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WEEKEND BREAK



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Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Steve Dopp works alongside a hazmat team sifting through the wreckage of a home in Paradise, California, looking for hazardous materials.

ASTORIA RESIDENT ASSISTS IN FIRE RECOVERY

Steve Dopp helps clean up hazardous materials at Camp Fire

By COLIN MURPHEY
The Daily Astorian

PARADISE, Calif. — As two men in white hazmat suits walked through the remains of what was once a home, Astoria resident Steve Dopp kept a close eye on what they found sifting through the piles of ash and debris.

Dopp's team of Superfund Technical Assessment and Response personnel is just one of many working for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help clean up a town incinerated by the most destructive and lethal wildfire in California history.

The Camp Fire roared through this community of 26,000 in Butte County on Nov. 8. It obliterated most of the town. It reduced homes to rubble and ash and hollowed out cars and trucks, leaving behind only burned-out shells. The fire was so hot, parts of vehicles melted away, leaving behind streams of molten



Trees scorched by the Camp Fire stand near a neighborhood that was destroyed in the blaze.

metal dribbling down driveways.

This is not the first time the EPA and contractors have worked at the scene of devastating wildfires in California and other states.

The North Bay fires of 2017 were part of a series of 250 blazes across Northern California beginning in early October. In all, those fires burned more than 240,000 acres, killed 44 people, destroyed 8,900 buildings and cost an estimated \$14.5 billion. The Camp Fire alone burned more than 150,000 acres, destroyed 18,000 buildings and killed 88 people, with at least three people still unaccounted for, according to the Butte County Sheriff's Office.

EPA Incident Commander Steve Calanog could not provide specific estimates, but believes the size and scope of the damage caused by the Camp Fire was worse than previous fires.

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Nearly every structure in this mobile home park in Paradise, California, was destroyed in the Camp Fire.