

Highway 1 repair begins at Alder Creek

Big Sur Coast: Panel approves Alder Creek permit

Kevin Howe, Monterey County Herald, 5-2-11

It will take four to six weeks to open up Highway 1 at Alder Creek on the Big Sur Coast, even with an "aggressive" repair program and an emergency permit from the state Coastal Commission to allow highway workers to bulldoze slide debris off the side of the road rather than trucking it to dump sites as normally required.

Geologic instability and continual falling of debris at Alder Creek have closed the roadway in both directions, according to state Department of Transportation spokeswoman Susana Cruz.

Last week, a two bulldozers and other equipment were airlifted by helicopter to the slide site and work began Wednesday, she said, after the Coastal Commission permit for the grading was issued Tuesday.

The slide has blocked traffic northbound on Highway 1 from Cambria and San Simeon, requiring motorists to drive north on Highway 101, west on Highway 68 and south on Highway 1 to get to Big Sur.

The roadway at Rocky Creek, which had been blocked by a slide in March, remains open, with one-way traffic controls, according to Caltrans.

At a meeting Thursday at 5th District Supervisor David Potter's office, Caltrans officials met with Transportation Agency for Monterey County and other county staff to review long-term plans for repair of the highway's southbound lane, according to Big Sur Chamber of Commerce president Kirk Gafill.

Gafill said Caltrans is considering several possible solutions, including a bridge, sidehill viaduct, or soldier pile retaining wall at an estimated cost of \$30 million and completion in March 2014, assuming no significant delays in the permitting or design process.