



NEWS RELEASE

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BAER team completes Soil Burn Severity map for Blue 2 Fire

RUIDOSO, NM, June 10, 2024 – Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) specialists recently completed their field data evaluation to produce the Soil Burn Severity (SBS) map for the Blue 2 Fire, which field verifies unburned/very low, low, moderate, and high SBS categories from satellite imagery.

The SBS map estimates approximately 2,135 acres (28%) of the fire is unburned/very low, approximately 4,486 acres (64%) have low soil burn severity, and approximately 602 acres (8%) sustained a moderate SBS. No portion of the fire was identified as having high SBS.

The SBS map product is an estimate of fire effects to soils, not fire effects to vegetation. SBS characterizes fire effects to the soil surface and below ground. Fire effects to vegetation would include an estimate of vegetation mortality and does not always correlate with degree of soil burn severity.

Moderate and high soil burn severity can alter or damage physical, chemical, and biological soil properties resulting in increased runoff, erosion, and negative effects to soil productivity. These soil properties include but are not limited to soil cover (effective litter), soil organic matter content, hydrophobicity (water repellency), soil pore space, and soil structure (degree of aggregation).

Changes to these soil properties determine the degree of soil burn severity. Loss of effective ground cover, especially on steep slopes, greatly increases probability of soil erosion and increased runoff.

The Blue 2 BAER team used remote sensing imagery with field-validated soils data to produce the final SBS map. The BAER team will use the SBS map as an analysis tool to estimate post-fire erosion with subsequent sediment delivery, stream flows and debris flow probabilities. The map is also being shared with cooperating agencies.

The Blue 2 Fire soil burn severity map can be downloaded from Inciweb at [Nmlnf Blue 2 Fire Postfire Baer Information | InciWeb \(wildfire.gov\)](https://www.wildfire.gov/nciweb/2024/blue2_baer_maps) as a JPEG or PDF version under the *Maps* tab.

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/.*