

Santa Fe National Forest  
**Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)**  
Post-Fire BAER Assessment



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BAER Information: (707) 853-4243

**FOREST SERVICE BAER TEAM BEGINS PHASE 3  
POST-FIRE ASSESSMENT OF HERMITS PEAK-CALF CANYON FIRES**

The Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team has begun its Phase 3 assessment of National Forest System (NFS) lands impacted by the Hermits Peak-Calf Canyon Fires on the east side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains

Initial preliminary analysis suggests the headwaters of the Pecos River to the Dalton Day Use/southern forest boundary are susceptible to post-fire flooding that may pose a risk to public safety. Additional elevated flows along the Pecos River may occur from the southern forest boundary to the confluence of Canon de los Trigos. Presence of ash, floating debris and high levels of sediment transport can be expected. A large portion of the Upper Pecos Watershed (Rio Mora and Winsor Creek are sub-watersheds of the greater Pecos Watershed) was exposed to fire which increases the likelihood of increased post-fire flows.

Post-fire assessments within the Pecos Wilderness have been a challenge due to its remoteness, steep unstable slopes, and ongoing rain activity. However, initial estimates of fire impacts to soil properties and subsequent hydrologic response have been ascertained by reviewing satellite imagery not impacted by cloud cover, observed fire behavior within the burned area, and aerial reconnaissance. Further ongoing analysis will be able to refine post-fire response predictions.

Due to the large size of the Hermits Peak-Calf Canyon Fires and fire behavior within the perimeter, the BAER team divided the burned area into phases for assessment and analysis, beginning in the cooler areas of the fire. The remaining burned areas to be assessed by the Phase 3 BAER team total approximately 40,000 acres.

An executive summary of the team's Phase 1 assessment of the *Headwaters Gallinas River* and *Tecolote Creek* watersheds has been posted to the BAER team's InciWeb page at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8104/>.

The team's Phase 2 BAER assessment covered the northern area of the fire, including the *Sapello River Watershed*, *Upper Mora Watershed* and portions of *Embudo Creek Watershed*. An executive summary for Phase 2 is being prepared and will also be posted on the team's InciWeb page.

After a large wildfire, special actions may be necessary to provide for public and community safety and protect critical natural and cultural resources from post-fire events like soil erosion and flooding. The BAER program uses ground and aerial surveys, satellite imagery and computer models to evaluate conditions and recommend emergency treatments to protect NFS values at risk from further damage.

BAER teams focus on emergency actions necessary to protect human life and safety, property, and natural and cultural resources, including affected watersheds. BAER assessments identify unacceptable risks on federal lands from post-fire threats and help land

managers prepare burned areas for potential threats from rainstorms. Burned areas often experience increased soil erosion and runoff from rainstorms.

The Forest Service BAER team assessing the Hermits Peak-Calf Canyon Fires consists of hydrologists, soil scientists, road engineers, biologists, archaeologists, recreation specialists, and geographic information system (GIS) specialists. The Phase 3 BAER team leader is David Moore, a Forest Soil Scientist from the Prescott National Forest. Micah Kiesow is the SFNF BAER Coordinator and can provide additional BAER related assistance.

Using its preliminary assessment, the BAER team plans some field verification to produce a Phase 3 soil burn severity map, which provides baseline information on changed watershed conditions and potential watershed impacts from the fire. The BAER team's Phase 3 assessment report will include its final assessment, analysis, findings, and recommended emergency stabilization treatments and actions.

The BAER team continues to coordinate and share information from its assessment with other federal agencies, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Weather Service (NWS) and US Geological Survey (USGS) as well as state agencies and local counties and municipalities who work with adjacent and downstream private homeowners, landowners, and businesses to prepare for potential post-fire flooding and debris flow impacts. NRCS is a federal agency that has post-fire responsibilities on private lands both within and downstream of burned areas.

Homes or businesses that could be impacted by flooding from federal land that result from wildfires may be eligible for flood insurance coverage from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Information about NFIP is available through FEMA at [www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program](http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program), or [www.floodsmart.gov/wildfires](http://www.floodsmart.gov/wildfires). Other flood preparedness information is available at [www.ready.gov/floods](http://www.ready.gov/floods) at [www.floodsmart.gov/](http://www.floodsmart.gov/).

**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: [www.weather.gov/abq/](http://www.weather.gov/abq/).*

Hermits Peak - Calf Canyon Post-Fire BAER Assessment information is available at: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8104/>

