



BAER TRACKS

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) is an emergency response, not a long-term rehabilitation program. Primary objectives are to identify significant post-fire threats. If necessary and feasible, actions are undertaken to manage unacceptable risks. Actions taken must be proven to be effective and must be implementable before a significant damaging weather event.

Natural processes will play the major role in recovery after a forest fire. However, there are certain actions that can be taken to speed recovery of burned areas.

There are four phases that lead to recovery of the forests:

1. Rehabilitation of fire suppression actions: This is completed before the fire is contained. It includes the rehabilitation of resource damage caused by suppression activities, such as dozer lines and hand lines, for example installing drainage and seeding, and the removal of hazard trees along highways and major forest roads.
2. BAER assessment of damage: This starts before the fire is 100% contained. This includes the evaluation of the fire effects to soil, vegetation, wildlife, roads, and facilities. This results in the development of the Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan.
3. BAER implementation: This is the emergency stabilization of soils and reestablishment of plant cover by the end of the first year after fire is contained. The approved plan is implemented as soon as possible by seeding, mulching, road work, debris removal from drainages, culvert cleaning and the possible removal of culverts too small to accommodate increased runoff. There may be a continued removal of hazard trees in and around recreation areas, roads, power lines, and along forest boundaries.

4. Long term restoration for a period of 1-3 years: This includes fence reconstruction, campground facility replacement, additional reseeding, continuing the removal of hazard trees, tree planting, and road repair. After appropriate environmental analysis tree planting and tree harvesting may occur.

The operational plan for the week starting June 27 includes four – 20 person hand crews that will begin to clear debris out of drainage bottoms around the Nutrioso, Greer and Eagar areas. Miscellaneous heavy equipment that will assist in these efforts has been ordered. The plan is to continue efforts in other areas.

The reseeding contract is in the final stages of contract preparation and seeding will begin as soon as funding is approved. The seed mix that will be used on the severely burned areas of the fire will consist of blue gamma, western wheatgrass, Lewis flax and annual barley for elevations lower than 8,000 feet. Arizona fescue, Idaho fescue, muttongrass, slender wheatgrass, and annual barley will be used on severely burned areas above 8,000 feet.

More information is available at <http://593info.org>.