

## **Big Sur -- slide cuts off Hwy. 1 to south**

**Sunita Vijayan and Leslie Griffy, Salinas Californian, 3-25-11**

Central Big Sur is completely cut off because of a mudslide today that closed Highway 1 near Limekiln State Park just a week after a 40-foot section of road collapsed, closing the highway north of the Bixby Bridge.

All told, more than 39 miles of Highway 1 are inaccessible. Access roads coming from the east are to the north and south of the closures.

California Department of Transportation officials said there is currently no estimate to when the lanes near Limekiln will reopen. The damaged roadway to the north, between Palo Colorado Road and the Bixby Bridge, is expected to take a month to repair. Highway 1 between the two closures remains open.

Thursday's mudslide happened after a week of wet weather and closed all lanes of the highway just south of the Limekiln Creek bridge at the 20.5 mile marker, about 25 miles south of Big Sur.

Caltrans spokeswoman Susana Cruz said a contractor's loader was damaged by a large boulder Thursday afternoon, halting the clearing operation until dawn on Friday.

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors is slated to expand an emergency proclamation for the area at its Tuesday meeting.

The move will authorize the county to fill emergency contracts without going through normal bidding process. The expanded order gives additional authority to the Monterey County Sheriff's department to provide services to the stranded region.