



Post-Fire BAER Assessment

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Information Brief

CentralWashingtonFireRecovery.info



Preparing for Rain Storms

Wildfire increases the potential for flooding, mud and debris flows that could affect campgrounds, fish habitat, homes, structures, roads, and other infrastructure within, adjacent to, and downstream from the burned area. Fall weather events in Central Washington can bring heavy rain storms or rain-on-snow events. Residents and visitors should remain alert to possible flooding when traveling along roads downstream from the burned areas of the recent Central Washington wildfires.

Central Washington Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team is working with the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest to assess the condition of watersheds that were burned in the throughout the summer. The **BAER** assessment team identifies potential emergency threats to critical values-at-risk, and recommends emergency stabilization response actions that are implemented on federal lands to reduce potential threats.

One of the **BAER** strategies is interagency coordination with local cooperators who assist affected businesses, homes, and landowners prepare for rain events. The Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are working together and coordinating with other federal, state and local agencies, and counties that assist private landowners in preparing for increased run-off and potential flooding.

Federal assistance to private landowners is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program. NRCS works with local governments (sponsors) to implement emergency measures in the wake of natural disasters to safeguard human lives and property. NRCS and the local sponsor prepare damage survey reports for eligible sites on private lands adjacent to and downstream from affected areas. NRCS uses these reports, along with the **BAER** team's assessment report, any may develop emergency measures to reduce the impacts from potential increased water and debris flows, and assist sponsors to implement recommended emergency measures.

Multiple agencies work with **BAER** teams and look at the full scope and scale of the situation to reduce the potential threats to human life and safety, and property; however, **BAER** emergency treatments actions on federal lands cannot prevent all of the potential flooding or soil erosion impacts, especially after wildfires change the landscape.

It is important that residents take steps to protect themselves and their property from flooding and debris flows:

- For their safety, communities need to monitor local weather reports and public safety bulletins, local road closures, emergency notifications, weather alerts, follow local county and city advisories, and act accordingly.
- Use a "weather radio" or smart phone "weather app" that monitors "all hazards" alerts issued by the NOAA-National Weather Service (www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/).
- Prepare for rainstorms by being prepared to evacuate if county or city emergency officials determine that flooding and mudflows are expected which could pose an increased threat to human life, safety, and property.
- Know and be alert to environmental signs of dangerous weather conditions and be prepared to take action that can save lives.
- Understand that all drainages within and downstream of the burned areas can produce flooding.
- If you find yourself in a flood, climb to safety (seek higher ground).
- Even if the water appears shallow enough to cross, don't try it by vehicle or foot. Water hides dips in the road – worse yet, there may be no road left under the water as flooding can scour away the entire road surface and ground beneath the road.



Interagency Resources for Flood and Storm Preparedness and Emergency Information

Local Counties

The Office of Emergency Services promotes preparedness through their emergency services program for each county, to assist the public to prepare for, respond appropriately to, and quickly recover from natural emergencies that may impact county residents and visitors:

Chelan County

<http://www.co.chelan.wa.us/sheriff/pages/emergency-management?parent=Units>

Kittitas County

<https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/sheriff/emergency.aspx>

Okanogan County

<http://okanogancounty.org/ochd/Emergency.html>

Yakima County

<http://yakimacounty.us/350/Emergency-Management>

County communities can register to receive important Notices and Alerts during emergencies at the following Central Washington county websites:

Chelan County

<http://public.alertsense.com/SignUp/?regionid=1184>

Kittitas County Flood Warning

<http://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/public-works/flood/warning.aspx>

Okanogan County

<http://okanogandem.org>

Yakima County

<https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085612758#/signup>

State Agencies

The Washington Emergency Management Division provides information emergency preparedness and about flood and storm preparation:

<https://mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division/disaster-assistance/for-households>

<https://mil.wa.gov/other-links/plans>

<https://mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division/grants/hazard-mitigation-grants>

<https://www.mil.wa.gov/preparesse> (Española)

The Washington State Department of Ecology

provides information to the public regarding flood and safety:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/floods/index.html>

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/water/floods/emergency.html>

<http://access.wa.gov/topics/emergency/flood>

Other Federal Agencies

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is administered by FEMA to provide flood insurance protection to property owners in return for local government commitment to sound floodplain management and related flood disaster mitigation efforts. An NFIP flood insurance policy can be obtained directly from the federal government or through an insurance company. Usually, a flood insurance policy has a 30-day waiting period for coverage. However, the 30-day waiting period does not apply if a property has been affected by flooding from Federal land that was caused by post-wildfire conditions.



Additional information about NFIP is available through FEMA at:

www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program.

Other flood preparedness information is available at: www.ready.gov/floods

Flood Smart information at:

www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/about/nfip_overview.jsp

The USDI Geological Survey (USGS) provides “water watch” internet tools and flood information for the State of Washington:

<https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/new/index.php?r=wa&m=real&ca>

https://waterwatch.usgs.gov/index.php?mt=real&st=wa&usst=wa&ushuc=&id=wwlmap_viewer

<http://waterwatch.usgs.gov/new/index.php?r=ca&id=flood>

The following counties offer Emergency Management Social media sites.

Chelan County EMS

<https://www.facebook.com/CCSOEM>

Kittitas County

<https://www.facebook.com/KittitasCountySheriff>

Okanogan County

<https://www.facebook.com/Okanogan.County.Emergency.Management>

Yakima County

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Yakima-County-Sheriffs-Office/122319294492086>

SPECIAL NOTE

Everyone near and downstream from the 2017 Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest fire areas should remain alert and stay updated on weather conditions that may result in heavy rains over the burn scar. Flash flooding may occur quickly during heavy rain events.

Current weather and emergency notifications can be found at the National Weather Service, Spokane Office: www.weather.gov/spokane

Okanogan-Wenatchee NF Post-Fire BAER Assessment information is available at:

<http://centralwashingtonfirerecovery.info>

or: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5633>

