

No letup in sight; Deluge hits area

By JOHN McNICHOLAS
Sentinel Staff Writer

No letup was in sight Saturday night for the latest in a series of storms to move into the Santa Cruz area.

The new storm, which could bring as much as four inches to the Santa Cruz Mountain area, according to the National Weather Service, came after a 24-hour respite from Friday's down-pour.

The National Weather Service Saturday night forecast rain heavy at times Sunday morning, decreasing later in the day and increasing again at night and Monday. The extended forecast calls for rain and wind at times through Tuesday.

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It was a sudden torrent of rain which deluged the Santa Cruz area Friday afternoon, dumping between four and five inches of rain in two hours on the mountain areas.

Storm drains filled to overflowing, turning streets into lakes. Creeks overflowed their banks, filling houses, washing out roads and bridges and saturated hillsides gave way. Trees felled in slides knocked out power to about 140 customers, PG&E spokesmen say.

There were no reports of injuries directly related to the storm.

It was one of a series of fronts lined up to move across Central California through Wednesday, said Thornton Jeffries, spokesman for the weather service in Redwood City.

There were several reports of flooding in the mid-county area, but the mountain areas were hit the hardest, with almost twice as much rain than the coastal flats.

Branciforte, Carbonera and Lompico creeks all swirled out of their beds to fill houses with brown water and wash out bridges and roads.

Carbonera Creek was four inches higher than it was at its peak in the Storm of '82, said creekside resident Jack Hinds, former Scotts Valley water district manager. Only last week, Hinds had finished repairing last year's damage. Friday, waist-high water again filled the house's lower floor.

Santa Cruz weatherman Ronald MacDonald said 1.53 inches of rain fell within a 2½-hour period Friday afternoon when the front itself was passing through. He also said that "we are sort of playing a game of tag with last year's rainfall total. As of 5 o'clock Saturday this season's rainfall total was 31.10 compared to 31.37 last year. "We probably will top that tonight."

The bridge on Glen Canyon Drive near Scotts Valley washed out, and the hard-pressed Branciforte Fire Department took over coverage of that area from Scotts Valley's depart-

ment, which could no longer reach it, said Branciforte firefighter John Faylor.

Most of Branciforte Drive was flooded, Faylor said, and slides blocked it in several places. Granite Creek Road is closed, a large part of it having been washed away. Firefighters filled their homes with school

children who were unable to reach home until the waters subsided.

Eight rental units at Market and Lee streets, below the confluence of Branciforte and Carbonera creeks, were evacuated after the raging water tore off a deck, undermined foundations and tore the utilities connec-

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Pete Amos/Sentinel

Jack Hinds, former Scotts Valley water district manager, was waist-high water in front of his home along Carbonera Creek Friday.



Eight rental units at Market and Lee streets, below the confluence of Branciforte and Carbonera creeks, were evacuated after water undermined foundations Friday. Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Storm

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tions out. The Red Cross put up seven homeless persons in the Holiday Inn Friday night.

Plans to put the Mount Cross Lutheran camp into use as an emergency shelter were not needed.

Scotts Valley experienced what Fifth District Supervisor Joe Cucchiara said was major flash flooding throughout the area.

Seagate Technology employees left work during the afternoon on warning from the fire department, and a river of muddy water swept through the newly-opened Interdesign, Inc. on Green Hills Road. It left mud several inches deep throughout the building, said Scotts Valley Fire Captain Sal Lo Franco.

One house in the Granite Creek area was reportedly hit by a mudslide, but details were unavailable. Two private bridges there were also reportedly destroyed.

In Felton, three major mudslides moderately damaged three houses, threatened several others and closed Highway 9 until sometime next week, a Caltrans worker estimated.

On Farmer Steet, a slide several hundred feet long toppled trees and branches onto sheds, but the mud and dirt stopped just short of doing serious damage to two houses in its path. On Pleasant Way, a slide sent mud and trees through a picture window, said Felton Fire Chief John "Mac" McDonnell.

County geologist Dave Leslie reportedly told nervous residents of Farmer Street more of the mountain perched above them was unstable and could come down.

"A lot of water was running where it's never run before," said McDonnell. "The storm drains just couldn't handle it all. None of the flooding was from the river, and it began clearing up as soon as the rain stopped."

John Masten, of upper Plateau Drive, said several elderly residents there were trying to sandbag their homes against runoff he says worsens each year as the area above is developed.

Several storm-related accidents were reported by the Highway Patrol. The most serious was Friday afternoon when two San Lorenzo Valley women were injured in a two-vehicle accident on the Mount Hermon Road bypass near Felton.

Winnona Marie Smith, 33, 1303 Highland Drive, Boulder Creek, was in serious condition at Community Hospital as of Saturday night. In satisfactory condition at Community was Janet Kathleen Berkemeyer, 32, 165 Higgins Road, Felton.

Smith lost control of the pickup truck she was driving westbound on the flooded bypass, according to the Highway Patrol. The truck spun counter-clockwise, colliding with a car driven by Berkemeyer.

The pickup truck was totaled and the car received major damage in the 2:05 p.m. accident, patrolmen said.

A passenger in the car, three-year-old Jerred Berkemeyer, apparently was uninjured.

Water was running through several homes Friday, he said.

"We're bothered by arthritis, old age and everything else, and we just can't move these sandbags fast enough in situation like this," he said. "We've been trying to get the county to do something about this for four years, and we're not getting anywhere."

In mid-county, three families were stranded on Olson Road, off Old San Jose Road, Friday when a culvert collapsed, taking 15 feet of road with it, a resident reported.

A mudslide Friday afternoon on Rodeo Gulch Road in Soquel blocked part of the roadway approximately 4.3 miles from Soquel Drive.

| | 24 Hrs. | Season | Last Year |
|-----------------|---------|--------|-----------|
| Santa Cruz | 2.20 | 31.10 | 32.78 |
| Graham Hill | | | |
| Road | 3.45 | 45.60 | 45.55 |
| Soquel | 2.10 | 33.99 | 36.34 |
| Boulder Creek | 3.40 | 73.71 | 66.81 |
| Aptos | 1.80 | 29.14 | 31.59 |
| Bonny Doon | 3.15 | 59.74 | 61.28 |
| Rio del Mar | 1.93 | 29.71 | 33.07 |
| Natural Bridges | .94 | 26.01 | 25.32 |
| Capitola | 1.83 | 35.70 | 34.53 |
| Happy Valley | 4.70 | 53.20 | 55.85 |
| Lompico | 4.85 | 76.40 | 69.45 |