

# NEWS RELEASE

Pacific Northwest Region - Colville National Forest  
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## *Post-wildfire work underway on the Colville National Forest*

**Colville, WA** – (September 17, 2015) As cooler weather moves into the area and this summer's fires are being contained and controlled, forest managers are assessing the burned areas to determine the types and scale of rehabilitation needed to stabilize soils, protect water quality and ensure any damage done during fire suppression efforts are repaired or mitigated.

The immediate goal of managers is to determine and complete the short-term Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) plan and subsequent work needed to stabilize hillsides and protect water quality. A BAER Team will be in place by mid-September to begin this critical work and move the severely burned areas to a more stable condition before winter weather begins. BAER Teams are comprised of soil scientists, hydrologists, engineers, vegetation specialists and other specialists.

Additional work that includes evaluation of burn intensity, soil stability, forest mortality and the potential for tree planting will be conducted as well. These assessments will be used to identify areas where there is significant need for action to protect forest and watershed health, and areas where dead merchantable timber may be harvested in an environmentally sound manner before the trees begin to decompose. Some of these longer-term efforts may require more time to implement due to required environmental reviews.

"We have a very good idea of what our priority areas will be related to BAER work and it is our priority to stabilize those soils and protect communities downstream. Once that critical work is completed, we will work with our partners to look at salvage opportunities." Said Rodney Smoldon, Forest Supervisor for the Colville National Forest. "We will continue to move forward with our previously schedule projects, but understand that this summer's wildfires will delay those projects in order to implement any needed rehabilitation or salvage projects for the health of the forest and to provide economic benefits for local communities."

Ninety-two individual wildfires have burned 93,095 acres across the Colville National Forest this year. A few of the larger wildfires are still active and there continues to be road traffic and heavy equipment use that necessitates keeping the emergency area closures in place. As firefighters make progress and fall weather further reduces fire activity, emergency closure areas will be lifted or will decrease in size. Due to rugged, inaccessible terrain, some fires may continue burning until winter snows extinguish them.

For more information on current wildfires please visit [www.inciweb.nwcg.gov](http://www.inciweb.nwcg.gov) or contact your local Forest Service Office.

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