



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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**NATIONAL INTERAGENCY BURNED AREA EMERGENCY RESPONSE (BAER) TEAM
BEGINS WORK ON THE MURPHY COMPLEX FIRE**

The National Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team arrived on the Murphy Complex Fire, Elko, NV, and began their fire assessments on Tuesday, July 31, 2007. The team's primary mission is to assess potential threats to life, property, and critical cultural and natural resources as a result of the wildfires. One potential threat is flooding and mud flows. The team's fire assessments will look at emergency stabilization needs for fire effects to both cultural and natural resources and infrastructure on Federal lands of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. In addition, the National BAER Team will provide assistance to the Bureau of Land Management, Jarbidge Field Office BAER Team which is conducting assessments on BLM lands in Idaho on the Twin Falls District.

The fourteen team members represent Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, and US Forest Service. The team is being augmented by staff from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Mountain City Ranger District. The disciplines on the team include: hydrologists, soil scientists, archeologists, wildlife and fisheries biologists, vegetation specialist, forester, environmental compliance specialist, geographic information system specialists, and documentation specialists. The team is led by Erv Gasser, National Park Service, Seattle, Washington.

Issues already identified by the agencies include: flood/debris flow impacts, roads and bridges, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, and noxious weeds. Following the fire assessment to evaluate the overall soil burn severity a determination will be made as to the necessity of any emergency stabilization treatments. The primary objectives are to protect life and safety, property, and reduce further resource damage that may be caused by flooding as a direct result of the fire. The BAER Team's focus is the potential for accelerated erosion and runoff from loss of vegetation and charred soils.

Following field assessments, the BAER Team will prepare an Emergency Stabilization Plan. The plan will cover the area within and down drainage from the fires on Forest Service and adjacent lands. It's anticipated that the fire assessments will be completed next week and the plan delivered to the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest the following week. Once approved, treatments will be installed within one year from date of containment of the Murphy Complex Fire and may be monitored for up to three years.

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