

National Fire Plan

Developing Effective Postfire Emergency Rehabilitation Treatments

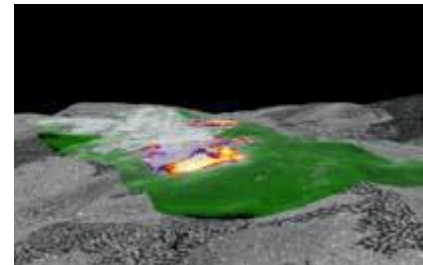


California, Montana - Expenditures for postfire rehabilitation treatments have increased dramatically in recent years as the residual effects of fire threatens more lives and property. However, there has been little quantitative monitoring of the effectiveness of these treatments.

With the increase in funding for restoration and rehabilitation projects through the National Fire Plan, scientists are studying the cost and effectiveness of postfire emergency rehabilitation treatments in reducing sediment movement and water yield from burned watersheds. A strike team comprising ecologists, botanists, engineers and hydrologists has been assembled and a mobile lab equipped for rapid installation of measuring devices on freshly burned areas. Equipment has been installed and measurements of erosion, runoff and vegetation responses are under way at four sites where fires have recently occurred (two in Montana and two in California). Two more installations are planned.



Researchers installed catchment basins and full runoff and meteorological instrumentation at the Fridley Fire on the Gallatin National Forest in Montana this fall. As the burned area recovers, this installation will help determine which rehabilitation treatments are cost-effective by making quantitative measurements of sediment movement and water yield from upland watersheds.



Forest Service scientists are investigating the possibility of using imagery data from flyovers of fires to quantify the intensity of fire at potential sites. This is a sample image from the Star Fire in the El Dorado National Forest, CA, which clearly indicates the potential to assess intensity. *(Image provided by Dr. Phil Riggan, USDA Forest Service, Riverside, Calif.)*

For additional information on the National Fire Plan, visit www.fireplan.gov