

Burn Area Recovery Task Force Overview

Following the destructive series of Southern California wildfires included in the Presidential Disaster Declaration FEMA-1731-DR-CA, Federal and State authorities realized the need for a unified approach to assess the post fire risks to lives and property that may arise during the 2007 – 2008 winter rainy seasons. The fires burned a combined area in excess of 520,000 acres throughout Southern California. The combined effects of vegetation loss, as well as, the effect on soils from the fire, create conditions that greatly increase the threat of flooding, erosion and debris flows into watersheds throughout Southern California. In order to facilitate a coordinated response to the post fire risks, the Multi Agency Support Group (MASG) was formed which consisted of State and Federal agency representatives. The MASG enlisted Burn Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams which consisted of programmatic and technical experts to assess the burn areas and prepare BAER Reports which outlined potential areas of concern. The Burn Area Recovery Task Force (BARTF) teams were then formed under the direction of the MASG to assist the affected counties with evaluation of potential hazards, development of potential remediation to these hazards, and coordination of potential funding sources for possible projects.

The BARTF consisted of multi-agency teams of specialists in a variety of fields including geology, biology, archaeology, hydrology, forestry, and engineering. The teams assessed a variety of source information, which included individual BAER reports, Post-Fire Hazard Awareness Maps, information from various city and county representatives, as well as tribal leaders. From these sources potential risks to lives and property resulting from post fire potential debris flow were identified. The identified risks were then evaluated and potential emergency protective measures were identified. The results of the BARTF team's evaluations are presented in this report which is categorized by county and fires within each county. The BARTF reports are intended as a tool to assist counties and municipalities in identifying potential projects or gaps and categorizing prospective funding sources.