

## **Triple Flare Recycling Helps Wildland Firefighting Camps Reduce Landfill Waste**

SISTERS, Oregon -- Supporting wildland firefighters means supplying bottled water and Gatorade by the pallet load. Making sure all that waste is recycled has been a low priority for crews tackling miles of wildfire, but that's changing in the Willamette National Forest.

The U.S. Forest Service hired Triple Flare Recycling, based in Bend, Oregon, to manage waste at fire camps this season and is already seeing results. Triple Flare is collecting 10,000 plastic water bottles each week and 7 yards of cardboard a day, company founder Phil Torchio said.

Forest Service managers began talking with Torchio, who also owns the event cleanup and recycling firm The Broomsmen, in 2016 about waste management services. Torchio said the need for a Broomsmen-style system at fire camp was obvious.

"The amount of trash they were producing was insane," Torchio said.

Triple Flare, which Torchio created to service government contracts, conducted waste audits and determined that 70 percent of fire camp trash could be recycled or composted. With approval to run only a recycling program, Triple Flare is diverting 44 percent of the waste generated by crews fighting the Whitewater Fire, which covers 15 square miles and employs hundreds of personnel.

Triple Flare's base of operations is the incident command post at Hoodoo Ski Resort. A crew makes rounds each day to collect recyclable material from three different camps.

Water bottles are being redeemed for Oregon's 10-cent deposit on bottles and cans. Office paper, cardboard, aluminum food cans and motor oil bottles also are frequently recycled.

Torchio said Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management managers deserve credit for taking a proactive approach to waste management. Now that Triple Flare is quantifying the recyclable material, the next step might be eliminating disposable bottles in the first place, Torchio said.

**About Triple Flare Recycling:** Created by waste management entrepreneur Phil Torchio in 2016, Triple Flare helps the U.S. Forest Service reduce landfill waste generated by wildland firefighting crews. Triple Flare is a companion company to The Broomsmen, which handles event cleanup and recycling for weddings, corporate gatherings and concerts at Les Schwab Amphitheater in Bend, Oregon.

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