

Heavy rains trigger Cambria landslide, plus water and sewer break

About 200,000 gallons of water, plus 1,000 gallons of sewage, spilled; PG&E crew had to install temporary power lines

Kathe Tanner, San Luis Obispo Tribune, 2-28-10

Heavy storm rains apparently triggered a landslide in Cambria early Saturday morning that took with it about 50 feet of Pembroke Drive's pavement, a 6-inch water main, 8-inch sewer main and utility poles and service.

The water-main break spilled about 200,000 gallons of water, according to representatives of the Cambria Community Services District.

The concaved landslide area is approximately 50 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet deep. The slippage took with it about three-quarters of the street width, leaving only enough pavement for an unreliable walkway.

Pembroke, a secondary artery for those living in Cambria's Park Hill neighborhood, will be closed to through traffic from Windsor Boulevard to above Bristol Street for the foreseeable future.

Mike Kuykendall, superintendent of the district's sewage-treatment plant Kuykendall said road engineers likely would have to assess the damage and draft a plan for fixing the area.

Emergency crews cordoned off the area with yellow emergency tape to keep people away from downed electric lines and possible additional land-sliding.

However at mid-morning Saturday, some neighbors and curious Cambrians ignored the tape and stood near the edge of the slide.

It was the third major water-main break since mid-December for the Park Hill neighborhood.

Kuykendall estimated that less than 1,000 gallons of sewage spilled in the landslide, but the water deluge would have diluted it considerably.

The watery cascade also carried yards of dirt down the hill, depositing it against a retaining wall at the nearby sewage plant.

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. crews installed temporary lines across the gaping hole to restore power to customers in the area.