

## Post- Fire Assessment

# Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Information Brief



## Minor Facilities and Infrastructure Rehabilitation Pilot

The primary Forest Service program to address immediate risk of post-fire damage to critical values on National Forest System (NFS) lands is the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program. Beyond the BAER program, there is a lack of dedicated funding to repair wildfire damages to NFS investments and resources. In response to the growing need to address NFS resources damaged by wildfire, the Forest Service began piloting a program in 2020 known as the “Minor Facilities and Infrastructure Rehabilitation Pilot”. This program is intended to gauge the level of need, and the agency’s ability to manage post-fire rehabilitation actions for a subset of rehabilitation needs related to minor facilities and infrastructure damaged by wildfire. Rehabilitation is defined by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) as short-term efforts undertaken within three years of a wildfire to repair or improve fire damaged lands unlikely to recover to management approved conditions or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by wildfire. If this pilot program proves to be successful in its ability to address targeted needs while maintaining fiscal discipline, it may guide the development of future Forest Service policy. The BAER program staff are tasked with the administration of this pilot effort.

### Post-fire Rehabilitation Pilot Facts

- Projects eligible for the pilot program include minor NFS facilities and infrastructure damaged and/or destroyed by a wildfire. Items that could be included are road and trail signage, minor road and trail infrastructure, some recreation facilities, and range allotment infrastructure.
- Major infrastructure, such as visitor centers, residential structures, administration offices, work centers and similar facilities are not included in the program.
- Forest Service Headquarters staff review and authorize all pilot project requests to ensure they comply within the program’s parameters.
- Forest Service staff at the unit level compile and prepare requests for funding. There is no application process for permittees or other forest users.
- Post-fire rehabilitation actions are not considered emergency actions, therefore:
  - Funding requests under the pilot should only occur after the BAER assessment has been completed for emergency needs.
  - NEPA and regulatory consultation is required prior to implementation of pilot activities.
- All work must occur on NFS lands and address NFS owned infrastructure and facilities.
- The pilot only includes infrastructure or facilities damaged or destroyed by wildfire and is not intended to address existing maintenance needs or construct new facilities that did not exist prior to the wildfire.
- At the end of the pilot period, the program’s successes and challenges will be reviewed to inform decisions on whether the program will continue in its current form, continue with adjustments, or be terminated.