



NEWS



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Mud flows slam Forest Falls neighborhood, damaging homes, wiping out roads

Eric Resendiz, ABC7.COM
September 13, 2022



A heavy storm cell sent rivers of mud flowing through Forest Falls, leaving homes and roads heavily damaged.

FOREST FALLS, Calif. (KABC) -- One of the harder-hit communities by this week's heavy rain across the Inland Empire was Forest Falls, where homes were heavily damaged, roads were washed out and cars were carried away on rivers of mud.

Authorities are still investigating a report of a missing person in the area as well.

After a heavy storm cell swept across San Bernardino County on Monday, many communities were hit with sudden downpours that caused flash flooding and mud flows. Backyards were left inundated with mud, power lines were taken out and tall trees were knocked over.

A shelter in place order for Forest Falls residents was lifted by 6 p.m. Tuesday, but evacuation orders remained in place for the area of Canyon Drive south to Prospect Drive and south of Valley of the Falls Drive.

Water and power service to many homes in the area were still out on Tuesday.

Search-and-rescue crews are still sweeping through the area checking on residents as bulldozers try to clear roads.

Some 2,000 homes in the Forest Falls and Oak Glen communities were evacuated, fire officials say.

Olin Richey captured cellphone video of a torrent of mud flowing down the hillside next to his home.

"A constant roll of thunder," Richey said. "That's exactly what it sounded like, just pouring through for a good half hour."

"It is a part of living in the mountains," said local resident Eugene Gerber. "If you want to live in paradise there is always some sort of consequence. For us it is mud, fires and snow."

<https://abc7.com/forest-falls-mud-flow-debris-flash-flooding/12227814/>

After mudslides, firefighters hunt for missing Forest Falls resident in San Bernardino Mountains

Brian Rokos and Quinn Wilson, OCREGISTER.COM

September 13, 2022 at 12:37 p.m. | UPDATED: September 13, 2022 at 11:28 p.m.



A search and rescue member walks through thick mud as they search a flood-destroyed home on Prospect Drive in Forest Falls on Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2022. Large mud flows hit the area Monday afternoon after a large thunderstorm hit the area heavily damaging at least 4 homes. (Photo by Will Lester, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin/SCNG)

Search-and-rescue crews summoned from throughout Southern California will resume digging through several feet of mud on Wednesday morning, Sept. 14, in an attempt to find a person reported missing after a rain-soaked mountainside collapsed and rammed through a house in the San Bernardino Mountains community of Forest Falls on Monday.

A Labrador from the Orange County Fire Authority sniffed the search area Tuesday in an attempt to lead rescuers to the victim. Then around 2 p.m., an excavator arrived on Prospect Drive to clear the 6-foot-high pile of mud, car-sized boulders and debris. The road was still closed Tuesday evening.

The vegetation that holds the dirt together had been burned away in the El Dorado fire. The heat from the flames also seared the ground, making it difficult for the land to absorb rainfall.

“Rescuers have taken each one of these seriously and have continued to search the populated areas with more than 120 personnel, specialized search dogs and heavy equipment,” McClintock said.

No details on the missing person were available Tuesday evening.

The mud slammed through the two-story home on Prospect Drive at about 4 p.m. Monday, ripping through the garage and the front of the house, McClintock said. It damaged three other houses across the street and left a 6-foot-high pile of debris, including car-sized boulders, blocking the street.

Firefighters were alerted to the catastrophe by other occupants of the house who said they could not find someone.

The state Office of Emergency Services summoned crews from multiple agencies, including urban search-and-rescue teams from Pasadena, Santa Fe Springs and Downey.

Forest Falls, with a year-round population of about 1,000 people, is in a canyon at the 6,000-foot level off of a sharp U-turn that takes travelers up Highway 38 to the resort towns including Big Bear.

After being overwhelmed by mudslides, highways 38 and 18 reopened Tuesday in the San Bernardino Mountains but some other roads remain closed.

The flooding affected burn-scar areas of the Apple and El Dorado fires from 2020, said Eric Sherwin, another spokesman for the **San Bernardino County Fire** Department. Debris flows hit Forest Falls and Oak Glen particularly hard, Sherwin said.

Britney Kreager, 23, and boyfriend Joseph Tapia, 24, were in one of the approximately 30 cars that lined Highway 38 just outside Valley of the Falls Drive, awaiting clearance to return Tuesday.

But by 4 p.m., they had waited five hours there and were impatient. Tapia wondered why the CHP couldn't escort residents as officers do after some fires and heavy snowfall.

But at 6 p.m., the shelter-in-place order from Monday expired in Forest Falls, according to the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. Residents were only allowed in the area and an evacuation order was still in place from Canyon Drive to Prospect Drive, south of Valley of the Falls, sheriff's officials said.

In Oak Glen, all evacuation orders were lifted Tuesday evening, with only residents allowed to enter the area of Oak Glen and Chagnall roads to Running Quail Road, the Sheriff's Department said. Potato Canyon Road remain closed into the evening, authorities said.

Home to the popular apple orchards, mud damaged the Oak Glen Steakhouse and prompted the closure of a half-mile stretch of Oak Glen Road south of the restaurant, McClintock said.

Forest Falls resident Lloyd Sherman said ash was mixed in with the mud in the debris flows. He said power and water service were out.

Residents of Prospect Drive in Forest Falls said Tuesday they had been warned that heavy rain was coming. It wasn't an exaggeration, one said, for her to describe the sound of the mudslide as similar to a freight train. Another said it was the loudest earth collapse he'd ever heard.

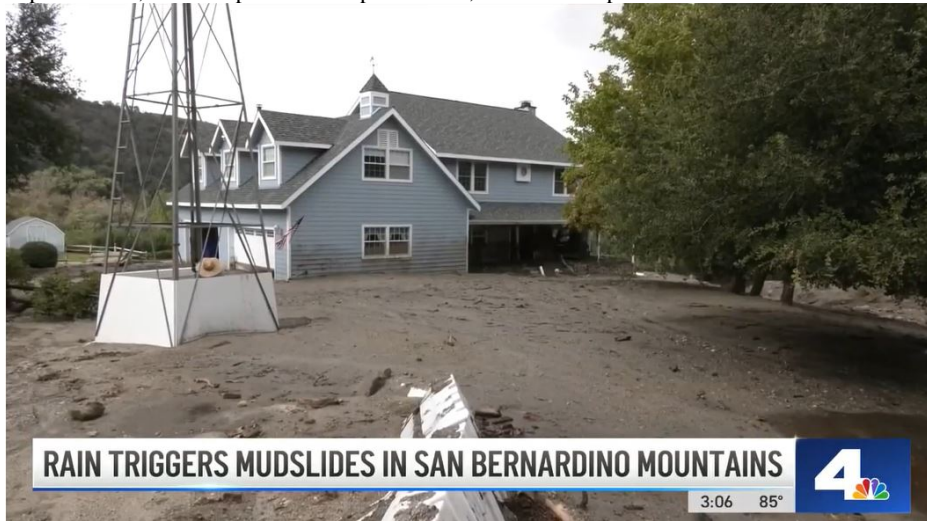
The evacuations for some Forest Falls residents were ordered Monday as fire equipment rolled back and forth and officials worried about the possibility of additional rainfall and mudslides. A California Highway Patrol officer made sure there was no unauthorized entrance to the canyon.

<https://www.ocregister.com/2022/09/13/highways-38-and-18-reopen-in-san-bernardino-mountains/>

Homes and Roads in Mountain Communities Damaged by Mudslides, Debris Flows; Monday's torrential rainstorm left a mess in its wake

Annette Arreola, NBCLOSANGELES.COM

September 13, 2022 • Updated on September 13, 2022 at 4:55 pm



The mud and debris flows damaged homes and cars and washed out roads in several mountain communities on Monday. Annette Arreola reports for Today in LA on Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2022.

Powerful debris flows damaged homes and cars and washed out roads in several mountain communities on Monday, and evacuation orders remain in effect with a chance for more rain on the way.

Video captured huge waves of foot-high mud rolling down the hillside outside the Oak Glen Steakhouse Saloon in just one example of the storm impacts in the region.

One bike rider told NBC4 that she couldn't make it up to Potato Canyon because there was an ambulance stuck there. Road closures, like the one at Oak Glen Road and Casa Blanca Avenue early Tuesday morning, also prevented people from getting around, with a thick layer of mud coating the streets.

Many nearby residents said they were just happy their homes weren't damaged -- though others in the area weren't so lucky.

Monday's torrential rainstorm left a mess in its wake. In Forest Falls, a debris flow brought huge rocks and boulders down on top of houses. Cars were also buried in the mud, and the situation became so dangerous that residents had to scramble out of their homes and leave the area.

"It's part of life," said resident Eugene Gerber. "It's part of living in the mountain. If you want to live in paradise, there's always some kind of consequence. For us, it's floods, fires [and] heavy snow."

The **San Bernardino County Fire** Department is helping to clear the roadways in the region now that the rains have slowed down, though more storms could drift over the mountains Tuesday afternoon. Luckily, this time, there are no flash flood warnings in place.

The damage extended all the way to the area of Crestline, with deep, debris-filled water flooding and flowing through several roads and covering cars up to their hoods. Many of those drivers were stuck inside their vehicles.

Part of the reason for the road closures was that the fast-moving waters trapped several cars.

An evacuation center is open at Redlands East Valley High School for those under evacuation orders.

<https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/homes-and-roads-in-mountain-communities-damaged-by-mudslides-debris-flows/2983873/>

Watch: Officers rescue mom, 2 kids from raging flash flood in California

Scott Sistik, FOXWEATHER.COM

September 13, 2022



Dashcam video from San Bernardino Police shows three of their officers rescuing the mother who had lost her balance while trying to cross the rapids. Officers then assisted two children and others who had become stranded on the other side of the water.

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. – Police officers rescued a mother and her children who were nearly swept away during a raging flash flood in California Monday.

As torrential rains pelted southern California from the remnants of Tropical Storm Kay, the mom had called police about an unrelated problem Monday afternoon, according to the SoCal News Outlet. But as the family was heading back to their car, an impromptu river roared down the street, nearly washing them away.

Dashcam video from San Bernardino Police shows three of their officers rescuing the mother who had lost her balance while trying to cross the rapids. Officers then assisted two children and others who had become stranded on the other side of the water.

There were no reported injuries.

"Our officers do not encounter swift-water floods often, however it doesn't stop them from jumping into action and saving lives," San Bernardino's Police Chief wrote on Twitter, who the city identifies as Chief Darren L. Goodman.

Flash flooding caused several issues across the Desert Southwest this week.

Farther out in San Bernardino County, flash flooding rolled through the Forest Falls area, causing severe damage and leaving one person still missing. Over 120 search-and-rescue personnel are combing the area looking for the missing resident as the area begins to clean up the damage.

Over in nearby Los Angeles County, dozens were trapped after a mudslide and debris flow in Lake Hughes. Los Angeles County Fire Department officials confirmed they rescued approximately 50 people who were taken to a nearby county fire station to meet with the American Red Cross.

Heavy rains near Oak Glen near Yucaipa sent a wall of mud into town, burying part of a restaurant under feet of mud.

Kay's remnants have since moved on into the Intermountain West, where flash flooding was possible Wednesday, but drier weather had returned to Southern California.

<https://www.foxweather.com/weather-news/officers-rescue-mom-2-kids-flash-flood-san-bernardino-california>