

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Section of Coastal Drive in Redwood National & State Parks Closed Due to Erosion

Multiple recurring landslides and dangerously narrowing sections of Coastal Drive within Redwood National and State Parks have resulted in the need to implement a permanent, seasonal closure of a section of the road to protect visitor safety. Only the 3.3-mile section between the Carruther's Cove trailhead and Coastal Drive's intersection with Alder Camp Road will be affected by this closure. This section of the road has been closed for the last several weeks due to recent slides. The northern segment of Coastal Drive between Klamath Beach Road and Alder Camp Road will continue to remain open year-round, barring any catastrophic landslides. Visitors may still explore the drive on foot or by bicycle, but should exercise caution and be aware more sliding can occur at any time and additional erosion may make sections of the road completely impassable.

Clinging dramatically to the cliffs above the Pacific Ocean and winding along the original route of historic Highway 101, Coastal Drive is a 9 ½-mile scenic drive stretching south from the mouth of the Klamath River to the northern end of Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway. The route provides panoramic views of the ocean and the Klamath River estuary, a peek at a World War II radar station (disguised to look like a farmhouse), and access to hiking and backcountry camping along Flint Ridge Trail. The underlying geology of the northern California coast is prone to landslides, and while most geologic events take place over eons, the landscape of this particular area

can change dramatically overnight due to rapid tectonic uplift and high rainfall. The rocks of these cliffs began as sedimentary deposits of sand and mud in a deep ocean environment and now consist of weak, easily eroded sandstone and shale. In the Pacific Northwest, the oceanic plate beneath the sea floor, the Juan De Fuca plate, is sliding under the North American continental plate, leading to rapid uplift of the area. This uplift combined with heavy rainfall leads to high rates of erosion and abundant landslides.

In the past, the parks have performed repeated repairs to keep Coastal Drive open year-round. However, increased landslides have made additional repairs challenging and costly. The General Management Plan for Redwood National and State Parks calls for the eventual conversion of Coastal Drive to a hiking and biking trail when "major road failure" occurs. According to Redwood National Park Superintendent Steve Chaney, "we may not reach that point for some time, even on a seasonal basis for the northern section of Coastal Drive, but we are nearing that threshold for the southern section due to the continuing loss of road surface and structure through landslides. The cost to repair and reopen the southern section of the road this year is currently estimated to be about \$50,000. At some point the annual cost to repair this section of the road is going to outweigh the value of having it open to vehicles for the summer."

While a section of the Coastal Drive is closed to motorized vehicles, there are still many other opportunities—from leisurely strolls to challenging bike routes—to explore Redwood National and State Parks. For more information, maps, and suggestions for exploring your parks, stop by the Thomas H. Kuchel Visitor Center located on Highway 101 just south of Orick, California, or the Crescent City Information Center at 1111 Second Street in Crescent City, California. Both visitor centers are open seven days a week. Information can also be obtained by calling (707) 465-7335 (M-F) or visiting the park website at: www.nps.gov/redw.

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