



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Executive Office

Office of Emergency Services

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2022 - 2023 Winter Storm Recap

On December 27, 2022, a series of powerful storm systems bringing high winds and extensive rainfall began impacting Mendocino County. At that time, the Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at a virtual level and began hosting daily coordination calls both internally and with Operational Area (OA) Partners. The coordination calls allowed OES to facilitate the sharing of information, gather intelligence for daily situation reports, address OA partner concerns, and assess unmet needs. OES also participated in Coordination meetings organized by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) for both the Coastal Region OA and the statewide OA. During this period, OES received daily briefings from the National Weather Service, monitored local weather forecasts and river levels throughout the County and shared relevant information with the public via social media, local radio and press releases.

In preparation for possible localized flooding, OES worked with its OA partners to deliver sand and sandbags to locations in Hopland, Willits, Laytonville and Covelo that were projected to experience flooding. OES also worked closely with PG&E, local fire agencies, and Disaster Recovery to distribute go bags and emergency generators to areas of the County experiencing prolonged power outages. Heavy rain and high winds from the successive storms caused numerous impacts throughout the County. Several rivers and streams in the county intermittently reached flood stage and caused road closures during the series of storms. Notably the Russian River in Hopland at Highway 175, the Navarro River at Navarro and the junction of Highway 128 and Highway 1, the Garcia River at Highway 1 and the Russian River at the Talmage and Perkins Street bridges. Extremely high winds in excess of 65 miles per hour caused widespread downed trees and powerlines throughout the Mendocino County Operational Area. The most severe wind damages occurred on the south coast from Gualala to Point Arena. Numerous roads were impacted by storm debris, small slides, blocked drainages, other roadway impediments, and miscellaneous damage during the storms. Damages to County owned facilities and infrastructure, special districts, cities, and private property are still being assessed.

On December 30, 2022, heavy rainfall and increased water flows in Outlet Creek led to a sinkhole opening at the entrance to the Creekside Cabins Resort and RV Park north of Willits at the junction with Highway 101. A vehicle subsequently fell into the sinkhole eventually leading to the complete failure of the culvert serving the private encroachment providing access to the park which left residents stranded. Fire, Law, EMS and County Agencies have assessed the situation and worked with residents to ensure that their baseline needs are being met.

On January 4, 2023, the state of California proclaimed the existence of an Emergency related to the 2022-2023 Winter Storms. On January 6, 2023, the County of Mendocino proclaimed the existence of a local emergency due to the extensive storm impacts across the County. On January 14, 2023, the Federal Government issued a disaster declaration for large areas of California, including Mendocino County.