

Perennial FAQ

Hello! We are Perennial Zero Waste, an independent contractor dedicated to diverting at least 30% of waste from landfills produced by incident operations.

What do we do?

- Perennial hand-sorts all of the waste flowing through fire camp and redirects it to recycling outlets and other community organizations.

Why does it matter?

- We can turn waste into something useful for the surrounding communities! What would otherwise be sent to the landfill can be used to feed people, feed livestock, make biodiesel, contribute to the development of recycling infrastructure, and minimize our fire camp footprint – on communities and the earth alike.
- Landfills in rural areas are not designed to accommodate the waste produced by fire camps.
- By recycling material as locally as possible, we can help stimulate demand for recycling infrastructure in rural spaces.
- Recycling minimizes our dumpster use, as a camp, and is more financially efficient for camps. Additionally, if the dumpster is used less, trash can be contained more efficiently.
- Recycling is one moving part in the greater zero waste journey to building sustainability into, or “greening” the very fabric of fire camps.

What do we divert from the landfill?

- Plastic bottles (largest volume)
- Cardboard (largest weight)
- Aluminum cans, paper, batteries,
- Non-perishable snacks, fruits, vegetables, bread, grains
- Cooking oil, wood, scrap metal, tin, glass, ink cartridges, clothing, household items

Where do we take it?

- We distribute materials with the goal of making the greatest positive impact in the communities affected by the wildfire. At the Cowlitz Fire Complex, we've partnered with the following organizations:

Presbyterian Thrift and Gift	Plastic, metal, misc
Packwood Senior Center	Non-perishable food donations
East Lewis County Transfer Station	Cardboard, Paper
Sweetwater Farm (Livestock partner)	Fruits, vegetables, and bread/grains
White Pass Community	Perishable food donations from Pine Creek, coordinated between local High School

How much have we recycled so far from the Cowlitz Fire Complex?

- Diversion rate from our first day to 9/17: 31.5%
- Approximately 5,600 lbs of material