

Making the best of it

Residents and visitors alike are stranded

Kelly Atherton, Crescent City Daily Triplicate, 4-5-11

A crew is still working to clear a landslide that closed Requa Road over the weekend.

Del Norte County Road Superintendent Jeff Daniels said he hoped to have at least one lane open by sometime Monday night or today and to get power restored to stranded residents, but the slide could continue to be a problem for some time.

About 78 people who live above the slide on Requa hill west of Klamath at the mouth of the Klamath River have been stuck without power since late Saturday, but there was a report of power being restored Monday evening.

Earlier Monday, efforts were under way to boat in food and fuel to residents who were starting to run low on supplies. They involved the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office, the county Office of Emergency Services and the Yurok Tribe.

The Historic Requa Inn has been providing shelter and food for out-of-towners and neighbors.

Volunteers from Del Norte County Search and Rescue and the Klamath Fire Department went door-to-door in Requa to make sure everyone was alright.

Emergency responders knocked on doors to see if any residents had medical needs, basically to see "how everyone was doing," said Cindy Henderson, emergency services manager for the county.

One person was taken by boat from Requa for shortness of breath Monday morning and was treated, Henderson said.

"Everyone is doing pretty good," she said.

A truckload of about 1,500 cubic yards of debris had been removed by Monday afternoon and the crew was trying to get another truckload out by the end of the day, Daniels said. The Yurok Tribe's watershed restoration crew is also helping to remove the slide.

The crew has managed to get partway through the slide but more of the hill keeps coming down, Daniels said.

"We're just hoping it stays where it's at," he said.

So far, that hasn't been the case. With each scoop of debris brought out, "a little bit more has come down," Daniels said.

"It's been one step forward and one step back," he said. "That's the nature of landslides."

Once the road opens, the slide area will have to be monitored daily as about 40-50 feet of upslope still has the

potential to fall, Daniels said, especially when it rains again.

The National Weather Service is forecasting rain for most of the week.

“This will be a project for several weeks,” Daniels said.

On Monday, food and fuel was taken by boat to the residents to make sure they made it through the night, Henderson said.

Requa residents have telephone service, but fuel was needed for a generator that runs telephone service for all of Klamath, she said.

“We’re taking it one day at a time,” Henderson said. “We’re trying to keep them content and help them weather through this.”

Despite not having electricity, the Requa Inn has been feeding neighbors while providing a command post, along with the Yurok Tribal Office in Klamath, and food distribution center for the American Red Cross.

Power was restored to the inn at about 6 p.m. Monday, Geneva Wiki, an owner, posted on her Facebook page.

The inn had a paella dinner Sunday night, a pancake feed Monday morning and served clam chowder for lunch for neighbors, Wiki said. The paella dinner was originally scheduled for a dinner with the head of the Administration for Native Americans from Washington, D.C., and several Yurok Tribal leaders, but they couldn’t make it to the inn, she said.

As Wiki spoke, two boats pulled up bearing ice, two generators, gas, milk, diapers, paper plates and dog food. Neighbors have also been sharing what they can, she said.

There were actually two Requa Road slides Saturday. A first, smaller one occurred in the afternoon. The county road crew had cleared it that evening, about an hour before more of the hillside came down.

Several out-of-towners were visiting the Mouth of the Klamath Overlook when the first slide happened Saturday.

Visitors included a family on their way to Disneyland, a couple from Florida who were going to Medford and a group from Arcata, Wiki said. They found shelter at the inn until the road was cleared.

The innkeepers found themselves without power again after the second slide and are feeding and housing others stuck on the hill. Come Monday morning, several eelers and hikers stranded after the second slide left by boat.

But the community is making the best of it, Wiki said.

“We’ve got kids running around, people snuggled up by the fire drinking good coffee, reminiscing and watching the river,” she said. “We feel like people are being taken care of.”