LAKE & APACHE POST-FIRE BAER ASSESSMENT UPDATE
August 2, 2024

Forest Service BAER Team Begins Post-Fire Assessment of Lake and Apache Fires

A Forest Service Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team has been established by the Los Padres National Forest (NF) to begin a post-fire burned area assessment of the Lake and Apache Fires that recently burned on National Forest, state (Sedgwick Reserve), and private lands. The BAER team leader is Emily Fudge, Forest Service Hydrologist. Forest Service BAER team assessments typically take approximately two weeks to complete.

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

BAER surveys 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.

BAER teams utilize satellite imagery and specialist data to analyze fire effects, produce erosion potential and debris-flow maps, and model post-fire flows. 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.

BAER reports are shared with interagency cooperators such as California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), NRCS, California State Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT), and counties who work with downstream private home and landowners to prepare for potential post-fire flooding and debris flow impacts. The WERT (CalFire is the lead agency and WERT works with communities) and Forest Service BAER teams coordinate the assessment of the burned area to ensure post-fire threats are identified. 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, or www.floodsmart.gov/wildfires. Other flood preparedness information is available at www.ready.gov/floods at www.floodsmart.gov/.

Additional information on understanding the BAER program, process and other post-fire information is posted on the Lake and Apache Post-Fire BAER InciWeb page found at: Calpf Lake And Apache Postfire Baer Information | InciWeb (wildfire.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/lox/.

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