

More trees coming to Wallace

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / August 12, 2016

Wallace will serve as one of possibly three sites in Calaveras County where more than 8,000 hazardous trees destroyed by the Butte Fire will be sorted and disposed.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors last week awarded a nearly \$9.8 million professional services agreement for removal of the trees and this week learned the work would begin within the month.

Public Works Director Jeff Crovitz told the board at Tuesday's meeting that Phillips and Jordan Inc. based in Knoxville, Tenn., will have a total of 13 crews doing the work and all of the trees should be removed and the debris management sites such as Wallace by the end of the year.

Each work crew will consist of 10 people, Crovitz added.

"My current estimate is in three or four weeks we will have boots on the ground and trees hauled out of the fire area," he said.

The Wallace site, which has served as a yard for burnt trees being removed from PG&E right-of-way, was already permitted for the work, Crovitz said, and two other sites in the county are going through the permit process.

The site in Wallace at one time had been the Thornburg Mill and then the Snyder Mill. Robert Smith, owner of Smith's Grinding out of Mountain Ranch, established the temporary logging operation on a portion of property used by the former mill following the Butte Fire to handle the trees from PG&E.

Some residents in the nearby Wallace Lake Estates have raised concerns about the noise level of the operation.

Many of those hired for the work crews and tree inspectors are locals, Crovitz said, and he will provide the board with those numbers in several weeks.