

Mudslides isolate most of county

By CHELA ZABIN
STAFF WRITER

Santa Cruz County was virtually cut off from the rest of the state at times this weekend as rains downed trees and caused mudslides, closing all major highways except Highway 1.

Highway 152, which had been closed during the weekend, was open this morning, and the California Highway Patrol was leading caravans of commuters over slide-covered Highway 17 from the Santa Clara County side. At the Summit, traffic going in both directions was being forced to use the northbound side of the road.

A CHP spokesman said that as a result, commuter traffic from

Santa Cruz to San Jose was backed up as far as Scotts Valley for several hours this morning.

Highway 129 from Highway 101 to Watsonville was closed yesterday from 3 to 6 p.m. because of numerous landslides, said a Caltrans spokeswoman. A mudslide near Rogge Lane was triggered Saturday night by the 4.8 earthquake that hit the Watsonville area at 7:42 p.m. The slide closed one lane of the highway for several hours.

The National Weather Service is forecasting scattered showers in the Monterey Bay area tonight and a 60 percent chance of rain tomorrow. The extended forecast through Friday calls for fair

weather in Central California.

Felton reported the highest rainfall in Santa Cruz County this weekend — 4.57 inches. Eureka Canyon got 3.30 inches, the next highest amount. Watsonville received 2.70 inches for the weekend.

Although no major mishaps reported, crews all over the area kept busy this weekend, clearing slides, trees and power lines. The county's Public Works department reported between 80 and 100 calls about blocked roads yesterday alone, and Watsonville's department called in extra people.

The storms caused numerous power outages in an areas stretching from the Santa Cruz Moun-

tains to the Monterey peninsula, with some areas being hit twice, said Lyle LaFaver, PG&E spokesman.

In Felton, 600 customers were without power for two hours yesterday afternoon when high winds blew down a tree limb that downed power lines. The wind also downed power lines, snapped poles and blew wires together, causing them to short circuit, LaFaver said.

In the Santa Cruz Mountains, heavy rains caused mudslides that knocked down poles. LaFaver said lightning hit PG&E equipment in Scotts Valley last night, causing outages that lasted no more than

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an hour. He said PG&E workers were kept busiest in the Felton-Scotts Valley area, where power outages occurred two or three times in the same area during the weekend.

Roads that were still closed due to flooding or slides as of 9 this morning were Highland Way between Spanish Ranch and Ryder roads in the Eureka Canyon area, Harkins Slough and Lee Roads, Paulsen and Whiting, Murphy's Crossing, and Zayante Road near the Summit. A spokeswoman for the county said Old Santa Cruz Highway "was barely passable."

Murphy's Crossing will be closed "indefinitely" she said.

Parts of Eureka Canyon Road have been closed to all but residents for the last two weeks because of mudslides and falling trees, the CHP spokesman said.

In Watsonville, streets service manager Ed Silva said crews were kept busy with minor flooding in the Bay Village area, Bridge Street and Arthur Road and Main Street. There was a minor mudslide on Hammer Drive, he said. Crews also worked to keep storm drains clear and make sure the pumps on the levee kept running, he said.

Flooding was reported at Ford's Department Store and a local convalescent hospital.

Carol Monclova, assistant manager at Ford's, said the water began coming into the candy department yesterday afternoon eventually forming a puddle three inches deep. Store workers called the city fire department, which vacuumed up the water. The carpets were being dried by blowers this morning. No merchandise was lost.

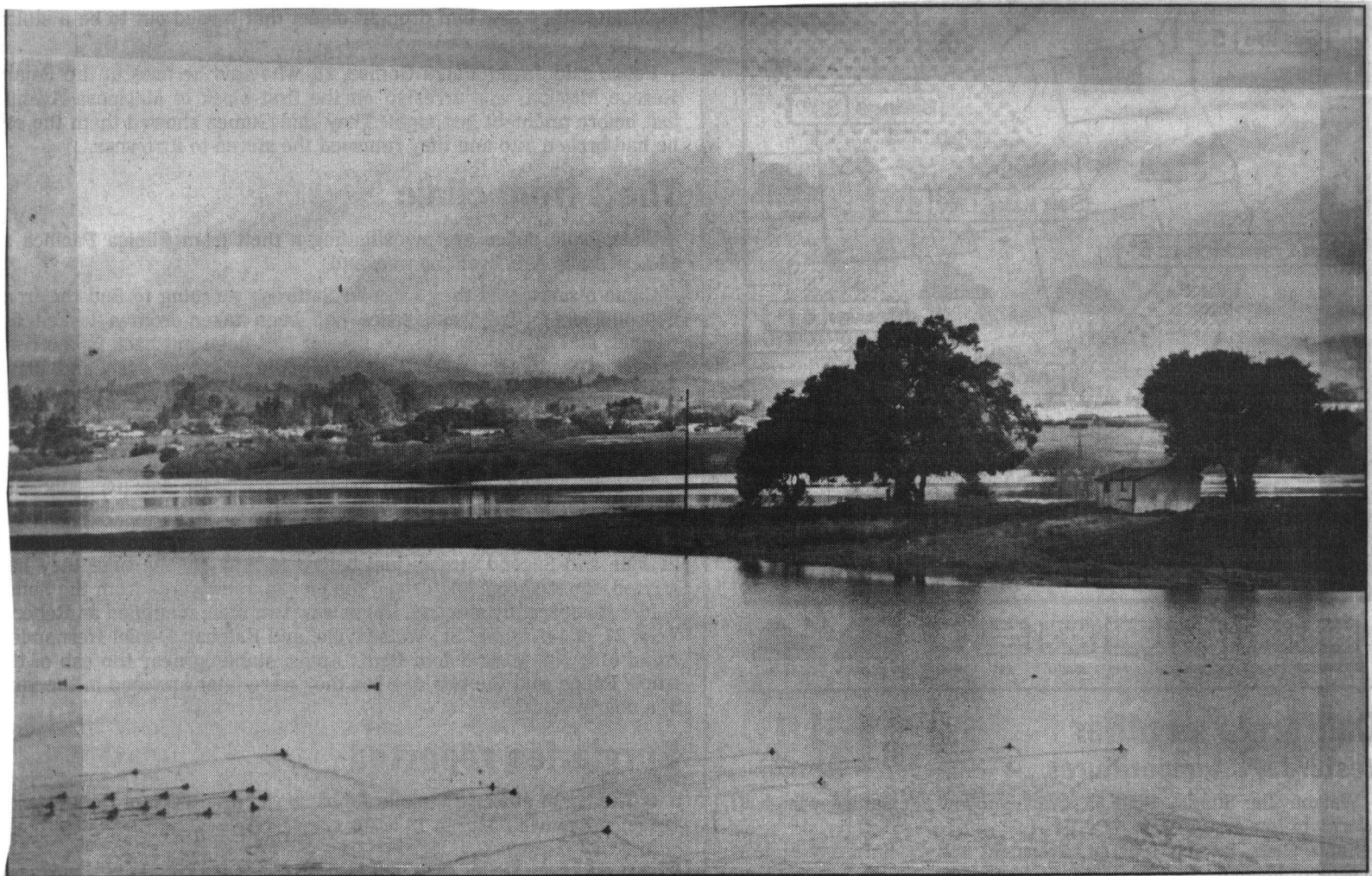
In the Midcounty area, 1½ inches of rain fell in less than eight hours in the Aptos and Soquel areas.

Both Aptos and Soquel Creeks were running bank-to-bank Sunday afternoon, with Soquel Creek measuring five feet at the depth gauge on the Soquel Drive bridge.

In North Monterey County, several people came to fire stations to pick up sand bags to try to prevent flooding in their homes and businesses.

RAINFALL

	Last 48 hrs	Season Total	Last Year
Felton	4.57	28.92	18.76
Santa Cruz	2.62	N.A.	N.A.
Soquel	2.25	N.A.	N.A.
Aptos	2.00	18.60	12.25
Freedom	2.54	16.50	12.33
Corralitos	2.55	18.28	13.95
Eureka Canyon ..	3.30	25.76	20.94
Watsonville	2.70	N.A.	14.81
Aromas	2.55	16.20	12.50
Pinto Lake	2.95	23.10	15.07
Prunedale	1.92	N.A.	N.A.



Kurt Ellison

Ducks can finally swim in College Lake. The frequently dry lake near the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds was nearly filled this morning after the latest storms drenched the county this weekend.

Ken F.