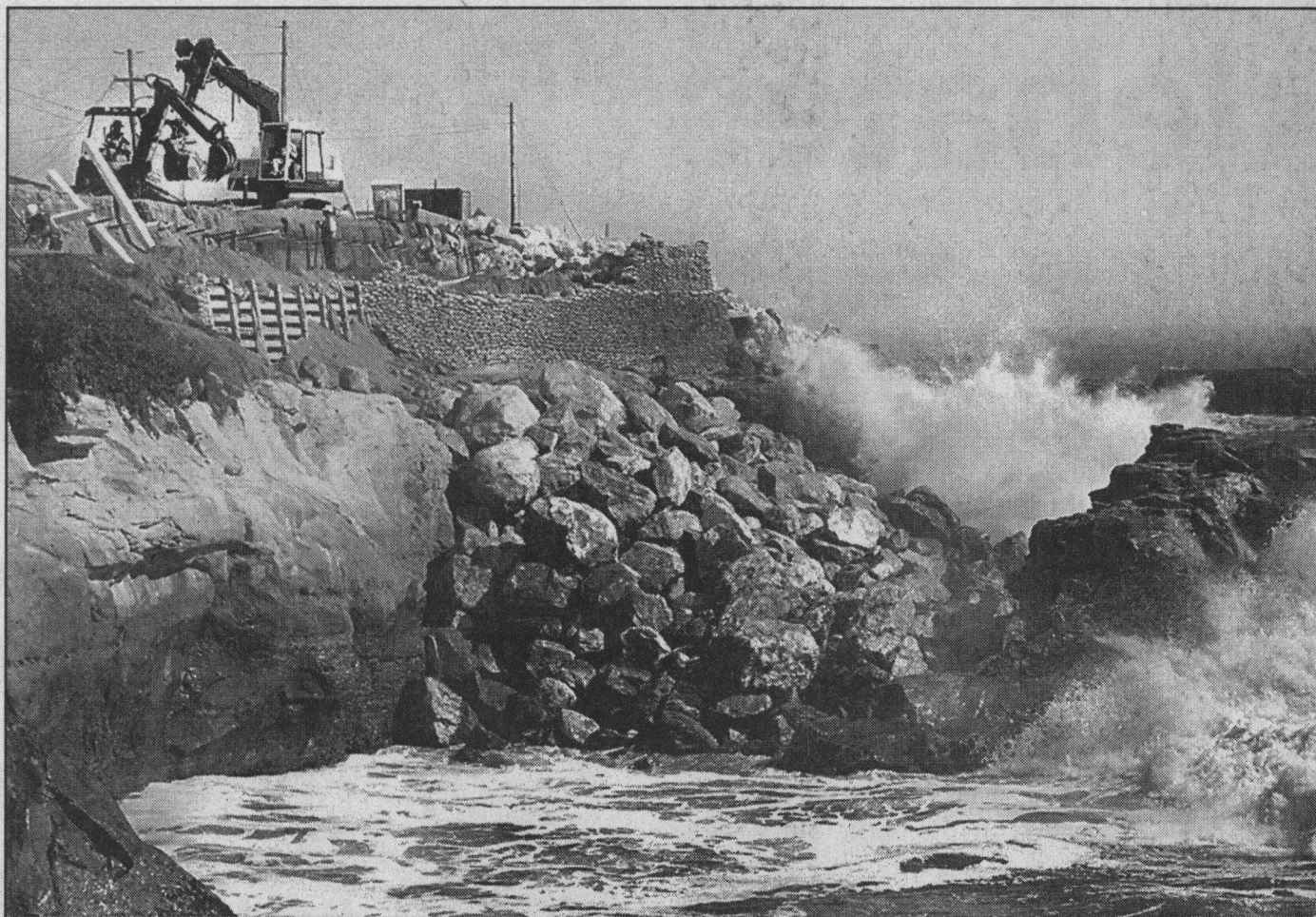


# LOCAL

## Man vs. nature



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Work is now under way along West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz repairing a failed retaining wall. The job is expected to be completed in late November.

## *Beach erosion* Crew at work repairing eroded sea wall along West Cliff Drive

By **CHRISTA MARTIN**  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — West Cliff Drive is seeing some changes.

Construction began last week between Woodrow Avenue and Columbia Street, where a small sea cave collapsed and a retaining wall gave way during storms in October 1998. That stretch of road is currently closed to through traffic.

A \$600,000 grant from the state Transportation Improvement Augmentation Fund is paying for the repair, said Tom Sharp of the Santa Cruz Public Works Department.

Emergency repairs immediately after

the storm were funded by the federal government, but federal officials would not agree to finance retaining-wall repairs, Sharp said.

They thought the damage was caused by wear and tear, not the storm, Sharp added.

Now, a year later, the larger project is under way.

Hillside Drilling from Richmond is doing the work, which involves construction of a 200-foot-long by 17-foot-tall retaining wall.

Road repairs also are planned. The 16-space parking lot will be moved about 4 feet closer to Woodrow, placing it on more stable ground. The lot has

been closed since this past winter.

The repairs are not a preventive measure, but a necessity.

"It was unstable," Sharp said. "We have to build a retaining wall to hold it all back. The bluff is retreating with wave erosion."

About 2,000 boulders are in place below the retaining wall from a previous repair job.

All parking spots will be preserved.

To blend in with the bluffs, the retaining wall will be a light tan.

The project should be completed by the end of November with the road opening to through traffic around that time.

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