USDA Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Payette National Forest | September, 2026

# Tartar Fire Burned Area Summary

## Burned Area Report

### Fire Background

The Tartar Fire was discovered on July 24, 2026, burning primarily on private lands approximately 21 miles northwest of Weiser, Idaho, and expanded rapidly across short-grass fuels to a final size of 158,027 acres. While a majority of the wildfire occurred on private land and Bureau of Land Management, approximately 6,522 acres occurred on the Payette National Forest, affecting portions of the Hitt Mountains and several headwater drainages, including Dennett, Mann, Rock, and Monroe Creeks.

Major vegetation types for Forest Service land in the Tartar Fire area include Evergreen Forest (mixed Douglas Fir and Grand Fir forest at higher elevations and Ponderosa pine forest at mid elevations), Shrub/Scrub (sagebrush and bitterbrush), and grassland/herbaceous. Other vegetation types included woody wetlands near streams, developed open space, and rocky outcroppings.

While many wildfires cause minimal damage to the land and pose few threats to the land or people downstream, some fires result in damage that requires special efforts to reduce impacts afterwards. The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program is designed to identify and manage potential risks to resources on National Forest System lands and reduce these threats through appropriate emergency measures to protect human life and safety, property, and critical natural or cultural resources. BAER is an emergency program for stabilization work that involves time critical activities to be completed before damaging events to meet program objectives.

Figure 1 (Above): Example of low to moderate soil burn severity on the Tartar fire.

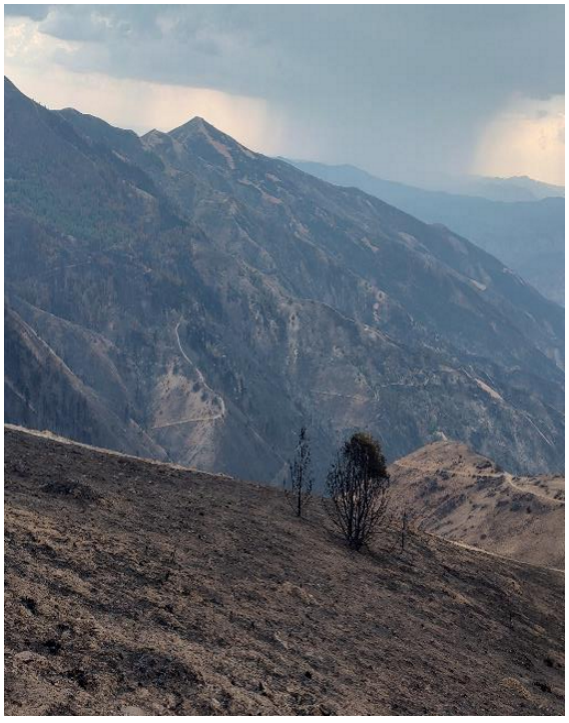


Figure 2 (Above): Example of moderate to high soil burn severity.

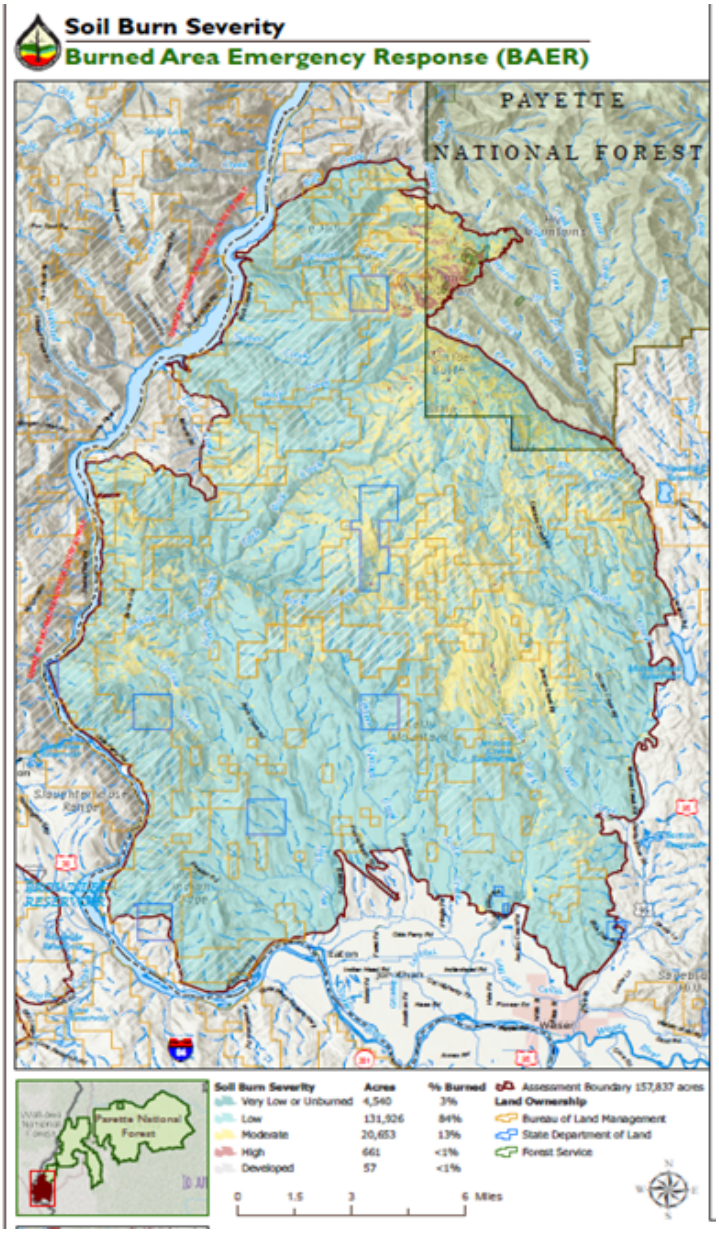



Figure 3: Soil Burn Severity map of the Tartar fire (full size map below).

## Soils & Soil Burn Severity (SBS)

Soils across the burned area are predominantly loamy (from very fine to coarse/skeletal loams depending on slope position), with a notable pocket of skeletal sandy soils in the upper Dennett Creek headwaters due to localized parent material differences.

SBS varies across the footprint: the northern Forest Service portion (Dennett Creek/Corner Mountain) shows more connected moderate-to-high SBS, reflecting more intense fire behavior, while the southern portion near Adams Creek Road is a patchy mosaic with smaller, disconnected areas of moderate/high SBS.

**Low SBS:** Organic surface layers lightly charred; grasses/understory recognizable; soil and root structure intact.
**Moderate SBS:** Up to 80% of ground cover consumed; shrub crowns largely intact and early regrowth visible; slight, recoverable soil structural changes.
**High SBS:** Fine fuels completely consumed; canopy largely removed; near-surface organic matter lost with altered soil structure in the upper inches (Gray/red/orange soil colors may appear)

In Dennett Creek, steep, connected slopes combined with moderate/high SBS are expected to produce increased hillslope erosion and sediment movement. In the east-facing drainages, slopes are shorter with a mosaic of SBS; localized erosion may occur, but large areas of low/unburned terrain are likely to filter sediment before it reaches streams. Across the area, vegetation recovery is expected to return soil conditions to near background levels within 1–3 years as grasses, forbs, and shrubs re-establish ground cover and roots.

## Hydrology & Post-Fire Watershed Response:

BAER hydrology modeling indicates variable post-fire watershed response among subwatersheds.

**Dennett Creek–Snake River:** Debris-flow potential is very likely in the mainstem due to steep, connected slopes and substantial moderate-to-high SBS; the upper basin shows a 50% likelihood of debris flows with short-duration rainfall intensities of 16–24 mm/hr within one year.
**Upper Mann Creek headwaters (Fourth of July & Robinson Creeks):** Localized moderate/high SBS; debris-flow potential likely but overall hazard minimal given the small affected area.
**Middle Mann Creek (Adams Creek):** Debris-flow potential unlikely and overall risk low due to low to moderate SBS confined to a northeast aspect.
**Monroe Creek (municipal watershed for Weiser), Rock Creek, and Raft Creek–Snake River:** Debris-flow potential unlikely, with low to moderate SBS and limited Forest Service acreage in Monroe Creek contributing area.

In areas of high SBS, intense rain rates (greater than 27 mm/hr) or rain-on-snow events can trigger debris flows or elevated runoff; these conditions are most consequential in steep, connected slopes.

Figure 4: Forest Service road 50010

## Critical Values & Recommendations

The first critical value BAER teams assess is always human life and safety on National Forest System lands. During and after heavy rainstorms, Forest Service employees and visitors to National Forest System lands could be threatened by floodwaters and debris flows. In addition, users of roads within and downstream of the burned areas may be affected by road washouts during and after heavy rainstorms.

The BAER team recommends general warning signs and communications to travelers on any National Forest System roads and trails within or directly adjacent to the fire. Warning signs will be placed along roads and trails at strategic entry points into the national forests and burned areas.

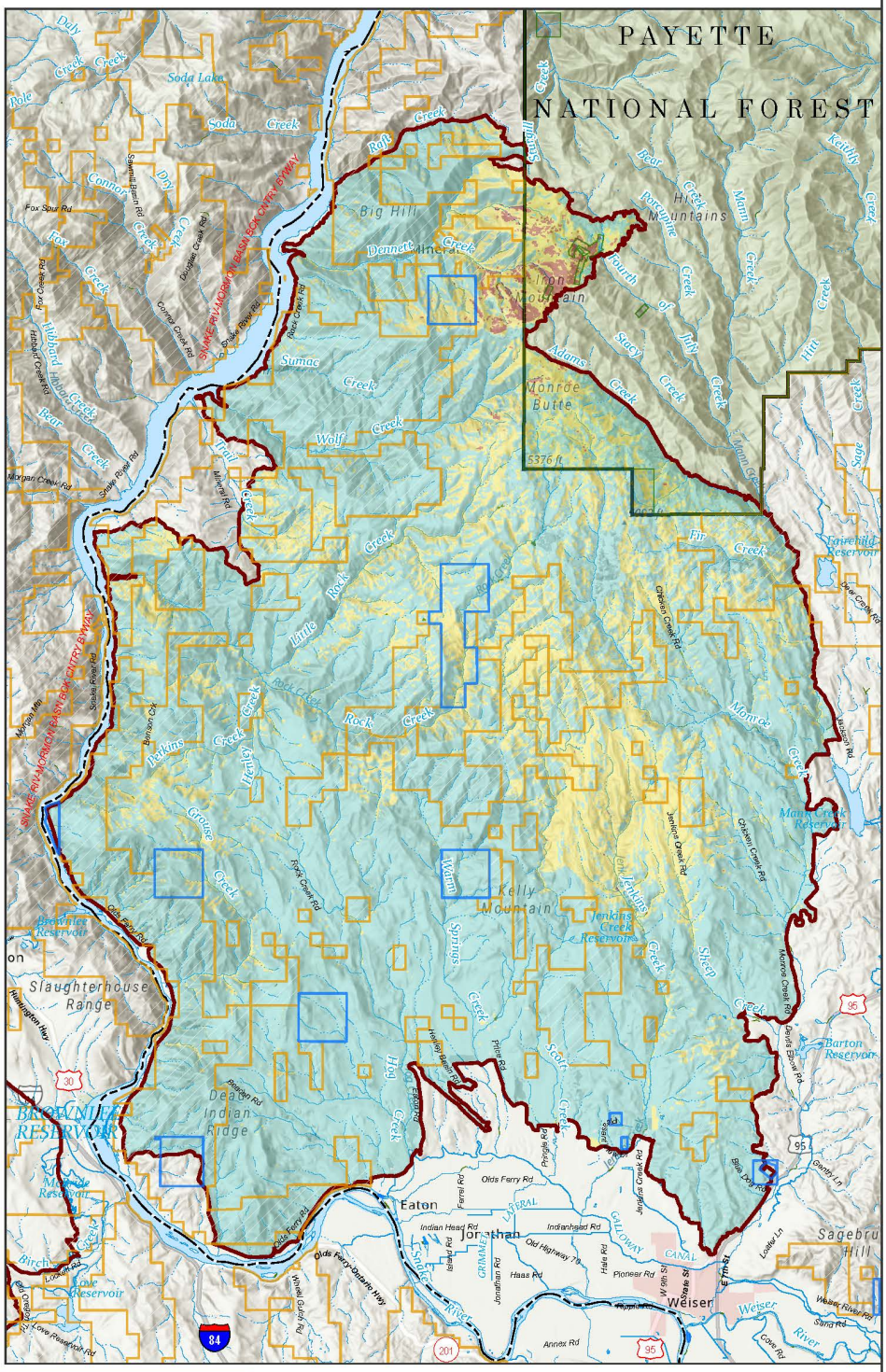
Post-fire runoff and debris can quickly overwhelm road and trail drainage, leading to washouts, slope failures, and damage to public and administrative infrastructure. To reduce these risks, the BAER team's desired actions focus on storm-proofing the transportation network, improving road drainage capacity and resilience by refreshing and adding drainage dips (rolling dips/grade reversals) to safely shed water, and installing armored fill slopes at vulnerable segment resist scour and overtopping during peak-flow events. These measures are paired with proactive trail monitoring, especially ahead of and after forecast storms, to verify that water-control features are functioning, clear sediment and floatable debris, and temporarily restrict use where needed. Together, these treatments help maintain conveyance, reduce the likelihood of structural failure, and protect property while vegetation and ground cover recover.

Native and rare plant communities within the Tartar Fire footprint are vulnerable to rapid invasive-weed establishment following disturbance. This is especially true where moderate to high soil burn severity has reduced ground cover and exposed soils. To protect biodiversity and support recovery, the BAER team recommends treating weeds where intact native plant communities overlap within medium to high SBS as well as along suppression disturbance cooridoors. Targeted treatments (e.g., spot herbicide under existing approvals, timely removal before seed set) will be paired with focused monitoring to catch early emergence, limit seed dispersal, and maintain the ecological integrity of native and rare plant communities as vegetation recovers.

Figure 5: Rare Snake River Goldenweed, partially burnt.

## Soil Burn Severity

### Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER)




| Soil Burn Severity | Acres | % Burned |
|---|---|---|
| Very Low or Unburned | 4,540 | 3% |
| Low | 131,926 | 84% |
| Moderate | 20,653 | 13% |
| High | 661 | <1% |
| Developed | 57 | <1% |

Assessment Boundary 157,837 acres

**Land Ownership**

- Bureau of Land Management
- State Department of Land
- Forest Service

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

N W E S

## Soil Burn Severity

Soil Burn Severity is a measure of the fire's effects on the ground surface and soil condition. This map identifies the fire-induced changes in soil and ground surface properties that may affect infiltration, runoff, and erosion potential. The BAER Team uses this map to identify areas of unacceptable risk to a critical value and where mitigating treatments may be most effective. This product is appropriate for wildland landscapes and does not represent fire effects in developed areas.

**Severity indicators**

**Very Low soil burn severity or Unburned**: Little to no burn expected within these areas except in small patches, or where fuels were sparce. Canopy and ground litter almost completely intact. Little to no vegetation mortality expected.

**Low soil burn severity:** The ground surface, including any exposed mineral soil, may appear brown or black (lightly charred), and surface organic layers are not completely consumed. Grasslands often appear charred and may be partially consumed, but recognizable. Forested and shrub canopy, and understory vegetation, will likely be slightly charred and may appear "green." Root structures are unaltered.

**Moderate soil burn severity:** Up to 80 percent of the pre-fire ground cover may be consumed but generally not all of it. Finer fuels including grasses, forbs, and small stems are mostly consumed. Shrub stems are charred or consumed, but root crowns are typically intact. Forested canopy may be scorched or consumed. Soil structure and fine root systems are largely unaltered.

**High soil burn severity:** Found mostly in forested areas and some areas of dense shrubland (e.g. riparian corridors). Fine fuels (<1 inch diameter) are completely consumed, with larger woody fuels being mostly or completely consumed. Shrubs may be consumed down to root crowns. Forested canopy in completely consumed with only larger stems remaining. Soil surface may appear gray, orange, or reddish where concentrated fuels were consumed. Near surface organic matter and fine fuels are consumed, with soil structure being altered or lost in the top few inches.

*For additional information including photo examples of soil burn severity see the Field Guide for Mapping Post-Fire Soil Burn Severity at:* https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr243.pdf



Date: 8/18/2026

The Burned Area Emergency Response (**BAER**) program addresses emergency stabilization on **National Forest System (NFS) lands only.** For e**ligible non-federal lands**, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's **Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)** program provides technical and financial assistance—working with local sponsors (e.g., cities, counties, conservation districts, and federally recognized tribes)—to relieve imminent threats to life and property from post-disaster flooding and erosion. Learn more here: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/emergency-watershed-protection; program authorities and eligibility are outlined in 7 CFR Part 624 and the EWP Program Manual. The Payette National Forest is also pursuing longer-term rehabilitation funding sources to support recovery beyond BAER.