



NEWS



News Headlines 7/13/2018

- 'It was just a wall of mud'
- Highway 18, 38 reopen after closure due to flooding, mudslides in San Bernardino Mountains
- Bear Scares Hikers into Taking Wrong Direction
- Single vehicle roll over crash on Arrowhead Lake Road in Hesperia
- Wildfire Forces Forest Falls Evacuations

'It was just a wall of mud'

Paola Baker, Daily Press

Posted: July 12, 2018, 12:51 p.m.



A worker walks through a closed and mud covered highway 18 between Lucerne Valley and Big Bear CA on Thursday July 12, 2018. A flash flood overwhelmed the area causing mudslides on several areas of the highway. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

LUCERNE VALLEY — Authorities shut down Highway 18 for hours after a flash flood caused powerful mudslides that washed out roadways and left several motorists stranded Thursday afternoon.

Motorists heading up to Big Bear and vice versa suddenly found themselves in muddy waters — literally — when rainfall began to pound the region just after noon Thursday.

By 12:30 p.m., California Highway Patrol logs were reporting that several vehicles were stuck in a massive mudslide that dragged boulders, logs and foot after foot of churning mud over the roadways.

CHP logs reported as many as three dozen vehicles stuck in mud on Highway 18 between the Mitsubishi cement plant and Big Bear during the heaviest downpour at around 1:30 p.m., as authorities scrambled to both shut down and clear the roadway.

The slide initially was said to measure about 20 feet across, but officials and several motorists left stranded reported seeing mud flows up to five feet tall as the storm raged.

“It was just like a wall of mud, rushing by. Like nothing I’ve ever seen before,” David Williams, who was headed up to Big Bear when the flash flood first hit, told the Daily Press as he waited for the roadway to clear near the Mitsubishi plant.

Williams said his father was also making the trip and got caught “right in the middle” of the most intense mudslides. Officials later said no vehicles were actually stuck, but instead stranded due to the impermeable mud flows. No occupants were trapped and no injuries were reported.

Several of the motorists, including Williams, said they planned to “wait out” the weather and officials’ efforts to re-open the roadways. They didn’t have to wait long for the storm — **San Bernardino County Fire** officials reported that the worst of the flood waters had subsided by 2:30 p.m. — but it took crews hours to completely clear the mud-choked roadway.

Highway 18 was reported to be open and clear as of 5 p.m., according to Caltrans officials. Motorists headed to Big Bear are still urged to use caution traveling up and down the mountain on all routes as flash flood warnings remain in effect.

Thunderstorms have been predicted throughout the remainder of the week.

For updated road conditions, visit Caltrans' Quickmap at <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/>.

<http://www.vvdailypress.com/news/20180712/it-was-just-wall-of-mud>

Highway 18, 38 reopen after closure due to flooding, mudslides in San Bernardino Mountains

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, Mike Cruz, Ryan Hagen , San Bernardino Sun

Posted: July 12, 2018, 1:30 p.m.



Highway 18 between Lucerne Valley and Big Bear is closed after flooding created a mudslide blocking traffic in both directions. (Photo by Sarah Alvarado for the San Bernardino Sun-SCNG)

Dozens of cars were stranded for hours in floodwaters and mud Thursday afternoon, prompting authorities to shut down Highway 38 near Valley of the Falls Drive in the Forest Falls and Highway 18 on the backside of Big Bear in Lucerne Valley, California Highway Patrol officials said.

Flood waters had subsided as of 2:30 p.m., and Caltrans crews worked to clear the roadway, according to CHP and **San Bernardino County** fire officials. By 4:45 p.m., the closed section of Highway 18 was reopened, according to the CHP.

The most serious flooding stranded a reported 32 vehicles along Highway 18 between Big Bear and Lucerne Valley starting just after 12:30 p.m., according to CHP reports. The area that was most affected was between the Mitsubishi concrete facility and Johnson Creek, Officer Chris Carter, a CHP spokesman, said Thursday afternoon.

“There’s about a 2-and-a-half mile stretch of highway that’s impassable,” Carter said. One of the main sections of mud was about 5 feet deep by 80 feet wide, according to Carter.

A white Honda Ridgeline was reported stuck in the mud about 12:29 p.m., according to Terri Kasinga, a Caltrans spokeswoman. Crews will be working to clear the mud and rock for the next few hours, she said at the time.

The driver, James Bondurant, said he’d been driving up Highway 18 when he noticed flooding.

“I’m driving up the hill trying to get past all these floods and it’s literally coming up to my car and (the highway) was just completely wiped out, there was nowhere to go,” he said. “So I turned around, tried to go back and ... in a manner of minutes we were trapped in this little area — couldn’t get out.”

Bondurant said he was grateful Caltrans responded so quickly. About three hours after getting stuck, he said he hoped to be out soon.

The rushing water at Oak and Valley of the Falls drives near Highway 38 caught an 87-year-old woman in its flow until she was rescued by a San Bernardino County sheriff's deputy with help from a water truck, the department's Yucaipa station said on Twitter.

Authorities were "calling to close the road for a 1- to 2-foot wall of water and mud coming down" in Forest Falls along Highway 38, said CHP Officer Marcelo Llerena Thursday afternoon.

<https://www.sbsun.com/2018/07/12/chp-closes-highway-38-near-forest-falls-due-to-mudslide/>

Bear Scares Hikers into Taking Wrong Direction

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: July 12, 2018, 10:52 a.m.



Not the exact bear on the PCT, but a reasonable facsimile thereof.

Hiking the Pacific Crest Trail near the Lake Arrowhead area on July 7, carrying no food or water, four teens encountered a bear, turned around and got lost. They called for help around 4 p.m. The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Aviation Division rescued the four Los Angeles residents.

Three 18-year-old females and one under age 18 thought they were headed to Devil's Hull, but reported that Google indicated they were near Aztec Falls. They had with them two phones, one with 17 percent of its battery left and the other with 30 percent. They said they could not remember where they left their vehicle, but they estimated the latitude and longitude.

With phones running out of juice, they were nonetheless able to make contact with dispatchers who worked to pair them up with a 40 King rescue helicopter.

According to a report from the sheriff's department, the hikers said everyone was tired and one of them looked dehydrated. At one point the dehydrated victim was lying on the ground to rest. But she thought she was hearing animals and was afraid it could be a bear approaching again.

The group continued walking along the PCT, away from the sound of the noise. About that time, at 5 p.m. the helicopter located them, picked them up and flew them to a flat area to be met by waiting deputies. Rim Search and Rescue, and **San Bernardino County Fire** personnel were on hand. A medic checked them out at the scene and got permission to release the minor girl to the custody of her friends.

The Rim Search and Rescue team gave the four females a ride to their vehicle.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_5d661d26-85fc-11e8-a604-570b06416208.html

Single vehicle roll over crash on Arrowhead Lake Road in Hesperia

Staff Writer, VVNG

Posted: July 12, 2018



HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) –One person was airlifted to a trauma center following a single-vehicle rollover crash Wednesday night.

It happened at about 9:30 pm in the 7500 block of Arrowhead Lake Road, near the Hesperia Lake Park.

For reasons still unknown, the vehicle, a silver 2002 Toyota Highlander occupied by two people lost control near the curb and overturned.

San Bernardino County Firefighters requested the use of helicopter H325 to airlift one occupant to a trauma center with unknown injuries. The second person of the vehicle declined medical treatment at the scene.

No other vehicles were involved and the cause of the crash remains under investigation by the Hesperia Sheriff's Station.

<https://www.vvng.com/single-vehicle-roll-over-crash-on-arrowhead-lake-road-in-hesperia/>

Wildfire Forces Forest Falls Evacuations

Heidi Fron, Mountain News

Posted: July 12, 2018, 10:32 a.m.



A burned-out truck, a roadside brush fire and a major wildfire illustrate the extent of the 1,348-acre Valley Fire that affected the communities of Forest Falls, Mountain Home and Angelus Oaks.

The communities of Forest Falls and Mountain Home, threatened by a raging wildfire, were evacuated last weekend and were reopened July 9 to residents only, provided that they can show proper identification.

The fire, a mudslide and mandatory evacuations constitute a clear reminder that all residents of the San Bernardino Mountains must be prepared now for the possibility of fire events in the area. Refer to last year's issue of the Mountain News special publication *Bee Prepared*, and check to ensure that you and your family are ready. Watch for a new edition of *Bee Prepared*, which will be published in mid-September.

The Valley Fire, which began around 1:29 p.m. on July 6, had burned approximately 1,348 acres. Perimeter containment was at 13 percent on Tuesday, according to Cal Fire's San Bernardino Unit. Fire behavior was stable Monday night.

Located at Valley of the Falls Drive and Forest Service Road 1S08, the fire forced closure of State Highway 38 from Bryant Street in Yucaipa to the south side of Angelus Oaks. In addition, no public access was allowed between the Valley of the Falls turnout and Angelus Oaks on Highway 38 due to a mudslide on July 7 and because of the ongoing fire activity.

Cal Fire described the terrain as rugged and steep. The fire has been burning chaparral and large timber in an area with no significant fire history. Conditions remained consistently challenging for firefighters, Cal Fire reported, due to the weather's high temperatures, and limited accessibility to and within the fire area.

Fuels reportedly were drying out from Saturday's storm, and Cal Fire noted that fuels are drier than usual for this time of year because of recent drought history.

The weather has been unstable and was expected to remain volatile since the National Weather Service (NWS) has predicted thunderstorms possible every day this week. Storms might cause winds that push the fire and increase the risk of flash flooding, according to a Cal Fire warning.

Restrictions were lifted Tuesday for all Forest Service/California Land Management campgrounds along the Highway 38 corridor in the Jenks Lake and Barton Flats areas. Recreation closures remain in place for the Mill Creek Visitor Center and all trails leading to the San Gorgonio Wilderness.

All trails within the San Gorgonio Wilderness are still under emergency closure, including Aspen Grove, Big Falls Picnic Area, Fish Creek, Forsee Creek, Lost Creek, Momyer Trail, Vivian Creek Trail, San Bernardino Peak Trail and South Fork. As circumstances change, refer to the San Bernardino National Forest website, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sbnf>, for updated information about trails and campgrounds.

State Highway 38 from the Big Bear side is the only public access from Big Bear to Angelus Oaks and Barton Flats.

On Tuesday, minimal fire growth was expected further north into the San Gorgonio Wilderness. Burning logs and rocks rolling down steep slopes remained a risk, Cal Fire warned.

The Unified Command included the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, **San Bernardino County Fire**, United States Forest Service, and Cal Fire's San Bernardino Unit.

Total fire personnel attacking the wildfire was at 612, consisting of 14 fire crews. Total fire engines numbered 39, aided by 9 helicopters, 2 bulldozers and 5 water tenders.

Cooperating Agencies included the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, California Highway Patrol, California Office of Emergency Services, San Bernardino County Office of Emergency Service, CALTRANS, San Bernardino County Animal Control, American Red Cross and Southern California Edison.

Anyone requiring further details may call the Incident Information Line: (909) 383-5688.

Remember, whenever a wildfire exists, drones pose a serious risk to firefighting and can cause air operations to cease. The general public is warned to refrain from operating drones during such emergencies. The Federal Aviation Administration may declare a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) to be in effect, and any private aircraft or drone that violates the TFR could face serious criminal charges.

http://www.mountain-news.com/news/article_7e7b2e82-85f9-11e8-bcc1-ffe7af6087a2.html