

PROJECT: CAMP FIRE REMEDIATION
LOCATION: PARADISE, CA
APPLICATION: SEDIMENT CONTROL
PRODUCT: FILTREXX SILTSOXX® (5" DIAMETER)

For Matthew Kearns, erosion control was always a family business. Matt's father started an erosion control business in the late 1980s with a focus on lawns, sports fields and golf courses. Matt and his younger brother, Chad helped their dad out with the business. When Matt graduated from high school, he joined the military and his brother continued working for his dad. When Matt returned home from his military service in 2016, he and Chad were ready to start their own business.

"We knew we wanted to start some sort of business together," said Matt. "We already had all the equipment from my dad so we decided to go into erosion control on the construction side. That's how Grassroots Erosion Control, Inc. started."

In October of 2017, Northern California saw a series of 250 wildfires, covering 245,000 acres and destroying nearly 9,000 buildings. A debris removal company contacted Grassroots for help with post-fire remediation. At this point, the business was just Matt and Chad but they were able to provide erosion control for 170 lots in Northern California. Grassroots was exclusively hydro-mulching at this time.

In July of 2018, another debris removal company contacted Grassroots for post-fire remediation help on the Carr Fire, which burned in Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area. This time, Grassroots was able to provide erosion control using hydro-mulch and straw wattles on 800 lots.

When the Camp Fire hit in November of 2018, Matt knew they were going to need additional help for the workload that this fire would entail. "We knew we were going to have to hire a crew for Camp Fire. We needed more bodies," said Matt.



"What we really wanted to do was hire locally and give back to the community. We knew people had lost jobs, their homes and were in desperate need of work. We used Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. to be paired with people in the community who lost their homes and needed work."

At the Camp Fire, Matt and his team were introduced to Filtrexx SiltSoxx as an alternative to straw wattle for the post-fire clean up.

"Initially, we thought the compost filter sock was going to be very heavy," said Matt. "It was our first time using this product. We were concerned about the weight of the sock. We were introduced to local Filtrexx sales representatives and they addressed our concerns by showing us the 5" SiltSoxx. This was going to increase our productivity in a big way."

Grassroots had previously only worked with straw wattles on their post-fire remediation sites. In side-by-side ASTM performance testing, SiltSoxx outperformed straw wattles by nearly 10X, reducing sediment loss by an average of 3.7 tons/acre compared to straw wattle.

"One of the best things about SiltSoxx is that they are so much easier to install," said Matt. "They don't need to be trenched."

"Here in California, the weather is so hot, we work 8-10 hour days trenching volcanic rock – it's too much. We've already had a couple of guys have health issues this summer due to heat. Eliminating the need to trench is huge. It's a lot easier."

"On a side-by-side comparison, we found that we can install SiltSoxx twice as fast as straw wattle. Therefore the total cost of installation is less expensive with SiltSoxx than straw wattle."

Matt also liked the environmental benefits of using SiltSoxx versus another comparable BMP.

"It's just a better product for the environment," said Matt. "It actually filters out contaminants. The water doesn't just pool up or run through it, it filters the water and protects our streams."

Grassroots believes that erosion control is going to become even more important as we move into the future.

"It's going to continue to grow," he said. "Erosion control will always be a problem. Grassroots focuses on the construction side – opening up land, moving earth, exposing dirt to the

elements – you need to stop contaminants from entering streams and hurting the environment. Erosion control is going to be around for a long time."

He also strives to make Grassroots a leader in the industry.

"New products will be introduced," said Matt. "SiltSoxx is a brand-new product for us. It is a product we like and we definitely will be using it more and suggesting it on future projects."



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