

## **POST-WILDFIRE PROGRAMS**

### **1 Introduction**

This chapter provides policy and direction for activities associated with post-wildfire management in the National Park Service. The National Park Service Fire Management Post-Wildfire Program is dedicated to protecting lives, property, and resources while promoting the restoration, maintenance, and integrity of ecosystems. The program determines the need to prescribe and implement emergency treatments to meet the following objectives:

- Minimize threats to life or property.
- Stabilize and prevent further unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources resulting from the effects of a fire.
- Repair or improve lands damaged directly by a wildfire.
- Rehabilitate or establish the integrity of stable ecosystems in the burned area.

Natural recovery after a wildfire is preferable if immediate stabilization and rehabilitation needs have been met or are assessed to not be necessary. In situations where a burned area emergency exists and it is possible to restrict access to protect life and safety or where valid uses will significantly interfere with emergency treatment objectives or delay recovery, administrative closures should be the first consideration. Treatments should be disallowed if they are experimental or proven to be ineffective.

All unplanned wildfires are eligible for post-wildfire funding, regardless of the strategies, tactics, and management options.

Post-wildfire management consists of four funding activities: Suppression Damage Repair, Emergency Stabilization, Burned Area Rehabilitation, and Restoration. Descriptions for each are found in section 3.

### **2 Responsibilities**

#### **2.1 National Level**

The Branch Chief, NPS Branch of Wildland Fire, is responsible for designating a National Post-Wildfire Programs Coordinator for the National Park Service. The Branch Chief, NPS Branch of Wildland Fire, is the approving authority for Emergency Stabilization plans over \$500,000 and is the approving authority for all Burned Area Rehabilitation plans.

The National Post-Wildfire Programs Coordinator, as directed by the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation, plans program development and evaluation guidance, coordinates program issues, establishes funding priorities, and provides training, oversight, and information. The coordinator is also responsible for supporting, managing, and conducting overall performance reviews and evaluation of emergency stabilization, rehabilitation, and BAER team activities. The coordinator must involve other program areas such as wildland fire management, budget, and cultural and natural resources, as necessary and appropriate, to ensure an integrated interagency program. The coordinator reviews, and recommends for approval to the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation, all plans submitted to the national office.

## **2.2 Regional Level**

NPS regional fire management officers are responsible for designating a Post-Wildfire Programs Coordinator for each region and providing support and funding to administer the program.

The regional coordinators are responsible for reviewing Emergency Stabilization and Burned Area Rehabilitation plans produced by the parks in their regions, and recommending them for approval to the appropriate approving authority. The regional coordinators provide training, oversight, and information to parks within their region and coordinate activities with other regions, agencies, and states as necessary and prudent for the program. They are also responsible for supporting, managing, and conducting overall performance reviews and evaluation of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation activities. The coordinators must involve other program areas such as wildland fire management, budget, and cultural and natural resources, as necessary and appropriate, to ensure an integrated interagency program.

## **2.3 Park Level**

Park superintendents are responsible for the following:

- Developing, implementing, and evaluating ES and BAR plans, treatments, and activities within their parks.
- Submitting the plans to the regional office for review and approval.
- Designating a coordinator for ES and BAR plans and their implementation.
- Ensure that their employees are trained and made available to participate in post-wildfire programs as the situation demands.

Employees involved in post-wildfire programs are responsible for knowing appropriate policies and guidance. They are also responsible for knowing, understanding, and practicing safe operations. Employees with operational,

administrative, or other skills will support the ES and BAR effort as necessary. Many of these employees have the skill sets, knowledge, and expertise to serve as incident resource advisors and can function in both capacities. Often they transition from resource advisors to BAER team members on the same incident.

### **3 Background, Definitions, Objectives, and Mission Goals**

While many wildfires cause little damage to the land, some wildfires create situations that pose threats to life and property from flash floods and debris flows. In other cases, natural and cultural resources may need to be stabilized to prevent unacceptable degradation resulting from the effects of a wildfire. There may also be damages to resources, lands, and facilities resulting from wildfire suppression actions, in contrast to damages resulting directly from a wildfire.

Post-wildfire management activities are prescribed as a result of a wildfire when (1) the actions are essential to the protection of human life, personal property, and critical natural and cultural resources, and (2) when they further the accomplishment of the NPS mission. *Critical resources* are those defined in law, for example, the Endangered Species Act or National Historic Preservation Act.

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) is defined as the *response* to imminent post-wildfire threats to human life and safety, property and critical natural or cultural resources. The National Park Service assists in organizing BAER teams at the local, regional, and national levels.

Post-wildfire management consists of four funding activities: Suppression Damage Repair, Emergency Stabilization (ES), Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR), and Restoration.

#### **3.1 Suppression Damage Repair**

Suppression Damage Repair are planned actions taken to repair the damages to resources, lands, and facilities resulting from wildfire suppression actions. Damages may come from line construction, safety zones, fire camps, etc. This parallels the “break fence, fix fence” concept in “routine” suppression repair.

Suppression damage repair activities are planned and performed by the suppression incident management team as soon as possible prior to demobilization. However, some actions may need to be conducted by the local unit following incident management team demobilization. The incident management team must document the fire suppression activity repair actions and those still needed to ensure that all planned actions are completed during transition back to the local unit. Suppression activity damage repair is not the

responsibility of the BAER team. It is the responsibility of the Incident Commander or the park if delegated back in the “turn back” plan.

### **3.2 Emergency Stabilization**

Emergency stabilization is an extension of emergency actions and consists of planned actions taken to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects of a wildfire. These actions may also include stabilization, repair, replacement, or construction of physical improvements in order to prevent unacceptable degradation to natural and cultural resources. The objectives of emergency stabilization are to first determine the need for emergency treatments, and then to prescribe and implement the treatments. Life and property are the first priority. Cultural and natural resources treated through ES should be unique and immediately threatened.

### **3.3 Burned Area Rehabilitation**

*Burned area rehabilitation* consists of non-emergency efforts undertaken to repair or improve wildfire-damaged lands unlikely to recover naturally, or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by wildfire. The objectives of burned area rehabilitation are to (1) evaluate actual and potential long-term post-wildfire impacts to critical cultural and natural resources and to identify those areas unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildfire damage; (2) to develop and implement cost-effective plans to emulate historical or pre-wildfire ecosystem structure, function, diversity, and dynamics consistent with approved land management plans, or if that is infeasible, to restore or establish the integrity of a stable ecosystem in which native species are well represented; and (3) to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by wildfire.

### **3.4 Restoration**

Restoration activities are long-term ecosystem restoration projects that are beyond the funding limitations and time frames of emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation. Fire funds are not available for these projects. The park needs to determine their priority and shift ONPS funding or seek other sources.

Table 1. Post-Wildfire Program and Funding Components

	<b>Suppression Rehabilitation</b>	<b>Emergency Stabilization</b>	<b>Rehabilitation</b>	<b>Restoration</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	Repair suppression damages	Protect life and property and critical resource values	Ecosystem Rehabilitation and Repair damages	Long Term Ecosystem Restoration
<b>Damage due to:</b>	Suppression activities	Post-fire events such as flooding	Fire	Fire
<b>Urgency:</b>	Before incident closeout	1-12 months	1-3 years with approved extensions up to 5 years	3 + years
<b>Responsibility</b>	Incident commander	Agency Administrator	Agency Administrator	Agency Administrator
<b>Funding type:</b>	Suppression (fire)	Emergency Stabilization	Burned Area Rehabilitation	Regular program

#### **4 Federal BAER and BAR Policy and Guidance**

For policy and guidance on items in this chapter, refer to the following documents:

- [\*Departmental Manual Part 620, Chapter 7: Post-Wildfire Recovery\*](#)
- [\*Interagency Burned Area Emergency Response Guidebook\*](#)
- [\*Interagency Burned Area Rehabilitation Guidebook\*](#)
- [\*Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations\*](#)
- [\*Director's Order 18\*](#)

It is the intent of this chapter to define NPS-specific guidance and not to redefine guidance found in the guidebooks and manuals listed above. This chapter will tier from these documents so that it will not have to be updated when new Service, Departmental, or interagency policy is implemented. These documents, as well as other helpful guidance, can be found at the following website:

- [\*NPS BAER Program\*](#)

## **5 Operational Principles, Policies, and Procedures**

### **5.1 Principles**

The National Park Service will utilize the least intrusive and least resource damaging methods to manage post-wildfire actions required to mitigate actual or potential damages caused by wildfire. It is not the intent of the post-wildfire programs to stop all erosion or eradicate all non-native species that may appear following wildfire. Erosion following wildfire is an element of natural landscape change, and should not necessarily be viewed as a deleterious effect, especially in natural areas. For example, erosion should be reduced only when it threatens values to be protected, such as the domestic water supply or critical cultural and natural resources, or where it is unnaturally severe due to unnatural changes in fire regimes.

### **5.2 Pre-Planning**

To prepare for burned area emergency response activities, parks should plan to take the following actions prior to the fire season:

- Develop goals and measurable objectives for the post-wildfire program and incorporate them into the fire management plan. The fire management plan should identify resources and values to be protected, fire-related stressors, and anticipated treatment strategies. An annotated bibliography or an overview of the effect of fire on each resource of concern should be compiled to assist with planning activities. For example, pre-planning for emergency stabilization may include identifying the locations of critical resources that might be threatened by post-wildfire events such as flooding, slides, erosion, or debris flows. Pre-planning for burned area rehabilitation may include identifying the types of invasive species that are likely to colonize and persist in burned areas and the likelihood of seed germination during the primary fire season at the park. Much of this information can be made available as part of a Resource Advising kit.
- The post-wildfire goals and measurable objectives need to be included with data input into wildfire management decision support tools.
- Based on the resources of the park and the values to be protected, identify and/or locate disciplines necessary to prepare ES and BAR plans, as well as individuals to implement the treatments proposed.
- Hold a preseason meeting with emergency stabilization and rehabilitation technical specialists, fire management staff, and other appropriate staff to discuss roles and responsibilities, to clarify areas of disagreement and/or

confusion, and to annually review the rehabilitation and restoration section of the fire management plan.

- Identify key internal and external agency contacts.
- Identify in advance suppliers, equipment, storage facilities, seed mixes, and implementation personnel.
- Compile an incident library consisting of the park's general management plan, resource management plan, fire management plan, vegetation management plan, and other resource and land management plans. Park resources should be inventoried and entered into a GIS database that can be made accessible to incident management teams, BAER teams, or other interdisciplinary teams brought in to assist the park. Some of the potential themes to be entered into GIS that would be useful for ES and BAR activities include the following:
  - Soils
  - Vegetation
  - Topography
  - Facilities
  - Roads and trails
  - Hydrography
  - Slope instability
  - Cultural resources
  - Wildlife
  - Threatened and endangered species habitat
  - Non-native plants
  - Research and monitoring sampling locations
  - Past fires (fire history to understand post-wildfire trajectories and impacts)
  - Disturbance histories
- Ensure that there are protocols for monitoring treatment effectiveness and all other monitoring needs and that they are part of the fire monitoring plan as discussed in the chapter on Fire Ecology and Monitoring in *Reference Manual 18*.

### 5.3 Planning

Funds for post-wildfire treatments and activities will only be allocated for actions identified in approved ES or BAR plans. These plans may be programmatic (prepared in advance) and applicable to clearly defined types of incidents and situations, or prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists during or immediately following a wildfire.

### 5.4 Incident Response

When there are threats to values at risk including life, property, critical natural resources, and cultural resources, the park may form a Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team. This team conducts rapid assessment to develop an

emergency response BAER plan. The composition of the BAER is dependent on the issues and complexity of the fire. The teams are scalable and membership on this team may vary depending upon the values at risk and objectives that are to be met. Members may be selected from local, regional, and national teams and, when appropriate, other agencies. General composition may consist of any or all of the following positions:

- Team Leader
- Deputy Team Leader
- Environmental Specialist
- Documentation Specialist
- GIS Specialist
- Hydrologist
- Soil Scientist
- Geologist
- Forester
- Biologist
- Cultural Resource Specialist
- Botanist
- Watershed Response Modeler
- IT Specialist

#### Building the BAER Team:

- Identify values at risk that need to be assessed
- Identify key internal personnel and external stakeholders that need to be involved
- Define team responsibilities, priorities and critical success factors
- Establish clear goals and set expectations

The team leader serves as the link between the team and the park or region's program manager leadership, and the incident management team. The BAER team leader is responsible for ensuring adherence to the NPS evaluation standards and guidelines. The team leader supervises and manages the assessment team, manages entrance and close-out meetings, keeps the team focused on objectives, manages complex and controversial issues that arise during the incident, assembles and reviews BAER plan drafts, and compiles a final BAER plan document for the park superintendent.

Team members should include subject matter experts in the areas related to those being assessed. Team members work under the direction of the team leader and are responsible for conducting the assessment in accordance with NPS and Departmental standards and guidelines. Team members are not



necessarily limited to NPS, but rather belong to any organization and organizational level deemed appropriate.

Consultants and resource advisors may be called upon for specific tasks to provide information and assistance to the team, while not being full team members.

The park is responsible for implementing an approved BAER plan. They may use park staff or hire temporary employees using standard hiring authorities.

Furthermore, the park may hire emergency employees using the authority of the Administratively Determined (AD) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers:

- To cope with floods, storms, or any other all-hazard emergency that threaten damage to federally protected property, have the potential to cause loss of life, serious injury, a public health risk, or damage to natural/cultural resources unless brought under immediate control.
- To carry out emergency stabilization work where there is an immediate danger of loss of life or property or when prompt remedial action is essential before potentially damaging climatic events occur.
- During a transition period, not to exceed 90 calendar days, following an emergency to develop plans and manage an emergency stabilization effort until regular employees can handle the situation or until other employment methods can be initiated. The 90 calendar days begins on the date the Burned Area Emergency Response plan is approved.

## 5.5 Remote Sensing Products

BAER teams often conduct rapid assessments of fires using remote sensing products. This post-fire emergency assessment can include requesting a Burned Area Reflectance Classification (BARC). BAER teams complete this request immediately prior to or after arriving on the fire; the product needs to be delivered to the team as soon as possible, often less than a week after the request. The intent of the BARC map is to provide the BAER teams with a product to assist in determining emergency stabilization needs; it may or may not meet the objectives for fuels monitoring or vegetative fire effects analysis. The incident pays for BARC maps. To request Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Imagery Support go to <https://fsapps.nwcg.gov/mtbs/birch/>.

## 5.6 Incident Management and Decision Support Tools

Emergency stabilization is part of incident management and may be supported by the same incident management organizations as the wildfire. The wildfire decision support tools will incorporate post-wildfire values at risk and values to be

protected. The decision support tools will also incorporate post-wildfire goals and objectives found in fire and resource management plans.

## 5.7 Plant Materials

Natural recovery of native plant species is preferable whenever possible. Seeding or planting native and non-native species produces unnatural changes in successional patterns and vegetative communities and should be used on a limited basis to prevent erosion damage or to combat invasion of non-native species.

Policies for selection, use, and storage of native and non-native plant materials are as follows:

- Ensure the appropriate native ecotypes of plant materials are given primary consideration.
- Restrict the use of non-native, non-invasive plant materials to urgent situations or to cases where timely reestablishment of a native plant community, either through natural regeneration or through the installation of native plant materials, is not likely to occur. For example:
  - When emergency conditions exist that require actions to protect life and property or resource values (e.g., flooding, mass wasting, and threats to soil stability and water quality, and potential invasive species establishment).
  - When native plant materials are not available and/or are not economically feasible.
  - In permanently, highly altered plant communities, such as road cuts, and sites dominated by exotic weeds.
  - In designated historical sites where maintenance of historical vegetation communities (including agricultural crops) is needed to maintain historical integrity.
- Select non-native plants as interim, non-persistent plant materials, provided they will not hybridize with local species, permanently displace native species, or offer serious long-term competition to the recovery of endemic plants, and provided they are designed to aid in the reestablishment of native plant communities. Decisions to use non-native plant species must take into account long-term recommendations that are not funded under ES or BAR beyond three years, including evaluation and, as appropriate, removal of the plants and replacement with native plant communities.
- Base determination and selection of genetically appropriate plant materials on the site characteristics and ecological setting, using the best available information and plant materials.
- Ensure that development, review, and/or approval of revegetation plans, including species selection, genetic heritage, growth stage, and any needed

site preparation, is done by a qualified plant specialist who is knowledgeable and certified or trained in the plant community type where the revegetation will occur. These specialists may include state heritage ecologists and botanists, rangeland ecologists, forest ecologists, silviculturists, plant geneticists, aquatic plant specialists, or botanists. When native species are used, species and life form mixtures (forbs as well as grasses) should be used, and single species seeding should be avoided.

- Ensure that seed mixes, mulch, and/or straw wattles contain no federally or state designated noxious weeds. Do not use seed sources that contain invasive plant species. In addition, seed mix, mulch, or straw wattles must be tested for noxious weeds prior to application.
- Cooperate and coordinate within the National Park Service and with other federal agencies, organizations, and private industry in the development of native plant materials and supply sources.
- Anticipate plant material needs for emergency and planned revegetation. Develop core plant lists, planting guidelines, plant material sources, seed caches, and seed storage facilities. Request that seed providers obtain certification through State Seed Laboratories. Certification must be current.

## **5.8 Cultural Resources**

Post-wildfire programs can assess cultural resources to determine whether known historic properties may be further degraded as a result of a wildfire. The programs do not assess the cultural resource damage directly caused by the fire. Cultural resource assessments and treatments are limited to those sites documented before the wildfire occurred and sites that are discovered incidentally while assessing and treating documented sites. ES and BAR funds cannot be used to conduct systematic surveys of a burn area to document sites that may have been exposed by the wildfire unless the surveys are conducted for environmental compliance related to land-disturbing treatments.

## **5.9 Funding**

NPS regional directors are the approving authority for Emergency Stabilization plans less than \$500,000. The NPS fire director is the approving authority for ES plans greater than \$500,000. Supplemental requests that would increase the total ES plan cost beyond \$500,000 must receive national approval.

The NPS fire director is the approving authority for all Burned Area Rehabilitation plans.

All unplanned wildfires are eligible for post-wildfire funding, regardless of the strategies, tactics, and management options.

## 5.10 Personnel Funding

### Emergency Stabilization

All wildland fire funded personnel (except hazardous fuels personnel) will fund their base eight hours from their base funding when working on emergency stabilization activities. All non-fire funded and hazardous fuels personnel may charge their base eight hours to emergency stabilization accounts when performing those work activities. Fire and non-fire funded personnel overtime hours will be charged to the emergency stabilization account.

The special overtime provisions of Public Law 106-558 (Fire Fighter Pay Equity Act) apply to employees involved in the preparation and approval of emergency stabilization plans. The overtime provisions only apply during the initial emergency assessment period, until the emergency stabilization plan is submitted for approval. These overtime provisions do not apply to employees involved with treatment implementation or monitoring.

Payment for hazardous duty differentials for BAER personnel must follow the regulations contained in 5 CFR 550, utilizing the established hazard and hardship categories identified in Appendix A of Subpart I ([5 CFR 550.901-907](#)). The firefighting category only applies to personnel directly participating in fighting fires and does not apply to BAER personnel, regardless of the fire containment/control status in the area where the BAER assessment is being performed. Additionally participation in aerial reconnaissance (helicopter or fixed-wing) during normal weather and flight conditions does not qualify for hazard pay. If unusual or adverse conditions are present, BAER reconnaissance should be delayed until conditions are safe. If it is determined that an allowable hazardous duty category applies to assessment or implementation work, the determination must be authorized in advance by the park superintendent. Required documentation to support the determination includes a job hazard or risk analysis, citation of the specific hazard ([5 CFR Part 550 Appendix A of Subpart I](#)), names of employees, and the nature of the work to be performed under hazardous duties.

### Burned Area Rehabilitation

All participants may fund their base eight hours from the burned area rehabilitation account. Burned area rehabilitation treatments are planned activities and overtime should be reasonably managed.

## 5.11 Emergency Hiring Authority

The [Administratively Determined \(AD\) Pay Plan for Emergency Workers](#) can be used to support immediate mobilization of BAER emergency stabilization resources for up to ninety days following the containment date of a wildfire. After this time, normal hiring procedures must be used. This authority cannot be used

to circumvent other hiring authorities. The AD Pay Plan cannot be used for nonemergency burned area rehabilitation (BAR activities). Criteria for using the AD Pay Plan to meet emergency stabilization objectives are as follows:

- To cope with floods, storms, or any other emergency that threatens damage to federally protected property unless brought under immediate control
- To carry out emergency stabilization work where there is an immediate danger of loss of life or property or when prompt remedial action is essential before potentially damaging climatic events occur
- During a transition period, not to exceed ninety days, following the containment date of the wildfire or following a natural emergency, to develop plans and manage an emergency stabilization effort until regular employees can handle the situation or until other employment methods can be initiated

## 5.12 GIS Data Management

Base and incident GIS data layers can be used in formulating emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation plans. Any incident-related GIS data that is created during the BAER process should follow GIS Standard Operating Procedures naming conventions and directory structures found in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Publication, GIS Standard Operating Procedures on Incidents ([Publication Management System Number 936](#)). Metadata should be included for all GIS data. When reports and data resulting from the BAER process are generated, all of the data should be copied to a folder on the [NPS Data Store](#). Go to the [NPS Integrated Resource Management Applications](#) website for guidance on metadata standards and for procedures on posting data to the [NPS GIS website](#). Completed treatment polygons must be uploaded to the Department of Interior's database of record, the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System ([NFORS](#)). Suggested data layers can be found in *RM 18 Information and Technology Management, Chapter 19, Exhibit 1, GIS Data and Fire Management Matrix*.

## 5.13 Monitoring and Treatment Effectiveness Evaluations

Monitoring is required to provide feedback in the adaptive management process, as is discussed in the chapters on Fuels Management and Fire Ecology and Monitoring in *Reference Manual 18*. Monitoring is carried out to assess whether proposed treatments were properly implemented, whether actual treatments were effective, and whether additional maintenance or treatments are needed to make the project successful.

Funding for monitoring is contingent on the submission of reports documenting the success or failure of treatments. The reports will be sent to regional and national offices and will be archived at the parks. Information derived from the

reports will be broadly disseminated, and monitoring results and the evaluation of treatments and techniques will be shared through websites and other electronic means as described in section 6.4, Monitoring Data Management and Reporting.

## **6 Program Requirements**

### **6.1 Funding**

Funds for post-wildfire treatments and activities will only be allocated for actions identified in approved ES or BAR plans.

- ES projects are funded through the fire suppression operations activity, emergency stabilization sub-activity.
- BAR projects are funded through a separate operations activity.
- Funding for suppression repairs is provided from the Suppression Subactivity, the same source that financed the suppression actions. The same fire code as the fire will be used.

Funding for subsequent fiscal years must be formally requested. Funds will not be provided until accomplishment and monitoring reports are submitted and accomplishments are recorded in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS).

### **6.2 Timeframes, Plan Submittal, and Approval Authorities**

#### Emergency Stabilization

Emergency stabilization treatments are projects requiring immediate action. They are therefore funded for only one year plus twenty-one days after the ignition date of the wildfire. However, ES funding may be used to repair or replace emergency stabilization structures or treatments for up to three years following containment of a wildfire where failure to do so would imperil watershed functionality or result in serious loss of downstream values. Monitoring ES treatments for up to three years is also allowable. ES funding cannot be used to continue seeding, plantings, and invasive plant treatments beyond one year.

The initial ES plan must be submitted to the regional director within twenty-one days from the ignition date of the fire and a concurrent copy must be sent at the same time to the NPS Branch of Wildland Fire, Fire Management Program Center. If additional time is needed, extensions may be negotiated with those having approval authority. The approval authority is dependent on the funding thresholds as indicated in the table below:

TABLE 2. Funding Approval Levels for Emergency Stabilization Projects

Approval Authority	ES Funding Approval Level
Local Approval Level	\$0 Park Superintendent
Regional Approval Level	< \$500,000 Regional Director
National Approval Level	>\$500,000 Branch Chief, NPS Branch of Wildland Fire

Approval/disapproval of ES plans at regional offices will be limited to a maximum of \$500,000. Any plan request larger than the regional limit will be approved by the national office in consultation with the regional office. Supplemental requests within the first year (or in subsequent years) for treatments, monitoring, or repair or replacement of structures that would increase the total plan cost beyond \$500,000 must receive national approval. Plans will be approved within six business days of receipt. The regional and national offices will review the plan and make recommendations for approval/disapproval within the same six-day period. Amendments to plans as a result of new information should be prepared and submitted as needed, and the same time frames as for initial plans will apply.

In some emergency situations, certain actions may go forward before a plan is submitted and approved in order to protect life and property. If ES treatments need to be installed prior to full plan approval, then the description of the treatment, justification, and funding needed may be submitted to the anticipated approval authority in an email. This abbreviated process is usually followed when life and property resources are in imminent danger from the onset of rains that may trigger floods and debris flows. The treatments will still need to be included in the final ES Plan. Authorized treatments prior to plan approval do not include invasive species or vegetative treatments except for the falling of hazard trees. Authorized (not to exceed) amounts before a plan is submitted are as follows:

- BAER Team Assessment and Planning \$20,000
- Emergency Treatments to Protect Life \$50,000
- Emergency Treatments to Protect Critical Resources \$10,000

In emergency situations, exceeding these amounts may be approved by the regional director via email justifying the cause.

Burned Area Rehabilitation

Funding for burned area rehabilitation treatments and activities is provided for up to five years plus twenty-one days after the ignition date of a wildfire. BAR plans may be submitted at any time within that five-year anniversary. Years four and five of restoration treatments are exceptions and should not be planned for in advance. The priority of extensions for years four and five will be based on missed treatment windows due to unfavorable climatic prescription conditions. Years four and five will only be considered if funding is available after the initial fiscal year distribution. A written request and justification must be submitted to the regional and national BAER coordinators for consideration of an extension.

All BAR plans are approved at the national office because the funding is competitive. Parks will submit the plans to the regional director, and the regional office will make a recommendation of approval.

TABLE 3. Funding Approval Levels for BAR Projects

Approval Authority	BAR Funding Approval Level
National Approval Level	All BAR plans are approved by the Branch Chief, NPS Branch of Wildland Fire

BAR plans may be written as separate plans or separate sections of emergency stabilization plans. The BAR plan will specify the non-emergency treatments and activities that are to be carried out within three years following containment of a wildfire. BAR plans must be consistent with approved land management plans.

Funding for BAR is competitive. The National Park Service will select Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) projects based on pre-established criteria. Projects will be screened by the NPS regional and national coordinators to meet program objectives and policy. Regional Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) coordinators will rank projects by priority within their regions. The first round of funding will occur at the beginning of the fiscal year. For projects to be considered during the initial funding distribution, projects must have been entered into the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) and plans submitted by October 1 of the fiscal year. The regional and national coordinators will meet at the beginning of the fiscal year to select projects submitted by October 1. If funds are not completely distributed at the beginning of the fiscal year, subsequent distributions may occur by consent of the regional



BAER coordinators. A regional coordinator can make the request for another distribution. It can be for additional unforeseen funding of a previously submitted project or for a new emerging fire.

Projects are funded in one-year increments, and activities or treatments are reviewed at the end of each fiscal year and funded with the next fiscal year funds, as appropriate. If requests exceed available funding, plans are arranged in order of priority based on values to be protected and resource objectives.

Regions have the ability to redistribute unspent funds to other projects if they become available. This will transpire with the concurrence of the national office. If there is not a need within the region, other regions will be notified. If there is not a national need, funds will be retained at the regional office until fiscal year closeout. Unspent and undistributed funding will be rolled up to the national office at the end of the fiscal year and be part of the next year's allocation and competitively redistributed.

#### Suppression Damage Repair

The Incident Commander will determine when repairs can be initiated. Ideally, "routine" repairs are completed prior to the time that firefighting resources demobilize from the incident. This is not always possible, however, and remaining tasks may be "turned back" to the home unit to complete at a later date. While there is no time limit in which the suppression account for a given incident can be charged, timeframes should be realistic. A new accounting code will be issued for each fiscal year.

### **6.3 Accomplishment Reports**

For each post-wildfire project, parks must prepare annual and final reports that document total funding approved and expended; treatments; and treatment effectiveness as determined through monitoring. The annual reports are due by September 15 of each year until the project expires. The final report is due within 15 days of the expiration date of the project.

At a minimum, the following information must be provided:

- A summary table of what was actually spent, by treatment or activity specification
- A short narrative for each treatment specification or activity, with accounting detail
- Treatment effectiveness monitoring data

The report will specify procedures for transition of any long-term monitoring and continued maintenance of mitigation actions to normal park programs. The length and format of the report will be commensurate with the scope and complexity of the project.

#### **6.4 Monitoring Data Management and Reporting**

Accomplishment reports and monitoring data will be submitted electronically to the national office for posting on appropriate websites to ensure that future managers have access to the reports and can learn from past successes and failures. The national office will be responsible for posting the reports and maintaining the websites. Monitoring data is necessary to provide feedback for the adaptive management process (see the chapters on Fuels Management and Fire Ecology and Monitoring in *Reference Manual 18*).

Accomplishments will also be recorded quarterly by the designated park, regional, or national official in the [Department of the Interior's Database of Record, National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System](#).