

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Mighty storm floods, wrecks and leaves Peninsula in the dark

PINE CONE STAFF

IT WAS the biggest storm in a decade, bringing down hundreds of trees, damaging roads and homes along the coast, flooding low-lying neighborhoods, threatening the water supply, knocking out power to most homes and businesses, and bringing life on the Monterey Peninsula to a virtual standstill for several days.

At the height of the storm Friday morning, with winds gusting up to 80 mph and rainfall totals approaching 4 inches, trees collapsed on at least five houses in Carmel, two in Pacific Grove and five in Pebble Beach, according to repair crews.

One of those struck the home of Joe and Kate Cardenas on Sloat Road in Del Monte Forest.

"My wife was sitting on the couch reading a book about longevity," Joe Cardenas said.

"There was a loud noise from the fireplace and all of a sudden this big tree crashed about three feet from where she was sitting." Their daughter's bedroom was destroyed — fortunately, she was out of the country at the time.

**30,000 homes and businesses without power, many for more than four days**

At the height of outages, more than 30,000 PG&E customers were in the dark because of about 400 separate damaged power poles, lines and other equipment. The utility brought in crews from as far away as Southern California and Washington state, many working 16-hour days, to help the massive reconnect effort.

And with the power also out to its wells and pumps, California American Water Co. asked its customers to keep water use to an absolute minimum. A boil order was issued in Carmel Valley after one storage tank ran completely dry.

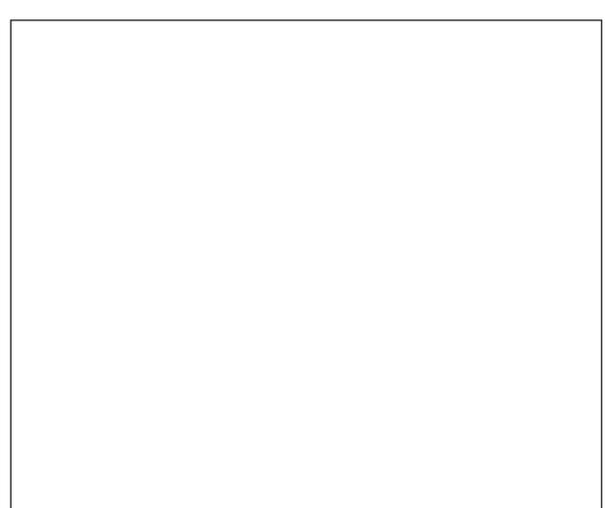
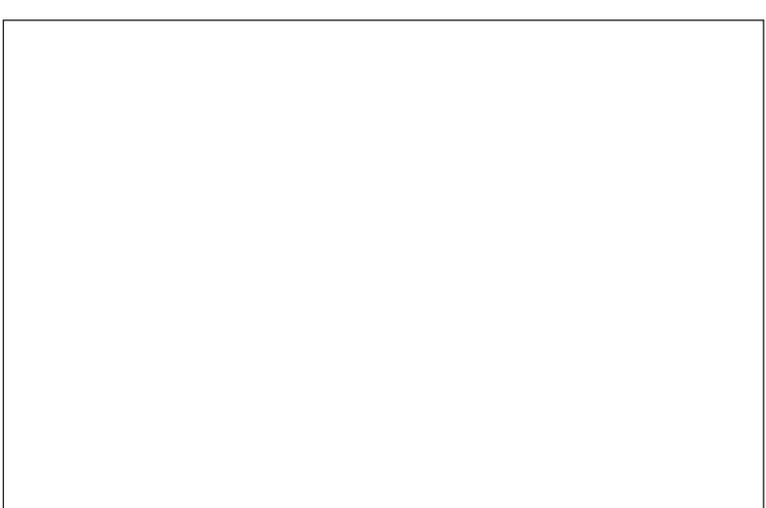
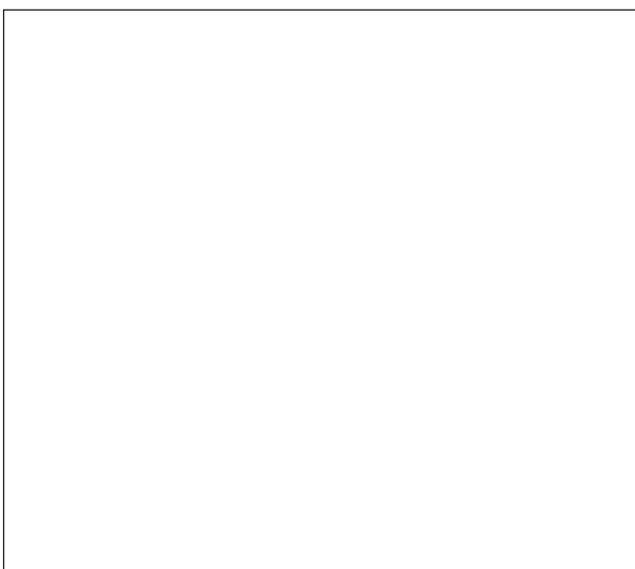
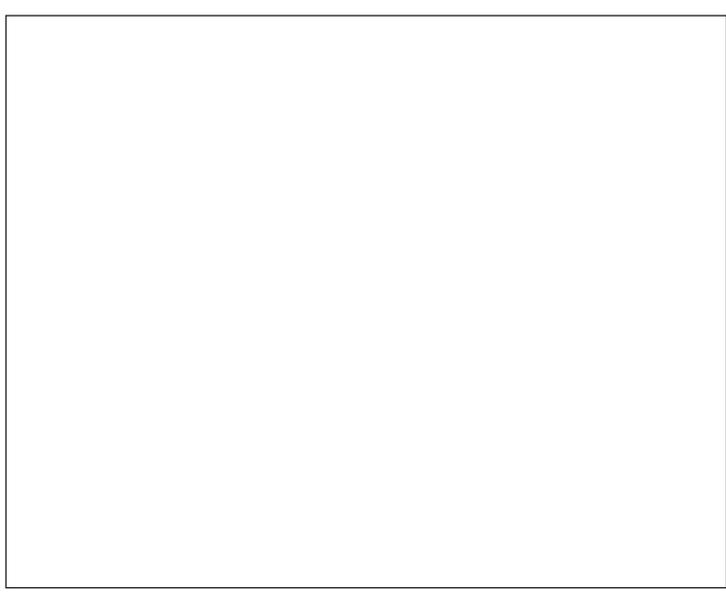
Along the coast, the worst was to come Saturday morning, when high tide coincided with a massive storm surge.

Beaches disappeared under the roiling sea and small boulders were tossed onto oceanfront roads in Carmel, Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove. A beach cottage belonging to the Monterey Peninsula Country Club had its front wall pushed in by huge waves.

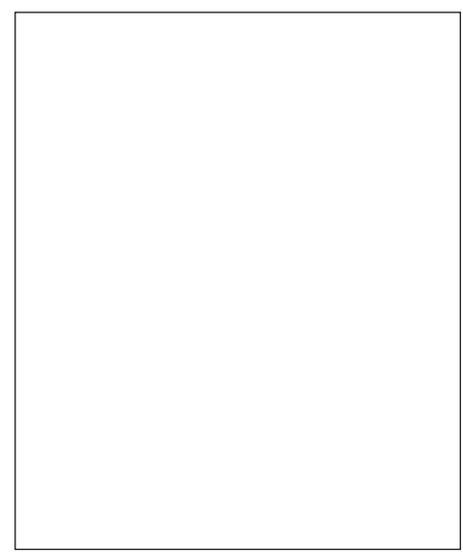
But homeowners along the Carmel River Lagoon — long a battleground between them and government agencies charged with protecting the welfare of the indigenous steelhead trout — were the hardest hit as storm swells rushed over the sandbar at the mouth of the Carmel River, sending the lagoon to record levels.

"It's 12.6 feet, and that's the highest it's ever

See **STORM** page 7A



The severe storm that hit the Monterey Peninsula with heavy rains and hurricane-force winds Friday brought trees down on many houses, including one on Sloat Road in Pebble Beach (below left) and on Mountain View Avenue in Carmel (middle right, above). One home on Guadalupe Street in Carmel (top left) already had a crew from E. Valdez Tree Service removing a big Monterey pine from its roof early Saturday. That same morning, small, storm-tossed boulders blocked Scenic Road (middle left, above) and the lagoon at the mouth of the Carmel River was at record levels (above left), flooding a nearby neighborhood for the second time in seven years (above right). Nearly every street had at least one tree that suffered major damage, and many were obstructed by fallen trees and power poles, including Camino del Monte in Carmel (below center). A thrilling sight for many residents was the appearance of a PG&E crew, such as the one that maneuvered around two large trees in the road to restore power on 20th Street in Pacific Grove after more than four days in the dark (below right). Monterey Peninsula Country Club emailed its members a photo of severe wave damage to the club's beach cottage near Point Joe (top right).



PHOTOS/PAUL MILLER; TOP RIGHT, MPCC