SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Public Works Department
2004-05 Winter Report
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Public Works Department

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Cover Photo: Jameson Lake spilling, photo taken April 6, 2005.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Santa Barbara County Public Works Department thanks several individuals, businesses, and organizations for their contributions to this report. The newspaper articles contained herein were reproduced with the permission of the Santa Barbara News-Press, South Coast Beacon, Santa Maria Times, Santa Barbara Independent, Lompoc Record, Ventura County Star, Santa Maria Times, and Santa Ynez Valley News.

In addition, the Department wishes to thank the National Weather Service in Oxnard for providing some of the information and figures used in this report and all of the individuals who collect and provide rainfall data as part of the Rainfall Cooperator Program.

Some newspaper articles and report reproductions have been edited to conserve space.
PREFACE

This report documents the significant weather-related events of winter 2004-2005 for Santa Barbara County. A brief introduction discusses the major circumstances and events including climatology, hydrology, storm damage, water supply, and other topics. The narrative sections and appendices that follow provide additional detail including photographs, news reports, hydrologic charts and tables, and weather information. This report is not intended to be a complete or exhaustive documentation of the events described herein.

The rainfall year and water year referred to in this report runs from September 1, 2004 through August 31, 2005.
RAIN

The rain is like billions
of steel marbles
crashing down,
kissing my cheeks,
small at first.
The stars trying to keep you away.

As the day wears on
the drops get bigger
splashing my cheeks and nose.

It is evening now,
you are huge.
The wind howls,
the howl of a wolf.

In the morning you are gone
and I can finally go out and play.

Mackenzie Spencer
Grade 5, 2005
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the winter of 2005 approached, there was little indication of the unusually high rainfall amounts to come. Surface ocean temperatures of the Eastern Pacific were atypical of the strong El Nino condition that is associated with wet winters in Southern California and the first four years of the decade had produced unremarkable winters. The previous year had produced only 60% of average rainfall in Santa Barbara County and much of California had begun preparations to cope with an extended drought.

September of 2004, the first month of the 2005 water year, produced no rain in downtown Santa Barbara nor did the first half of October. However, multiple storm systems during the second half of October brought countywide year-to-date rainfall to greater than 500% of average. By the end of the month, some of the mountainous areas of the county had received over ten inches of rain. The rainfall resulted in sporadic landslides, road closures, and urban flooding. However, soil conditions remained unsaturated and there was no significant replenishment of surface water supplies.

Conditions again turned dry in November during which most locations throughout the county recorded less than 25% of normal rainfall. Through mid-December, rainfall was far below normal and storage in Cachuma Reservoir fell to only 35% of capacity. However, a late December slow moving Pacific storm system off the coast of California brought heavy rainfall, strong winds, and flash flooding to Santa Barbara County. Of particular concern was the potential for mudslides resulting from the Gaviota burn area above Highway 101.

Beginning December 27, 2004, multiple storms brought copious rainfall to all reaches of the county. These storms were characterized by the presence of subtropical moisture, which was funneled into and deposited on the east-west trending Santa Ynez Mountains. By January 12, 2005, a gage at the crest of the Santa Ynez Mountains had recorded over 48 inches of rain for the storm period alone. By that time, countywide rainfall averaged 320% of normal for the water year and watersheds were saturated. All three of the reservoirs on the Santa Ynez River were full and spilling ending immediate concerns of drought.

Widespread problems resulted from the December/January storms including road and railroad closures, mudslides, urban flooding, power outages, fallen trees, and beach erosion. Ten deaths occurred in a massive mudslide at the coastal community of La Conchita in Ventura County. In Santa Barbara County, the prolonged closure of both north and south bound Highway 101 and San Marcos Pass interrupted travel and commerce. A large debris slide forced the closure of San Marcos Road, the only access point to upper San Marcos Pass. Surrounding counties suffered significant losses of agricultural crops, but crop losses within Santa Barbara County were minimal. Despite record-breaking rainfall for the period, short duration rainfall amounts were not extraordinarily high and few of the major creeks and rivers overflowed their banks.

A much-needed respite during the second half of January allowed county and city departments to repair streets and culverts and to clean out debris basins, some of which had filled to capacity. Wet conditions returned in mid-February. Heavy rains returned with a February 17 storm that was held nearly stationary by a region of high pressure situated off the coast of British Columbia.
Rainfall amounts from February 17 to February 23 were as much as 15 inches over the Santa Ynez Mountains and nine inches over the South Coast. Once again, there was considerable damage to transportation, communication, and power supply but little flooding from natural watersheds. Submerged runways forced the closure of the Santa Barbara Airport and mudslides forced the closure of Amtrak’s railway south of Santa Barbara County. South of Lompoc, Highway 1 collapsed at an eroded creek crossing and debris removal operations periodically closed Highway 101 at the Gaviota burn area. A mudslide severed underground cables near Camarillo causing cell phone outages to many Santa Barbara area users. Again, there was little crop loss in Santa Barbara County.

A surprisingly productive storm brought rainfall to the county March 22 and 23. Rainfall amounts of over four inches were recorded at locations in the Santa Ynez Mountains and nearly three inches of rain fell in downtown Santa Barbara. Gages along the county’s South Coast recorded rainfall rates of over one inch per hour and four inches in six hours. Two deaths occurred when a car slid from the highway into Gaviota Creek.

Although unremarkable rainfall fell during the remaining months of the water year, annual rainfall totals were extraordinary. Varying with location and length of record, rainfall at most gages ranked among the ten wettest water years. Annual rainfall at some locations ranked as high as the second wettest of record and individual months as high as first.

Despite the notable rainfall totals, rainfall intensities were not outstanding. Few rainfall intensities (inches of rain per hour) throughout the county exceeded recurrence intervals of ten years. Rainfall depths for most time durations shorter than 24 hours produced similar statistical results and in no case did recurrence intervals exceed 35 years.

The year’s high total, moderate intensity rainfall resulted in few instances of overtopped creeks, streams, or rivers. However, there was widespread urban flooding, facilities damage, and interruption of transportation. Local, State, and Federal emergency declarations allowed Santa Barbara, and many other Southern California counties, to seek aid in the recovery efforts. Estimates place the total cost of damages to county-owned facilities at over 30 million dollars. Included in this estimate are the costs to repair roads, clear debris, repair county-owned buildings, and implement emergency measures.
RAINFALL OCCURANCE AND HYDROLOGY

High total, moderate intensity rainfall characterized the winter of 2005. The large volume of rain throughout the winter resulted in full surface reservoirs and significant groundwater recharge. Rain related damages were largely due to landslides, urban flooding, fallen trees and beach erosion. Creek and river overflow was uncommon as rainfall intensities were generally not great enough to exceed the conveyance capacity for most watersheds.

Rainfall Distribution

In all locations except for the Cuyama Valley, the 2005 water year rainfall ranked well within the top ten of record. In the City of Buellton, annual rainfall ranked the second highest of 51 years. Appendix A, Figure 1 shows water year rainfall ranked for several locations throughout the county. Figure 6 is a graph of annual rainfall compared to other significant water years of the 1990’s and 2000’s.

In addition, monthly rainfall distribution was relatively uniform. Unlike January and March of 1995 and February of 1998, no single month in 2005 was much greater than the others when compared with the monthly mean. The exception to this was October rainfall, which was hundreds of percent greater than the normal October rain. Appendix A, Figures 2 through 5 show monthly rainfall for 2005 at several locations throughout the county as compared to other significant winters of the 1990’s and to normal rainfall.

Statistical analysis is used to quantify the probability of various rainfall events. If the probability that an event (in this case, a specified amount of rainfall in a given period) will be equaled or exceeded in a single year is P, then the recurrence interval (also called return period) is the reciprocal of the probability or 1/P. For example, if there is a 1% probability that two inches of rain will fall in one hour in any single year, then the recurrence interval for this event is 1/0.01 or 100 years. It should be noted that this does not imply that the event will occur at regular 100 year intervals. It is possible that two such events would occur in consecutive years or even in the same year.

Appendix B, Table 1 shows maximum rainfall amounts for 2005 for various periods at many locations within the county. The lower table shows the corresponding recurrence intervals. The greatest recurrence interval measured was 35 years at the city of Lompoc. This means that the listed depth duration (5.01 inches in 24 hours) is expected to be met or exceeded an average of once every 35 years. Note that the majority of recurrence intervals listed in the table is ten years or less with a maximum recurrence interval of 35 years. For comparison purposes, rainfall recurrence intervals during the 1995 and 1998 flood years were as high as 200 years.

Table 3 of Appendix B shows monthly records for selected gages. Figures 11 through 14 are maps showing the distribution of rainfall for the major storms. In addition, extensive rainfall records and statistical analyses are posted at the Santa Barbara County Public Works, Water Resources, Hydrology Section website: www.countyofsb.org/pwd/water/hydro.htm.
El Niño Considerations

El Niño is a disruption of the oceanic and atmospheric cycles of the equatorial Pacific. It is a major climatic phenomenon known to affect weather throughout the world. These effects include increased rainfall in the southern United States and drought conditions in the Western Pacific. During El Niño events, surface ocean temperatures in the Eastern Pacific are warmer than normal.

During the summer of 2004, neutral El Niño conditions existed in the Eastern Pacific. Beginning in September, a weak El Niño developed and remained through the winter months. During weak El Niño events, the Eastern Pacific surface ocean temperatures are less than one degree Celsius above normal.

Locally, strong El Niño events are often associated with greater than average rainfall and the average rainfall for all El Niño years is considerably higher than that for all years. However, weak El Niño events do not generally correlate to increased precipitation. Therefore, the El Niño conditions observed prior to winter were not reliable indicators of rainfall conditions for the following winter.

Drought Concerns

The potential for water shortages became a concern in 2004 with several years of below average rainfall or rainfall distribution that failed to contribute significantly to water supply. By the middle of December 2004, Cachuma Reservoir storage was about 35% of capacity and Gibraltar Reservoir storage was less than half of capacity (Appendix A, Figures 7 and 8). In addition, groundwater levels in some parts of the county had begun to show a decline in response to reduced recharge.

By February 2004, the County Water Agency and local water districts had added additional water efficiency measures to existing measures in order to respond to the potential drought. A Water Shortage Planning Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to address regional drought issues. The Committee identified measures to promote efficient water use including drought specific advertising and public information materials. In addition, several televised workshops were conducted to inform the public of various drought related topics. The county also increased its funding of water efficiency rebate programs to encourage new programs in consideration of the dry conditions.

By the end of the early January storms, all of the major reservoirs of the Santa Ynez River had filled and spilled. Greater than 100% of the capacity of Cachuma Reservoir was passed through the reservoir to the Pacific Ocean providing recharge of riverside groundwater basins. North County reservoirs and groundwater basins also received considerable inflow and increased recharge.

The sudden increase in countywide water supply removed the urgency of concentrated drought preparations. However, the programs already underway as part of drought preparations continued as planned and on-going programs also remained at standard levels.
The December/January Storm Period

Two storm periods of the 2005 water year were particularly significant. The first of these was a prolonged wet period that began December 27, 2004 and ended with a powerful storm lasting from January 7, 2005 through January 12, 2005 (See Appendix A, Figure 12, December/January Rainfall Map). It was during this storm period that watersheds became saturated and the reservoirs of the Santa Ynez Watershed filled and spilled.

The Gibraltar AI graph below is an example of runoff potential based on the calculation of soil moisture. The Antecedent Index (AI) is defined as the amount of rainfall in a 24-hour period that produces an inch of runoff over a watershed. The graph below illustrates a steep decline in the index at the end of December indicating that significant runoff would occur with much less rain than before the storm. Maximum soil saturation occurs at an AI of 2.5, the value reached in late December. Note that the soil moisture dried nearly to the moderate zone prior to the onset of the February wet period.
Satellite imagery from January 10, 2005 shows the largest storm of the series as it impacts Southern California (Below). A National Weather Service (NWS) discussion of that storm is included in Appendix E.

**January 10, 2005 - Satellite Image**

![January 10, 2005 - Satellite Image](image)

**Creeks, Rivers, and Reservoirs**

The December/January storm period saturated the watersheds resulting in runoff to all of the county’s creeks, rivers, and reservoirs. The water level in Cachuma reservoir rose about 20 feet in 24 hours and by the end of the January 7, 2005 storm, all but one of the county’s major reservoirs were full and spilling. With a conservation pool maximum elevation of 621.8 feet, Twitchell Reservoir’s water surface remained below 600 feet. Appendix A, Figures 7 through 10 is graphs of Reservoir water surface elevations with time. The graphs also show rainfall for correlation with reservoir inflow.

Few creeks or rivers overtopped their banks during the December/January storm period. However, many rivers and creeks had significant flow and some approached flood stage (Appendix A, Figures 16 through 20). The highest discharge of the year at Mission Creek occurred in the early morning hours of January 10 (Figure 17). Outflow from Cachuma Reservoir peaked at 18,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) the evening of January 10, 2005 (Figure 16).
The February Storm

The next major storm began February 16, 2005 and brought considerable rain through February 23, 2005. Unlike the December/January storm period, the February event consisted of a single, slow moving storm (Appendix E, NWS Discussion). Below is a radar image taken February 21, 2005.

The storm, which dropped nearly 15 inches of rain in at least one location, hit the South Coast and mountainous areas of the county hardest (See Appendix A, Figure 13, February Rainfall Map). At Gibraltar Reservoir, seven inches of rain fell in a single day.
**Creeks, Rivers, and Reservoirs**

After soil moisture dried to nearly moderate levels, the February storm quickly saturated the ground. Once again, the storms produced significant flow in creeks and rivers throughout the county. Most of the county’s reservoirs remained full from the January rains and minor operational modifications were made at Cachuma Reservoir to minimize the potential for downstream flooding. Peak flows and water levels measured in many creeks and rivers were similar for the January and February events (Appendix A, Figures 17 through 20).

**Flooding, Road Closures, and Damages**

The considerable volume of seasonal rainfall resulted in significant damage to the county’s infrastructure including roads, communications, airports, and railways. In addition, several lives were lost in incidents attributable to the heavy rain. The newspaper articles and photographs in Appendices C and D, respectively detail much of the damage and loss that occurred. The cost of damage to county facilities was in excess of 30 million dollars (Appendix B, Table 2, Storm Damage Repair Projects and Approximate Costs). Figure 15 of Appendix A is a map showing the location of storm damage to county roads during the winter.

In order to provide aid in recovery efforts, several levels of government adopted emergency declarations. The Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors ratified a Local Emergency Proclamation on January 11, 2005. January 15, 2005, the Governor of California declared a State of Emergency, and February 4, 2005 the President of the United States made a declaration of disaster. These documents are reproduced in Appendix F.

**San Marcos Road Landslide**

The closure of the lower section of San Marcos Pass resulted in heavy use of San Marcos Road, which meets the Pass near its summit. On the morning of January 31, 2005 there was a report of a disintegrating slope on San Marcos Road about two miles north of Cathedral Oaks Road. Investigation of the area revealed four-foot wide fissures at the top of the slope (See p. D7 of Appendix D, Photographs). By the evening of January 31, 2005, the entire slope had failed covering 120 feet of San Marcos Road and portions of the adjacent property with an estimated 40,000 cubic yards of debris.

The following aerial photograph was taken February 4, 2005 after the slope gave way.
Remediation of the slide area consisted of the mechanical removal of about 180,000 cubic yards of material, the largest earthwork project ever conducted by the county’s Transportation Division. The graded slope was benched and completed at an angle of 35 degrees. Wire mesh was affixed to the slope and anchored using about 1,000 soil nails. The road reopened in April and the project, nearly complete, is shown in the following photograph.
Debris Basins

Prior to winter, the Flood Control District routinely prepares debris basins to accept material. At the onset of the January storm, full capacity was available within the basins. The storm produced significant amounts of debris and the county’s 17 South Coast debris basins were filled to as much as 100 percent of capacity (See Debris Basin Cleanout Table, below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Performed By</th>
<th>Finish Date</th>
<th>Capacity of Debris Basin (cubic yards)</th>
<th>Quantity Removed (cubic yards)</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MARIA YGNACIO, M SBC</td>
<td>01/17/05</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>$3,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARIA YGNACIO, E SBC</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>ND</td>
<td>ND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN ANTONIO COE</td>
<td>01/26/05</td>
<td>19,210</td>
<td>10,427</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAN ROQUE COE</td>
<td>01/22/05</td>
<td>16,054</td>
<td>14,784</td>
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<td>01/27/05</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>$11,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>RATTLESNAKE SBC</td>
<td>01/19/05</td>
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<td>COLD SPRINGS COE</td>
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<td>SAN YSIDRO COE</td>
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<td>7,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROMERO SBC</td>
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<td>TORO LOWER, WST SBC</td>
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<td>GOBERNADOR COE</td>
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<td>$1,420,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Army Corps of Engineers (COE) took over debris removal from six of the basins listed in the table above. They conducted cleanout of those basins at the cost shown in the table. The Santa Barbara County Flood Control District cleaned out the remaining basins. The total cost for debris removal was about $6.1 million. FEMA reimbursement was available for some of the costs associated with debris basin clean out (Appendix B, Table 2).

Because the timing and magnitude of future storms was unknown, the agencies responsible for the basins made every effort to prepare them quickly to accept additional material. By February 2, 2005, debris removal was complete for all of the basins listed. Although the storm of February 16 was significant, debris inflow to most of the basins was minimal and immediate clean out was not necessary.
The two photographs below show Santa Monica Debris Basin shortly after the January 10, 2005 storm and during debris removal.
Additional Information

Additional information on the topics discussed in this report can be found at the following Internet sites. Note that these sites are active at the time of writing of this report but may not remain so indefinitely.

A) Santa Barbara County Public Works Water Resources:  
   http://www.countyofsb.org/pwd/water/default.htm

B) Santa Barbara County Public Works:  http://www.countyofsb.org/pwd/


APPENDIX A:

HYDROLOGY FIGURES
Figure 1

Buellton - Wettest Rainfall Years
(51 years of record)

Carpinteria - Wettest Rainfall Years
(57 years of record)

Cuyama - Wettest Rainfall Years
(51 years of record)

Lompoc - Wettest Rainfall Years
(35 years of record)
Figure 1 (continued)
Figure 2

Lompoc
Monthly Rainfall Comparison of Recent Notable Wet Years

- 1994-95
- 1997-98
- 2004-05
- Normal

Rainfall (inches)
Figure 3

Santa Barbara - Downtown
Monthly Rainfall Comparison of Recent Notable Wet Years

Rainfall (inches)

1994-95
1997-98
2004-05
Normal
San Marcos Pass
Monthly Rainfall Comparison
of Recent Notable Wet Years

Figure 4
Santa Maria
Monthly Rainfall Comparison of Recent Notable Wet Years

Figure 5
Santa Barbara County
Water Year Rainfall Comparison of Recent Notable Wet Years for Various Locations

Figure 6
Figure 11

Key to Features
- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Major Rivers

Watersheds
- South Coast
- San Antonio
- Santa Maria River
- Santa Ynez River
- Sisquoc River
- Cuyama River

Santa Barbara County Rainfall
October 17, 2004 - October 21, 2004
Figure 13

Key to Features
- County Boundary
- Major Roads
- Major Rivers

Watersheds
- South Coast
- San Antonio
- Santa Maria River
- Santa Ynez River
- Sisquoc River
- Cuyama River

Santa Barbara County Rainfall
February 17, 2005 - February 23, 2005
Cachuma Reservoir Outflow
Water Year 2005

(No outflow prior to 01/05)
FIGURE 17

Mission Creek Flow
January 2005

Mission Creek Flow
February 2005
FIGURE 18

Santa Ynez River @ Lompoc
January 2005

Santa Ynez River @ Lompoc
February 2005

A19
FIGURE 19

Santa Ynez River Stage below Gibraltar
January 2005

Santa Ynez River Stage below Gibraltar
February 2005
FIGURE 20

Cuyama River @ Buckhorn
January 2005

Cuyama River @ Buckhorn
February 2005
APPENDIX B:

TABLES
### Table 1

#### Rainfall Depth/Duration and Return Periods

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<tr>
<th>Station Name</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>5min</th>
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<th>1hour</th>
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<td>0.56</td>
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<td>1.74</td>
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<td>0.98</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
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**TABLE 2**

Winter 2005 Storm Damage Repair Projects and Approximate Cost

- **Department**: FEMA, CORP, Parks, Public Works, Roads
- **Category**: A) Debris Clearing; B) Protective Measures; C) Road Systems; D) Water Control Facility; E) Buildings and Equipment; F) Public Utility System; G) Other
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**Sheriff’s**

| FEMA      | B   | $20,579.33 | EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE MEASURES - SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT |
| FEMA      | B   | $2,744.36  | EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE MEASURES - SEARCH / RESCUE / EVACUATIONS |
| FEMA      | E   | $3,500.97  | BUILDING REPAIR - SHERIFF’S OFFICE |
| FEMA      | E   | $0.00      | BUILDING REPAIR - FIRE STATIONS |
| FEMA      | E   | $0.00      | BUILDING CONTENTS REPAIR - PATROL CAR |
| FEMA      | A   | $8,000.00  | DEBRIS REMOVAL - SHERIFF’S TRAINING FACILITY |
| FEMA      | E   | $9,135.00  | BUILDING REPAIR - BOMB/EXPLOSIVE STORAGE FACILITY |
| FEMA      | C   | $112,833.40 | ROAD REPAIR - CAMINO DEL REMEDIO ACCESS ROAD |
| FEMA      | B   | $2,227.97  | EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE MEASURES - SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT EOC |
| FEMA      | G   | $10,130.00 | PARK REPAIR - SANTA BARBARA COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT HONOR FARM | $169,151 |

**Resource Recovery**

| FEMA      | D   | $166,629.00 | STREAM BED EROSION - FOOTHILL LANDFILL SITE |
| FEMA      | C   | $20,623.78  | ROAD REPAIR - BARON RANCH ROAD |
| FEMA      | A   | $57,412.94  | DEBRIS REMOVAL - TAJIGUAS LANDFILL |
| FEMA      | E   | $8,649.00   | BUILDING REPAIR - ADMINISTRATIVE & ENGINEERING TRAILER |
| FEMA      | C   | $4,999.47   | ROAD REPAIR - MAINTENANCE AND SERVICE ACCESS ROADS |
| FEMA      | D   | $32,960.00  | DEBRIS BASIS REPAIR - WATER CONTROL FACILITIES |
| FEMA      | C   | $30,568.00  | ROAD REPAIR - STORAGE SITE | $296,812 |

**Total**

$32,610,663.38

**FHWA Category:**

- **EO** = Emergency Openings. funded at 100%.
- **PR** = Permanent Restoration. Funded at 90%.
### TABLE 3

**Water Year 2005 - Monthly Rainfall**

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APPENDIX C:

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES
People have been asking if Santa Barbara County is in a drought. Recent stories in local and national media have highlighted the severe drought in some areas of the West and some have reported that the county is now in a drought. On a more personal level, some residents have noticed their landscaping needs more water than usual and that reservoirs are lower than they’ve been in years.

Are we in a drought locally? It’s really a matter of degree, and responses need to be made in a measured manner. The county has received less-than-average rainfall for two of the last three years, which means reservoir and groundwater levels have been dropping.

This dry period is not unusual. Dry periods, and drought, are a way of life for Southern California, and drought planning is an essential element of water supply planning. With two more years of dry weather we would be facing a severe drought. Or, the coming winter could bring enough rain to completely fill local reservoirs. That’s why local water officials are evaluating supplies carefully and getting ready to take further action if necessary.

What are our water agencies doing to respond? They have worked to ensure water supplies will be available to meet their customers’ needs in the months and years to come. Since the last prolonged drought in 1986-92, local districts have maintained long-term water efficiency programs to help residents use water more efficiently. The amount of water used per capita today is lower than before the last drought — a testament to the success of these programs and residents’ awareness.

Local water districts are doing everything possible to prevent the problems experienced during the last drought. Most districts have obtained additional sources of supply, such as State Water and increased use of recycled water. The Santa Barbara County Water Agency recently created a Water Shortage Planning Technical Advisory Committee with staff of the agency and area districts. This group has drafted a Regional Water Shortage Plan to be implemented by the water agency in conjunction with the districts.

The plan is based on lessons learned during the last drought. It identifies increasing measures to ensure efficient use of water, including an advertising campaign and public information materials to be used during a water shortage, accelerated rebate programs for low-flow fixtures, and an inventory of potential surplus water.

This is a countywide picture of our situation. To find out what your individual supplier is doing, give that district a call. For more details, visit www.sbwater.org/droughtplanning.htm.

Robert Almy is manager of the Santa Barbara County Water Agency. This article was prepared in coordination with the cities of Buellton, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria and Solvang; the Carpinteria Valley Water District; Goleta Water District; Montecito Water District; California Cities Water Co.; La Cumbre Mutual Water Co.; Mission Hills Community Services District; Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board; and Central Coast Water Authority.
A drop in the bucket
Week's rain does little to help stop drought talk
10/19/04

By JOSHUA MOLINA

NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

The rain that soaked Santa Barbara this week, with more expected on the way, comes as a welcome surprise. But it will take a steady series of storms throughout the winter to boost water supplies to comfortable levels -- and end talk of drought.

"This is good, but there needs to be a lot more," said Steve Mack, the city's acting water resources manager. "Typically, these October storms come and then it doesn't rain for a couple of weeks or a month or even longer and it all dries up. We need several storms."

Mother Nature dumped about 1 inch of rain on Santa Barbara and about another 2 inches in the mountains the last two days. Heavier rains are expected today.

The rain comes as Santa Barbara, and communities throughout the state, are wrestling with the issue of drought, following two out of the last three winters without significant rainfall. Water experts with Lake Cachuma say there's enough water in the lake to supply Santa Barbara, Carpinteria, Goleta and Montecito through two more dry winters.

The Santa Barbara City Council today plans to hold a public meeting explaining the severity of the water situation, including discussion of supply, existing conservation efforts and the plan to deal with a drought.

Talking about water, city officials say the situation is not dire, but it could take a turn for the worse unless there's major rainfall. Already, agencies that receive water from Lake Cachuma have agreed to each take 20 percent less than their normal amount. To compensate, they plan to buy more state water.

The city of Santa Barbara also has groundwater supplies to tap into if needed. And the city has a desalination plant it could activate. The plant was built in 1992, but used for only a short time because by the time it was finished, significant rain had fallen.

The lack of rain is showing in the lake levels at Cachuma.

A comfortable level for water in Lake Cachuma is about 100,000 acre-feet. Today, Cachuma is at a little less than about 70,000 acre-feet. An acre-foot is equivalent to about 326,000 gallons of water. That's equal to covering a football field with water about 1 foot deep.

Bob Wignot, general manager of the Cachuma Operations and Maintenance Board, which oversees Lake Cachuma, said he is "cautiously optimistic" that there's enough water to get the area through the next two winters.

Anything worse than that would hark back to the worst drought in recent memory, in 1989 and 1990. "If we have two dry winters in a row, in the spring of 2006 we may have to take some emergency measures at Lake Cachuma," he said.

That would include installing a pump station at the lake to move water through Tecolote Tunnel, which carries water to the South Coast. When that was done in 1990, it cost about $600,000. Mr. Wignot expects the cost to hover around $750,000 if pumping is needed this time around, he said.

He said there have been some weather projections that this could be an El Ni–o year -- an unusual weather occurrence that brings storms. Some heavy rains would make things a lot easier, he said.

"If that came true, we would definitely benefit," Mr. Wignot said. "I don't have a crystal ball of course so there's no telling what the winter is going to be like. It's nice to see that we have had some early rainfall."

Santa Barbara city officials contend they have a strong conservation program. For instance, new projects approved by the city must have low-flow toilets and other water-saving fixtures and the city makes presentations to schools about how to save water.

In the past 12 months, however, Santa Barbara used 136 million gallons more, or 418 acre-feet, up about 3 percent compared with the same period the year before.

There are many explanations for the increase. Some say the lack of rain this year has prompted people to water their yards more. Others point to an increase in development in the city. Santa Barbara has more than 700 proposed housing units in the pipeline, which will further stretch water resources.
Latest storm brings few problems

Accidents reported, but ‘nothing major’

BY JAMES SCULLY
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Loud bursts of thunder and record-setting rains pounded the Central Coast Tuesday but caused few problems beyond routine street flooding and a scattering of power outages.

Rain started falling about 9 a.m. in Santa Maria, coming in deluges periodically throughout the day and accompanied by occasional window-shaking claps of thunder.

By 4 p.m., Pacific Gas and Electric Company crews had responded to a few outages but nothing too significant, a spokesman said. That included three in Santa Maria affecting less than 15 customers, one in Arroyo Grande affecting 26 customers and one in Lompoc affecting four customers.

The California Highway Patrol responded to a few rollover and spin-out accidents.

“We have had accidents, but nothing major,” said Officer Gus Lopez of the Santa Maria CHP. “People aren’t adjusting their driving to the existing conditions. They really need to slow down.”

For Esperanza Romero, right, dressing (from left) 3-year-old Artie Dina Gutierrez and 8-year-old Roman Gutierrez was just a matter of coordination.

Stop at Gaviota was closed because of mud in the parking lot. Earlier, crews dealt with a mudslide on the slow lane on southbound Highway 101, north of the Gaviota Tunnel, with chunks of one of the lanes resulting in a partial closure while workers cleaned up the mess, according to Caltrans spokeswoman Susan Zavaleta.

Caltrans is keeping a crew near the site to respond quickly to yardsticks in the area, and has a maintenance crew ready to update chargeable message signs.

“We have crews out as much we can to clear drains and keep the public safe,” she said.

By 5:30 p.m., rains led to closure of a traditional flooding spot — Highway 1 between Solomon and Black roads in the Santa Maria Valley.

Barriers were placed on Highway 1 at 13th Street in Orcutt, where a railroad maintained storm drain is clogged and made the road partially impassable.

“This is the major flooding,” said Zavaleta.

See WEATHER / A9
WEATHER:

Continued from page A1

Vern Dahl, Oceano Community Services District president, said he surveyed the town's flooded major thoroughfares.

Despite the closure of a portion of Highway 1, motorists were ignoring the "closed" and "water" signs, according to Dahl.

"We had a lot of people going through the barriers," he said.

Among them was Nickison resident Jason King, who tried to maneuver his Ford Explorer around the flooded road but didn't succeed.

"I tried to avoid the water," King said about the "lake" that was forming at 10th and Pismo Boblos streets. "I figured I could go around it."

He attempted to bypass the flooding by driving his vehicle through the small underpass, grow in front of the old fire station on Highway 1. But the water was too deep and his SUV got stuck.

"I thought it was fine," King said of the area. "It only looked like it was a foot deep. I thought I could get through." King added that two other cars followed him off the highway, but once his vehicle sank, the other motorists turned around and took the posted detour.

For the most part, the thrifty landscape usually soaked up the rains — close to .75 inches fell in about seven hours in Santa Maria.

"As we get wetter, storms like that will become more of a concern," said Tom Fagrum, deputy public works director for Santa Barbara County.

The 1.6 inch fell in Santa Maria by 4 p.m. Tuesday had shaved a 16-year record. The date's precipitation high rainfall came in 1990 when 58.88 inches of rain fell. Santa Maria has seen 5.22 inches so far this month, well above the normal for October.

At Twinwood Dam, 1.08 inches was logged Tuesday while Lompoc had 76.72. Santa Ynez had 9.90. Pismo Beach had 21.80 and San Luis Obispo County had 1.00 by late afternoon.

The rain isn't over this week.

Today will be mostly cloudy with a chance of showers likely in the morning then a chance of showers in the afternoon, according to the National Weather Service. The forecast also calls for a chance of thunderstorms. Highs in the mids 50s to lower 60s. Chance of rain will be 45 percent.

"It is a little hot out and a cold system going through so temperatures are going to stay relatively low," said Berndt Burgling from the National Weather Service office in Oceano.

Tonight will be partly cloudy with a 35 percent chance of showers. Lows are expected in the lower to mid-50s.

Thursday, partly cloudy conditions are expected with highs near 60 and winds from the east at 10 to 20 mph.

Despite the mounting rainfall totals, an end to the fire season has not been declared, according to one Santa Barbara County official.

That probably won't happen until at least Nov. 1, the next scheduled meeting of county fire officials.

Rain is being eyed as both good and bad for area growers.

"The good part is we're not picking any more strawberries," said Daron Gee from DB Specialty Farms. "The bad part is we're not picking any more strawberries."

Locally, berry growers didn't lose as much as colleagues in the Oxnard area, he said.

"We had some berries we were hoping to harvest," he said. "It didn't come to pass and we lost them, but we have a lot of new plants in the ground right now so we're thankful for the rain... We're happy and sad all in the same day."

Santa Barbara County fire officials reminded people to avoid crossing creeks and puddles, which can look benign but actually prove dangerous.

Santa Maria city officials said that residents in areas known to flood should take precautions by placing sandbags. Although the city doesn't provide sandbags, sand is available at lazy River Crossing near the Santa Maria River, on West Battles Road near "A" Street, and at 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Fridays at the Santa Maria Public Works Yard, 619 W. Church Street.

Rains can be obtained at several locations including:

- Orchard Supply Hardware, 1800 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, 968-2454.
- Farm Supply, 1225 W. Main St., Santa Maria, 925-2337.
- Quinn Rentals, 200 W. Betteravia Road, Santa Maria, 925-3559.
- Pacific Soil Stabilization, 1257 W. Sowers Road, Santa Maria, 925-7377.

- Loomis & Sons, 415 E. Bench St., Arroyo Grande, 469-5544.
- Costa Supply Co., 5605 Broad St., San Luis Obispo, 545-2505.
- Double D Feed & Supply, 2524 Farm Road, San Luis Obispo, 545-5459.
- Sea Line Farm Supply, 475 King Farm Road, San Luis Obispo, 545-7251.
- Sandbags are available at the Grover Beach Fire Department, 201 Backway Ave., at no cost to the public. The bags, sand and shovels are located behind the department.

Staff writers Quintin Cashen and April Chorhon contributed to this report.

Santa Maria's Adam Park was transformed into Lake Adam as a younger hands home from school.

Rain totals for the 24-hour period ending at 5:00 p.m. Tuesday:

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Source: National Weather Service.
Storms are breaking October rain records
Burned areas of Gaviota under flood watch today

10/27/04

By HILDY MEDINA
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

The second storm to hit Santa Barbara County in a week dropped more than 2 inches of rain in some areas on Tuesday, causing slides that closed some mountain roads, cutting off power to thousands and delaying a satellite launch.

The continuing downpour, which has already broken records for October, also prompted a flood watch through 6 p.m. today in the burned areas of the Gaviota coast.

Forecasters expect rain through most of today, with about a 30 percent chance of rain by evening. By the time the Alaskan storm moves on, it may have dumped a total of 7 inches in the mountains and 1.5 inches in Santa Barbara.

As it was in the last storm, the North County was hit the hardest, with Santa Maria getting 1.2 inches of rain, breaking its Oct. 26, 1950, record of 0.75 inches.

"Looks like they had almost an inch of rain in three hours," said Stuart Seto, a weather specialist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard. "That's pretty good."

The rainfall total for the month at Santa Barbara Municipal Airport stood at 2.54 inches Tuesday. That's the most in the 63 years the National Weather Service has been keeping track -- topping the previous record of 2.4 inches set in 1976.

The storm caused power outages in several areas.

About 2,900 Edison customers in Goleta's Camino Contigo were affected in the early afternoon. By 4 p.m., power had been restored to a portion of those customers. Crews also responded to outages on the Mesa that left 1,300 customers without power and another 478 in Santa Barbara near Gutierrez Street. Crews were working late Tuesday to restore power in all the areas, said Ernie Villegas, a Southern California Edison Co. spokesman.

The exact causes of the outages, which were all storm-related, were unknown as of late Tuesday.

The heavy rainfall also sent mud and rocks onto mountain roads in Los Padres National Forest, forcing several closures. A two-mile stretch of Happy Canyon just north of the Cachuma Campground was closed as well as Paradise Road at the Lower Oso picnic area. Pendola Road is also closed at Romero Saddle until the roadways can be cleared.

"We haven't dried out from last week's storm, and they're talking about more rain," said Forest Service spokesman Joe Pasinato. "People don't need to be there until the rain stops and things stabilize."

Santa Barbara Public Works crews worked through the night driving around the city, checking on hot spots like storm drains in the lower areas and other parts of the city known for flooding, said Rick Fulmer, the department's streets manager. Workers were also keeping an eye on the Laguna pump station, "ready to make changes if need be," said Mr. Fulmer.

Astronomy enthusiasts are hoping the rain doesn't dampen their chances of seeing a total lunar eclipse that will happen this evening.
Article II. Mudslides close northbound 101, trap 3 vehicles

Section 2.01 Traffic headache as cars take Highway 154

1) 12/29/04

By BARNEY McMANIGAL

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

Connie Jo Morris picked the worst time to pull her 1993 Chrysler New Yorker into the Gaviota rest stop.

As she napped inside with her dog, Bosco, early Tuesday morning, the hillside above gave way in a torrent of mud and rocks that slammed into her car.

"It was kind of like being on a ride at Disneyland," she said of the mud and debris flowing into her car throughout the night.

The Santa Maria woman was among several motorists caught by a string of nighttime mudslides that poured onto Highway 101 near the Gaviota Tunnel. Though there were no injuries, the mess closed down the northbound lanes of the freeway all day and into the night.

All northbound traffic was routed over Highway 154, causing a massive traffic backup at rush hour and through the evening. At 7:30 p.m., traffic was inching along at 5 mph. CHP officials said they expected the northbound lanes on Highway 101 to reopen today.

Ms. Morris -- who was returning home from a camping trip in San Diego with her silky terrier -- had pulled into the rest area after running out of gas during the night.

"I didn't plan on staying there so long," said Ms. Morris, who stood by Tuesday morning as Caltrans workers shoveled the car out from several inches of mud.

She was chipper about the ordeal: "You might as well laugh about it."

Besides Ms. Morris' Chrysler, Caltrans workers helped dislodge an 18-wheel truck and a station wagon, which also got trapped, she said.

The sudden mudslides -- three total -- began before midnight Monday, as two people traveling on the highway in a Winnebago slammed into a stream of mud just north of the tunnel. The vehicle, which was pulling a trailer, tore through about 150 feet of guardrail in the left lane, nearly plunging 25 feet into the Gaviota Creek below.

California Highway Patrol officers arriving at the scene encountered the trailer hanging halfway down into the creek. They immediately closed all northbound lanes.

Neither Jonathan Hegvold, 25, nor Evelyn Diaz, 21, both from Tujunga, was injured, though officers reported serious damage to the vehicles.

"It all happened at once," CHP spokesman Ernesto Sanchez said of the mud bank that came streaming across the road.

The slides occurred in the area of the Gaviota Fire, which began on June 5 and raged through 7,400 acres before it was contained five days later.

With hillsides still barren from the fire, the heavy rains brought down a glut of rocks, trees and other debris that clogged drains leading under the highway to the creek.
Fierce storm pounds county with flooding, power outages

12/29/04 SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

By JOSHUA MOLINA and SCOTT HADLY

NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITERS

A ferocious storm packed with huge waves, wicked winds and heavy rains slammed into Santa Barbara County on Tuesday, triggering mudslides, flooding and power outages for as many as 3,000 residents.

Winds whipped up a spiraling waterspout just offshore of Carpinteria around 5 p.m., and by sunset the storm had dumped more than a foot of rain on Figueroa Mountain, more than 7 inches at San Marcos Pass and 4 inches in downtown Santa Barbara.

The first lightning strike of the storm came about 5 p.m., followed by a low rumble that was heard across the South Coast. Thirty minutes later, fire crews at Santa Barbara Municipal Airport were called out to a runway waiting for a single-engine Cessna aircraft that had been struck by lightning and was preparing to land. The plane made it in safely.

The wind and rain caused damage and power outages across California, and may have been responsible for at least two deaths, a surfer in Northern California and a truck driver whose rig went over the side of Interstate 5 on the Tejon Pass near Pyramid Lake.

Forecasters said the rain will be tapering off today, but periodic downpours, thunderstorms and even isolated small tornados are possible in some areas. But starting tonight through the weekend, additional showers are likely.

In Santa Barbara, the strength of the storm rattled loose thousands of palm tree fronds. Cars weaved in and out of a scattered mess of splintered branches that lined Cabrillo Boulevard and Santa Barbara’s waterfront.

An audience of tourists and locals packed the beach shooting videos and snapping photographs of the thrashing waves and boats that had washed up on the sand.

The wind ripped at least five boats from their moorings just offshore and sent them crashing onto East Beach. Around 10 a.m., a crowd watched as the owner of the beached 40-foot Tanya F, Doug Jaffe, and his two daughters, Gracie, 7, and Hannah, 9, fished toys and other belongings out of the ocean.

A rescued pink dollhouse, shoes, detergent and a small refrigerator were piled up on the sand. Family photographs floated in the sea.

"Daddy, Daddy, we're going to lose our stuff," one of the girls yelled as a big wave tipped the edge of the boat into the water, spilling more belongings into the sea.

Mr. Jaffe stood somberly as he watched the waves beat down his boat.

"It's soaked," he said, sternly. "It's waterlogged. I am going to have to get a chain saw and chop it up."

Seeing the family's distress, fisherman Mike Shields waded into the muddy water and helped retrieve some of their valuables, including photos.

"Pictures are important," Mr. Shields said. "Those are things that you don't replace."

Mr. Shields said he felt "heartbroken" for the boat's owner. "Talk about breaking a man's spirit. Losing a boat, that will do it."

Nearby, Lisa Tuckerman and her two sons Cooper and Hudson watched, in awe of the wreckage on the beach. "It's a good reminder of the power of the ocean," Ms. Tuckerman said. A steady stream of observers throughout the day gathered around the wrecked boats.
Owners will be given 10 days to remove the beached vessels, which washed ashore from an area east of the wharf called "Fool's Anchorage," because, unlike the boats in the harbor, they are not protected and tend to wash up during bad storms.

A tidal surge and big waves pounded Stearns Wharf in the hours before sunrise Tuesday, loosening a few pilings, punching up several planks and knocking a huge water tank under the new Sea Center into the surf, according to Waterfront Director John Bridley.

Trying to keep the water tank from smashing into the pier and damaging the pilings, crews attempted to lasso the tank and then tow it to shore.

Some people took advantage of nature's surprise. A handful of kayakers plunged into the ocean near the pier.

Longtime surfer and Montecito resident Johnny Goldberg, who goes by the name Johnny G., waxed his shortboard with his friend Jimmy Bollettieri, a Miami Beach resident, before heading out to catch a wave next to Stearns Wharf, not a typical surfer hot spot.

"I have never seen this side break," said Johnny G. "It's just cool."

He was near the mouth of Mission Creek where muddy water dotted with trash flowed into the ocean, adding to the mocha-colored swath visible along the shore for miles.

County health officials recommend people stay out of the water for 48 hours after a storm because of high bacteria counts.

Some of the most serious damage from the storm was from high winds, recorded at over 50 mph in some locales. Downed trees damaged several cars and took out power lines, blew transformers and caused power surges.

Southern California Edison responded to more than 70 incidents, mostly trees into power lines. The storm knocked out power for about 2,900 homes in Isla Vista and 700 homes in the Mesa area of Santa Barbara, said Edison spokesman Ernie Villegas.

Many of those customers were without power for more than 12 hours, Mr. Villegas said.

In Solvang, the wind knocked over a sign for a downtown hotel and a rooftop plastic Santa statue atop the Svendsgaard Lodge blew over.

The rain pumped this season's rainfall total to almost 200 percent of normal. The 24-hour totals recorded by the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District as of Tuesday morning showed amounts equal to almost 50 percent of the total rainfall this season.

Isolated flooding was reported across the county. Two homes on Monte Bello Street in the Santa Ynez Valley were flooded after midnight.

The county is offering residents sandbags at several locations, including the South Coast Yard near the transfer station at 4430 Calle Real, behind the Sheriff's Department headquarters, at Fire Station 32 in Santa Ynez, 906 Airport Road, and at the Santa Maria Road Yard, 912 W. Foster Road.

For Carlos and Maria Leyva, Las Vegas residents, the storm meant an early end to their Santa Barbara vacation. Before they packed up to head for San Diego, they videotaped the big waves.

"We will not be coming back here during the winter," Mr. Leyva said, holding his 13-month-old daughter Rebecca. "Next time we will come in the summer for Fiesta."
January

Storms give Goleta Beach an extreme makeover

1/3/05 SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

By THOMAS SCHULTZ
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Goleta Beach is not what it used to be.

A week ago, that is. Surging high tides driven by the powerful storm systems that brought rain and high winds to the South Coast rearranged this most popular of Santa Barbara County parks last week. Another short-term fix there is likely now, as officials work through a years-long and controversial process to create a master plan for handling chronic erosion.

The storms last week took a big bite, leaving a 4- to 6-foot vertical wall of sand nearly the entire length of the park along the lawn. This forced officials to put up a long orange safety fence to protect pedestrians from taking an unexpected tumble.

The high tides appear to have stolen away all of the tons of sand deposited by crews last year in an experimental $2 million project that relocated sediment dredged from the Santa Barbara waterfront. In addition, officials said the swirling water undermined a section of asphalt at the eastern parking lot.

It could be weeks before authorities decide whether to haul in more sand, at an undetermined cost, or try something else. In the meantime, the beach can still be reached by taking a walk around the fence at either far end.

"We'll need to keep the fence up until we can do something about that drop-off," said Terri Maus-Nisich, county parks director.

Acting too soon could prove pointless, particularly if new storms hit later this winter.

"We want to place the sand so it will have the best chance of staying," Ms. Maus-Nisich said. "We really can't make any decisions until we have a better feel for the long-range forecast."

At the Beachside Bar Cafe at the park, employees watched the erosion this week with frustration.

"I've been the day manager," said Laurie Hoffland. "Every day I come in, there is less. It's not so much that waves splash high. It's just when the tides come in, they have enough force they just gouge. With every wave that comes in, it just takes sand out with it.

"It will probably just get worse as the winter goes on. It's always real exciting. But then again, it's always real sad. More and more of this asset of our community washes out to the ocean."

A dispute about how to address chronic erosion at the park pits a tradition of recreation against the ebb and flow of coastal processes. The first camp favors artificial barriers to the waves. The second prefers an approach known as "managed retreat" in which structures, underground utilities, grass and perhaps parking are moved -- or removed -- so the shoreline can recede as nature dictates.

Goleta Beach is one of 23 parks managed by the county, and officials said it is the most popular. The park is already partially armored against erosion with revetments along its eastern flank, rocks near the restaurant and rocks along its western end.
Storm eases drought fears

1/4/05 SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

By MELINDA BURNS

NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

A jet stream on steroids and a storm system with a mind to linger are delivering a record-breaking rainy season in Santa Barbara County, filling Lake Cachuma to the halfway mark and averting the need for immediate drought warnings, hydrologists said Monday.

A record 30 inches of rain has fallen at Gibraltar Dam in the mountains behind the city since the water year started on Sept. 1, county Flood Control officials said. The dam began spilling on Wednesday evening. Los Alamos, Santa Ynez, Buellton, Lompoc, Sisquoc, Cachuma and Figueroa Mountain also broke historical rainfall records for the period from Sept. 1 to Jan. 3.

Most important, hydrologists said, the big storms hit the mountains as well as the coast, saturating the ground and causing water to run off and flow into the reservoirs.

Cachuma, the main drinking water source for the South Coast, has risen 19 feet since the storm system rolled in the day after Christmas, nippy, slow-moving, fresh from the Gulf of Alaska and swollen with moisture from the Pacific Ocean. Today, the mud flats that were cracked and exposed next to the dam off Highway 154 are under a foot and a half of water, and boaters no longer have to trek across an extended gangway to reach the water's edge. The lake is at 55 percent of capacity, up from 37 percent before Christmas.

"This really reverses the trend of the last several dry winters," said Bob Wignot, manager of the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board, the agency that runs the reservoir. "We're more than 300 percent ahead of the average rainfall."

In Santa Barbara, 14.6 inches of rain fell between Sept. 1 and Jan. 3, the third wettest start of a rainy season since the city began keeping records in 1867. That's two and a half times the average for this time of year. The city's historical annual rainfall average is 18.2 inches.

January and February are usually the months with the heaviest rainfall here. But this December, nearly 8 inches fell in downtown Santa Barbara -- an event that might be repeated once in the next 10 to 25 years -- followed by another 1.8 inches late Sunday and early Monday.

The City Council, which had been poised to declare a "stage one" drought alert today, will instead likely postpone its decision until the end of the rainy season in April, said Steve Mack, the city's acting water resources manager.

"Now that we know the pressure's off, it seems more sensible to wait," he said.

A "stage one" alert advises the public that a serious drought could be on the way. Under a "stage two" alert, the city requests voluntary cutbacks in water use -- something that had been contemplated for this spring, if the dry weather had continued.

Lake Cachuma is now at the level it was about a year ago. Mr. Wignot said the South Coast agencies that get deliveries from Cachuma may want to revise the 20 percent cutback that they implemented in October. Most of them upped their deliveries of state water from the California Aqueduct to make up for the loss of Cachuma water, and they could save money if full deliveries from Cachuma were reinstated, Mr. Wignot said.

But even as local water managers count their blessings, climatologists who take the long view predict that the dry weather will return -- for another 18 years. It's the 25-year "La Niña" cycle of drier winters and colder summers that began in 1998, when the ocean temperatures off Southern California dropped between 2 and 5 degrees, these experts say.

For a reminder of what's to come, they say, there's the dry period from 1944 to 1964 in Santa Barbara in which only four years of above-average rainfall were recorded. The rest of the years were dry, including one in which the city got only 8 inches of rain.

That's why Bill Patzert, a climatologist with Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, looks at Cachuma as half empty, not half full."
Saturated ground: 
One more storm could bring flooding

ERIN CARBLYE
STAFF WRITER

Holiday storms have been nature’s way of cleaning out Santa Barbara County’s creeks and rivers and adding to groundwater reserves — but flooding could result if heavy rains continue in the storm that is forecast to hit Thursday.

“We’ve got a lot of rain over the last nine days, and the watershed response is very high. That brings a concern for future storms,” said Tom Fayram, deputy public works director for Santa Barbara County.

The Santa Ynez River is scoured clean from the rainfall and the Santa Maria River is flowing east of Santa Maria, Fayram said.

These flows over the last couple of days are very beneficial because they help scour things over, and nature can do a lot of work a lot cheaper than we can do,” Fayram said.

“The river does some self-cleaning and keeps that channel open,” as it scours out the riverbed’s vegetation.

“What we’ve observed is, all of our creek channels have done real well,” Fayram added.

Water isn’t flowing in the Santa Maria River where it crosses Highway 101 because the sandy river bottom absorbs the water by that point, recharging the valley’s groundwater basin. But east of Santa Maria, there is water in the riverbed, Fayram noted.

So far officials are pleased with the weather, saying the additional rainfall will prevent drought preparation measures on the South Coast, such as restrictions on watering lawns, washing cars and flushing toilets.

But more of the same weather, through good for groundwater supplies and reservoirs, could cause flooding.

If a heavy storm like the one after Christmas occurs, high runoff could follow.

“That’s when you’re going to start to challenge the capacity of the creeks,” Fayram said.

It’s difficult to predict locations of potential flooding, Fayram said.

Tuesday, county workers flew over both rivers in a helicopter to survey needed work. The Santa Ynez River indeed fairly good, but Fayram said additional flow would help scour the river more.

The county has been responding to reports of downed trees and clogged vegetation in creeks throughout the storm, clearing out problem areas, Fayram said.

In the 1980s, farmers and environmentalists battled over clearing willows and vegetation from the Santa Ynez River. The county has cleared the riverbed since 1997 because storms have consistently washed away built-up vegetation, Fayram said.

Staff writer Erin Carbury can be reached at 733-9218 or by e-mail at ecarblye@pulitzer.net.
A creek runs through it

Water supply rises with local reservoirs

Storm runoff beginning to replenish long-dry supplies

BY JANINE SCULLY
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Continued runoff from recent rains is filling drought-depleted reservoirs that provide water and recreation for Central Coast communities. From Cachuma Lake in Santa Barbara County to Lake San Antonio in Monterey County, authorities report rising reservoir levels even as winter storms bear down on the

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Central Coast.

With 105,332 acre-feet of water Tuesday, Cachuma was 56 percent full. The lake had recorded 21.58 inches of rain, some 340 percent of normal.

"It's exciting to see the lake come back up," said Tony Ruetter, chief of operations for the Cachuma Project.

By Tuesday morning, Cachuma's elevation was nearly 737 feet above sea level, about 33 feet from spilling.

"Before the nine days of rain, the lake was just 36 percent full."

"It was getting low, we're building 184 numbers," said Ruetter, who is based with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in Fresno.

"That growth is enough to fill all annual water needs of communities, primarily those on the South Coast, supplied from Cachuma.

Bradley Dam, which forms Cachuma, last spilled during a wet spring in 1961.

"It's going to take some good storms to fill up the lake," he said.

Lopez Lake east of Arroyo Grande was at 49 percent of capacity Tuesday and was 21.5 feet from spilling. The dam last spilled in 1997.

Lopez serves as water to Pismo Beach and is a popular recreational area.

"It's beautiful," said Dan Chapman, Lopez park ranger. "We were getting worried. It really transforms the park when the lake is full." With already saturated ground, he expects runoff from heavy storms will cause the lake to continue rising.

Twitchell Reservoir, a flood control and groundwater recharge facility east of Santa Maria, had 1,393 acre-feet of water.

"Right now it's just a drop in the bucket," said Sandy Nort, Twitchell's operations and maintenance supervisor.

Twitchell can hold more than 300,000 acre-feet of water. The facility last held significant water in 2000 after the remnants of 16 storms.

Many areas on the Central Coast had no measurable rain for the 24 hours ending at 4 p.m. Tuesday, marking the first break in nine days.

Muir, near Monterey County, Lake San Antonio is at 40 percent of capacity with 153,075 acre-feet of water stored.

San Migueltito Lake in mid-San Luis Obispo County is 56 percent full.

The National Weather Service forecast calls for partly cloudy conditions today with a 40 percent chance of showers in the afternoon.

By tonight, partly cloudy conditions will be paired with a 40 percent chance of light rain, turning to a high of 70 percent on Thursday.

This storm is expected to deliver heavy downpours late Thursday and into Friday and could be another "flood producer," the weather service said.

"Further out, the forecast models are advertising another storm for Sunday and Monday so there is no dry weather in sight for the foreseeable future," the agency warned.

Associate Editor Joanne Scully can be reached at 789-2221 or by e-mail at Joanne@Tribune.net.
Fierce rain, deadly slides

AT LEAST 3 KILLED AS MUD SMOthers LA CONCHITA HOMES

County's worst storm in decade closes several highways, and experts fear it could get worse

By JOSHUA ROBIDEAU

A maelstrom scorned the region on Monday, triggering mudslides that killed at least three people in La Conchita, severing highways, trapping vehicles and leaving as many as 3,000 people stranded. Highway 101, a major artery that links the coastal cities of Pismo Beach, Santa Barbara, and Ventura to Los Angeles, was closed to all traffic.

In the north, Highway 154, which connects Santa Ynez Valley to Santa Barbara, was closed for several hours. Federal officials also said they were monitoring the situation in La Conchita, the site of the deadly mudslide in 2005.

Forecast

Heavy rains are expected to continue for several days, and flash flood warnings are in effect through the week. The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood watch for the region, and residents are urged to stay away from areas prone to mudslides.

Resources

For updated information, visit the National Weather Service website or call 800-477-7447. For a list of emergency contact numbers, visit the Santa Barbara County website or call 805-568-7700.

Rescuers frantically search through mud for missing: about 15 houses damaged

By MORGAN GREEN, JANE BLEDSOE and CLIFF SCOTT

At least three people were killed and others seriously injured Monday by an avalanche of mud that struck the town of La Conchita, north of Santa Barbara. The mudslide buried several homes and sent rescuers racing to dig out survivors.

Firefighters and Ventura County Sheriff's deputies deployed sensitive listening equipment into the La Conchita mudflow to help them find anyone who may have been buried. Special listening devices were focused on the mound of debris that had collapsed near the coastal Railroad Avenue.
Motorists sit stranded Monday between two mudslides on Highway 101 in La Conchita, between Ventura and Santa Barbara.
SLIPPERY SLOPE. S.B. foothills resident Bob Kohl cleared mud off his driveway bridge the morning after Sycamore Creek topped its banks. His home on the 1300 block of Sycamore Canyon Road was undamaged.

SLIDING ASHORE. During low tide, a boat owner towed his beached vessel to the sea's edge, hoping the surf would carry her back offshore. The storm threw several boats onto the beach during surging high tides.

Here Comes the Rain! After nearly six months without any significant rainfall, Santa Barbara County welcomed several days of wet weather this week that helped slightly to replenish a very low Lake Cachuma (photographed) and gave a sigh of relief to ranchers fearing extended drought conditions. The rain proved to be a bummer, however, for organizers of the Goleta Lemon Festival, which was canceled Sunday when Girlis Park became too soggy. According to meteorological specialist Bruce Rockwell from the National Weather Service, this week's showers were supposed to drop as many as three inches on the coast and up to six inches in the mountains but would taper off by the weekend. Weather experts are predicting a slightly above-normal temperature and precipitation this winter, meaning a slight to moderate El Niño season. In related news, the Santa Barbara City Council heard a report Tuesday from water supply officials—during a heavy rain, ironically—about how the city will address future dry conditions. Pumping groundwater, increasing State Water supplies, and asking customers to use 19 percent less water would be employed before the city considers constructing its desalination plant. Water manager Steve Mick emphasized that Lake Cachuma goes through normal wet and dry cycles, and that his department will evaluate the need for drought measures after this winter's rainy season.

—Matt Kettmann and Cathy Muille
STORM BOTH HELPS, HURTS

Rain allays drought fears but also takes a toll on life, property

Above, Lake Cachuma began spilling at 7 a.m. Monday after a three-day storm drenched the county, bringing up to 20 inches of rain to the mountains behind the South Coast. The last time the lake spilled was in March 2001. At left, a pair of ducks take a swim in a flooded parking lot at the Andrew Clark Bird Refuge. At toll left, Steve Gordon of Santa Barbara stands over a hot tub that washed ashore at East Beach. At bottom left, Wade Hoon, a Caltrans engineer, assesses one of many rock slides along Highway 101. The double yellow lines mark the center of the road. It probably will reopen on Wednesday.

Above, two cars sit abandoned Monday after getting swept up by a mudslide on Highway 101 north of Los Angeles. At left, mud, rocks, and other debris are cleared from a Sycamore Canyons Road driveway earlier in the day.
Rains shut down roads, rails
Northbound lane of Highway 101 closed; sinkhole halts Amtrak

By MELISSA EVANS
NEWS PRESS STAFF WRITER

The fourth consecutive day of downpours and high winds kept emergency workers busy Sunday with stranded motorists, road closures and reports of minor flooding — and more rain is on the way.

Traffic on the roads was a nightmare Sunday after authorities closed one northbound lane of Highway 101 near the Gaviota Tunnel because of a mudslide and unsafe conditions.

Highway 154 remained closed Sunday between Highway 246 and Cathedral Oaks Road after a series of mud and rockslides. The road was not expected to reopen until later this week, depending on the weather.

Highway 1 will likely remain closed at its junction with Highways 101 and 101 through Wednesday after a 100-foot section of the freeway collapsed Saturday.

The weather also disrupted train travel through the county. Amtrak canceled its Pacific Surfliner service for Sunday, and possibly Tuesday, after a sink hole eroded parts of the railway tracks near Point Conception. The only train in the vicinity Sunday, which was headed south, was notified and passengers were given alternative transportation to Santa Barbara. Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said.

Other trains, including Amtrak's Coast Starlight, will not travel any farther south than San Luis Obispo — originating and arriving there instead of Los Angeles, officials said. Passengers are strongly encouraged to make other travel arrangements, Mr. Magliari said.

Saturday evening, Santa Barbara County Fire Department firefighters rescued their second stranded motorist in the past few days after a man driving a pick-up truck got stuck trying to cross Gaviota Beach Road. Other weather-related calls included a tree that fell onto a home and reports of minor flooding because of excessive runoff, said Dendra Wiley, spokesman for the county Fire Department.

There were no serious injuries involved in any of the calls, she said.

A handful of households were without power Sunday evening, including 14 homes in the Calle Madera and Laurel Canyon area, after a tree knocked down electrical lines, a spokesman from Southern
Stories of the storm

Teresa Emery, left, and Ernesto Sanchez, both of Santa Maria, look Sunday at stormy waters, which flooded the Santa Maria Riverbed at the Suey Crossing Road bridge.

Rivers fill while highways close

Many gather to see waters flow at Suey Crossing Road

BY MALIA SPENCER

A steady stream of people gathered Sunday at the Santa Maria River near Suey Crossing Road to watch as unseasonal rainwater gushed across the road.

"It's pretty wild," said Cathy Duarte, who was with her daughter watching the water rush over the riverbed, in which the two usually hike.

Duarte, who has lived in the area for 30 years, said she hasn't seen the river in this state in almost a decade.

In addition to putting water in the Santa Maria River, the rain also closed more roads.

A nearly 6-mile portion of Highway 166 was closed between Highway 101 and Marcello, in Kern County, around 7 a.m. Sunday. The road was expected to remain closed until daybreak because of flooding.

For information regarding road conditions for the morning commute, drivers are requested to call the Caltrans highway information network 800-427-7623.
STORM:

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at 1-800-GAS-ROAD.

Caltrans crews closed portions of Highway 164 and a section of Highway 1 on Saturday, and those stretches of road will remain closed through Wednesday, Caltrans officials said.

Highway 154 is closed due to mud and rock slides just west of Painted Cave Road. Highway 1 is closed at Ylvis Creek between Lompoc and Highway 101 because the heavy rains have caused a 200-foot-long portion of the pavement to give way.

Drivers commuting south are directed to take Highway 24 East and connect to Highway 101, Caltrans spokeswoman Marta Bortner said.

On Saturday, Caltrans had hoped to have part of the affected area of Highway 1 open for the Monday morning commute, but that will not happen, Bortner said.

Once the rain stops and the pavement is more stable, the road can be rebuilt, Bortner said.

“It’s simple, but it (the affected area) needs to stop moving first,” she explained.

She said officials would keep an eye on mudslides in the Gaviota area, especially since Highway 101 is the alternate for the closed Highway 154.

The department does not anticipate any further road closures, she said.

But if the northbound Highway 101 lanes are blocked by a mud or rock slide, Bortner said traffic will be escorted by the California Highway Patrol through the area on the southbound lanes.

Traffic would have to be stopped in one direction in order for those moving in the opposite direction could pass. If this occurs officials expect delays of up to three hours during peak traffic times.

Sunday was the fourth day of a series of storms that continued to drop rain on the already saturated ground.

Sunday’s rain total of .46 inches for Santa Maria was not record-breaking, however, Saturday’s 1.13 inches of rain set a new record for the date. That date’s previous record was .51 in 1950.

Santa Maria has received 3.12 inches of rain since Jan. 1, according to National Weather Service data, which is 2.46 inches above normal for that period.

The gray skies and wet weather are expected to last through Tuesday, said Dan Keeton, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

A low pressure system and multiple storms have created the long stretch of nearly unceasing rain, he said.

“The storminess is typical, but the intensity and having storm after storm after storm is unusual,” he said.

The last memorably wet winter was the El Niño year of 1997-98, Keeton said.

This year, the state is experiencing a weak El Niño pattern, with warmer water temperatures near the equator, he explained.

However, there is a light at the end of the tunnel for the Central Coast, Keeton said.
Storms hit region hard

Road closure, flood warnings continue locally

BY JARENE SCULLY
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Despite Monday’s reprieve between storms, the sudden Central Coast copped with closed roads, disrupted rail service and rising rivers, even as authorities braced for another wave of hard rain and possibly more risk to life and property.

Caltrans crews worked on various problems that forced the closure of several stretches of Highways 1, 101, 166, 154, 190, 192 and 33.

The Central Coast’s worst mudslide killed at least three people Monday afternoon and crushed houses at La Conchita near the Santa Barbara-Ventura county line. Highway 101 was closed in both directions as mud and debris washed across all four lanes. Interstate 5 remained the north-south option, but with major east-west highways shut down, that wasn’t the easiest alternative.

“We’re telling traffic to stay off the road,” said Caltrans spokeswoman Susana Zavala.

Crews also kept a close watch on Highway 101 near the Gaviota burn area, but the stretch of road remained open Monday.

Highway 1 between Lompoc and Highway 101, with a huge crack in the pavement and slumping soil at Ytian Creek, will remain closed through at least Wednesday.

Rocks and mud that closed Highway 154 late Saturday night were “getting worse,” Zavala said Monday. Originally, crews expected to reopen the road Wednesday.

“It’s going to be for a while longer, I think,” she said. “It’s a big mud and rock slide and debris, and the road has been damaged.”

Highway 101 east of Santa Maria is flooded and will remain closed indefinitely, especially at night as a precaution, according to Caltrans.

Highway 33 at Highway 166 remains closed.

Conditions are not much better to the north. Slow lanes in both directions remained closed on Highway 101’s Cuesta Grade in San Luis Obispo County.

See STORMS / A10
STORM:

Continued from page A1

po County, and a message sign warned of slowing traffic.
Ladies, county road crews have been dealing with flooding.
“We’re handling it,” said
Richard Navarro of Santa Barbara
County Public Works.

“With everything saturated,
we’re just trying to keep road-
ways open as best as we can.”
Monday at 9 p.m., a tree that
fell on Highway 227 just north
of Noyes Road in rural Arroyo
Grande led to the road’s closure
for most of the night.
Cachuma Lake reached capac-
ity and began spilling over Brad-
bury Dam early Monday, caus-
ing the Santa Ynez River to swell.
Monday, the National Weather
Service issued a flood warning
for the lower Santa Ynez River,
including Lompoc and Vandenberg
Air Force Base, through 2 p.m.
today.
In Lompoc, downstream from
Cachuma Lake, officials waited
and watched as the Santa Ynez
River grew Monday, with the like-
lihood it could swell more today.

“It really depends on how much
we get and how quick we get it,
eto,” said Battalion Chief Robert
Kovaci from the Lompoc Fire
Department.

Steve Jordon, whose Baroda
Farms operates on land in the
western Lompoc Valley, evacu-
ated irrigation pipes and tractors
from low-lying areas.

“Most of the ground in the
flood zone does not have crops on
it right now,” he said. “We’ve
just got our fingers crossed.”
Tom Faymann, head of the San-
ta Barbara County food control
agency, said much of Monday
morning’s efforts focused on the
South Coast, which was ham-
pered with rains overnight Sun-
day.

“The exception of that is the
Santa Maria River, which has
significant water in it right
now,” he said Monday morning,
saying that his crews have pat-
trolled the levee non-stop since
Sunday to watch for breaks.
The Santa Ynez River will con-
continue to rise and could spill
its banks, he added.

“It’s very possible it could do
that,” he said. “There’s so much
water in the system now there’s
no place to put any more.”
Lompoc firefighters and police
kept busy Monday afternoon
when three teens decided to
climb the Santa Ynez River in an
inflatable raft. The two 15-year-
old boys and 14-year-old boy were
picked up by the river by police
who were spotted near
McLaughlin Road, Fire Battalion
Chief Stan Hart said. The teens
had donned wetsuits and
launched their raft deliberately,
said Hart.
It is unclear what if anything
the boys were hired to do with
the names of the two 16-year-
old were unavailable.

“Even though they thought
it was fun, the potential is dead-
ly,” Hart said.

Another danger in Lompoc be-
sides fast-moving water is the
brush in the river south of the
North H Street bridge.

“At this point the (Bradbury)
Bridge is releasing water from
Lake Cachuma, and it’s going to
cause an increase in water (in the
river) and stronger currents,”
Hart said.

The high release of water from
Cachuma was expected to flood
River Park, prompting Lompoc
officials to close it. The park
was closed while it’s off lin-
time, but despite the dangers, there
is no way to close the river to
thrive seekers.

“Anytime the river is flowing,
you are going to get people that
want to challenge the river and

they are just either unaware of
the dangers or they are willing to
accept the risks,” Hart said.

Late Monday afternoon, resi-
dents of the Maricoa Creek area
near San Marcos Pass Road were
also worried of possible flooding
in that section of Los Padres
National Forest.
That was one of several South
Coast areas given voluntary
evacuation orders.

Unfavorable weather prompted
Santa Barbara County leaders
to send out evacuation notices
from the 16-year-old

More than 1,000 acres were

expected to ignite a 1,500-acre fire
in the Santa Barbara foothills.

Assemblyman Pedro Nava, D-
Santa Barbara, asked Gov
Arnold Schwarzenegger to de-
clare a state of emergency in San-
ta Barbara and Ventura counties.

Drivers aren’t alone in dealing
with weather related headaches.
Amtrak passenger rail service is
halted after a sinkhole was re-
ported near railroad tracks at
Gaviota. Rock slides also were re-
ported along the tracks south of
Santa Barbara.

Since the Union Pacific-owned
tracks closed, Amtrak said that
all Pacific Surfliner service north
of Los Angeles is canceled
through Thursday, when the rail-
road expects to re-open.

Until further notice, Coast
Starlight trains will originate
and end in San Luis Obispo in-
stead of Los Angeles. Alternate
transpotation will be provided
between Los Angeles and San Luis
Obispo with the exception of
San Luis Obispo and Santa
Barbara.

More rain overnight was ex-
pected to dump 1.2 inches on
coastal valleys and much more in
the mountains.

The heaviest rain was likely to
be gone by a.m. today after
some four to six hours of down-
pours.

“When it does come in, it’s go-
ing to come in fast and furious,”
said Kenneth Clark, AccuWeather
meteorologist.

“The good news is that
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and
Saturday look to be dry days,”
Clark said.

Staff writers Mark Abromson
and Quintin Casher contributed
to this report. Associate Editor
Janene Scully can be reached at
739-3214 or jscully@pulitzer.net.
Frantic search for survivors

La Conchita slide toll up to 6; as many as 13 under rubble

By JANE HUBER and CRICK SCHULTZ

Using tools as simple as plastic buckets and as sophisticated as robotic sensors, rescue workers searched mudslide Tuesday in a Southern California hillside slide that killed at least six people.

Authorities said 12 other people were injured, too critically, to be moved. They predicted more bodies could be pulled from the rubble.

"We will continue rescue operations around the clock, until we are completed. Rescue efforts would be so much more difficult," one official said that a person could survive up to four days. "After that, the chances are slim." The numbers were based on a Harvard study of the survival rate of those who were buried in similar situations.

The rescue efforts at the site, now 300 feet below the street level, involved digging by hand and in some cases, using several scoops of the railroad tracks at hand, as well as a 10-foot vehicle. It is likely to provide a clear view of the perspective for a large number of vehicles. A ladder was put on a likely to clear obstacles, and only those able to climb on the Mountain Rescue said.

Several homes were found to have as many as 20 people who had been reported missing or who, lacking family of Damion Walker, a long-time residential occupant, were reported to be still missing.

"I know we're going to find more," he said. "In the morning, we'll be able to access these homes, and they are still missing." The numbers were based on a Harvard study of the survival rate of those who were buried in similar situations.

Scientists' warning

Grim prediction comes true as disaster repeats

By THOMAS SCHULTZ

Days after 9/11, the National Weather Service issued a grim prediction for a repeat of the disaster. The number of fatalities was estimated to be 30,000.

"When that will be, is a matter of debate," the service's 9/11 team of engineers, led by Ventura County's national Shortly after 10 a.m., the National Weather Service issued another warning. It warned that "the hazardous situation will continue for the next few hours until 8 p.m., when the situation is expected to improve." The numbers were based on a Harvard study of the survival rate of those who were buried in similar situations.

Closures leave South Coast isolated

By MORGAN GREEN and MARIA ZAYE

As a result of the slide in the San Clemente area, the road from the slide was closed.

Doug Pugh, a respiratory therapist at the Long Beach Valley Hospital, was flown to Santa Barbara by a rescue helicopter Tuesday afternoon.

ROADS CLOSED AROUND COUNTY

Highway 101, south of La Conchita, will be open until Friday.

Highway 150, east of Highway 101

Highway 101, west of Highway 101

Highway 144, Buena Vista Road in Santa Barbara

Highway 101, over the San Marcos Pass

Please see CLOSURES on A7

Inside Today

END TO COURT BATTLE

UCSB professor Richard Martin is the latest in a string of university professors to have their academic freedom challenged. The court ended a long court battle over a lawsuit that sought to terminate Martin's employment and compel him to resign. The university has said the lawsuit was filed in response to Martin's political activities.

LOCAL NEWS

JACKSON LIKELY TO TESTIFY

President Bush's agricultural and environmental appointments against him. Sources have told the New York Times.

NATION & WORLD

MICHAIL CHESTOFF Nominated for Homeland Security

President Bush nominated Michael Chestoff, former head of the Justice Department's counterterrorism division to be the country's second Homeland Security secretary. B1

IRAQ ELECTIONS

In a pre-election visit, President Bush met with Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Sources say that the visit could not be seen as an "endorsement" by President Bush. Instead, the visit was apparently a means to convey the message that the Bush administration is committed to the success of the election.
WEATHER UPDATE
LOMPOC RECORD  1/12/2005

Storms' wake: Rivers raging and roads closed to traffic

Travel becomes a hunt for open highways, roads

BY JANENE SCULLY  STAFF WRITER

A soggy Central Coast will finally get some relief today from a relentless string of storms, but even as blue skies emerge, closed roads and running rivers remain as reminders of recent rains.

Highway 101, closed Monday by a river of mud across all four lanes and later for recovery efforts at the fatal La Conchita mudslides, remains closed at the Santa Barbara and Ventura County line. The highway may re-open at La Conchita on Friday, Caltrans spokeswoman Susana Zavala said.

Highway 154 will remain closed indefinitely due to a pavement washout just west of Painted Cove Road. See story on Page A6.

Tuesday morning, Caltrans re-opened Highway 166 between the Central Coast and Cuyama. But drivers trying to reach Interstate 5 — the only way to travel south with 101 closed below Santa Barbara — will still encounter detours near Taft, and Highway 33 at Highway 166 also remains closed.

Highway 1 near Ytias Creek between Highway 101 and Lompoc also remains closed and won't open today as first expected.

“Our crews are everywhere, working hard,” Zavala said.

At the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, crews were grateful Tuesday that strong rains expected to hit Monday night hadn't mate-

Please see STORMS, Page A6
From The Front

1/12/2005

Wash-out closes Highway 154 indefinitely

BY ERIE CARR

Highway 154 is closed indefinitely after winter storms washed away pavement and left a large landslide in the southeast corner near San Marcos Pass.

The highway could remain closed for weeks, said Caltrans spokesman Colin Jones.

Damage is estimated to be in the millions of dollars.

The landslide, about 100 yards south of Painted Cave Road, occurred after a culvert that runs under the highway filled with debris and failed. Water began flowing under the road, eroding the hillside and eventually landing on the eastern side of the highway.

Caltrans continues to pump water out of the hole in an attempt to prevent flooding or a landslide. Residents near Maria Ybarra Creek, which runs down the mountain, were evacuated as a precaution against flooding Monday and the evacuation continues in effect.

Repairs to the highway will take a long time, said Steve Prince, deputy inspector for Caltrans.

The agency couldn't work on both sides closed, or keep one lane open, in alternating directions.

Prince said money for the repair would likely come from Caltrans' emergency restoration fund.

The county Board of Supervisors declared a local emergency Tuesday and asked the governor and the president to declare state and federal emergency, which would make the area eligible for state and federal emergency funding.

The county also honored those that destroyed homes in Arizona and Utah.

The storm also was blamed for flooding that destroyed homes in Arizona and Utah.

Twenty people were still living in the area, and authorities found 13 of them when they were washed away by the flood.

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It was a case study in flood control, said Caltrans spokesman Mark Daws.

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The storm was blamed for flooding that destroyed homes in Arizona and Utah.

It was a case study in flood control, said Caltrans spokesman Mark Daws.
Cachuma spills; officials to rethink cutback

1/11/05

By MELINDA BURNS

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Lake Cachuma is spilling, and no one can recall when it has ever filled so fast.

Six days ago, the lake was half empty, but at 7 a.m. Monday, the dam tender opened the gates to let the surplus water flow down the river.

"It's pretty incredible, the amount of rise we've had in a little over two weeks," said Bob Wignot, manager of the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board, the agency that runs the reservoir. "If someone had told me on Christmas Day that Cachuma was going to spill on Jan. 10, I would have said, 'You've been drinking too much eggnog.'

With the ground already saturated from two weeks of wet weather, the latest rains in the backcountry ran right into Cachuma. Beginning Friday, 25 inches of rain fell at Old Man Mountain in the Santa Ynez range northeast of Carpinteria, high in the headwaters of the Santa Ynez River -- and that's just a sampling of the drenching the mountains got.

The latest downpours may have clinched the 15-day county record for rain and runoff, officials said Monday.

Representatives of the South Coast water agencies that take water from Cachuma will meet on Wednesday to reconsider a 20 percent cutback that they agreed to in the fall. Back then, the lake had pulled back so far that there were acres of cracked mud flats next to the dam. The agencies were going to import water from the California Aqueduct to make up the difference. As of a week ago, the city of Santa Barbara was poised to announce a "Stage One" drought alert.

"I'm thinking most likely the consensus is going to be to ask for the full water order from Cachuma this water year," Mr. Wignot said Monday.

Historically, there have been days here of greater rain intensity, as on Jan. 10, 1995, when 8 inches fell in 12 hours in Santa Barbara, causing widespread flooding. Last weekend, 8 inches of rain was spread over two days in the city. But it was enough to tip Santa Barbara's total for the season to 24 inches, well above the historical annual average of 18 inches.

"It's been very good for the water supply outlook," Mr. Wignot said. "I just hope we get a little bit of a drying-out period now, to be able to catch our breath."

The weekend storm rode in on a slow-moving current from the subtropical Pacific Ocean, much like the El Niño events of a decade ago. When a big current of moist air from the southwest slams into the mountains, it is forced to rise, expanding and cooling and condensing into rain as it goes. Thus, the highest spots, such as San Marcos Pass, Gibraltar Dam and Old Man Mountain, get the most rain.

"The way the coastline sticks out into the Pacific, we have more tendency to get this kind of extreme event," said Joel Michaelsen, a climatologist at UCSB.

Cachuma spills, on average, about once every three years. But "average" does not mean much when it comes to weather in Santa Barbara, which has historically endured 20-year droughts. Climatologists now say that Southern California is six years into a 25-year La Niña condition, a dry cycle triggered by colder temperatures in the Pacific.

So why is this year so wet?

"What usually happens is not what always happens," Mr. Michaelsen said. "We get dry years during wet periods and wet years during dry periods. Abnormal is normal around here."
Not by land, but by sea and air, Santa Barbara can be reached
Tour operators are ferrying people along the coast

01/12/05
By Jessica Keating, Ventura County Star

West Aycock cut short his Phoenix vacation after he saw the devastation on television: his neighbors running, the hill above La Conchita sliding toward the sea, the roaring river of earth reducing homes to splinters.

The 23-year-old hotel concierge drove with two friends overnight through the rain-battered desert, hoping to reach his girlfriend and 1-year-old son by early Tuesday morning. He was less than 20 minutes south of Carpinteria, where his family had safely fled, when he reached the barricades on Highway 101.

Mud still covered the highway, and Caltrans officials were predicting the freeway would stay closed until Friday. Train service between Ventura and Santa Barbara also was shut down.

With a six-hour detour -- to Bakersfield and Paso Robles, then south to Santa Barbara -- their only driving option around the barricaded highway, Aycock and dozens of other travelers Tuesday looked to the sky and sea for alternate routes.

Aycock and his friends secured seats on a 75-foot catamaran at Ventura Harbor after the trio learned that Condor Express, a Santa Barbara tour operator, planned to ferry stranded travelers between the two cities.

"I'll do whatever it takes to get to the other side," Aycock said. "Thank God I found out about this boat."

About 70 others lined the wind-blown dock at Ventura Harbor, some Santa Barbara residents and others visiting from as far away as Chicago. Nobody complained when the captain asked for $50 a head, one way.

After three days on the road, Nicole Neilson and Chase Cox sank gratefully into their seats. They drove a friend to Victorville on Sunday, then got delayed in the rain in Palmdale on the drive back to their Buellton home. Cox called the Caltrans road hotline so often, he finally wrote the number on his blue jeans.

By the time the couple got to Ventura, Neilson said, their car gave out. Cox's mother planned to pick the couple up in Santa Barbara on Tuesday afternoon.

"We're inching our way back," Cox said. "It's been one big adventure."

Condor Express pulled into Ventura Harbor about 11:30 a.m. Tuesday about 45 minutes at sea. After leaving the Sea Landing in Santa Barbara, the boat hugged the shoreline, passing the La Conchita rescue area.

Ventura resident Scott Nething, trying to return home after a skiing trip in Vancouver, bounded off the boat, ticked off a list of the debris in the sea: a purple hot tub, tires, wood. "Man, that was gnarly," Nething said. "The hill just went 'blech.' "

Caltrans officials predicted Tuesday afternoon that it would take two more days to clear the Highway 101 landslide. Elsewhere, sinkholes and high water have shut down rail service between Ventura and points north and south.

Amtrak has canceled its Pacific Surfliner service north of Los Angeles through Thursday, because of a sinkhole near Gaviota. Water raging under a 100-foot stretch of rail in Somis is preventing Metrolink trains from reaching Camarillo and Oxnard.

Metrolink is running buses between Moorpark and those cities. Montalvo station customers in Ventura are being asked to drive to Oxnard.

In the meantime, Condor Express in Santa Barbara and Island Packers in Ventura plan to provide ferry service between the two cities. Both operate catamarans with indoor and outdoor seating and galleys stocked with sodas, M&Ms, cheeseburgers and quesadillas.

"We have been just bombarded by phone calls," said Cherryl Connally, Island Packers' co-owner. "But it's nice to help people out."

Channel Islands Aviation, based in Camarillo, also swooped in to help travelers Monday and Tuesday. Flights to Santa Barbara leave the Camarillo Airport every two hours beginning at 8 a.m., company owner Janie Oberman said. Tickets on the company's least expensive charter plane, a 10-seater, are $200 one way.

"I've got a terminal full of people right now just ready to go," Oberman said Tuesday.
Rain both blessing, curse for farmers, ranchers

KIRSTEN FLAGG
STAFF WRITER

As moments of sunshine made their way to the Central Coast Tuesday, the region’s agriculturists stopped to assess the impacts of a week of rain on their livelihoods.

Whether farmers and ranchers counted the 4.5 inches of rain that had fallen since Friday in the Santa Maria Valley and surrounding area as Mother Nature’s curse or manna from heaven depended largely on which commodity they sell.

For vegetable farmers, the accumulated saturation of their crops means higher operating costs, some destroyed harvests and a delay in spring plantings, although none reported serious field flooding.

However, for the area’s cattle ranchers, green pastures and rising stock ponds spelled a reprieve from three years of dry weather. And when grasses grow, cows rejoice, said Jean Rotta, a cattlemwoman in the Huesno Valley, east of Arroyo Grande.

“I think they love it because I can see that the grass is getting taller with a little more green to it,” said Rotta. “And the sunshine we’re getting now is just heaven for everything.”

For the first time in two to three years, Rotta said, she actually had to release water to keep her 4-acre stock pond from overflowing.

By Tuesday, George Adam, of A+A Farms in Santa Maria, estimated between 10 and 20 percent of his broccoli was destroyed from the bacterial soft rot that thrives in oversaturated grounds.

In addition, operating costs rose as more manpower and equipment were employed in harvesting to compensate for the wet, muddy and often windy conditions.

“(Workers) are stuck more. There’s more slippage. People have trouble walking,” said Adam, listing causes for extra safety measures taken for workers these last few days.

To add to the economic tolls from difficult harvesting, vegetable farmers had to delay their planting for this spring, which could cost them later, said Richard Quandt, president of the Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo County.

Staff writer Kirsten Flagg can be reached at 735-2206 or kflagg@pulitzer.net.
On Dec. 28, Lake Cachuma, seen at left from Harvey’s Point walkway, was less than half full. It is now spilling after a series of downpours.

### Rainfall totals across the county

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station name</th>
<th>24 hour total</th>
<th>Water year as of Monday*</th>
<th>Percentage of normal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buelitton</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>22.39</td>
<td>347%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachuma</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>28.53</td>
<td>386%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpintera</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>306%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuyama</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>173%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figueroa Mt.</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>23.52</td>
<td>279%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibraltar Dam</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>46.91</td>
<td>460%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goleta</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>24.30</td>
<td>339%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lompoc</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>14.74</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Alamos</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>17.44</td>
<td>319%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos Pass</td>
<td>1.50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>24.35</td>
<td>360%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Maria</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>12.88</td>
<td>242%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Ynez</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>21.99</td>
<td>381%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sisquoc</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>13.96</td>
<td>245%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Countywide normal-to-date rainfall percentage:** 321%

* As of 8 a.m. Tuesday; numbers are in inches

SOURCE: Santa Barbara Flood Control District

TOM DE WALT / NEWS-PRESS
Rain is over, but troubles it inflicted to linger

Partly cloudy skies for week, cleanup of blocked roads, rails will take days

By JESUS MALKA
KELLY HERRA
and NORA WILKIE

With rain service of Upthrusts in both directions canceled for now, State Road officials are working to clean up the flooding that hit the county last week.

One of the most affected areas was Ridgeway, where floodwaters reached nearly waist-high levels. Several properties were damaged, and some residents are still recovering.

Another area hit hard was Jericho, where floodwaters caused significant damage to homes and businesses. The town is working to assess the damage and begin the recovery process.

The rain caused widespread flooding throughout the county, with many roads and rail lines still closed. Authorities are提醒 citizens to be cautious as they travel through affected areas.

A section of Highway 154 junction of Parnell Cove road went. It's not known when the road will reopen.

The others brought down a tree in the 1700 block of Do in Vasa Street on Tuesday.

SUSAN TAKAHASHI, one of several hundred residents in the Mary Heights Cove area said to have their homes, loads up her car on Tuesday.

The others brought down a tree in the 1700 block of Do in Vasa Street on Tuesday.

SUSAN TAKAHASHI, one of several hundred residents in the Mary Heights Cove area said to have their homes, loads up her car on Tuesday.

The others brought down a tree in the 1700 block of Do in Vasa Street on Tuesday.

SUSAN TAKAHASHI, one of several hundred residents in the Mary Heights Cove area said to have their homes, loads up her car on Tuesday.
Valley commuters in for a round-about trip

BY ERIN CARYLYE
STAFF WRITER

Recent storms have had—and will continue to have—a dramatic effect on Valley residents who use Highway 154 to commute south.

The highway is closed indefinitely after winter storms washed away pavement and left a large sinkhole in the southbound lane near San Marcos Pass.

The highway could remain closed for weeks, said Caltrans spokesman Colin Jones. Damage is estimated to be in the millions of dollars.

The sinkhole, about 100 yards south of Painted Cave Road, occurred after a culvert that runs under the highway became clogged with debris. Water began filling in under the road, eroding the soil and pavement and heaving up in a 6-million gallon lake on the mountain side of the highway.

Caltrans is pumping water out of the lake in an attempt to prevent more flooding or a landslide. Residents near Maria Ygnacio Creek were evacuated as a precaution against flooding Monday. The order was lifted as of 9 a.m. Tuesday.

Replacing the highway will take a long time, said Steve Price, deputy district director for Caltrans. The agency could work more quickly with both lanes closed, or could keep one lane open in alternating directions and work more slowly, he said.

Price said money for the repair would likely come from Caltrans’ emergency restoration fund.

The county Board of Supervisors declared a local emergency Tuesday and asked the governor and the president to declare state and federal emergencies, which would make the area eligible for state and federal emergency funding.

South Coast residents may get to homes on Highway 154 by using old San Marcos Road from Goleta, but the See HIGHWAY / A12
HIGHWAY:

Continued from A1

road is not in good enough shape to be used as a detour for the state highway, said Phil Derney, county Public Works director.

"Everything is still very wet up there. Even though it doesn't rain, the conditions are prone to change," said Scott McElpin, deputy director of county Public Works. Water-logged soil could move in a few days and further shift the pavement, he said. "That kind of holds true for all our mountainous roads.”

An estimated $3 million in damage to county facilities and $2.5 million to county roads has occurred so far, McElpin said.

County residents may watch government access television or call 568-9433 for information about flooding, 568-9008 for road closures, or visit www.countyrodeo.org.

■ Staff writer Erica Carlyle can be reached at 786-2218 or by e-mail at ecarlyle@spulizer.net.

Photos by Suzanne Farwell
County estimates $40 million in damage; road problems extensive
1/14/05
By HILDY MEDINA
SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

REPAIRS: Officials tour hard-hit 154 area. With the storm now behind them, county officials on Thursday estimated that the price tag for the damage, ranging from potholes to landslides, will exceed $40 million countywide.

Fire, sheriff's and public works department heads joined 2nd District Supervisor Susan Rose for a tour of Highway 154 near Painted Cave, the area with the most severe damage in this county.

While officials are grappling with at least 120 storm-related problems throughout the county, including damaged homes, the storm's aftermath will be felt the hardest and the longest by motorists. Repairing the main road from the Santa Ynez Valley into Santa Barbara over the San Marcos Pass will cost $14 million, they believe, and may take until the spring to complete. Other arteries are slowly reopening.

The closure of Highway 101 at La Conchita is scheduled to end by noon today. A popular way around that section of the 101, Highway 150, will remain closed for months thanks to a bridge washout. Flood-damaged Highway 192, west of Highway 150, is also expected to open today, as is Highway 144 (Sycamore Canyon Road). Highway 1 at Ytias Creek, between Lompoc and the 101, is open only between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. as a slipout in the commuter route is repaired. Ms. Rose, whose district encompasses the broken portion of Highway 154, said the county has asked for state and federal assistance. County Administrator Mike Brown proclaimed a local emergency on Monday for storm-related damage back to Jan. 1.

As of Thursday morning, officials had not heard back from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's office on a state declaration or a request for federal help. "We are working hard to assist our citizens with damage to their home and the county's infrastructure," Ms. Rose said during a news conference at the county's Office of Emergency Services on Thursday. "However, without state or federal disaster aid, this can create extreme hardships."

Individual assistance for homeowners is only available if there is a presidential declaration.

While officials wait for word from the governor, they are working closely with Caltrans to discuss what needs to be done to repair the 154. The road will remain closed to all traffic except emergency vehicles for the time being.

A portion of the highway near Painted Cave Road washed away after debris plugged a culvert built in the 1950s. About 7 million gallons of water collected. On Monday afternoon, Caltrans officials notified county department heads that the risk of a catastrophic failure was very high.

On Monday night, about 300 residents in the Maria Ygnacio Creek area below the impromptu lake were told to leave their homes and were not allowed back until Wednesday morning. Authorities feared that if the blockage gave way, homes in the Maria Ygnacio Creek area could be flooded, or worse, get slammed by a massive mudslide.

On Thursday, Caltrans crews continued clearing boulders and chunks of debris to unclog the opening as they used nine hoses to pump out the reservoir.

ROADS CLOSED

Going south
• Highway 101 at La Conchita just south of the Santa Barbara-Ventura county line is expected to open by noon today.
• Highway 150 just east of Highway 101 is closed due to a bridge washout and will stay closed for several months.

Around the coast
• Highway 192 just west of Highway 150 is closed due to flooding, with reopening expected today.
• Highway 144, Sycamore Canyon Road in the city of Santa Barbara, is closed due to mudslides, with reopening expected today.

Heading north
• Highway 154 over the San Marcos Pass is closed at Painted Cave Road due to slides and washouts. Reopening is weeks to months away.
• Highway 1 is slowed at Ytias Creek between Lompoc and Highway 101. One lane is open between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

STEVE MALONE / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS
101 reopens at La Conchita

Road cleared of mud after 4 days

1/15/05

By HILDY MEDINA and CHARLOTTE BOECHLER

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITERS

On Friday -- four days after mudslides crippled one of the state's busiest north-south freeways -- weary Caltrans crews managed to reopen Highway 101 at La Conchita.

Cleanup crews have worked around the clock since Monday, sometimes through heavy rains and treacherous conditions, to push tons of soupy mud off the road and onto the beach.

"It wasn't like you could pick it up and put it in a truck," said Marta Bortner, a Caltrans spokeswoman.

Caltrans officials maintain a close watch on the hillside, where a massive landslide killed 10 La Conchita residents and buried 13 homes several hours after the mudslide closed 101.

"Our goal is to keep it safe for motorists," said Ms. Bortner.

Crews on Friday scrambled to put up temporary concrete barriers to replace metal guardrails destroyed by the storm or by front loaders pushing the mud to the other side. Some concrete walls along portions of the freeway were also damaged.

It is unknown when the road will be completely repaired, said Ms. Bortner.

News that the freeway had opened sent thousands of motorists spilling onto the 101. While southbound travelers rolled on mostly empty stretches after their portion reopened at 9:50 a.m., there was bumper-to-bumper northbound traffic that stretched for about four miles south of La Conchita waiting for those lanes to open 40 minutes later. All but one northbound lane on Highway 101 remain closed to about a mile south of La Conchita to allow crews to continue their cleanup.

The four-day closure forced some stranded commuters to miss work and prompted those in town to pick up some extra shifts. Some torn between homes and workplaces in Santa Barbara and Ventura tried two impromptu water-taxi services that started running Tuesday. By Friday, the ferries had moved about 5,000 commuters.

Businesses also felt the pinch, running low on staff and product. Delivery trucks added an extra five to six hours to their road trips. Some local gas stations ran out of gasoline.

Santa Barbara County officials have yet to hear whether any financial aid will be made available to Santa Barbara. As of Friday, countywide damage estimates are about $35 million, down about $5 million from estimates Thursday.

The hardest hit area is Highway 154 near Painted Cave, where a portion of the road was swept away, forcing the months-long closure of the heavily traveled road from Santa Ynez Valley into Santa Barbara.

Highway 150, an alternative to Highway 101 for some South Coast residents, also will remain closed for months after one of its bridges washed away.

Highway 1 at Ytias Creek, between Lompoc and the 101, will be closed through Monday for paving. It is scheduled to reopen Tuesday.

The reopening of flood-damaged Highway 192, west of Highway 150, has been postponed to late next week, as well as Highway 144 (Sycamore Canyon Road).

All trains between Gaviota and Los Angeles remain canceled. No time estimate is available for when train service will be restored. Crews on Friday continued to clean up the tracks in and around the La Conchita area.

It took Ventura resident Kathy Good, a Forest Service employee, two hours to get through the traffic to work after the freeway reopened. The trip typically takes about 35 minutes, she said.

A member of the Forest Service's communications team, Ms. Good is accustomed to large-scale emergencies and was braced for the worst when she heard about the mudslides. She hunkered down and worked from home when she was able to.

"Given what was happening all around the state I figured there would be more emergencies in addition to La Conchita and resources would be scarce," said Ms. Good. "I knew we would probably be stuck for a few days."
But many motorists, such as Ventura resident Brent Swartzentruber, were not prepared for the days-long delay. On Thursday, frustrated by the closure, he got on his mountain bike and headed to his Carpinteria office. He made it across some thick mud, but it was a police roadblock that stopped his trip. On Friday, he and his girlfriend shared a ride into work. The trip took an hour and 20 minutes.

Marisa Caldwell, a senior at UCSB, didn't even try to attempt the freeway on Friday. The Ventura resident figured the traffic would be too thick and she wouldn't make it to school on time anyway. She's been out the whole week.

"It sucks because it's only a 10-week quarter," she said. "So one week out of that is a pretty big deal."

The biopsychology major has been unable to attend the three classes she's taking. "I'm doing an animal learning lab, so I'm supposed to be in there feeding my rat every day," she said. "Someone else has been taking care of my rat."

Although she has been corresponding with her professors through e-mail, Ms. Caldwell, 22, admitted she hasn't been able to do much, aside from some research, at home.

"It would be fun," she said. "Except I really don't get out of any work. I have to do it all when I get back."

Carol Borowitz, owner of Rincon Catering in Carpinteria, was among those who attempted the drive because she needed to complete payroll for employees before she takes off on Monday for an out-of-town trip.

"We've got to keep the employees happy, you know?" she said with a chuckle.

The Camarillo resident said it normally takes her 15 minutes to go from Ventura to the Santa Claus Lane exit, near where her business is located. But, despite the freeway going down to just one lane in some places, it took her only 25 minutes.

"That was a nice surprise," she said. "It went a lot faster than I thought!"

Santa Barbara's Condor Express, which carried hundreds of stranded commuters to and from Ventura County, had its last water-taxi service on Friday. About 300 people used the service Friday, mostly to pick up their cars. Many others canceled their reservations after news of the freeway reopening got out.

Ventura's Island Packers Co. also had to give refunds to would-be passengers. They plan to do one more trip today at 7 a.m. Combined, the vessels transported an estimated 5,000 people between Santa Barbara and Ventura since Tuesday, according to Condor Express.

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HIGHWAY CONDITIONS

GOING SOUTH

Highway 101, open.
Highway 150 just east of Highway 101, closed due to a bridge washout, reopening in several months.

AROUND THE COAST

Highway 192 just west of Highway 150, closed due to flooding, reopening expected Tuesday.
Highway 144, Sycamore Canyon Road in Santa Barbara, closed due to mudslides, reopening expected Tuesday.
Gibraltar Road between El Cielito Road and East Camino Cielo closed to all but local residents for two weeks.

HEADING NORTH

Highway 154 over the San Marcos Pass, closed at Painted Cave Road due to mudslides and washouts; reopening weeks to months away.
Highway 1 at Ytias Creek between Lompoc and Highway 101, closed due to repairs for a slipout, full reopening expected Tuesday.

STEVE MALONE / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

Four days after a mudslide closed Highway 101 at La Conchita, officials reopened the north-south artery on Friday.
Rain-soaked soil gives way

Highway 1 closed again

BY NIL NISERUS
AND JANINE SOLT
Staff Writers

Highway 1 was closed indefinitely today at Ynez Creek because of road damage from rain erosion, said Marta Botner, Caltrans spokesperson.

Ground saturation and run-off has cut a 30-foot deep hole in the road on both the south and northbound lanes, 10 miles south of Lompoc, said Officer Ernesto Sanchez, of the California Highway Patrol.

Motorists were able to travel the southbound land of Highway 1 after the northbound lane was damaged from rain last week, however the chain was widened and the road was closed on Friday, he said.

The nearby creek geology and rain contributed to the damage, Botner said.

Lompoc motorists should use Highway 246 as an alternate route to and from Highway 101, Botner said. Sanchez said traffic on the 246 is heavier than usual.

"People need to be more careful and more courteous and when people are making left turns across the highway, they need to be especially vigilant and not take any chances," Sanchez said.

Meanwhile, the Central Coast basked in balmy temperatures Monday with what the National Weather Service forecast as "Chamber Please see WEATHER, Page A6

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Weather
(Continued from Page A1)

of Commerce" conditions.
Temperatures will remain
well above normal in some
areas, according to forecasts.
And after more than two
weeks of rain, the dry spell is
welcome. Weather charts
show any rain is at least a
week away.

"That’s even iffy," said
Bruce Rockwell from the
National Weather Service in
Oxnard.

"We’re at least getting a
respite," he added. "There’s
not very much to talk about.
Breezy weather during the
mornings is expected to con-
tinue today and Wednesday.
The forecast calls for highs
in the 70s, with 80-degree
highs expected on some parts
of the Central Coast today
and Wednesday.
Normal for Santa Maria in
mid-January is in the mid-
60s.

High temperatures
Monday were 70 degrees in
Santa Maria, 76 degrees at
Port San Luis, 72 in Lompoc,
Goleta and Morro Bay, and 74
at the San Luis Obispo
Airport. Other highs were 75
at Vandenberg AFB, 76 in
Santa Ynez, and 70 in Santa
Barbara.

For a complete weather
forecast, see Page B3.

Temperatures should start
falling by Friday, but mild
conditions will remain
through early next week.

Bill Patzert, meteorologist
with the Jet Propulsion
Laboratory in Pasadena, said
the rains were unusual, but
not necessarily record shatter-
ing.

In the late 1800s, California
had rains in October,
November and January, fol-
lowed by a dry February,
March and April.

The mild El Niño pheno-
menon spotted several months
ago has experts differing how
much influence it is having on
weather this year.

Patzert called El Niño a
non-factor this season.

"It just shows you some-
times you can have a wet win-
ter even though you didn’t
draft El Niño," he said.

But warm weather doesn’t
necessarily mean good news.
Early warning can bring
melting snow pack and could
bring more mudslides and
potential flooding, he said.

Storm water run-off left
several beaches with advi-
sories to avoid swimming due
to high bacteria warnings.

Amtrak also hasn’t yet
restored regular service after
weather-related damage rav-
aged the tracks, and pas-
genrs may notice changes on
the Coast Starlight and Pacific
Surfliner routes. Among
issues, a huge sinkhole near
Gaviota snarled rail traffic.

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A tough road as commuters find new ways to get to work

1/21/05

By SCOTT STEEPLETON

NEWS-PRESS ASSISTANT METRO EDITOR

It's unclear when highways hit hard by storms will reopen

Heavy rains did a number on local roads, and drivers are paying the price.

Commutes that averaged 45 minutes are dragging on for six hours, and drivers accustomed to taking the easiest route are now forced to use whichever route is open.

Crews from Caltrans, Santa Barbara County and various cities affected by the recent storms are doing what they can to keep the traffic flowing, but with some road closures on the indefinite list, the only thing to do is leave a little early and keep your cool behind the wheel.

Mark Human typically spends less than a half-hour driving between Santa Barbara and Rancho San Marcos Golf Course, about 12 miles north on Highway 154, where he is the general manager. Since the rains damaged the San Marcos Pass, his drive has been extended up to 75 minutes, and the same goes for the dozen or so employees who live on the Santa Barbara side of the pass.

"When the highway first had its issues, we were carpooling through Buellton and coming back down through the back side," said Mr. Human. "I was here when the landslide hit back in '98 and had to do the same thing."

Nobody wants to spend more time on the road than necessary, but Mr. Human said everyone understands the work that needs to be done.

"We totally support what the county's doing in getting the road cleaned up and back to safe conditions," he said.

Employees have shifted their schedules to avoid rush-hour traffic, and Mr. Human is thanking customers for making the drive by offering discount greens fees.

"We're in a tough spot," he said, "and we're just hoping the county can get those roads cleaned up as soon as possible."

To get an idea of just how bad it is out there, as of Thursday, Caltrans reported storm-related closures or construction on at least four roads used to get into and around Santa Barbara County:

Highway 154 is closed to through traffic from Highway 246 to about three miles west of Santa Barbara because of a rock slide and a washout.

Highway 166 is down to one lane at various locations from Highway 101 in Santa Maria to Highway 33 in San Luis Obispo County from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays because of construction.

Highway 192, the winding road that follows the foothills from Santa Barbara to Carpinteria, is closed the two miles leading up to Highway 150 because of flooding.

Highway 1 is closed from Highway 101 to Highway 246 in Lompoc because of storm damage.

Highway 150, which connects the Ojai area to the South Coast, has a couple of problem spots.

The stretch from Highway 101 to about Lake Casitas may reopen on Monday, but the collapse of two bridges closer to Carpinteria will keep the road between Highway 101 and Highway 192 closed for several months.

While winter storms essentially cut the South Coast off from points south for about a week earlier this month, people trying to get from one part of the county to the other have had their own problems.

Highway 154's closure caught Robert Acosta in the middle of a move from Montecito to near Camino Cielo.

"I just bought a house up there, but I've had to delay the move because the movers can't go there," said Mr. Acosta, CEO of a venture capital group.

Old San Marcos Road, a wriggling shortcut up the Santa Ynez range that meets 154 above the closed area, also suffered storm damage and presents its own challenges.
To balance the needs of residents -- but not commuters -- with that of getting the road fixed, county crews are allowing people with proper ID to go through for 10 minutes every 90 minutes, but even that sometimes stretches into two hours.

"I've been stuck a couple of times," said Mr. Acosta. "We talked to the county crews and talked to other residents."

Other drivers have not been so patient.

California Highway Patrol Officer Don Clotworthy said there have been several reports of people trying to run the checkpoint or giving the repair crews too much grief.

"Old San Marcos Road has been one of the trouble areas. But unfortunately, everyone is going to have to follow the rules that are set down by county roads and constructions crews," he said.

With the amount of work that needs to be done, Officer Clotworthy said the best thing for drivers to do is plan accordingly.

"We have so many areas right now that are problem areas, but if you give yourself more time, you're going to have the patience to deal with it," he said.

He suggested taking along some water or other beverage, along with snacks. "Maybe something to read or some other form of entertainment to keep one occupied."

And realize that for all your troubles, there might be someone out there who's got it even worse. People from Ojai who commute to Santa Barbara, for example, have faced six-hour drives in some cases.

"It's a hassle," said the officer, "but we all have to live with this for a short period of time."

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MIKE ELIASON / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

Some waited two hours to pass the checkpoint on Old San Marcos Road at Highway 154. Union Asphalt crews repair the mudslide damage on Highway 154 near Painted Cave Road that has made San Marcos Pass impassible.
Long road ahead for repair crews
1/24/05
STEVE MALONE
SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS PHOTOGRAPHER

It will be a long time before crews are done cleaning up after the storms that have ravaged the region.

No rain has fallen for more than a week, but parts of Highway 192 are still awash. Water is being pumped from the roadway near the junction with Highway 150.

Highway 150 is still impassable because a bridge over Rincon Creek was damaged and had to be removed.

The bridge will be rebuilt and a section of the highway straightened. The work should be finished by fall.
WEATHER:

Continued from page A1
and continuing into Friday.

"That one’s going to be even lighter," Seto said.

Still, after days of deluges earlier this month, the soil remains saturated and authorities will be watching key areas that had mudslides or previous problems, such as the Gaviota burn area, Highway 1 and Highway 154 over San Marcos Pass. Additional rain could pose more problems for some areas that received the brunt of earlier storms.

The rains have pushed season rainfall amounts well above normal. In Santa Maria 10.71 inches have fallen since July 1, more than the amount that fell during the previous rain season. During a normal year, the city receives roughly 14 inches of rain.

A high pressure system will return Sunday, bringing dry weather expected to continue through Monday.

Although counterparts in Ventura County suffered crop losses, growers here didn’t have the same problems and aren’t dreading more rain.

"We do need the water. We need the rainfall," said Richard Quandt from the Grower-Shippers Vegetable Association of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

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Close, yet so far: Businesses suffer from highway closures

1/24/05

By ANNA DAVISON

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

At Cold Spring Tavern, there are plenty of empty tables and no need to jostle for a space by the fire. Fewer meals are being served and not as many pints being poured. With customers scarce, kitchen and wait staff have been sent home.

Some of the employees at Rancho Oso Guest Ranch & Riding Stables have also been told they don't have to come to work until things pick up.

"We're probably at 25 percent of our normal business," said general manager Bill Krzyston.

Both Cold Spring and Rancho Oso draw the majority of their customers from the south, and with Highway 154 closed just on the other side of the San Marcos Pass, fewer people are making the much longer road trip over.

"It's dismal around here," said Chris Hudak, a bartender and server at Cold Spring. On a recent weekday afternoon there were no dinner reservations on the books, which is "unheard of," he said.

"Right now we're taking at least a 50 percent hit."

Both businesses are desperate to get out word that they're open -- and accessible.

Staff at the tavern resorted to making signs declaring "Cold Spring Tavern open" and putting them up in the valley to let people in the mood for a cold beer or a meal know that they'll get a warm welcome at Cold Spring. Rancho Oso did the same.

With Highway 154 closed to through traffic near Painted Cave, the usual 30-minute trip from Santa Barbara to Cold Spring is more like 90 and involves taking Highway 101 past Gaviota and turning back into the valley and up the hill at either Highway 246 or the other end of 154.

Many customers coming from the north don't know they can drive south on 154 all the way to Paradise Road, Mr. Hudak said.

"There's a lot of misinformation around," Mr. Krzyston remarked.

Elizabeth Breen of the Santa Ynez Valley Visitors Association said there "definitely is an impact" from the highway closure and "what we're working on is getting the word out."

Someone has taken matters into their own hands by posting a sign declaring "Solvang open" on Highway 101.

However it's not hurting some businesses that Highway 1 between Lompoc and the 101 is also closed after a section of the road washed out during the recent rains.

The closure pumps up to 4,000 weekday commuters onto the 246, ready to make a right onto the southbound 101 at Buellton in the morning -- and perhaps fill up or buy a biscuit in the process.

In Buellton, many businesses just off Highway 101 are doing well, said Cindy Norlin of the Buellton Chamber of Commerce.

Although Ms. Breen said she's noticed plenty of traffic on the 101, a manager at Pea Soup Andersen's said the restaurant has seen a slowdown.

Frances Snyder, a spokeswoman for the Chumash Casino Resort, said it's difficult to gauge the impact of the closures on the casino because January is historically a slow month, but that it's "doing good business relative to the road issues."

At Lake Cachuma, "we don't think we've really been that affected," said Park Naturalist Liz Mason. "Our reservation person is just as busy as ever."

The lake had problems other than access, though. Boaters were banned right after the torrential rains pushed heaps of debris and wood into the lake, although they're welcome now.

The reservoir-filling downpour did have a silver lining. "Our first sunny day, a lot of people were coming up to see the lake full," Ms. Mason said.

But businesses like Cold Spring Tavern and Rancho Oso, near the apex of the pass, are hoping their luck soon turns around.

Mr. Hudak said that this past week Cold Spring has been the slowest he's seen in the nearly two years he's worked there.
Usually there would be three front staff at the tavern. On a recent weekday, only Mr. Hudak was there, along with several people in the kitchen. Seven workers are often needed in the kitchen on a busy day, he said.

Many Cold Spring employees are looking for other work to help get them through the slow period, "not to leave Cold Spring," Mr. Hudak said, "but just to supplement it. I'm finding myself going into debt."

Tavern managers and employees have been brainstorming ways of enticing people in for a bite or beer.

Given the number of roadwork crews in the area, they wondered about handing out fliers to crews offering discounts on sandwiches.

"Something to start driving in some people," Mr. Hudak said.

Rancho Oso is running a special offer on overnight stays through February. Mr. Krzyston said he's thinking of calling a public relations firm to get the word out that Rancho Oso is open -- and it's looking particularly beautiful, with creeks bubbling and hills vivid green.

Mr. Hudak also wish visitors would come and enjoy some sunny days at Cold Spring.

"Especially with the weather perked up it's been tough," he said. "There's no one to share it with."
Governor seeks disaster funds

By Erin Carlyle - Staff Writer
Lompoc Record

01/27/05

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger formally asked President Bush Wednesday to declare a national disaster in Santa Barbara County - and seven other counties - due to storm damage. The move comes a week after the governor declared a state disaster. A federal disaster declaration would leave the county and its cities paying for just 6.25 percent of the approximately $45.9 million in storm damage to public facilities - compared to the 25 percent that local governments are required to shoulder without the declaration. The federal government would pick up 75 percent of the total, the state another 18.75 percent.

A federal declaration also would mean federal loans and grants for private property owners whose homes or businesses were damaged in the storms. Santa Barbara County has sustained about $45 million in damage to state and county roads, bridges and public facilities, while individual cities have reported a total of $868,705. Santa Maria reported $30,000 in costs for picking up trees and limbs that fell in the storm, and replacing damaged or destroyed trees, said Jack Owen, Santa Maria Fire Department Battalion Chief.

Solvang reported another $260,605 for damage to water-supply facilities, said Dave Rickard, county disaster recovery manager. Guadalupe, Buellton and Lompoc have not yet turned in their numbers, Rickard said. If the president does not declare a federal emergency, the state would have to pick up 75 percent of the local damages; local government would pick up the remaining 25 percent.

Old San Marcos Road closed Wednesday afternoon because silt dampened by the rain caused the road to be slippery, but was expected to reopen by 7 p.m., Rickard said. The road could be lost entirely if the winter brings heavy rains, said Scott McGolpin, Deputy Director of County Public Works. East Camino Cielo, Painted Cave and Gibraltar roads are also in danger, McGolpin said. Highway 154 remains closed as Caltrans crews repair an estimated $14.7 million in damages to it and other state routes, including Highway 1 between Lompoc and Highway 101.

The U.S. Forest is seeking federal assistance to help pay for repairs. Damage to Los Padres National Forest roads - from the Mt. Pinos area in Ventura and Kern counties to the Big Sur coast - is estimated at $4 million to $6 million, said Kathy Good of the U.S. Forest Service. That total does not include damage to trails, she said. The numbers could climb after forest personnel survey the area by air, she said, but she estimated the extent of the damage wouldn't be known for weeks. Repairs to roads and trails are expected to take months, Good said. Popular campgrounds in the forest's Figueroa Mountain area - including Nira, Davy Brown, Figueroa and Cachuma - that were closed by the storm reopened Wednesday, said Jill Evans of the Santa Lucia Ranger District. The sites can be reached only through Figueroa Mountain Road, however, because Happy Canyon Page 1 of 2 Printable Version

Road remains closed. Colson Canyon Road east of Santa Maria is also closed beyond the Colson Canyon Campground, Evans said. The Wagon Flat and Barrel Springs campgrounds in the La Brea Canyon area beyond the closure are inaccessible, Evans said.

Schwarzenegger asked the White House to declare disaster areas in Santa Barbara County as well as Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties. The governor's letter said storm-related damage to public facilities totaled $235 million; it counted 1,200 homes damaged and another 214 destroyed across the state.
Battered roads slowly coming back to life
1/31/05

By NORA K. WALLACE

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

In a tale of two highways, it was the best of times for Santa Ynez Valley commuters and the worst of times for those in Lompoc. While work on re-establishing through traffic on Highway 154 remains on track, it's going to take about a year to fix a lane washout on Highway 1 south of Lompoc, according to the California Department of Transportation.

Meanwhile, the Old Coast Highway, closed since last summer, was expected to open today. But it will be at least three more months before anyone can use the road leading to the Nojoqui Creek Bridge, according to county officials, who are also hustling to fix a wiggly alternative to Highway 154.

Of all the local storm-damaged thoroughfares -- Highways 1, 154 and 150 near Carpinteria -- Highway 1 will take the longest to restore, said Marta Bortner, a Caltrans spokeswoman. An at least 30-foot-long segment of the northbound lane crashed down an embankment two weeks ago after a creek ate away the embankment underneath.

The road had been closed intermittently earlier in the month because of a collapse in the roadway farther south.

To serve the more than 4,000 drivers who use the road every day, Caltrans is expected on Thursday to reopen the highway from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays only.

Flaggers will be stationed on either end of the slip-out for about a month until temporary signal lights are put in place. Traffic will alternate using the one lane untouched by the slip.

"We'll be stuck with this one lane for some time," Ms. Bortner said.

Caltrans is looking at several ways to fix the road.

"The long-term solution is building a (retaining) wall or relocating the highway, which is significant," she said.

"No matter what the solution, it has to be designed and environmentally cleared."

That will mean at least a year before the road is permanently fixed, she explained. The option will be chosen based on environmental impacts, engineering feasibility and cost, she added.

For Santa Ynez Valley drivers, the repairs on San Marcos Pass are progressing rapidly, Ms. Bortner said. Perhaps as soon as three weeks from now, Caltrans will put flaggers in place so drivers can travel the road between the valley and Santa Barbara.

The reopening timeline depends on the amount of rain hitting the county in the next month.

Earlier this month, a large segment of the southbound lane near Painted Cave Road was undermined by a blocked culvert, and chunks of the asphalt fell down an embankment.

The eaten-away portion is being filled back in, Ms. Bortner said, and then crews will "pave it, stripe it, open it."

Crews are rebuilding the embankment with reinforced fill to give it a more natural look, she said. They're also installing several devices, such as a bypass drain, that will prevent the culvert from overflowing or being blocked if large amounts of rain occur again.

"When the landslide came down and blocked the culvert, we didn't have the culvert anymore," she said. "But normally we wouldn't have 44 inches of rain in 17 days."

There are also numerous landslides on the pass, with "some pretty sizeable rocks that need to come down," she added.

The rocks also have large piles of other material behind them, so crews must first excavate that debris, and then remove the rocks.

Nearby on Old San Marcos Road, crews have been working seven days a week since the storms in early January.

"The county's feeling tremendous pressure on Old San Marcos," said Scott McGolpin, deputy director of county Public Works. "A lot of people are using it for a detour. The official detour is Highway 101."

Most of the major slip-out repairs were to be finished by this past weekend. Crews are doing remedial work on culverts, so water flows better.

"We had to get in there now, because if there's any significant rain, there'd be a tremendous threat we'd lose the entire roadway," Mr. McGolpin said.
Work isn't going as quickly on a project off Highway 101. Large orange signs on the roadway warning that Old Coast Highway is closed between June 28 and Jan. 31 are now being taped over.

The road will not be open for about two or three more months, largely because of storm delays, Mr. McGolpin, explained.

"We're a little behind schedule because of the rains," Mr. McGolpin said. "We'll be pouring the girders here shortly. They were able to span across the creek. They're working high and dry now."

Other delays with reopening came last June, when the planned demolition of the 88-year-old bridge prompted an outcry by local historians, who unsuccessfully attempted to stop the wrecking ball.

The Old Coast Highway is one of the longest stretches of California's historic artery still in public use, according to local historians. Their contention that the bridge was a landmark was overruled by government historians.

The new bridge will be longer and wider, and is necessary because the aging bridge became a safety concern.

In a nod to the historians, the county agreed to cover 22-foot-long sections on either end of the bridge with Portland cement concrete, rather than asphalt, Mr. McGolpin explained.

"It is our hope we struck a balance now with the historic folks to recreate the driving experience of the Old Coast Highway across the new structure," Mr. McGolpin said.

The bridge project is budgeted at about $1.6 million.

In the south, on Highway 150, Caltrans is moving forward with a plan to replace two bridges, with a minor road realignment in between, Ms. Bortner said. That construction should be finished by the fall, she added.

The highway from Ojai is open to Carpinteria, she noted. Detour signs reroute drivers near Highway 192 to Casitas Pass Road and onto Highway 101.
February

Nature in control?

A scene from last week as crew dumps material at the Goleta Beach Park shoreline.

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS  2/6/2005
Rain or shine, county pitches cloud seeding

By Mark Abramson
Staff Writer

Not even record rainfall levels can put a damper on the county’s efforts to get more water districts involved in its cloud seeding program.

The two water districts responsible for keeping the faucets, bathtubs and showers running in Mission Hills and Vandenberg Village got a peek during a joint meeting Wednesday night at how cloud seeding boosts rainfall and water supplies.

The Mission Hills Community Services District (MHCSD) and Vandenberg Village Community Services District (VVCSD) boards have the option of paying to participate in the program. About half of the $350,000 cloud seeding budget is paid for by the county and the other half is funded by the water agencies or districts that participate.

“This is a good area to run this kind of program.”

Rob Almy
Santa Barbara County Water Agency Manager

The participants include the cities of Lompoc, Santa Maria and Santa Barbara, the Goleta Water District, the Carpinteria Valley Water District and a handful of other districts in the county.

Getting the two water districts in the Lompoc Valley to participate in cloud seeding has historically been a hard sell for the Santa Barbara County Water Agency. The water agency estimated that it would cost MHCSD $1,216 for the 2004-2005 fiscal year and VVCSD $2,059. It cost Lompoc $9,950 and Santa Maria $34,216 to participate in the program for the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

“This is a good area to run this kind of program,” the water agency’s manager, Rob Almy, told the directors of the two boards.

“The districts have resisted it because they use ground water and do not rely on surface water from the (Santa Ynez) river,” he said before the meeting. “They haven’t felt it was worth the investment of rate payer dollars.”

Despite this winter’s record rainfall, the Twitchell Reservoir near Santa Maria has not filled up and cloud seeding has been used to increase its water levels, Almy added.

According to the water district’s Web site, the science behind cloud seeding relies on using a substance called silver iodide. The silver iodide is dispersed into rain clouds from mountain top stations or by airplanes that fly into the most productive parts of a cloud precipitation-wise. The silver iodide adds more condensation to the clouds to increase rainfall.

The Web site touts cloud seeding as a cheap way to bolster a water supply because the costs are less than $100 an acre foot compared to $30 to $500 for state water on the South Coast and the $75 to $350 for the same amount of water from Lake Cachuma.

A lot of the technology that goes into cloud seeding is owed to the military’s research into using it as a weapon to disrupt enemy logistics, Almy said.

For civilian cloud seeding purposes, the presence of ominous rain clouds does not always mean that the planes will be revved up or the silver iodide flares that disperse the substance into clouds from ground stations will be fired off to make some rain.

“If it’s not cold enough, we don’t seed and if it’s too big a storm we don’t seed,” Almy said. “Public safety is No. 1.”

Staff writer Mark Abramson can be reached at 735-2315, Ext. 126, or by e-mail at mabramson@lompocrecord.com.
LOMPOC

Flooding possible due to rain, dam release

Officials urge public to stay out of river

BY MARK BAYLIS
STAFF WRITER

Heavy rainfall combined with a release of water from Bradbury Dam into the Santa Ynez River has emergency service personnel warning of flash flooding through Tuesday.

Emergency service crews were on standby this morning, ready to evacuate River Park should the Santa Ynez River rise above the floodstage of 18 feet.

The Lompoc Fire Department alerted the park's

Please see RIVER, Page A6
River
(Continued from Page A1)

site managers Sunday night of the possibility of evacuation due to flooding. In turn, the park's temporary residents — about 40 people were currently staying at the park — were notified of the possibility of evacuation.

Fire officials said this morning they did not expect the river to flood. "We may be evacuating River Park, but it's not likely looking at the projections at this time," said Battalion Chief Stan Hart. "It's going to reach flood stage. That doesn't mean it will go over banks. It just means it's at a high level and threatening low-level areas. We're asking everyone to stay clear of the river and banks."

The National Weather Service announced a river flood warning for low-lying areas of Lompoc and Vandenberg Air Force Base until noon Tuesday. Fire officials warned adventure-seeking residents to stay out of the river, as mud and debris fills the river below the water level, threatening to snag would-be thrill seekers. During earlier storms, a handful of men were arrested for swimming and rafting in the river, which is illegal.

Unusually heavy rain in January hurt some vegetable farmers and forced the closing of River Park. A low-lying area along Flordale Avenue near the federal prison flooded and is a common spot at risk during flash floods.

Staff writer Mark Baylis can be reached at 736-2513, Ext. 105, or by e-mail at mbaylis@pultzer.net.
Daring rescue saves man from doomed boat

2/22/05

By MORGAN GREEN

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

The latest storm to blow through Santa Barbara knocked out cell phone service to hundreds of customers and had nervous residents eyeing unstable hillsides and swollen rivers.

There were no major injuries reported in the county, but one man was the object of a daring rescue in the early hours of Monday morning.

The storm also caused problems for motorists. Highway 101 east of Carpinteria was narrowed to one lane of traffic from just after noon until about 4 p.m. Sunday so Caltrans crews could do preventive work.

Despite the dousing, a Ventura Sheriff's Department spokesman said there had been no further landslides at La Conchita. Some residents have chosen to remain there despite the continuing danger from the unstable steep slopes above the residential enclave where 10 people died in a mudslide last month.

However, mudslides north of Moorpark meant that Amtrak service north out of Los Angeles had to be suspended at least through today. Pacific Surfliner service is expected to resume between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo on Feb. 28, according to an Amtrak announcement. Until then, buses will shuttle Amtrak customers between those cities.

Just after midnight on Sunday, a pair of Harbor Patrol officers punched a rescue boat through battering surf and gale winds of more than 45 miles per hour to save a one-legged man from a derelict boat that was careening toward destruction on East Beach.

Officers Rick Hubbard and Jan Martinez responded to the radioed call for help and a red flare fired by Jim Catlin from his 27-foot-long vessel. The boat, moored in unprotected waters east of Stearns Wharf, had broken loose during the weekend storm and was heading for the beach. With no mast for sails and no engine, the hulk was out of control.

Officer Martinez said just getting out to Mr. Catlin was difficult, with close packed breakers blocking the harbor mouth. "You couldn't see what was coming. We were holding on for dear life," he said. "The waves were coming at such close intervals we'd push up through one, then come down just as another one was breaking on us."

When the officers approached the vessel, more than a third of a mile off East Beach, they realized it was going to be impossible to get Mr. Catlin off "boat-to-boat" because the steep waves see-sawed the Harbor Patrol boat and Mr. Catlin's vessel 20 feet in opposite directions. They couldn't leave Mr. Catlin aboard until his boat hit the beach, pounded, and possibly capsized.

"He's about 55. He's not in the best of health, and he didn't have his prosthetic leg on," said Officer Martinez.

There was only one option, the rescuers realized, so they tossed out a life ring. Mr. Catlin jumped overboard and got into it.

Wearing a wet suit and swim fins, Officer Hubbard, a former Long Beach lifeguard and experienced rescue swimmer, leaped in the water to pull Mr. Catlin to shore. "It was pretty intense, definitely a heart-pounding situation," the officer said. When sets of breakers loomed out of the blackness, revealed only by foamy white summits, "we just tried to ride them out as they hit us."

Officer Hubbard pulled Mr. Catlin out of the water near Stearns Wharf, where waiting police and firefighters saw him into an ambulance. His prosthesis was later retrieved and given back to him.

Mr. Catlin was treated for hypothermia and shock at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital and released. He was unavailable for comment Monday.

"This was one of the most dramatic marine rescues in our area in many years," said the officers' boss, Harbor Operations Manager Mick Kronman. "Both officers deserve an extraordinary amount of credit."

Mr. Catlin will not be required to pay for his rescue, but the city will seek payment to demolish and remove the remains of the boat from East Beach, said Officer Martinez. "That usually comes to about $1,000 to $1,500."

Three unoccupied sailboats and a motor vessel also wrecked Sunday night on East Beach, which is downwind from the unprotected anchorage used by scores of visiting vessels in the summer, but known as the Fool's Anchorage in the winter when storms sweep in from...
Rain and wind lash county

Storms knock out power, close roads
By HILDEY MEDINA and SCOTT STEEPLETON
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITERS

An unrelenting series of storms that killed at least nine Californians drenched Santa Barbara on Tuesday, prompting flood and tornado warnings, closing roads and knocking out power.

The storm, which began Thursday, is expected to continue through today, according to the National Weather Service. Another slow-moving storm is in the forecast for early next week.

“These are slow-moving low-pressure systems; it takes forever to work their way across the West Coast and then they linger,” said Bill Patzert, a climatologist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Cañada Flintridge.

“We’ll definitely see more rain. February and March are our two wettest months,” he said.

The U.S. Geological Survey issued landslide warnings for Santa Barbara and seven other counties throughout the state.

“Rainfall is moving slowly through...

Please see WEATHER on A12

Wettest years on record
Rain year is Sept. 1 - Aug. 31

1. 1997-98 47.67
2. 1940-41 45.25
3. 1977-78 40.42
4. 1982-83 39.73
5. 1998-99 38.34
6. 1983-84 34.53
7. 1994-95 33.82
8. 1889-90 32.43
9. 1957-58 31.96
10. 1910-11 31.92
11. 1913-14 31.80
12. 1961-62 31.21
13. 1968-69 30.47
14. 2004-05 29.22

Pedestrians who wanted to keep their socks dry Tuesday had to leap over torrents of water unleashed by the latest storm.

IN THE NEXT MONTH: “We’ll definitely see more rain. February and March are our two wettest months,” says climatologist Bill Patzert of La Cañada Flintridge.
Warnings issued about landslides, flooding

WEATHER

C 54

soil and debris, and over time, steps to mandate, might result in destabilization of some hillside areas," according to a USGS statement. Fears of such destabilization extended to La Concha, where some residents are in a state of mindfulness of June. The deadly mudslide left the Rockwell community Tuesday.

Santa Barbara County forecasters warned about an inch of rain per hour, dumping more than 8 inches on parts of the county since Thursday. Slippery roads and flooding were common for a handful of the county's roads and areas.

Highway 1 near Titus Creek was closed after rainfall caused a washout of the highway between Lompoc and Goleta. The highway had only been open 12 hours a day, following damage caused by the new year's storms.

In Santa Barbara, Sespe Canyon Road remained open only to residents. It is expected to open to all traffic today, Caltrans officials said.

At Hollister Ranch, the main access road for residents was closed after flooding made it impassable.

Mudslides forced Amtrak officials to suspend train service north of Los Angeles to Santa Barbara until Thursday.

Western Santa Barbara County joined other areas throughout Southern California that have lost power because of the storms.

Gil Alexander, an Amtrak spokesperson, said the electrically powered trains were being idled at about 12 p.m. at Goleta.

“Unpredictable” storms related to “the intense thunderstorms and lightning in that area.”

Crews were restored power to all 110 customers within an hour.

Since the storm hit, Mr. Alexander said, Amtrak has restored service across Southern California. It will completely fly the southbound services in, he said.

The service has been restored to normal.

Amtrak has announced it will be providing shuttle service for travelers.

On Thursday, the boxcar made a successful run through the night.

The freight train, which is about 9000 tons long, over the weekend and will continue to distribute the waves as far east as 5:00 on Tuesday. But we’re still not out of the woods yet.

The city of Ventura was also lining up for the weekend and will continue to distribute the waves as far east as 5:00 on Tuesday.

The storm includes reports from The Associated Press. E-mail: brendal@naspress.com

Caltrans crews work through the rain machine in preparation under Paradise Road on Tuesday afternoon.

Rain didn't keep spectators away from a Santa Barbara High School water polo game on Tuesday. Above left, Ken Brown, with the city Parks and Recreation Department, assisters a rain-soaked Cold Springs Creek at Mountain Drive. At left, a mudslide forced the closure of Sisemore Canyon Road, but it is expected to reopen today.
Piece of Hwy. 1 collapses under weight of storm

2/24/05

Nora K. Wallace and Michael Todd
SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

Route closed as major stretch sinks several feet

The storm that pummeled California this week spelled disaster for Highway 1 near Lompoc, as a major portion of the roadway collapsed for the second time this year.

About 11 miles south of Lompoc, heavy rain undermined the roadway at Ytias Creek, causing it to sink several feet and prompting Caltrans to close down the route at least temporarily. Caltrans should have a better idea by next week when the road will be open again.

There is no rain in the forecast until Sunday, when a chance of rain is predicted into the middle of next week.

Highway 1 has suffered significant damage in the past two months. A washout in January obliterated a large section of the northbound lane almost 10 miles south of Lompoc.

That damage was significant enough that Caltrans is considering rerouting the entire highway in that area, in a project expected to take about a year.

Crews are evaluating the new Ytias Creek slippage to decide what long-term solution might be best, Caltrans spokeswoman Marta Bortner said. That may include a retaining wall, a viaduct or even a bridge, she added.

Caltrans has about $6 million to fix both Highway 1 problems, she said.

Drivers will face delays elsewhere in the county in the coming days. Today Caltrans will begin an emergency project to replace a failed culvert along southbound Highway 101 at Santa Claus Lane near Carpinteria.

The project will require closing the southbound slow lane near Santa Claus Lane from 8:30 a.m. to noon. The southbound Santa Claus Lane onramp will also be closed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. today and Friday and next Monday through Friday. If there is rain, the closure of the southbound slow lane will be rescheduled for next week.

On Monday, the southbound lanes of Highway 101 at the Gaviota rest stop will be closed from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. while a new, larger culvert is put in place to handle storm runoff, mud and debris under the roadway. Drivers will be re-routed to Highway 154 during that time, Ms. Bortner said. On Tuesday, the northbound lane will be closed during the same nighttime hours, but traffic will be diverted through the rest stop to allow drivers passage. After that, the highway at Gaviota will be limited to one lane in those evening hours in both directions until March 4.

On the train tracks, Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner service north of Los Angeles remains closed at least through Friday because of mudslides. Buses will move passengers from the south to Van Nuys, Oxnard, Santa Barbara and Goleta.

LEN WOOD / NEWS-PRESS PHOTOS

Heavy rains sent asphalt slipping away along Highway 1 near Ytias Creek this week, forcing the road's closure for an indefinite time.
The body of one of the two people killed is pulled out of Gaviota Creek and up a ravine Tuesday afternoon. Santa Barbara County Sheriff, Fire and Search and Rescue team searched for nearly four hours before finding the bodies of both victims downstream from where their car had slid into the water.
Two killed when car slides into swollen creek
By Janene Scully and Mark Baylis/Staff writers

Santa Maria Times
Thursday, March 24, 2005

A Goleta woman and a toddler escaped but two other people were killed Tuesday afternoon when two vehicles ran off Highway 101 into a raging, rain-swollen creek at Gaviota. In addition to the casualties at Gaviota, Tuesday's record-breaking rains left roads flooded, led to multiple smaller crashes, canceled high school and college sporting events and forced the Air Force to scrub a missile test. Emergency crews launched a large, multi-agency, swift-water rescue operation at Gaviota about 12:15 p.m. The California Highway Patrol said the first vehicle, a gold Toyota Corolla driven by Chris Morganstern, 39, ran off the southbound lanes between Highway 1 and the Gaviota tunnel. Morganstern's vehicle just touched the water, allowing her and a toddler to escape to safety. But as a CHP officer was set to drive the two back to Buellton, and as a Santa Barbara County Fire Department captain was still on scene, they saw another vehicle slide off the road and plunge down a 30-foot embankment into the rushing waters, authorities said. "They both ran to the edge and by the time they got there they were gone," said CHP Officer Marc Combs from the Buellton office. "It happened that fast." The two fatalities were occupants of the second vehicle, a newer Toyota Matrix with Arizona license plates. The Sheriff's Department was waiting to release the victims' names until their next of kin could be notified. The first body was found about 2 p.m. and at least a mile away, under a railroad trestle at Gaviota State Beach. The second body was discovered around 4 p.m. about a quarter of a mile from the accident site. Rescue personnel didn't know if the two victims died upon impact or drowned, a sheriff's spokesman said.

Members of the Sheriff's Department's Search and Rescue Team recovered the first body after 90 minutes. A crew of about 10 rescue workers rappelled down a 40-foot embankment to recover the second body. Dozens of people from multiple agencies were involved. "It's a huge rescue effort," said Combs, who estimated the fast-moving creek water was 10 feet deep. The normally calm creek turned into a raging river after hours of rain had pounded the Central Coast. "It's really fast. You don't want to get anywhere near that water," he said. "I couldn't believe how big the river ... is right now. It's raging right now." Public safety officials left the cars overnight and planned to extricate them today. "We didn't want to send any people in the water," said Capt. Diondray W.
APPENDIX D:

PHOTOGRAPHS
Cachuma Reservoir (Elev. 696.51 feet - 11/4/04)

Cachuma Reservoir (Elev. 751.40 feet - 3/25/05)
Montecito Creek @ Riven Rock – 1/10/05

Hwy. 192 in Carpinteria - 1/12/05
Clean out of Montecito Debris Basin – 1/14/05

Montecito Debris Basin – 2/9/05
West Side of Santa Barbara, Urban Flooding – 3/22/05

Carpinteria Marsh Temporary Dam – 1/10/2005
Goleta Beach – prior to Winter 2005

Goleta Beach – January 9, 2005
Goleta Beach Replenishment – January 2005

Santa Ynez River at Robinson Bridge – 1/3/2005
San Marcos Road Landslide

Ground Break above San Marcos Pass Landslide – 1/30/05
Mission Debris Basin – 1/21/05

Blosser Extension Bank Erosion – 12/28/04
Hwy. 1 Closure

East Camino Cielo - Wash Out
APPENDIX E:

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
STORM DISCUSSION
January 2005 Storm Discussion
(The internet links contained in the following discussions may no longer be active)

January 7-11, 2005 Southern California Heavy Rainfall Event

General Summary
A prolonged period of heavy precipitation besieged southern California beginning Friday, January 7th and continued almost unabated through Tuesday, January 11th. In its aftermath, the storms caused tragic loss of life, including 10 deaths attributed to a landslide into homes in the small coastal community of La Conchita (Ventura County), and millions of dollars of flood and storm-related damage throughout southern California.

Precipitation
While little of southern California was spared from the heavy rains, the areas hardest hit stretched from near Point Conception west of Santa Barbara to the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains north and east of Los Angeles, where storm totals through the duration of the event exceeded 30 inches in the wettest locations. As if this were not enough, a prior storm period that began a few days after Christmas and continued into the first week of January saw an additional 10 to 20+ inches of precipitation in this same area. For example, the precipitation gage at Old Man Mountain in the Ventura River drainage recorded 24.05 inches between December 26th and January 5th. The table below shows some unofficial rainfall totals from both storm periods for some key gages in southern California.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gage</th>
<th>Dec 26 - Jan 05</th>
<th>Jan 07 - 11</th>
<th>Totals from both storms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos Pass</td>
<td>18.15 in.</td>
<td>24.64 in.</td>
<td>42.79 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordhoff Ridge</td>
<td>16.37 in.</td>
<td>27.99 in.</td>
<td>44.36 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opids Camp</td>
<td>19.83 in.</td>
<td>31.94 in.</td>
<td>51.77 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palomar Mountain</td>
<td>8.52 in.</td>
<td>12.67 in.</td>
<td>21.19 in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provided in the links below are map images showing storm total precipitation for the period from 4PM PST Thursday, January 6th through 4PM PST Tuesday, January 11th (144 hour totals), as well as graphics showing daily totals through the January storm.

144-hour Storm Total Precipitation Gage Maps (Jan 6 - 11)
Entire CNRFC area (California and Nevada)
Southern California centered on Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties
Southern California centered on Los Angeles area
Southern California centered on the area between Los Angeles and San Diego

Daily Observed Precipitation Graphics ending at 4 AM PST (10 km resolution)
Jan 07 | Jan 08 | Jan 09 | Jan 10 | Jan 11 | Jan 12

During the peak of the event, rainfall exceeded over two inches per 6 hours for roughly a 36-hour period with greatest 6-hour amounts reaching 4.37 inches at Nordhoff Ridge in the mountains near Ojai.

Graph of 6-Hour Precipitation for several gage locations in southern California

Weather Synopsis
The storm period between Dec 26 - Jan 04 was attributed initially to a very cold deep upper low that descended out of the Gulf of Alaska. By Tuesday, Dec 28th, the low settled off the coast of central...
California, with a powerful low level jet of 50-70 knot winds at 850 millibars (around 5,000 feet MSL) taking direct aim on the transverse mountain ranges of southern California. The system tapped into a moderately moist subtropical airmass with total precipitable water near 1.0 inch. This marked the beginning of a cold wet period with a series of deep upper lows dropping down from the north into a long wave trough positioned just off the west coast. This pattern would continue to impact much of the California into Nevada into the new year with 7 to 10 feet of fresh snow piling up in the Sierra Nevada and heavy rains along the coast of central California as well as initially into the Mount Shasta area. The second in the series of upper lows moved into southern California later in the week producing more heavy rains and snow at the higher elevations on New Year's Eve day. A final upper low would later send another round of moderate precipitation once again into southern California on the third and fourth of January, followed by a couple of days of relatively dry weather.

The dry spell was short-lived as a more ominous pattern was organizing in the eastern Pacific (see Figure 1 below). Of greatest concern was a “breakthrough” of subtropical moisture that would eventually mix with another cold low that was descending down the west coast from British Columbia. With a blocking pattern setting up further out in the Pacific, the second foreboding concern would be the anticipated prolonged duration of the upcoming event as the large upper low pressure system was forecast to become stationary off the coast of northern California, in an ideal location to stream subtropical moisture northeastward into southern California.

![Figure 1. General weather pattern affecting Southern California Jan 7-11, 2005](image)

The threat would soon be realized as the initial cold front spread rain into southern California beginning Friday morning, January 7th. This proved to be just the beginning as heavier rains materialized on Saturday that persisted through the remainder of the weekend and into Monday before finally tapering off from northwest to southeast on Tuesday morning, January 11th. While the winds were not as strong...
as the preceding events of late December, the moisture-laden subtropical air with precipitable water near 1.5 inches and weak embedded shortwaves rippling along the subtropical jet focused heavy prolonged orographic rainfall with high snow levels into the transverse ranges of southern California.

Below are loops of national upper air analysis charts for 00UTC (4 PM PST) and 12UTC (4 AM PST) for the period from Dec 25, 2004 through January 12, 2005. The CONUS view is limited in the eastern Pacific but does provide some information regarding the weather patterns affecting the west coast during these two storm periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satellite Imagery Loops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec 25, 2004 - Jan 04, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 06, 2005 - Jan 12, 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These loops contain over 40 images and may take awhile to load on a low bandwidth connection.

Below is an additional set of upper air analysis loops created from images from the Climate Diagnostics Center. The loops are every 6 hours for the Jan 06-12, 2005 period. The 500 MB loop provides a much better view of the blocking pattern in the Pacific with the strong upper high over the Aleutians and the subtropical energy "undercutting" the high and merging with the cold upper trough off the Pacific Northwest coast (as referenced earlier in Figure 1 above). The 850 MB chart shows the fetch of southwest winds that steered a stream of warm moist subtropical air into southern California. The wind speeds are displayed in meters/second (m/s). To convert to miles per hour, multiply by 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Upper Air Loops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>850 MB Winds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 MB Heights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upper air soundings (radiosondes) display the vertical profile of winds, temperature (plotted in red), and dew point temperature (plotted in blue) at Vandenberg Air Force Base and San Diego in southern California during the January 6-11 storm period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upper Air Sounding Loops (Radiosondes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vandenberg Air Force Base</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
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</tbody>
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A more detailed sounding from Vandenberg Air Force Base taken on the morning of Sunday, January 9th provides additional information during one of the heaviest rainfall periods of the event. Some items to note on the sounding include:

- strong warm advection (veering winds with height below 700 MB),
- strong S-SW winds of 30-50 knots (favorable for strong orographic lifting over the coastal mountain ranges),
- a freezing level of nearly 10,000 ft (indicating a deep warm layer conducive to efficient warm-rain processes),
- moderate instability (a lifted index of -1.3 deg C),
- near-saturation through the sounding with precipitable water of 1.16 inches.

Hydrologic Impacts
Already noted were the mudslides throughout much of the area, with considerable damage to roads and several areas isolated due to washed out roads, debris, etc. All major river basins in southern California were impacted to some degree by the sheer volume of precipitation that fell from the two combined storm periods, stretching from the upper Salinas River from the late December storms, to the Mexican border by the time the early January storms were finished. The greatest impact was felt along the coast from the Santa Ynez River north of Santa Barbara to the San Luis Rey River at Oceanside. Highest flows of record were noted in the Ventura River and the Santa Clara River northwest of Los Angeles. Lake Cachuma northwest of Santa Barbara saw an elevation rise of over 34 feet from the 7th of January to fill the reservoir by the 11th, requiring flood releases into the Santa Ynez River. The normally dry flood control reservoir above Prado Dam on the Santa Ana River reached a storage of around 100,000 acre-feet with downstream releases of 10,000 cfs. The San Diego River at Fashion Valley rose to just touch flood stage near the end of the storm period as the tail end of the system moved across the basin. Northern California major rivers fared much better as the snow levels were low enough to add generously to the already large snowpack, but provide little contribution to runoff. However, weir flow did occur on the Sacramento River from the late December storms and unusually high tides and winds caused some levee erosion problems in the Sacramento Delta during the January storms.
February Rainfall Discussion

Feb 17-23, 2005 Southern California Heavy Rainfall Event

General Summary

Just a mere five weeks since the drenching rains of late December and early January, a waterlogged southern California found itself in another seven day stretch of what must have seemed like relentless rains. The resulting impacts were more landslides and flooding. According to newspaper accounts, the aftermath of the storm left nine people dead, including at least two deaths from mud and rock slides and a civil engineer who was swept by rushing water into a large sinkhole. Property damages soared well into the millions, including the dramatic collapse of the runway at the Santa Paula Airport into the rain-swollen Santa Clara River. Colder than the January storms, snowfall measured an impressive 8 to 10 feet in the mountains above Los Angeles.

Precipitation

Once again, much of southern California experienced a prolonged period of precipitation with the area from near Point Conception west of Santa Barbara to the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains north and east of Los Angeles hardest hit. Storm totals generally ranged from 4 to 8 inches across coastal locations, while adjacent mountains received 8 to 18 inches. However, localized amounts exceeded the 20 inch mark, including Opids Camp just north of Los Angeles in the San Gabriel Mountains. These precipitation totals, in addition to the two impressive earlier storm systems affecting the region around New Year’s Day and the second week of January, have placed many locations well above seasonal normals. Since the water year began on October 1st, percents of normal across southern California generally ranged from 200 to 400 percent. The table below shows some unofficial precipitation totals from the three significant storm periods for some key precipitation gages in southern California.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gage</th>
<th>Dec 26 - Jan 05</th>
<th>Jan 07 - 11</th>
<th>Feb 17- 23</th>
<th>Totals from all 3 storms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Marcos Pass</td>
<td>18.15 in.</td>
<td>24.64 in.</td>
<td>11.85 in.</td>
<td>54.64 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordhoff Ridge</td>
<td>16.37 in.</td>
<td>27.99 in.</td>
<td>13.78 in.</td>
<td>58.14 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opids Camp</td>
<td>19.83 in.</td>
<td>31.94 in.</td>
<td>22.40 in.</td>
<td>74.17 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palomar Mountain</td>
<td>8.52 in.</td>
<td>12.67 in.</td>
<td>8.24 in.</td>
<td>29.49 in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A graph of 6-hour precipitation for these locations shows the 6-hourly rates to be consistently lower than what was observed in early January, although the heaviest periods early Monday morning on the 21st briefly came close with 6-hour amounts in excess of 3 inches.

With several significant precipitation events occurring across southern California this year, both Downtown Los Angeles (USC Campus) and San Diego (Lindbergh Field) were rivaling their wettest years ever since records were first recorded. Through March 1st, both locations reached their third wettest year (seasonal totals begin on July 1st). The information below shows the top three precipitation years, including the current one.

**Downtown Los Angeles (USC Campus) – Records began in 1877**

- July 1st, 1883 to June 30th, 1884 38.18 inches
- July 1st, 1889 to June 30th, 1890 34.84 inches
- July 1st, 2004 to March 1st, 2005 33.87 inches

* This makes the current precipitation year the wettest on record for the past 115 years.

**San Diego (Lindbergh Field) – Records began in 1850**

- July 1st, 1883 to June 30th, 1884 25.97 inches
- July 1st, 1940 to June 30th, 1941 24.74 inches
- July 1st, 2004 to March 1st, 2005 19.64 inches

* This makes the current precipitation year the wettest on record for the past 64 years.
Another interesting fact to note is the precipitation deficits across the Pacific Northwest compared with the surpluses across southern California this year. Seasonal totals through March 1st at Downtown Los Angeles and San Diego were outpacing Seattle and Portland. The table below shows precipitation totals from July 1st to March 1st, departure from normal, and normal precipitation for these four locations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>July 1st to March 1st</th>
<th>Departure from Normal</th>
<th>Normal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>21.98 in</td>
<td>-5.48 in</td>
<td>27.46 in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>16.64 in</td>
<td>-10.07 in</td>
<td>26.71 in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>33.87 in</td>
<td>+23.07 in</td>
<td>10.80 in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>19.64 in</td>
<td>+12.17 in</td>
<td>7.47 in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provided in the table below are links to gage map images showing storm total precipitation for the period from 4AM PST Thursday, February 17th through 4AM PST Thursday, February 24th (168 hour or 7 day totals).

168-hour Storm Total Precipitation Gage Maps (February 17 - 24)
- Entire CNRFC area (California and Nevada)
- Southern California centered on Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties
- Southern California centered on Los Angeles area
- Southern California centered on the area between Los Angeles and San Diego

The next table below displays gridded observed precipitation for the same period but divided into daily totals (4AM - 4AM).

Daily Observed Precipitation Graphics ending at 4 AM PST (10 km resolution)
- Feb 18
- Feb 19
- Feb 20
- Feb 21
- Feb 22
- Feb 23
- Feb 24

Weather Synopsis
A stubborn pattern, situated across the eastern Pacific and west coast of North America for more than a week, brought periods of precipitation to southern California from Feb 17-23, 2005. This pattern, known as a “Rex Block”, occurs when an upper high pressure system sets up at a higher latitude while an upper low pressure system sets up at a lower latitude along a similar longitudinal line. In this case, the upper high pressure system parked itself off the British Columbia coast, which in turn pushed the dry polar jetstream well into Alaska and northern Canada. The initial upper low pressure system anchored near 130W and just off the central California coast. The moist subtropical jetstream (which played a key role in the Jan 7-11, 2005 southern California heavy precipitation event) did not play much of a factor in this event. It remained for the most part along 20N before steering northeast into the south-central United States and northern Mexico. As a result, moisture content during these series of precipitation events generally peaked near 1.00 inch precipitable water.

Rounds of precipitation affected southern California from Santa Barbara to San Diego counties on Friday February 18th and again on Saturday February 19th. This precipitation was enhanced by shortwave energy rotating around the initial upper low pressure system, upper jetstreaks sliding around the base of the low nosing into southern California, and increasing low-level flow from the south to southwest slamming into the adjacent coastal mountain ranges. (See Figure 1 below)
This initial upper low pressure system began to weaken on Saturday morning, February 19th and moved slowly off to the northeast. However, strong shortwave energy from the central Pacific and a cold origin upper low pressure system diving south-southwest out of western Canada reinforced the blocking pattern on Sunday afternoon, February 20th. This developed a second and stronger upper low pressure system inside 130W and just off the central California coast.

With this second upper low pressure system in place Sunday night, February 20th, the strongest shortwave energy for the entire event took aim at southern California. Although moisture content (precipitable water values near 1.00 inch) and southerly flow ahead of the shortwave energy were similar when compared to the previous few days, the impressive dynamics increased precipitation rates (and precipitation totals) across the entire region, reaching near 1.00 inch per hour. **Infrared satellite imagery** loops on Sunday February 20th clearly show the dynamics associated with this system as it developed into a classic comma-shaped pattern and cloud tops cooling rapidly to as low as -55 C. A loop of mosaicked **Nexrad WSR-88D radar 0.5 degree reflectivity imagery** (PLEASE NOTE: this loop contains 100 images and requires large bandwidth) displays the precipitation echoes associated with this frontal cloud band and the continuous regeneration of precipitation streaming northward into the tranverse mountain ranges in the wake of the cold front.

After this strong shortwave exited the region to the north and east, the upper low pressure system very slowly began to move off to the east-southeast. However, additional periods of precipitation continued through the Presidents’ Day holiday (Monday, February 21st) into the middle of the week as additional shortwave energy rotated through southern California.

The potential for convective precipitation remained a concern throughout the duration of the event. The close proximity to the upper low pressure system, favorable dynamics, and afternoon heating from breaks in the cloud
cover produced scattered thunderstorms every afternoon; even a few waterspouts and weak tornadoes that affected coastal areas from Santa Barbara to San Diego counties. Sounding data from Vandenberg and San Diego show the destabilized atmosphere in place across the region, indicative of the development of thunderstorms. In fact, this convective weather moved as far north as the Sacramento Valley in northern California on Monday, February 21st, where weak tornadoes also touched down in the greater Sacramento area near the international airport.

Finally by the end of the week, the blocking pattern in the eastern Pacific and western North America pushed inland into the intermountain West and weakened.

**Satellite Imagery Loops**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feb 17 - 23, 2005</th>
<th>Water Vapor</th>
<th>IR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Below are upper air analysis loops created from images from the Climate Diagnostics Center. The loops are every 6 hours for the Feb 16 - 23, 2005 period. The 500 MB loop provides a view of the blocking pattern in the eastern Pacific with the persistence of the upper low off the coast of central California. The 850 MB windspeed loop displays the low level southwest wind pattern that produced the strong orographic lifting along the transverse mountain range of southern California. The 300 MB windspeed loop shows the existence of a strong upper jetstream along 20N, but probably too far south to play an active role in this pattern over southern California. The wind speeds shown in the images are displayed in meters per second (m/s). To convert to miles per hour, multiply by 2.2.

**Upper Air Loops**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surface</th>
<th>850 MB Winds</th>
<th>500 MB Heights</th>
<th>300 MB Winds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Upper air soundings (radiosondes) display the vertical profile of winds, temperature (plotted in red), and dew point temperature (plotted in blue) at Vandenberg Air Force Base and San Diego in southern California during the February 17-23 storm period.

**Upper Air Sounding Loops (Radiosondes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vandenberg Air Force Base</th>
<th>San Diego</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Included in the table below are more detailed soundings from Vandenberg Air Force Base and San Diego, taken at 4pm Sunday, February 20 and again at 4 AM PST the next morning. These provide additional information during the heaviest rainfall period of the event. Some items to note on the soundings include:

- strong SE-SW winds of 30-40 knots (favorable for strong orographic lifting over the coastal mountain ranges),
- lower freezing levels (between 6,500 and 7,500 feet) than the early January storm period,
- moderate instability (lifted indices between 0 and -3 deg C),
- precipitable water between 0.8 and 0.9 inches, adequate for moderate to heavy precipitation but not as moist as the early January storms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vandenberg AFB</td>
<td>4 PM PST Sunday Feb 20</td>
<td>4 AM PST Monday Feb 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>4 PM PST Sunday Feb 20</td>
<td>4 AM PST Monday Feb 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hydrologic Impacts**

Predictably, the major drainages throughout southern California, previously saturated from the late December and early January storms, reached or exceeded flood stages at nearly all forecast points. The Santa Ynez, Ventura, and Santa Clara rivers north of Los Angeles generally peaked Monday, Feb 21, following a night of the more intense rainfall and after several days of light to moderate rainfall.
Further south, the San Diego River peaked later Monday evening into Tuesday while the San Luis Rey saw its peak later Wednesday afternoon, February 23rd, when the area received its heaviest rains as the weather system moved slowly eastward across southern California.

There were widespread reports of mud and debris flows, rock slides, and small stream and urban flooding throughout southern California. These caused several road closures and considerable property damage.
APPENDIX F:

GOVERNMENT DECLARATIONS
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF RATIFYING
PROCLAMATION OF THE EXISTENCE
OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY CAUSED BY
HEAVY RAIN, AND CONFIRMING
THE REQUEST FOR A STATE OF
EMERGENCY; AND REQUESTS A
PRESIDENTIAL DECLARATION OF
EMERGENCY

RESOLUTION NO. 05-006

WHEREAS, Government Code, Sections 8558 and 8630, et seq., and Chapter 12 of the Santa Barbara County Code empower the Director of Emergency Services to proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency when the County is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity and the Board of Supervisors is not in session, subject to ratification by the Board of Supervisors within seven days; and

WHEREAS, conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within this County, caused by heavy rain, storm conditions and flooding commencing on or about on January 1, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Emergency Services of the County of Santa Barbara did proclaim the existence of a local emergency within the County of Santa Barbara, on the 10th day of January, 2005, at which time the Board of Supervisors was not in session (a copy is attached of the “Proclamation of Local Emergency by Director of Emergency Services”); and

WHEREAS, on the 10th day of January, 2005, at which time the Board of Supervisors was not in session, the Director of Emergency Services of the County of Santa Barbara also requested the Governor of California to proclaim the County of Santa Barbara, to be in a State of Emergency within the meaning of Government Code Section 8558 (a copy is attached of the “Request to Governor to Proclaim a State of Emergency When Board of Supervisors is not in Session”); and
WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors does hereby find that these conditions of extreme peril did warrant and necessitate the proclamation of the existence of a local emergency and warranted the request to the Governor of California for a State of Emergency, and it now finds that it is warranted to additionally ask the Governor to request the President of the United States to issue a Presidential Declaration of Emergency covering the County of Santa Barbara.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that the proclamation of the existence of a local emergency as issued by the Director of Emergency Services is ratified by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the requests to the Governor of California, by the Director of Emergency Services, to proclaim the County of Santa Barbara to be in a State of Emergency covering the County of Santa Barbara, are confirmed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara; and the Board asks the Governor to request the President of the United States to issue a Presidential Declaration of Emergency covering the County of Santa Barbara.

IT IS FURTHER PROCLAIMED AND ORDERED that the local emergency shall be deemed to continue to exist until its termination is proclaimed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, California.
PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this 11th day of January, 2005, by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisor Carbajal, Firestone, Gray, Centeno

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Supervisor Rose

ATTEST:
MICHAEL F. BROWN
CLERK OF THE BOARD

By Deputy

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
STEPHEN SHANE STARK
COUNTY COUNSEL

By Deputy County Counsel

APPROVED AS TO ACCOUNTING FORM:
ROBERT W. GEIS, C.P.A.
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

By

3
PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY
BY DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
(GENERAL)

WHEREAS, Chapter 12, Section 6 of the Santa Barbara County Code, empowers the County of Santa Barbara, Director of Emergency Services, to proclaim a local emergency if the Board of Supervisors is not in session; and

WHEREAS, Section 8558 (c) of the Government Code defines a "Local Emergency" as: "the duly proclaimed existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the territorial limits of a county, city and county, or city, caused by such conditions as air pollution, fire, flood, storm, epidemic, riot, drought, sudden and severe energy shortage, plant or animal infestation or disease, the Governor's warning of an earthquake or volcanic prediction, or an earthquake, complications resulting from the Year 2000 Problem, or other conditions, other than conditions resulting from a labor controversy, which conditions are or are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of that political subdivision and require the combined forces of other political subdivisions to combat, and;

WHEREAS, conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within the County of Santa Barbara, caused by HEAVY RAIN, STORM CONDITIONS and FLOODING commencing on the 7th day of January, 2005 at which time the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara was not in session; and

WHEREAS, on January 10, 2005 it has been determined that due to the HEAVY RAIN, STORM CONDITIONS and FLOODING, conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist and merit the proclamation of a local emergency. The Board of Supervisors is currently not in session.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY PROCLAIMED that a local emergency now exists in the County of Santa Barbara; and

1. That all the recitals set forth herein above are true, correct, and valid; and

2. That these aforementioned conditions of extreme peril are not the results of labor controversy; and

3. That in furtherance of this proclamation of local emergency, there is hereby invoked in the County of Santa Barbara all of the powers and mechanisms set forth in the California Emergency Services Act (Government Code sections 8550 et seq.), Santa Barbara County Code, Chapter 12, Section 6 and all other applicable laws, as said powers and mechanisms may hereafter be used by authorized personnel of the County of Santa Barbara; and
4. That, pursuant to Santa Barbara County Code, Chapter 12, Section 6(a)(6)(C) and (D), the Director of Emergency Services is empowered to require emergency services of any county officer or employee and to requisition necessary personnel or material of any county department or agency; and

5. That a copy of this Proclamation of Local Emergency shall be posted on all outside public access doors of the County Administration Building, and personnel of said County shall endeavor to make copies of this Proclamation available to news media; and

6. That this Proclamation of Local Emergency shall be effective immediately and shall remain in effect for a period of seven (7) days from the date hereof, unless ratified by the Board of Supervisors, and extended, or unless sooner terminated.

Dated: January 14, 2005

Time:

[Signature]

County Administrator /
Director of Emergency Services
County of Santa Barbara
To the HONORABLE ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

REQUEST TO GOVERNOR TO PROCLAIM A STATE OF EMERGENCY WHEN BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IS NOT IN SESSION

a. Chapter 12, Section 6 of the Santa Barbara County code, empowers the County of Santa Barbara, Director of Emergency Services, to proclaim the existence of a local emergency when the county is affected or likely to be affected by a disaster; and

b. Conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property have arisen within the County of Santa Barbara, caused by Heavy Rain, Storm Conditions and Flooding commencing at or about the __th day of January, 2005; and

c. On January 10, 2005, when the Board of Supervisors was not in session, the Santa Barbara County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed the existence of a Local Emergency (copy attached); and

d. The Board of Supervisors will be requested by the Santa Barbara County Director of Emergency Services to ratify the existence of a local emergency therein; and

e. The Board of Supervisors is currently not in session; and

f. It has now been found that local resources are unable to cope with the effects of said emergency; and

g. In accordance with State law the Santa Barbara County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed that an emergency exists throughout the County;

IT IS REQUESTED:

1. That the Governor of California proclaim the County of Santa Barbara, to be in a State of Emergency within the meaning of Government Code Section 8558; and

2. That a copy of the proclamation be forwarded to the State Director of the Office of Emergency Services.
3. That Phil Demery, Director of Public Works be designated as the authorized representative for public assistance and Kathy Gallagher, Director of Social Services, be designated as the authorized representative for individual assistance of the County of Santa Barbara for the purpose of receipt, processing, and coordination of all inquiries and requirements necessary to obtain available state and federal assistance.

Dated: January 22, 2005

Time: 9:00 a.m.

MICHAEL P. BROWN,
County Administrator /
Director of Emergency Services
County of Santa Barbara

Approved as to form:

County Counsel
Stephen Shane Stark

Deputy
January 15, 2005

GOVERNOR ISSUES EXECUTIVE ORDER S-1-05

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER S-1-05
by the
Governor of the State of California

WHEREAS, a series of severe rainstorms swept through Southern California beginning on December 28, 2004; and

WHEREAS, the series of storms brought heavy rains that caused flash floods, mudslides, the accumulation of debris, washed out and damaged roads, and the loss of human life; and

WHEREAS, due to the extensive damage caused by these storms on January 12, 2005, I declared a State of Emergency in Ventura County, and on January 15, 2005, I declared a State of Emergency in the counties of Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Santa Barbara; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative in the circumstances to bring every necessary resource to bear to alleviate the individual, social and economic impacts of these events and to remove bureaucratic barriers to recovery and to Californians in need of services.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby issue this order to become effective immediately:

1. The California Department of Transportation shall formally request immediate assistance through the Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program, 23 U.S.C. §125, in order to obtain federal assistance for highway repairs or reconstruction in Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Orange and San Diego Counties.

2. The statutes, rules and regulations, as they apply to the excavation of rock, gravel, sand or soil from public or private lands under the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (as amended) (Public Resources Code, Division 2, Chapter 9) are hereby suspended for excavation that is for the sole purpose of reconstructing state or local transportation facilities in the counties of Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Orange and San Diego that were damaged in these storms.

3. That statutes, rules and regulations as they apply to California Department of Transportation contracts are suspended for 180 days following the date of this proclamation for the purpose of facilitating the reopening and restoration of transportation infrastructure damaged by these storms in the counties of Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Orange and San Diego. California Department of Transportation officers shall use sound discretion in applying this suspension to ensure that the suspension of statutes, rules and regulations serves the purpose of accelerating the reopening and restoration of transportation infrastructure damaged in the storms.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have here unto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this the fifteenth day of January 2005.

/s/ Arnold Schwarzenegger

Governor of California
Federal Register Notice

Billing Code 9110-10-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Federal Emergency Management Agency

[FEMA-1577-DR]

California: Major Disaster and Related Determinations


ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This is a notice of the Presidential declaration of a major disaster for the State of California (FEMA-1577-DR), dated February 4, 2005, and related determinations.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given that, in a letter dated February 4, 2005, the President declared a major disaster under the authority of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (the Stafford Act), as follows:

I have determined that the damage in certain areas of the State of California, resulting from severe storms, flooding, debris flows, and mudslides on December 27, 2004, through January 11, 2005, is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (the Stafford Act). Therefore, I declare that such a major disaster exists in the State of California.

In order to provide Federal assistance, you are hereby authorized to allocate from funds available for these purposes such amounts as you find necessary for Federal disaster assistance and administrative expenses.

You are authorized to provide Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, and Hazard Mitigation in the designated areas; and any other forms of assistance under the Stafford Act you may deem appropriate. Consistent with the requirement that Federal assistance be supplemental, any Federal funds provided under the Stafford Act for Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation, and the Other Needs Assistance under Section 408 of the Stafford Act will be limited to 75 percent of the total eligible costs.

Further, you are authorized to make changes to this declaration to the extent allowable under the Stafford Act.

The time period prescribed for the implementation of section 310(a), Priority to Certain Applications for Public Facility and Public Housing Assistance, 42 U.S.C. 5153, shall be for a period not to exceed six months after the date of this declaration.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hereby gives notice that pursuant to the authority vested in the Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response, Department of Homeland Security, under Executive Order 12148, as amended, David Fukutomi, of FEMA is appointed to act as the Federal Coordinating Officer for this declared disaster.

I do hereby determine the following areas of the State of California to have been affected adversely by this declared major disaster:

Los Angeles and Ventura Counties for Individual Assistance.

Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties for Public Assistance.
Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties in the State of California are eligible to apply for assistance under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

(The following Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Numbers (CFDA) are to be used for reporting and drawing funds: 97.030, Community Disaster Loans; 97.031, Cora Brown Fund Program; 97.032, Crisis Counseling; 97.033, Disaster Legal Services Program; 97.034, Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA); 97.046, Fire Management Assistance; 97.048, Individuals and Households Housing; 97.049, Individuals and Households Disaster Housing Operations; 97.050 Individuals and Households Program-Other Needs, 97.036, Public Assistance Grants; 97.039, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.)

Is/

Michael D. Brown,
Under Secretary,
Emergency Preparedness and Response,
Department of Homeland Security.

Back to Disaster Federal Register Notices for California Severe Storms, Flooding, Debris Flows, and Mudslides
Late December to Early January Disaster Declaration Expanded To Include Six Counties

Release Date: March 17, 2005
Release Number: 1577-026

PASADENA, Calif. -- The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today announced that Kern, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Santa Barbara counties have also been determined eligible for federal disaster aid to help residents recover from the severe storms, flooding, debris flows and mudslides which occurred from December 27, 2004 through January 11, 2005.

"After reassessing the extensive storm damages throughout Southern California, federal and state officials have concluded that homeowners, renters and businesses in six additional counties are eligible for disaster aid," said FEMA's David Fukutomi, federal coordinating officer.

"We welcome today's announcement by FEMA," said OES Director and State Coordinating Officer Henry Renteria, who requested reassessment of damages on behalf of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. "It is great news for homeowners, renters and business owners who suffered losses during the December 27th through January 11th storms. We remain committed to working with FEMA to ensure that all qualified Californians receive the help they are eligible for under the law."

The only way residents can register for federal and state disaster aid is through FEMA's toll-free number at 1-800-621-FEMA (621-3362). The number for the hearing or speech impaired is 1-800-462-7585, TTY. Operators are available from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. daily. The assistance can include grants to help pay for temporary housing, home repairs and other serious disaster-related expenses not met by insurance or other aid programs. Low-interest loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration also will be available to cover residential and businesses losses not fully compensated by insurance.

People in the newly declared counties, who suffered damage in the December 27 through January 11, storms have 60 days to register with FEMA, May 15, 2005 is the last day for residents in all eight declared counties, including Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

OES coordinates overall state agency response to major disasters in support of local government. The office is responsible for ensuring California's readiness to respond to and recover from natural, manmade and war-caused emergencies and for assisting local governments in their emergency preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery efforts.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations.

FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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