

Narrator: California's water is a precious commodity. The largest Pacific coast estuary– the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta- is located in California and most commonly referred to as "the Delta." Its waters wind through six (6) counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo. This vital waterway provides drinking water to more than two thirds of the state's population, irrigates seven (7) million acres of crop land, is home to a variety of wildlife, and offers numerous recreational opportunities.

Narrator: But what's in the Delta's water?

Narrator: Rotting and derelict commercial vessels abandoned in the Delta have spoiled its beauty and jeopardize the environment. The disintegrating boats pose a danger to public health and safety as they leak fuel and other hazardous wastes into the water and leave behind debris, creating navigational hazards.

Todd Thalhamer: "A lot of these boats contain oils, fuels, asbestos, and if it's released in the environment it's a threat...while one boat may not be a large threat, you take 20 of these vessels and add them up in one particular area and releasing oil over time is a big threat.

Scott Walker: "...we have the navigational hazards associated with these vessels that um, are essentially places in the Delta where we have tremendous recreational activity and, there have been incidents where um, boaters, essentially crash into these and it is a cause of injury.

Todd Thalhamer: "These boats aren't anchored, they're in the levee system... when high tide comes in or high winds they're out floating around. You could hit these boats at night."

Narrator: Fortunately, as part of a pilot solid waste cleanup effort, The Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) partnered with state and local agencies to remove these illegally-dumped hazards.

Narrator: The abandoned vessels were brought to CalRecycle's attention by the Sacramento County Sheriff's Office as a result of an earlier phase of the project.

Todd Thalhamer: "As you know, CalRecycle does many types of clean-ups throughout the State of California. From burned dumps to illegal dumps...CalRecycle takes care of the environment.

Todd Thalhamer: "...Well, Sacramento County Sheriff sent a request letter in for us to look at a number of their abandoned vessels, debris, barges...as far as boats that they felt were navigational & environmental hazards...we verified those and then from that process we now mobilized our resources to pull these boats out of the water."

Scott Walker: "Typically these boats are scuttled on the shoreline of the Delta. They impact wildlife habitat, they impact fisheries, they impact navigation, they impact large stretches of levee shoreline...they also are locus of illegal dumping off levee roads, and this problem expands itself to the point where you get large areas, uh, along the Delta, levees where you have this debris; wood, metal, and exposed hazardous substances- PCB's, batteries, there's waste oil, lead contaminated paint, lots of asbestos-asbestos is a major part of many of these vessels, ...pesticide containers... it's very, very difficult project to do this in a manner that prevents leakage of hazardous substances, they're very complicated in terms of bringing them up when they're sunk"

Todd Thalhamer: this is probably our toughest assignment yet...we're heading for the levee to remove a boat that's been there for past two years...CalRecycle is using some unique resources. We're using an excavator which is part of standard equipment butwe're going to load an excavator on to this piece of equipment called a 'LCM', it's a landing craft and then from there we'll take the excavator upriver... the

excavator will come onto the beach and then from there, we're going to pull this abandoned boat back into the river to our staging area for proper recycling and disposal."

Narrator: The Sacramento County Sheriff Marine Unit strives to identify abandoned vessel owners. The owners may be subject to fines or their boats may be confiscated by local authorities. In many cases, responsible parties can not be identified through registration.

Sheriff Dave Guthrie: *"More times than not, you can't find the last owner...sometimes people go as far as erasing numbers ...we still go through a process of judication by posting notices... but I can write tickets every day, it still not going to get the boat off the water, and that's the expensive part, removing the boats..."*

Narrator: In cases where a responsible party *is* identified, CalRecycle and the Sheriff's department work together to recover costs through prosecution or voluntary efforts.

Narrator: In the Fall of Twenty-Eleven (20-11), the Sacramento County Sheriff Marine Unit and CalRecycle contractors began removing eleven (11) abandoned vessels, ranging in size from a fifteen (15)-foot runabout to a ninety (90)-foot wooden tug.

Narrator: Cleanup crews contained potentially hazardous materials by bringing the boats to a central staging area.

Todd Thalhamer: *"At our staging area we're going to actually go through the vessel, take out the recyclables, look for the hazardous waste, take off the fuels, sample for asbestos, sample for pcb's...once the hazards are removed from the vessel, we'll recycle the metal and then the waste will go to the landfill-protecting the environment and securing our resources..."*

Todd Thalhamer: *"we actually had a small release of oil...hydraulic oil as well..."*

Narrator: Using oil booms to trap contaminants, workers directed the floating trash, oil, and debris to the shore for removal.

Narrator: The boats were hoisted from the water and dismantled. Parts are recycled or disposed of safely. Some vessels contained recyclable metals. Clean-up costs can be partially offset when recovered metal is sold for recycling, bringing in up to ten thousand dollars for this particular project.

Narrator: Along the way, the team encountered some unexpected complications, from hundreds of bees and wasps living in one vessel, to a surprise find of a sunken barge with three hundred (300) gallons of liquid hazardous waste engulfed in a steel wall three-eighths-inch (3/8") thick.

Todd Thalhamer: *"...we're having a lot of difficulties just getting the project started given the logistics of trying to load an excavator-a fifty thousand (50,000) pound excavator on a LCM-yesterday we came across a three hundred (300) gallon, ah, potential spill...in a barge that had burned down, we didn't know it had a thousand (1,000) gallon fuel tank on it and as we were taking the barge apart we came across a thousand (1,000) gallon fuel tank!"*

Narrator: One boat fell apart upon retrieval.

Todd Thalhamer: *"That boat was probably the most technical boat we've pulled yet, it was thirty-six thousand (36,000) pounds, it's almost fifty (50) feet, unfortunately for us it's basically rotted all the way through..."*

Scott Walker: *"We were able to tow the vessel to shore, it was in the process of sinking, we were able to get a crane, with strapping around it, and as we hoisted the vessel up, it started to break apart, we used booms-special booms- around where any kind of materials that could fall off or leak from that vessel are*

going to be contained ...the residual material within the boom was very, very minor amount of material and the crews in the field were able to remove that material without incident."

Todd Thalhamer: *"Unfortunately for us as we were pulling that boat out it actually disintegrated... that's one of the large problems that we face, these boats here that we're pulling out, they're dilapidated, they're deteriorating and rotting in the water, in order to get these things out it's actually a fairly complex process."*

Narrator: A more notable find was a recovered ship with a proud past. Former Coast Guard Cutter eight-three-five-two-five (83525) was pulled from a slough near 'Fisherman's Cut' in Contra Costa County. Coast Guard representatives witnessed the removal of the historic artifact which was the only Coast Guard vessel to host a Japanese surrender at the end of World War II.

Todd Thalhamer: *"As far as the eight-three-five-two-five (83525) is concerned, for us it's a very historic vessel that we've discovered, that we're going to do our due diligence to take proper care of it and restore, uh, what we can and bring it back to the Coast Guard for the donation in their history."*

Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander, Blanca Rosas: *"I'm very excited, uh, we were invited by California Recycle as part of their clean-up efforts on the Delta... they have discovered a historic Coast Guard Cutter. The historic part of this is that this cutter is one of the cutters that, or should I say the only Coast Guard cutter that hosts the surrender, the Japanese surrender during World War Two, um, so the surrender the garrison of the on the island-Aguian island."*

Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander, Blanca Rosas: *"Some of the parts are uh, going to be given to the Coast Guard for historic purposes, uh, we're going to display some of them at our local Coast Guard station here in Rio Vista, and maybe the other ones will go to our headquarters to the historian office. Apparently these vessels were decommissioned in nineteen sixty five (1965), around that time, and, uh, they were sold to the public and civilians...and, uh, the last owner had bought this vessel, abandoned it, in the clean -up that California Recycle is doing, doing um, in the Delta area, they found about it and they had some member who was owner of the vessel before and he had information and we identify it as one of the Coast Guard Cutters that participated in the during World War Two (2)."*

Narrator: This is a positive result of government agencies and stakeholders working together to identify a threat to the environment, develop solutions, and provide funding to help correct the problems.

Todd Thalhamer: *"We're actually working with three Sheriff's departments on this project; mostly we're working with Sacramento County Sheriff. We're also working with Solano County Sheriff and Contra Costa County Sheriff. They're key, they're key to this, they're out front. They're the agencies that will get the intel, they'll process the judication, in other words they'll do the enforcement against the owners, they'll research the vessels, if they can find an owner they'll go after these owners and recover funds for us, and they're also providing us with support...as far as bringing individuals back and forth, patrolling areas-when we need slow wake zones because of whatever we are pulling into the water. So from our aspect, they are a key partner in this event."*

Todd Thalhamer SB *"...CalRecycle's taken the lead in this scenario and used as much local resources along with State resources in order to protect the environment".*

Narrator: CalRecycle covered approximately six hundred and sixty five thousand dollars (\$665,000) in project costs, paid for through fees assessed on trash dumped at landfills. In-kind services from project partners and a state grant were also instrumental in the effort, which expanded the reach of CalRecycle's Delta cleanup pilot project.

Scott Walker: *"...we have the Solid Waste Cleanup Trust Fund, which is funded approximately five million dollars (\$5,000,000) per year, from the dollar forty (\$1.40) per ton tipping fee for every ton of waste disposed in California landfills."*

Todd Thalhamer: *"...and what does that money do? Well, directly right behind us is exactly what that money does. We're able to use money specifically from trash generation in order to clean up illegal disposal and abandoned vessels here in the background..."*

Scott Walker: *"We were able to get a one hundred thousand dollar (\$100,000) grant from the State Water Resources Control Board for the Coast Guard Cutter that we removed in Contra Costa County."*

Sheriff Dave Guthrie: *"There's so much work to be done out in the Delta and in the bay of derelicts and abandoned boats... it's a daunting task... and without CalRecycle, the counties can't do it, the counties just don't have the money, 'cuz' it's expensive to remove these boats"*

Narrator: Most CalRecycle cleanup projects address illegal dumping that occurs on land. The Delta cleanup presents unique challenges as CalRecycle works to address pollution threats, restore beauty, and protect the environment.

Todd Thalhamer: *"You're fighting the tide, you're fighting the winds, you're fighting the rain conditions, you're fighting all sorts of normal conditions that you wouldn't have on a land based scenario....on the water, you have to put containment booms out, when you try to take one of these boats out of the water you've got to worry about spills, you have additional clothing that you have to wear, life vests, boats, logistical support, it's just... it just takes the level of effort and tunes it up a number of notches..."*

Todd Thalhamer: *"The Sacramento River and the surrounding Delta is used by a number of fisherman, the general public, water skiers, nature hikers, and it's even used by the salmon as they return back to spawn. By our actions here, we've taken a small hazard that are across the Delta, and we've eliminated those hazards and we've protected the environment so that we can enjoy this for a long period of time."*

Scott Walker: *"CalRecycle's Solid Waste Cleanup Program has been in place since nineteen ninety four (1994). We've cleaned up well over one thousand (1000) sites throughout the whole State, over two hundred (200) projects, we provide grants to local governments for cleanup... we also have department-managed cleanups using our own contractors, we cleanup illegal disposal sites, legacy dumps-where the responsible party cannot be identified or is unable or unwilling to perform timely cleanup. We're also called in for disaster cleanups, like the Angora wildfire and the San Bruno pipeline disaster."*

Scott Walker: *"Whether on land or water, CalRecycle's cleanup programs has the expertise and the experience to cleanup pretty much anything that we can encounter. And it's a major basis of our mission to protect public health and safety in the environment."*

Narrator: By removing waste tires, household hazardous items, derelict vehicles, discarded appliances, lumber, furniture, and other materials from targeted sites and either recycling or properly disposing of them, CalRecycle restores a safe environment and preserves the pristine beauty of our State.