



BAER Information: Chad Yocum, BAER Team Leader 928-458-4879

BAER Team Assessment of Grapevine Fire Impacts

PRESCOTT, AZ – August 3, 2023 – A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team is being established to begin a burned area assessment of the Grapevine wildfire on the Verde Ranger District. Preliminary evaluation has found no immediate or downstream values at risk, including the community of Whitehorse. Preliminary evaluation also found no immediate or downstream values at risk associated with the 405-acre Racetrack wildfire. Both wildfires burned within natural fire behavior for vegetation types and timing.

BAER assessments are rapid evaluations of the burned area to identify unacceptable risks on National Forest Service (NFS) lands from post-fire threats. The team's focus is on the emergency actions necessary to protect life and safety, property, and critical natural and cultural resources on NFS lands. The team is working in conjunction with the Yavapai County Flood Control District and shares burned area information from the assessment with other federal, state, and local agencies with post-fire responsibilities on state and private lands both within and downstream of burned areas, including USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Weather Service (NWS), and US Geological Survey (USGS).

BAER teams consist of scientists and specialists including hydrologists, geologists, soil scientists, engineers, botanists, biologists, archaeologists, and geographic information specialists. The teams collect data during ground surveys and complete GIS and modeling to evaluate the post-fire risks. The first step in the BAER assessment process is taking satellite imagery and data collected during ground surveys to produce a soil burn severity map. The soil burn severity provides the baseline information to determine changed watershed conditions for assessing potential watershed impacts from wildfires, such as flooding and unstable soils. This information is then compiled to determine if post fire emergency conditions are present. The order of emergency response strategies includes natural recovery, administrative closure, then land treatments if unacceptable risks are identified.

Everyone near and downstream from the Grapevine Fire burned area should remain alert and stay updated on weather conditions that may result in heavy rains over the area. Flash flooding could occur quickly during heavy rain events.

REMINDER: The Grapevine Fire Area Closure has just been lifted and there is still heavy equipment working throughout the area. Detailed information and maps are available on InciWeb at:

<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/azpnf-2023-grapevine-fire>