

February 18, 2017

Dear Big Sur residents,

Last Saturday February 11th, I became aware of some concerns about the possibility of one of our bridges being damaged and the land beneath it cracking. I went down to investigate and with State Parks and Cal Trans saw the damage first hand at the Sycamore canyon bridge. Within a few hours the word was out that maybe people should get north of the bridge if at all possible. That was followed by a hard closure in the early evening. Cal Trans arrived on Sunday February 12th to look at the integrity of the structure and the decision was made to allow traffic out only through the closure until 4:00 PM. Pedestrian traffic and emergency vehicles were allowed after that until the geo techs could look at the bridge on Monday.

The closure stayed in place with pedestrian traffic and emergency vehicles only until we got the confirmation early on Wednesday February 15th that for a few hours vehicles would be allowed to cross depending on the integrity of the bridge which they constantly monitored. This crossing, which included things like propane and service trucks, was allowed to continue until 5:00 PM Wednesday.

To this date, Saturday morning, there has been a hard closure, not even foot traffic allowed and after talking to Cal Trans I do not expect that to change. CHP is in place to handle traffic control.

The Fire Brigade and OES are actively working with the State Park and private land owners to try and identify the possibility of putting in a trail around the bridge. Our plan is to look at the State park area on Tuesday when hopefully the rain stops.

The Fire Brigade has had our response area broken up right now into about four separate areas. Loosely defined as the area south of Limekiln, the Lucia/Hermitage area between Big Ck. and Pauls' slide, the area south of the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge and the area north of the bridge. With the rainy weather these areas can change. The Lucia area has been shut in already for about 8 days.

For emergency concerns, first of all, as usual, call 911. There are some USFS personnel in the area south of Limekiln at the Pacific Valley station; I have, off and on, a medical Fire Brigade member in the Lucia/Hermitage area. Our fire house is in the area south of the bridge with a number of Fire Brigade members, and we have moved an engine and a medical/rescue squad to the USFS Big Sur station on the north side. I have several members on the north side of the Bridge as well. AMR, the ambulance crew, is at their quarters at our fire house at the Post Ranch and my goal is to have them remain there throughout this incident.

In some of the isolated areas the best way out for a medical emergency will be a helicopter. (You may want to sign up for the AirMedCare (formally CalStar) membership if that ends up being the helo that flies you out). In the event it is not possible to fly you out we will do what it takes to get you out, it may be that we have to carry you out by stretcher. We do have an emergency route planned for the folks in the area just south of the bridge if need be. This underlines the importance of having anyone who does not live here to leave. The more people

there are in the affected area the more possibility there is for an emergency. If anyone has any medical concerns they might consider evacuating. This is not the time for nonresidents to have an adventure. They are a liability and are using up precious resources.

An emergency proclamation has been declared for our area. The Fire Brigade has been working with the Chamber of Commerce, (Kirk), OES and several other agencies from the onset to make sure the needs of everyone in their isolated areas are met. We had two conference calls yesterday afternoon to further discuss the situation.

Also the Sheriff's department has two vehicles on the south side of the bridge if need be.

This is just one more challenge Mother Nature has given to all of us down here, and hopefully we will all get through it safely. Please feel free to call me with any questions or concern.

Martha Karstens
Chief