



# What is? **BAER**

**Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) is an assessment intended to protect life, property, water quality, important archeological resources, and impacted ecosystems from further damage.**

Some wildfires create situations that require special efforts to prevent further problems after the fire. As soon as it is safe to do so, sometimes even before a wildfire is fully suppressed, the US Forest Service dispatches a multidisciplinary group of scientists and natural resource management experts called a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team to assess post-fire effects and damages to resources, property, and infrastructure. The team consists of hydrologists, wildlife biologists, archeologists, soils scientists, landscape architects, geologists, ecologists, engineers, foresters, botanists, and Geographic Information System (GIS) specialists.

A hot fire can change the composition of soil, making it hydrophobic. Hydrophobic soils repel water. Instead of being absorbed by vegetation and forest litter, rain in a severely burned area will stay on the surface, potentially causing floods, erosion, and debris flows.

Post-fire programs such as BAER or similar, Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR, supported by the Department of Interior), address these

and other situations with the goal of protecting life, property, water quality, archeological resources, and deteriorated ecosystems from further damage after the fire is out.



Photo credit: Dept. of Interior

# FIRE FACTS

## The primary objectives of BAER:

- Determine if an emergency condition exists after the fire.
- Alleviate emergency conditions to help stabilize soil; control water, sediment and debris movement; prevent impairment of ecosystems; mitigate significant threats to health, safety, life, property and downstream values at risk.
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of emergency treatments.

## Post-fire stabilization work includes:

- Reseeding native grasses and plants, replanting trees and shrubs, and utilizing mechanical techniques.
- Controlling invasive species.
- Stabilizing fish and wildlife habitat, including watersheds and in-stream habitats.
- Repairing recreation infrastructure and access to roads, trails, trailheads and campgrounds.

## For more information:

Burned Area Emergency Response, BAER:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/watershed/burnareas/background.html>

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