

Trail Maintenance Plan in the Trout Fire Area

There are three types of federal funding available to address fire damage to trails. The first is BAER funding, which must be spent within a year. The second is BAR funding, which needs to be used within three years. The third is Disaster Relief funding, which has no deadline.

Currently, the Gila NF has received BAER funding to repair trails affected by high and moderate soil burn severity, thanks to the diligent work of FS staff in assessing the trails and applying for funds. This covers eight miles of trail, including roughly 3.3 miles of the CDT, 2.2 miles of Allie Canyon Trail #100, a small section of Bear Canyon Trail #104, one mile of Woodhaul Wagon RD NRT # 55, and a portion of Signal Peak Trail #742. If all goes as planned, the experienced Region 1 FS Trail Crew from Montana will arrive in the fall to perform technical repairs such as felling hazard trees, building rock walls to stabilize tread, and other trail improvements. In spring 2026, Wild AZ Conservation Corps will work on additional tread stabilization and other trail needs. These crews are crucial and highly valuable, especially since the Silver City District currently has no trail crew available to handle these issues.

This work will significantly improve the trails, but as we know, in high- and moderate-burn areas, the increased need for trail maintenance can persist for a decade or more. Based on post-Signal Fire experiences, these higher-severity burn zones are likely to expand with locust, which must be addressed at least twice a year. This is where Gila Back Country Horsemen, dedicated CDT adopters, and other trail maintenance volunteers play an essential role.

Beyond brushing, trails downstream from high-intensity burn zones may need repair due to washouts caused by flooding. All these efforts are supported by BAR and Disaster Relief funding, although Gila NF is still waiting to learn if it will receive this funding.

If you plan to explore these areas soon, remember that post-fire leafy vegetation can grow very tall, making trails even harder to find during the first year after the fire.

Overall, patience is necessary as these trails and loops gradually stabilize.

We will continue to highlight trail work in this area as progress is made.