

Butte County Cleanup Video (May 2012)

Narrator: Butte County has been called the "Land of Natural Wealth and Beauty." Located in the north end of California's central valley, the county is bordered by the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Visitors and residents enjoy bucolic country roads, wide open fields, and prime recreation in nearby waterways. But due to ignorance, or laziness, illegal dumping has fouled the pristine water and land. Illegally dumped trash, used tires, and hazardous waste were discovered on privately owned ranches and neighboring parcels.

Butte County Code Enforcement Officer, Scot Johnson: "We are out in the western Bangor area of Butte County, out in this wonderful grazing land here. I was brought to this location by an individual who hunts out here who told me about a large tire pile..."

Narrator: The tires and trash destroy the landscape and more important, create an environmental and safety hazard.

(Video Break)

Narrator: Cattle peacefully graze on the land and drink at the small streams. Now the animals, the people that care for them.... and the waterways... are in danger!

Butte County Code Enforcement Officer, Scot Johnson: "In Butte County we're really concerned about the environment. Out here we have a very shallow water table, with the illegal debris that's been dumped on this property; it poses a threat to the water table out here, the tires are dumped in ponds, the ewaste is dumped in the ponds, the cows are drinking out of the water... we really want to get this site cleaned up for the environment."

Narrator: The dumped waste creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and the tires are a potential fire hazard.

Butte County Code Enforcement Officer, Scot Johnson: "These tires are in seasonal ponds. When the water is up, the temperatures get warm, the mosquitoes breed. As the water drops down, the tires hold water and continue to breed mosquitoes throughout the entire summer."

Narrator: Sadly, illegal dump sites sometimes encourage more dumping. Illegally dumped construction debris and used tires suggest unscrupulous individuals decided to keep the money that was supposed to pay for proper disposal. Fortunately, the Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery-also known as CalRecycle- awarded Butte County a \$45,000 cleanup grant through its Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement Program. CalRecycle helps fund the removal of illegally disposed waste from farm or ranch property where the property owner was not responsible for the problem.

Butte County Code Enforcement Officer, Scot Johnson: "After learning about the Farm and Ranch Grant program from CalRecycle, unfortunately, I did find a need in Butte County for the use of the grant. We do have 1900 square miles of county area, 90% of its rural, agricultural, timber...we go from the valley floor to 7,000 foot elevation in our county. We have 1300 miles of maintained roads that Public Works is responsible for...and I'm also responsible for patrolling and looking for illegal dump sites."

Butte County Code Enforcement Officer, Scot Johnson: "...based on the number of tires, it put the property owner in violation of not having a minor waste tire facility permit to house more than 499 tires... I do an inspection report, which gets sent to CalRecycle, which then, at the time of that inspection, generates a notice of violation just because of the sheer volume of tires out here... and working with CalRecycle and the Farm and Ranch Grant and the Waste Tire program people, it's allowed us now to coordinate with the property owner get a contract out

here, start the cleanup process, and through the Farm and Ranch grant, since the property owners are victims of this here, there is no cost to the property owner to remove all this junk and debris off the site”

Narrator: The Butte County cleanup had an environmental objective: to protect the ecosystem, recover the watershed, and restore the land. Contractors will remove debris and hazardous waste and transported the recyclable materials to the proper facilities. By the project’s end, thousands of tires, tons of trash and two mobile homes were removed from the site. CalRecycle helps preserve and protect our farms, ranches, people and watersheds from the dangers of illegally dumped waste.