

County's State Parks, Beaches Suffer Some Major Damages

Damages as high as \$400,000 have been reported at state beaches in the mid-county, and Henry Cowell State Park remains the only state park in the Santa Cruz Mountains open in the wake of the county's worst-ever storm.

No damage estimates have been released regarding the mountain parks. Big Basin, Castle Rock, Portola, Butano and Cowell were hit by high waters, mud and hundreds of fallen trees.

While Cowell's 113 campsites remain open, the park's mile walk through the redwoods has sustained serious damage. The park's office was damaged and rangers are

operating out of the maintenance shop, according to spokeswoman Mary Kranpetz.

At the state beaches, most damage occurred to the Aptos Creek Bridge, which separates Seacliff and Rio del Mar beaches.

Supports for the bridge, which is used for emergency vehicle access and as a pedestrian access way, sank at least a foot, according to Maintenance Supervisor Jim Smallwood. It hasn't been determined if the entire bridge should be rebuilt, but replacement has been estimated at \$200,000.

Other major damage to state beaches, Smallwood added, includes a 50-foot-long section of a concrete channel that is upstream from the Aptos Creek Bridge, as well as a portion of the lower beach parking lot at New Brighton State Beach. Repairs are estimated at \$100,000 and \$85,000, respectively. New Brighton remains open to the public.

While Smallwood termed the damage as "pretty heavy," he said it was lucky for the beachfront parks that there wasn't heavy surf at the time the storm.

"The surf wasn't high at all," he said. "All the damage occurred from the rain and runoff soaking in."

He is hoping for 75 percent emergency funding from the federal government, but didn't estimate when repairs would be made. "If we don't get federal monies, I don't know what we're going to do," he added.

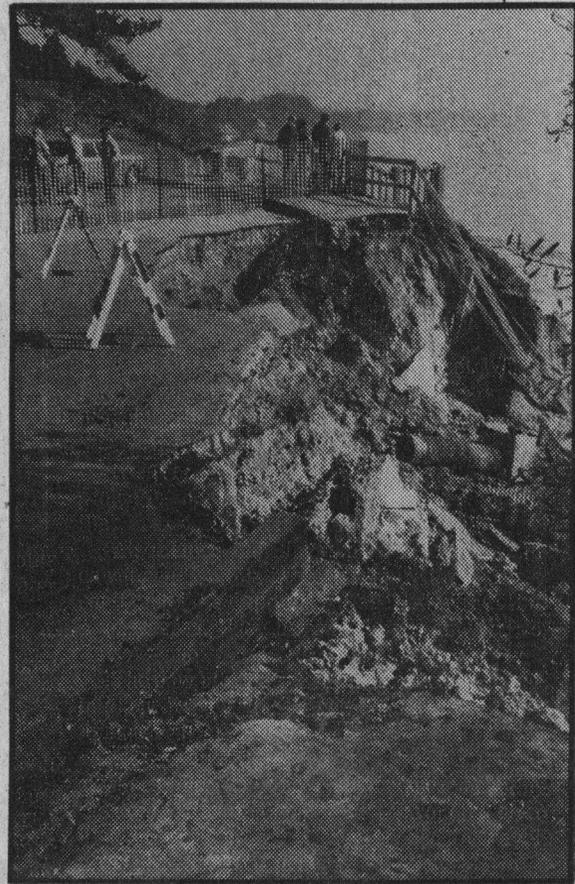
Federal crews have surveyed the damage in the mountain parks. Park workers, as well as volunteers, are working seven days a week to clear the storm debris.

"It's just going to take time," said Kranpetz. She added that Cowell is picking up the attendance from the other closed parks.

"We're getting a few calls from campers whose trailers were stuck in the mud at other parks. They finally got them out and are calling us for a campsite," she said.

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Damage at New Brighton State Beach parking lot.