recommended emergency measures (www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1045263.pdf).

Multiple agencies work with the **BAER** teams and look at the full scope and scale of the situation to reduce the potential threats to human life and safety, and property; however, **BAER** emergency stabilization actions on federal lands cannot prevent all of the potential flooding or soil erosion impacts, especially after wildfires change the landscape.

It is important that residents take steps to protect themselves and their property from flooding and mudflows:

- For their **safety**, communities need to monitor local weather reports and public safety bulletins, local road closures, emergency notifications, weather alerts, follow local county and city advisories, and act accordingly.
- Use a "weather radio" or smart phone "weather app" that monitors "all hazards" alerts issued by the **NOAA-National Weather Service** (http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/).
- **Prepare for rainstorms** by being prepared to evacuate if emergency county or city officials determine that flooding and mudflows are expected which could pose an increased threat to life and property.
- Know and be alert to environmental signs of **dangerous weather conditions** and be prepared to take action that can save lives.
- Understand that all canyons within the northern New Mexico area and particularly those associated within the burned areas can produce flash flooding.
- At first sign of a storm, even if it's not right over you, the storm may be up-stream from your location, or if you find yourself in a flood, climb to safety (**seek higher ground**).

Resources for Preparing for Flash Floods-Mudflows and Interagency Cooperator Information:

Local Counties

Rio Arriba County communities can register to receive important notices and alerts during emergencies:

- https://cne.coderedweb.com/Default.aspx?groupid=OJ7Ib%2b6zadpJ%2bG1kGvTigg%3d%3d.

Information regarding emergency preparedness for **Rio Arriba County** is available at:

- http://www.rio-arriba.org/departments_and_divisions/emergency_preparedness.html.

The **San Miguel County** provides public safety and emergency information, and operates the AM 1680 radio station that transmits weather information as well as emergency alerts for **Pecos Valley** residents:

- www.smcounty.net/.

The **Pecos Canyon Fire and Rescue** provides the latest fire news, alerts, closures and other information to residents of the Pecos Canyon and encourages residents to prepare for the predicted flooding and mudflows as a result of the recent wildfires:

- www.pecoscanyonfire.org
- www.pecoscanyonfire.org/_pdf/PrecautionsForBurnAreaFlooding.pdf.

State Agencies

The **New Mexico Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management Division** of provides information about floods and flood preparation:

- www.nmdhsem.org/Preparedness.aspx
- www.nmdhsem.org/uploads/files/New%20Mexico%20Family%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20Guide%20High%20Quality.pdf.

The **Surface Water Quality Bureau** of the **New Mexico Environment Department** provides information to the public regarding wildfire impacts on surface water quality:

- http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/Wildfire/index.html
- ftp://ftp.nmenv.state.nm.us/www/swqb/Wildfire/FAQ06-14-13.pdf.

Other Federal Agencies

The **US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) – Albuquerque District** coordinates its **Emergency Management** program with the **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** and local governments to provide engineering services to respond to national and natural disasters in order to minimize damages and help in recovery efforts. Public Law 84-99 enables the **Corps** to assist state and local authorities in flood fight activities and cost share in the repair of flood protection structures. Public Law 93-288 authorizes **FEMA** to task the **Corps** with disaster recovery missions under the Federal Response Plan (www.spa.usace.army.mil/Missions/EmergencyManagement.aspx).

The **Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012**, signed into law on July 6, 2012 by President Obama, reauthorizing the **National Flood Insurance Program** (**NFIP**) through September 30, 2017, and increasing access for some residents whose homes could be impacted by flooding from federal land that resulted from wildfires. This law may allow residents in these impacted communities to be eligible for an exception from the 30-day waiting period usually required for flood insurance coverage. Additional information about **NFIP** is available through **FEMA** at www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program, or **Flood Smart** at www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/about/nfip_overview.jsp.

Other **flood preparedness** information is available at: www.ready.gov/floods, and www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/flooding_flood_risks/ffr_overview.jsp.

The **USDI Geological Survey (USGS)** provides "water watch" internet tools and flood information for the **State of New Mexico**:

- http://nm.water.usgs.gov/flood/
- http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/?m=flood&r=nm.