



2020 Oregon Wildfire Recovery

Assessment Synthesis Overview Technical Doc.

Last updated: March 7, 2021

What assessments of fire impacts were synthesized?

The Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Task Force convened a sub-group of technical staff to review the existing assessments of post-fire impacts. The following assessments comprised the synthesis:

- U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) reports, which focus primarily on impacts and needed actions on USFS managed lands;
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) reports, which focus primarily on impacts and needed actions on BLM owned and managed lands; and
- Erosion Threat Assessment/Reduction Team (ETART) reports, including the Water Quality/Drinking Water Supply Resource report, which utilize technical information from BAER assessments to further determine impacts and needed actions on state and private lands.

What fire areas were covered?

The assessment synthesis covers 10 fire areas. Four of these fire areas--Archie Creek, Beachie Creek, Holiday Farm, and Riverside--had the benefit of ETART assessments. The remaining six fire areas--242, Almeda, Brattain, Echo Mountain, S. Obenchain, and White River--rely on BAER, ESR and/or the Water Quality/Drinking Water Supply Resource report to estimate impacts and needed actions.

What impacts were the focus of the assessment synthesis?

The assessment synthesis identifies post-fire impacts and high-priority actions needed in the next two years to help address and mitigate for impacts to natural resources that present risks in two critically important categories: 1) human life and safety and 2) the protection of drinking water/source-water supply areas. The integrated assessment spreadsheet—a technical document—compiles information about specific impacts—including detailed location—and necessary actions to reduce risk. However, within these categories, many high-priority actions were identified as being common across the fire areas.

What are the common, high-priority actions across fire areas that can help reduce risk of impacts to human life/safety and drinking water supplies in the next two years?

Several high-priority actions are common across fires that can help reduce risks to human life and safety, drinking water supplies, and source-water areas:

- Culvert repair and replacement
- Culvert cleaning and storm-proofing of roads
- Hazard tree removal
- Removal of navigational hazards
- Closures of high-risk areas
- Posting of warning signs
- Community alert/warning systems
- Geo-technical analysis of at-risk areas
- Seeding and erosion control
- Invasive species surveys and control
- Restoration plan development
- Riparian and upland planting and establishment
- Floodplain restoration and reconnection
- Protection and repair of drinking water intakes
- Monitoring of drinking water supplies
- Septic repair and replacement

Are there any limitations of the assessment synthesis?

The synthesis compiles information from the rapid assessments of natural and cultural resources impacts that were completed shortly after the 2020 fires were brought under control. Because they were completed quickly, these assessments utilized easily accessible information and were not intended to be fully comprehensive. Additional information and further studies about and understanding of impacts—such as erosion and landslide risks—will inevitably emerge in the coming months and years, informing refinements to recovery planning and implementation over the next 3-10 years.

What are the next steps?

The assessment synthesis will be used to:

- Incorporate input received from tribes about natural and cultural resources of particular concern;
- Engage with local partners to identify qualitative assessment information that should be incorporated into the synthesis;
- Work with local, state, tribal and federal partners to determine what needed high-priority actions already are underway or complete and in what locations;
- Match needed actions with available funding programs; and
- Equally as importantly, describe the scope of need for post-wildfire recovery related to natural and cultural resources and work to secure additional funding to address these needs.

How does the assessment synthesis inform long-term post-fire recovery work?

Looking forward, some high-priority actions—such as riparian and upland plantings and floodplain restoration that can reduce erosion impacts to water quality and risk of post-fire landslides and flooding—will continue to be implemented at larger scales as recovery continues for the next decade. In addition, these actions will, over the longer term, provide habitat benefits for fish and other aquatic species. Ultimately, by working with local, state, tribal and federal partners, the Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Task Force aims to take a holistic approach to wildlife recovery and rebuilding by:

- Investing in near-term recovery needs to address areas of high erosion potential, particularly associated with possible debris torrents and public safety;
- Ensuring drinking water sources are prioritized for recovery and restoration;
- Identifying critical streams for aquatic habitat and prioritize investments in those that need active restoration;
- In coordination with tribes, identifying and protecting areas with high concentration of cultural resources at risk.

How can I access the full assessment synthesis?

Please send requests to Kyle Abraham, Oregon Department of Forestry's Private Forest Division Chief at Kyle.ABRAHAM@oregon.gov or Jo Niehaus, Natural and Cultural Resources Recovery Task Force Public Information Officer at Jo.NIEHAUS@oregon.gov.