



Burn Area Emergency Response Report for High Park Fire Prepared

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Fort Collins, Colo. (July 19, 2012) – An interagency Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) team has identified potential treatments for the High Park Fire burn area.

The team was comprised of resource specialists from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Larimer County, Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). BAER teams consider potential immediate post-fire impacts to human life and safety, property, and cultural and natural resources. The USFS is responsible for addressing concerns on National Forest System lands and the NRCS through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program and a partnership with a local sponsor works to address similar threats and concerns on non-Federal lands.

An interagency report has been prepared and summarizes watershed information, areas of concern, values at risk and proposed treatment. The High Park Fire burned over 87,200 acres on multiple land jurisdictions. Of the burned acres within the fire perimeter, 32,302 burned at a low severity; 35,399 at a moderate severity; and 5,714 at a high severity. More than 14,000 acres within the perimeter were unburned. Emergency treatments considered include land treatments, road and trail treatments, protection/safety treatments, and, for the USFS, cultural resources.

CDOT is planning potential rock scaling operations to help prevent more rockslides onto Highway 14 by taking down already loose rocks.

Aerial mulching is planned for 5,604 acres on National Forest System (NFS) lands, with no treatments proposed in the Cache la Poudre Wilderness. Possible treatments for private lands include aerial mulching and seeding of an additional 5,657 acres. Most of the land would be mulched with weed-free agricultural straw, but some could use wood shreds or wood straw. Areas planned or proposed for aerial mulching to reduce erosion are in high and moderate soil burn severity and on slopes between 20% and 60%. They are also strategically located in areas where life, safety, or property is at risk or where there is high risk to public water supply.

Additional possible treatments on private lands include barriers or other measures to reduce damage from sediment and debris; clearing channels and drainage ways; warning signs; and increasing the size of culverts on county roads and providing some protection from erosion to reduce the risk of flood flows overtopping and washing out portions of these roads.

Other planned treatments/responses on NFS lands include road repairs or closures; temporary closures of areas, including USFS trails; warning signs; noxious weed detection and treatment; hazardous tree cutting (of immediate threats); and trail stabilization.

In total, the BAER assessment identified approximately \$24 million in potential emergency stabilization treatments to address the impacts of the High Park Fire. Roughly \$17 million in possible

treatments is identified for public roads and private lands. Approximately \$9.9 million of these treatments may be eligible for 75% federal funding through the EWP program, but the Federal funding currently available for Colorado falls far short of this amount. The cost for local sponsors and private landowners would be around \$9.3 million. No source for these local funds has been identified yet.

Please continue to check <http://inciweb.org/incident/2904/> for the latest information on the fire and updates on BAER activities.

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MEDIA FIELD TRIP: Media are invited to a field trip July 24, meeting at the Young Gulch Trailhead at 9 a.m. Representatives from the USFS, NRCS, Larimer County, and CDOT will be available to provide an overview of the process and findings, as well as answer questions. After an approximately one half mile hike at Young Gulch, there will be two to three additional stops. Please wear hiking boots and bring water and a hardhat (we will try to have a few available).