

“You look around here and the whole town’s gone.”

Just weeks after the Dixie Fire tore through the gold rush community of Greenville, recovery crews from the Department of Toxic Substances Control US Environmental Protection Agency and CalRecycle-managed assessment crews - hit the ground.

Removing the most immediate threats from family homes left in ashes.

And launching a state-managed cleanup effort more quickly and efficiently than ever before - to help wildfire survivors rebuild their homes and restore their lives.

“We just want residents here to know we are here for them, from start to finish.”

The nearly 1-million-acre Dixie Fire is the second largest in California history.

In 2021, it was one of many large-scale wildfires that burned through more than a dozen California counties - destroying over 1,600 homes and more than 2.2 million acres to date.

A rarity just a few decades ago, climate-fueled wildfires are California’s new normal, with 6 of the 10 largest wildfires in state history happening since 2020.

“CalRecycle is part of the California ‘one team, one fight’ that helps communities recover.”

Coordinating with local, state and federal partners, CalRecycle-managed crews remove burned metal, concrete, contaminated soil and ash from burned properties at no cost to wildfire survivors who join the state program.

“Our very important role under our mission task it to come in and help communities remove all of the debris you see behind us in order for them to rebuild.”

In 2007, the state first called on CalRecycle to help manage an El Dorado County wildfire cleanup before contaminated runoff could reach Lake Tahoe.

Since then, CalRecycle has led the cleanup of over 21,000 properties across 28 counties. The Department works with its state, federal and local partners each year to make the program more efficient and more effective at tackling larger, more frequent cleanups.

With a sole focus on helping wildfire survivors recover and rebuild.

“And that is the reward, is seeing people rebuild. Seeing people, a year after we go wheels up from an operation, seeing homes be rebuilt and communities being revived.”

“As they get ready to rebuild their lives and rebuild their community, California and CalRecycle is here for them.”

--

We are here for the people of California as we embark on recovery.

- Soundbite

As climate change has made our wildfire season year round, CalRecycle is here to help California communities recover for the 8th, 9th season in a row recover and restore their lives.

- Bring in Tahoe fire, increase in acres burned – bar graphs. Zoomed out. Make a copy and put it there.
- Video Weed, Valley Fire, others
- Nobody knows its weed – could label, Andy Marino or Todd (group photos) -

Another year of tragic wildfires. Greenville is smaller, but looks a lot like Paradise. Don't have much there, mostly tourist. It was a financially depressed community.

- Dixie Fire, Plumas county
- Tragedy – good portion of Paradise's commercial core survived. Greenville's main street is gone.
 - Internet and cell phone service knocked, main cell phones, internet service.

It was an overwhelming tidal wave of devastation had hit them.

- Don't use images of fire. Maybe for a focused setup – work of firefighters is out of our lane
- Controlled burn stuff from Yosemite. Seeing the trees and smoke remnants -
- Tragedy now – I don't have a house or a place to rebuild.

TINA SOUND: When she came in to Cal OES – difference between response and recovery. Recovery is a longer timeframe. Mobilization of resources. These people are still in crisis mode. Extended trauma.

We do one part of it.

Every wildfire brings a different set of tragic circumstances.

All wildfire are different – addition of trees. Also, size of fires. Number of properties affected. Mid 3 digits - biggest challenge in recent years is geography. Antelope valley, del norte county – tough spots to reach.

--

Pics of site assessments

Rachel explains program

- Log that
- Visual: Rachel standing in front of debris, talking about what's behind her.

Chris has pics/video of properties – Tehama County

--

2020 -

99% debris removal – one property left in Fresno County

- 76 percent FSA (tree only account for remaining)

Pics of 2020 – Sonoma and Napa, pics and videos. Nothing too remarkable

- Water tender keeping down dust
- Numbers and totals

Key Points for 2020:

- We met our overall goal – most debris removal completed in less than a year.
- Allowing our crews to then focus on upcoming fire season

Working together w/state and local partners.

- Started work on upcoming fire season two months ahead of pace

-

Contractors, our folks, others, working together – one team one fight

We have expanded our internal team – talk to Tina about what that means. A year ago, Bob's team had 6 people. Take a look at org chart now, 2-3 times as large. Expanded admin team. Allows our field team to work more effectively.

Expanding sci/engineer and admin staff – more efficient, quicker deployments.

Northern (plumas) and Central Division (placer)

- Crews working everywhere.
- Quicker, attention to local needs

2021 still evolving – pre ops TPs

--

[CalRecycle SOT - Rachel Wagoner Interview RAW.mp4](#)

Plumas County-Specific Debris Removal Program Video:

- • Captions:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/zx7ne361tvnlhog/ElleGreenvilleCleanupCaptions.srt?dl=0>
- • Video:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/w47cuaykvsxktjm/Cleanup%20After%20the%20Dixie%20Fire%20Begins%20in%20Greenville%20Elle.mp4?dl=0>

Debris Removal Program General Video:

- • Captions:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/uyzblquvwm0spga/HHWCleanupBeginsGreenville.en_US.srt?dl=0
- • Video:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/pj2l6hpvl2g919i/Dixie%20Fire%20Hazardous%20Debris%20Cleanup%20Begins%20in%20Greenville.mp4?dl=0>

Deputy Director Ryan Buras Recovery/Debris Removal videos:

- • <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3fnbz2k63j8nlby/RyanBuras1.mp4?dl=0>
- • <https://www.dropbox.com/s/nh2blaow4igc56i/RyanBuras2.mp4?dl=0>
- • <https://www.dropbox.com/s/a3qiy6eavf31bjj/RyanBuras3.mp4?dl=0>
- • <https://www.dropbox.com/s/6o9zq4ul44rag6l/RyanBuras4.mp4?dl=0>
- • <https://www.dropbox.com/s/juxdlvke1ssbsa7/RyanBuras5.mp4?dl=0>