

## High water, slides abound

*Roads groan under strain of ceaseless rain; Russian River crests short of flood stage; scattered blackouts in rural areas*

**Mary Callahan, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 3-26-11**

The sun came out Friday, a brief spring tease even as clouds threatened and showers remained in the weekend forecast.

The brief hours of respite Friday allowed crews to continue their assault on downed trees and power lines. Motorists in Sonoma, Mendocino and Lake counties dodged high water and landslides as the workweek ended.

The Russian River was on the rise, but crested Friday afternoon well below flood stage, officials said.

Though the water supply storage in Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino was at 108 percent of capacity or greater, there remained "ample room for flood-control purposes," Sonoma County Water Agency spokesman Brad Sherwood said.

"It looks like we dodged the bullet in terms of any river flooding this winter," he said.

In Lake County, however, Clear Lake continued to rise slightly past flood stage and was forecast to reach its peak Monday, barring heavy rain, officials there said.

While a number of lakefront roads were flooded in communities around the lake, "we have not received any calls of severe damage," said Karen Bader, Lake County's Water Resources Office coordinator.

Sonoma County Deputy Director Tom O'Kane said his crews were "pretty exhausted" after weeks of rain and tending to storm-related road closures — some lasting hours, others, days or weeks.

Through 4 p.m. Friday, Santa Rosa had received .58 inches for the 24-hour period, bringing the season's total to 33.63 inches. Other daily totals included .87 inches in Ukiah, .50 inches in Lakeport, .55 inches in Sebastopol and .24 inches in Petaluma.

"With the saturated ground and full creeks and rivers, any amount of rain can cause a roadway to become flooded," CHP Officer Steve Fricke said.

Wohler Road remained flooded at River Road because of overflow from Mark West Creek. Also flooded Friday afternoon were Todd Road at Walker Road south of Santa Rosa and Sanford Road at Occidental Road near the Laguna de Santa Rosa north of Sebastopol.

Many roads that commonly flood during heavy rains had reopened, including Valley Ford Road, Mark West Station Road and Todd Road, county officials said.

The Russian River receded in Hopland enough that Highway 175 through the hamlet was reopened. But a landslide about 9 miles east of town continued to require attention, the CHP said Friday.

Landslides also had closed Old River Road at River Road in Guerneville on Friday, as well as Geysers Road at River Road outside Cloverdale, according to county road personnel.

In Mendocino County, where county supervisors Tuesday approved a resolution declaring a local disaster because of an estimated \$2.5 million in winter storm damage to county roads since March 15, the repair cost is now projected to come closer to \$6.4 million, Deputy Public Works Director Bob Parker said.

"It's slipouts, overwhelmed roadside drainage systems, just a whole host of problems caused by the super-saturated soil conditions and the heavy rains," a grim-sounding Parker said.

Road crews have been working dawn to dark, but "they'll repair one place and then another place opens up," he said.

Most trouble spots were on inland roads in rugged, rural areas where motorists were restricted to one-way traffic, including Comptche-Ukiah Road near the coast, Orr Springs Road outside Ukiah, Mountain View Road near Manchester and at another spot near Anderson Valley, Sunset Drive in Point Arena, Philo-Greenwood Road in Boonville and Canyon Road west of Willits.

High-elevation snow had Bell Springs Road and Spy Rock Road north of Laytonville closed for a second day, as well as Mendocino Pass Road near Covelo, Parker said.

Sonoma County blackouts included 202 customers in Camp Meeker, 47 in Jenner, 24 in Cazadero and seven in Healdsburg. PG&E estimated Camp Meeker residents would have power restored before midnight Friday.

The new week holds the prospect of sunny skies and warmer temperatures. However, rain was expected to fall early today, with some lingering showers through Sunday, according to the National Weather Service.

"It looks like the whole of the workweek at least will be mostly sunny," meteorologist Austin Cross said.

By Tuesday, temperatures should begin warming up into the 60s, with mostly 40s and 50s until then, he said.

"But I'm sure just the sun will feel pretty good on Monday," Cross said.