

Devastating waves perform encore



Pete Amos/Sentinel

Crashing tide destroyed this Via Gavioto home at the end of Clubhouse Drive in Rio del Mar.

Estimated damage is \$30 million

By JOHN McNICHOLAS
Sentinel Staff Writer

Waves again crashed through beachfront homes and businesses this morning, but Santa Cruz County escaped the terrible pounding that caused an estimated \$30 million in damages Thursday.

More than 25 homes were destroyed, according to unofficial estimates this morning, and 20 more sustained damage that could worsen when another storm rolls in from the Pacific this afternoon.

There were no reports of injuries throughout the county.

County Administrative Officer George Newell declared a local state of emergency this morning as damage reports were assessed. He requested Gov. George Deukmejian to declare

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Sewage flowing into bay

By KEITH MURAOKA
Sentinel Staff Writer

Close to half a million gallons of raw sewage are flowing into Monterey Bay daily from Santa Cruz to Rio del Mar due to numerous sewage line breaks during Thursday morning's high tides.

Repairs may not be completed until early next week, according to county Sanitation District officials. County Environmental Health Director Ray Talley told The Sentinel this morning, however, that while there is a health hazard, he does not see the situation as critical.

"Ocean waters at this point are highly contaminated anyhow as a result of drainage from the rain. It's common during winter storms," he said. "There is a health hazard, but it's not like it happened in the middle of summer when there's a high level of water sports."

Talley's office has posted signs warning of contamination at Twin Lakes, Schwann Lake, Moran Lake, Pleasure Point, the Capitola Esplanade and along Via Gaviota in Rio del Mar.

Luckily, there have been no breaks in the main Aptos sewer transmission line which transfers waste to the Santa Cruz treatment plant at Neary Lagoon, county Sanitation Director Don Porath told the Sanitation District Board Thursday afternoon.

All the breaks have occurred in so-

No sun, but weather to improve

By The Associated Press

Rain-weary Northern California, where hundreds of homes suffered flood damage, relaxed a little today with word that the year's highest tides were receding and the next storm system would hit hardest in central and southern areas of the state.

National Weather Service meteorologist Kent Field said the next system would move into Northern California tonight but would taper off and clear by Saturday.

The brunt of the next system will be

borne by central and Southern California, leaving the northern section relatively unscathed, Field said. However, some showers were expected to return to Northern California on Sunday and Monday, he said.

Today's high tide of 7.1 feet occurred at the Golden Gate at 10:23 a.m., diminishing to 7 feet at its highest point at 11:15 a.m. Saturday and dropping to 6.7 feet at its peak on Sunday at 12:04, the weather service said.

In Marin County, just north of San Francisco, waves crossed 100 yards of

beach and destroyed six expensive beach houses. Seven others were damaged seriously.

Up to 500 homes were inundated in Santa Venetia as the tide enlarged San Pablo Bay, authorities reported.

Gov. George Deukmejian said Marin and San Mateo counties were disaster areas. Local states of emergency were declared in Humboldt and Trinity counties and in the cities of Milpitas, Fremont and Patterson, said state Emergency Services spokeswoman Anita Garcia.

"The counties and cities are so busy

dealing with emergencies, they haven't had time to get any damage estimates together," she said, noting 998 Californians had been forced to leave home.

Elsewhere, rivers ran high — some at the flood stage — as the soggy soil refused to accept the half-foot of rain dropped by the earlier storms, which smothered two men with oozing mud.

About half of the 200 residents in the city of Tehama fled Wednesday night when the Sacramento River jumped a levee and poured 4 to 5 feet of water into the streets, "but it's receded now and

everything's A-OK," said sheriff's dispatcher Sandy Green.

In the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, the highest tide in 58 years — 10.34 feet — flowed over the tops of fragile earthen levees. There were levee breaks reported on 1,200-acre Mildred Island, 100-acre Fay Island and at Disappointment Slough beside the 2,400-acre Shima Tract. Officials said the slough breach could threaten the Lincoln Village West housing tract in north Stockton, but the other

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Coastline pounded

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the county an emergency area, and to ask the federal government for a disaster area declaration.

The extent of the damage was unknown this morning. One county official said, "We don't even know what the damage is, much less what we can do to fix it."

Supervisor Joe Cucchiara this morning estimated damages to sewer systems at \$356,000; to roads, \$91,000 and debris clearance at \$30,000. These estimates are only "a piece of the pie," he said.

PG&E officials said crews were working at 5 a.m. this morning to restore service to 1,600 customers, most of them in the mountains or the Davenport area. Officials hoped to have the power back on by noon today, and gas service to some of those customers will be restored sometime today, they said.

East Cliff Drive was undermined almost totally by the scouring sea. Today, it remains closed at Moran Lake and Twin Lakes. Other roads closed include Glenwood Drive between Northridge Road and the Glenwood Cutoff at Highway 17; West Zayante Road, Rider Road, Buzzard Lagoon Road, Sky View Terrace and Upper Glenwood Drive.

No further damage was sustained in hard-hit Capitola this morning, city officials said. (See stories on Pages A3 and A4.)

Damage to private homes in the county is in the millions.

A row of more than 20 million-dollar beach-front homes on Via Gaviota in Seascape were heavily damaged Thursday. The sea pounded some into collapse, and roared through picture windows atop a seawall to the ocean.

This morning, owners tried to clear debris from the homes to deprive the sea of its battering rams, but as one said, "There's not a hell of a lot you can do at this point."

The power of the waves had been such that the air pressure had blown oak doors off hinges. The sea had scoured some houses of furniture and fixtures, and left walls tilting and leaning.

Even as seawater coursed through

the gutted houses and out the front doors into the streets this morning, residents talked of rebuilding.

"It's all you can do," said homeowner Caleb Alldrin. "You work your whole life for a place like this, and you can't just walk away from it when something like this happens." Other owners echoed his feelings.

Residents worried about the storm forecast to hit at noon today. It is predicted to hit hardest from Big Sur to Southern California. One to two inches of rain are expected in this county's low-lying areas, with more predicted for the mountains along with winds of 15 to 35 miles an hour. Another six-foot-plus tide will peak at 10:56 a.m. Saturday.

"Each day you just wait to see what's left," said Via Gaviota homeowner Barbara Helwig, who stood in front of her collapsing house. "It just doesn't get over with. You wish you could say, 'Now it's over and we can start again,' but it's an ongoing ordeal."

Farther south, at Pajaro Dunes, residents are battling time and tide to save two condominiums. If riprap cannot be put in front of them before Saturday, the condos may be lost to the sea, residents say.

On Las Olas Drive, next to Seaclyff State Beach, resident Peter Fields said this morning waves were high but did no further damage. He said several homes were badly damaged Thursday.

Reports were sketchy on the fate of several homes at the end of Beach Drive which the sea hammered from their pilings Thursday.

In Santa Cruz, Municipal Wharf officials said it was "in good shape" and open this morning except for the very end.

In Big Basin Redwood State Park, officials said a redwood tree which had stood 250 feet tall and 12 feet in diameter crashed into a park residence Wednesday afternoon. It also destroyed a building used to lodge firefighters in the summer months. No one was injured, they said.

Sentinel Staff Writers Paul Beatty, Mark Bergstrom and Toni Cocco contributed to this report.

Sewage in bay

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lead into the main Aptos sewer transmission line.

He described the situation as "nowhere near to what we had in 1980." At that time, the main line broke at Pot Belly Beach, dumping at least a million gallons of raw sewage daily into the bay for four days.

Senior Civil Engineer Tom Bolich gave the half million gallon estimate afterwards.

He said the biggest problem was at Twin Lakes and Schwann Lake, where some 250,000 gallons of raw sewage is flowing into the bay daily. While emergency crews from both Granite Construction and Ponza Brothers are on the scene, he doesn't anticipate complete repair until early next week.

Moran Lake is the next biggest problem, Bolich said, with an estimated

150,000 gallons flowing into the bay daily.

Those biggest breaks occurred when East Cliff Drive was virtually washed away by heavy waves Thursday. The county's sewer lines ran underneath the road and were severed.

At Twin Lakes, the break involves 100 feet of eight-inch line coming from Schwann Lake, said Porath. A 60-foot, 12-inch line was severed at Moran Lake.

Other breaks occurred along Via Gaviota near Hidden Beach in Rio del Mar and on the Capitola Esplanade, where numerous sewer lines from the restaurants are believed to have broken.

Talley added that the warning signs have been posted "just as a precaution."

"Normally, the contamination takes care of itself due to the dilution factor and wave action with winter storms," he added.