

Yosemite storm -- rockslide closes key route, park worker killed

Julie Cart and Shelby Grad, Los Angeles Times, 1-24-12

A powerful storm that hit Yosemite National Park has closed a major route into the park and left a park employee dead.

The storm brought six inches of rain and snow to Yosemite.

Part-time ranger Ryan Hiller, 27, was killed Saturday when strong winds felled a tree, crushing his tent in an employee housing area of the park, officials said.

Hiller, from North Carolina, had worked in the park for five years and was employed by a ski area concessionaire, according to park spokesman Scott Gediman.

A large tree limb crushed Hiller's tent in Yosemite Valley, Gediman said. Other trees around the park were also knocked down by strong winds, he said.

The storm that hit the Sierra Nevada, including Mammoth Mountain, caused a rockslide Sunday that shut Big Oak Flat Road, a key route into the park from the Bay Area, according to the Associated Press. The park remains open.

It's unclear when that road will reopen.