

# Blazes in the West reveal historic artifacts

By Jim Carlton, Wall Street Journal

SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST – Wildfires scorching the West are revealing an unexpected bounty: newly uncovered historic artifacts, some dating back thousands of years.

Looters and government archaeologists are scouring charred earth for the new archaeological treasures—sometimes even before all the embers are out.

Last summer, a fire that blackened about 150,000 acres in the mountains here above Fresno uncovered remnants of a 19th-century logging railroad that had been partially hidden by vegetation. Among the exposed artifacts: battered pails, rusted tin cans, and other vestiges of life from an abandoned logging camp.

“Camp dumps are cool because you can see what people were eating and drinking,” said Alex Verdugo of the U.S. Forest Service, as he recently picked through debris he estimates was discarded as long as 100 years ago.

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