

# Heavy rains have minimal impact locally

BY HEADLIGHT-HERALD STAFF

**TILLAMOOK COUNTY** — Heavy rains late last week raised rivers, flooded low-lying areas and contributed to landslide in several areas throughout the county.

Rainfall in the county for the 40-hour period between 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 27, and 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29, was 6.78 inches, according to the National Weather Service.

To put this in perspective, Ty Ree, warning coordination meteorologist noted that rainfall in the February 1996 flood was recorded at 8.88 inches over four days in Astoria, which he said would be comparable to Tillamook's level.

Normal local rainfall for January is 13.71, he said, adding that the county got almost half of that amount in two days.

Tillamook County Emergency Management Director Tom Manning observed that the county, overall, came out "pretty well" during the rainfall. Hardest hit were the small creeks, due to a lot of heavy rain at lower elevations, he said.

One house near a creek in Garibaldi had 6 inches of water inside, he said.

A positive factor, he said, was that there were relatively low tides during the heavy rainy period, with the highest at 7.3 feet. During the 1999 flood, he said, tide levels were at nearly 9 feet.

A lot of the mitigation elements the county had in place also contributed to a lower impact, he said.

Leo Kuntz of Nehalem Marine concurred.

"I am quite sure North U.S. 101 would have been heavily inundated without several measures which all worked together to keep flooding minimal and businesses open," he said.

As for rivers, the Wilson River crested just below its 13-foot flood stage, at 12.4 feet Thursday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service. Trask River was right around flood stage, and the Nehalem at Foss crested at 13.95 feet Friday morning. Its flood stage is at 14 feet.

Schools in the Neah-Kah-Nie District in Northern Tillamook County were closed Thursday.

A slide closed the Miami-Foley Road Thursday morning from U.S. 101 to Milepost 2. Motorists were urged to avoid Cape Meares Road at milepost 1.3 and Foss Road at milepost 2 was reported as barely passable because of a slide and a downed tree.



**ABOVE:** The Cape Meares Loop Road is closed 1.3 miles south of Cape Meares Lake due to a slide that took out the south bound lane. The road links the community of Cape Meares with Oceanside and Netarts. Cape Meares State Scenic Viewpoint is accessible north from Oceanside. The road will remain closed until further notice.



**LEFT:** Tillamook County Public Works employee Grant Graves, road equipment operator, moves his backhoe through the high water on Alderbrook Road, adjacent to the Kilchis River, Jan. 29. Graves had just completed unplugging culverts on the Kilchis River Road.

BOB REED/Photos for the Headlight-Herald

**RIGHT:** The car wash on the Wilson River Loop near North Main Avenue (U.S. 101) in Tillamook received more than two feet of water during the peak of last week's flooding.

BOB REED

