

Tahoe and Eldorado National Forests

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)

Post-Fire BAER Assessment



September 29, 2022

BAER Information: (707) 853-4243

FOREST SERVICE BAER TEAM BEGINS POST-FIRE ASSESSMENT OF MOSQUITO FIRE

A Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team has been established by the Tahoe National Forest (NF) and Eldorado NF to begin post-fire burned area assessments of the Mosquito Fire that recently burned on Forest Service federal, state, and private lands. The BAER team leader is Kendal Young, Forest Service Natural Resources Staff Officer. A California State watershed emergency response team (WERT) is evaluating burned private and state lands. Both teams will be sharing information and data as they complete their assessments and subsequent reports. Forest Service BAER team assessments typically take approximately two weeks to complete.

In addition to the CalWERT team, BAER teams coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Weather Service (NWS), US Geological Survey (USGS), and other federal, state, and local agencies as they assess potential post-fire impacts to the burned watersheds.

Post-fire surveys by the BAER teams are rapid assessments that evaluate the burned area to identify watersheds having increased potential for post-fire flooding, sediment flows and rockslides, and assist land managers to prepare the burned area for seasonal thunder cell storms. The team focus is on potential emergency impacts to life and safety on federal land. They also model hydrologic response throughout the burned area and share the team's findings with the affected downstream agencies.

BAER teams may consist of scientists and specialists including hydrologists, geologists, soil scientists, road engineers, botanists, biologists, archeologists, and geographic information specialists. BAER teams collect field data during their burned area surveys to analyze through GIS and computer models and present their findings along with recommended BAER emergency stabilization treatments in a BAER assessment report.

The assessment teams use satellite imagery and specialist data to analyze and produce a runoff map that shows the levels of potential water flows during specific modeled rain events. This is the first step in assessing potential watershed impacts from wildfires to any federal values that may be at-risk from potential increased flooding, sedimentation, debris flows, and rockslides. BAER teams produce a report that describes potential threats associated with the burned area's post-fire conditions and sometimes include recommended emergency stabilization measures and actions. BAER emergency response efforts are focused on the protection of human life, safety, and property, as well as critical cultural and natural resource values such as the water quality of streams and wetlands on federal lands.

The BAER reports are shared with interagency cooperators such as California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), NRCS, and counties who work with downstream private home and landowners to prepare for potential post-fire flooding and debris flow impacts. Homes or businesses that could be impacted by flooding from federal land that resulted 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, or www.floodsmart.gov/wildfires. Other flood preparedness information is available at www.ready.gov/floods at 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/sto/.*

Mosquito Post-Fire BAER Assessment information is available at: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8430/>

