



DELUGE

Nine atmospheric rivers struck Santa Cruz County between late December 2022 and mid-January 2023. Rain flooded creeks and buried roads under mountains of mud. High winds sent trees crashing onto homes and brought down power lines. Ocean swells tore through piers, smashed oceanside restaurants and devastated Santa Cruz’s iconic West Cliff drive. More than 35,000 residents were ordered to evacuate. The storms damaged roughly 1,000 homes and businesses and caused more than \$240 million in damage to state and county public infrastructure alone.

The staff of Lookout, a tiny, two-year-old local digital news outlet with six reporters, one photographer, one assignment editor and a copy editor, dropped everything to dedicate itself to the storms. Journalists fanned out across the 445 square miles of the county and shared updates with readers in blogs, stories, videos, email alerts, text messages and social media posts. In total, Lookout published more than 100 blog posts and news stories. We shared dozens of videos, social media posts and text alerts in the first two weeks of January. Here’s what the first few days looked like.



Ocean swells knocked out the front wall of Eric Stark’s oceanfront home in Rio Del Mar on Jan. 5 / Kevin Painchaud

DEC. 31 – JAN. 2

■ The rains start on [New Year’s Eve](#). With several staff members out of town for the holidays, Managing Editor **Tamsin McMahon** and Lookout photojournalist **Kevin Painchaud** work through the weekend [reporting](#) on flooding, power outages and evacuation warnings in neighborhoods along the coast. General assignment reporter **Max Chun** and politics correspondent **Christopher Neely** join in Monday, Jan 2., a holiday, to [prepare coverage](#) ahead of Tuesday’s rainfall and another storm set to hit the region late Wednesday afternoon.



Storm debris, Santa Cruz Boardwalk on Jan. 2 / Kevin Painchaud

JAN. 3

■ By Jan. 3 it becomes clear from weather reports that the atmospheric river forecast to strike the coast Wednesday into Thursday won’t be a typical rainstorm. Reporters **Chun** and **Neely** start building a guide to the coming storm, featuring advice, links and resources for local residents. Our friends at the **Long Beach Post** reach out, offering to fly a reporter to Santa Cruz to help.

McMahon builds and launches a liveblog to kick off our hour-by-hour coverage.

■ **Liveblog launches at 4 p.m.:** [Santa Cruz County Storm Central: The latest on the winter storms, swell damage](#)

■ Education reporter **Hillary Ojeda** files a story on local schools canceling classes out of precaution. Arts and culture columnist **Wallace Baine** files a dispatch that sandbags, batteries and other supplies are all selling quickly as local residents stock up. By 5 p.m., **Neely** reports that the county is launching an emergency operations center.

■ Lookout drops our paywall, making storm coverage freely available. In a county with fewer than 300,000 residents, the coverage will be viewed more than 500,000 times.

JAN. 4 – STORM PREPARATIONS

8:00 A.M.

■ **Ojeda** heads to the Civic Auditorium in Santa Cruz, where the city is opening an evacuation shelter. She files a blog post on preparations for the shelter to hold 40-60 of the region’s more than 2,000 unhoused residents.

■ **Baine** files a story about [the last devastating storm](#) to hit the region, in the exact same week 41 years ago.

■ **Chun** starts working the phones, calling local governments, law enforcement and other agencies involved in storm preparations.

■ Feature writer **Mark Conley** heads to the seaside Capitola Village, where the 166-year-old wharf and the restaurants and hotels that line the waterfront are bracing for the biggest northwest swells in recent memory.

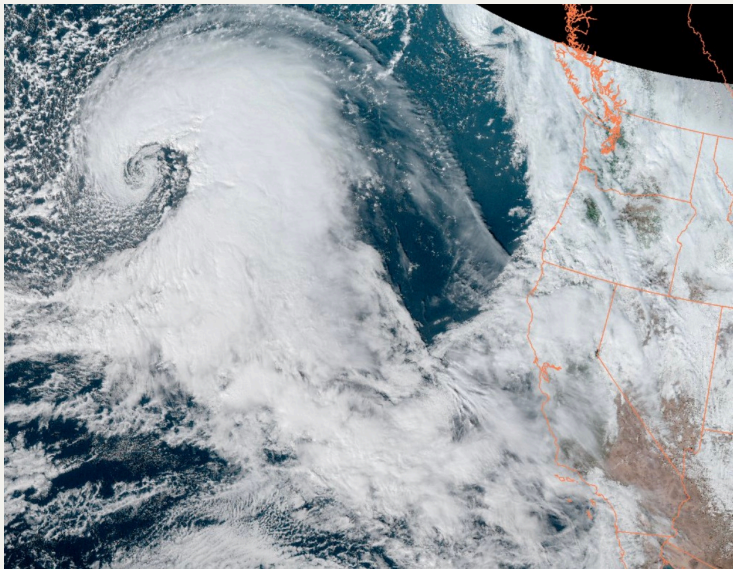
■ **Painchaud** and Long Beach Post reporter **Fernando Haro Garcia**, who arrived the night before, head to Watsonville, where they file [photos and reports](#) of storm preparations.



JAN. 4 CONTINUED

11 A.M.

■ **Baine** shares a map from the National Weather Service’s Twitter feed for the blog, showing the incredible scale of the bomb cyclone moving toward the coastline. He sends video from Watsonville, where winds are already starting to pick up “We are so small and nature is so big,” he writes.



Bomb cyclone heads for the West Coast / NWS via Twitter

12:12 P.M.

■ **Chun** reports that the California Parks Service has begun shutting down most of the state parks and campgrounds in the county. **Ojeda** files a blog item about Watsonville evacuating neighborhoods along the Corralitos and Salsipuedes creeks. **Painchaud** and **Haro** file video, photo and interviews from a base camp in Santa Cruz where utility company PG&E is setting up for the coming storm.



PG&E emergency vehicles gathering on Jan. 4 / Kevin Painchaud

2 P.M.

■ **Neely** reports in, this time from the county’s emergency operations center. Officials [now predict saturated soil](#) will start to fail across parts of the region, causing widespread landslides and downed trees. One official tells him the county can no longer update its road closure maps for residents to travel safely — there are simply too many road closures. Instead, officials urge residents to shelter in place.

3:30 P.M.

■ **Conley** reports from Capitola that police there have ordered Capitola Village to evacuate. **McMahon**, who has been updating the blog and publishing stories throughout the day, prepares an email alert to update residents on the evacuation warnings, road closures and other emergencies.

WEATHER ALERT

Evacuation orders issued in Soquel, Rio Del Mar, Watsonville; Brunt of storm to hit by 4 p.m.

The Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office issued new mandatory evacuation orders for parts of Felton, Soquel, Paradise Park, Watsonville and parts of the Pajaro Valley. Evacuation orders mean that residents in those areas should leave immediately due to the threats of rising flood water, debris flow and other dangers. The National Weather Service forecasts the heaviest rainfall is expected to hit the county starting around 4 p.m.

11:30 A.M.

■ **Chun** gets off the phone with NWS meteorologist Brayden Murdock, who tells him the [brunt of the storm](#) should hit by 4 p.m., bringing up to six inches of rain. “It’s more concerning if it continues slowing down as it hits landfall,” Murdock warns. “A slower moving system means that more rainfall will hit the area before the storm passes.”

11:45 A.M.

■ **Conley** [files a story from Capitola](#), where crowds are starting to gather to watch the coming swells and city workers are removing benches to keep them from being tossed around by waves. **Conley**’s reporting notes that the exceptionally high tides have already swept away much of the sand buffering that had been built to protect the village.

One restaurant owner nervously points out the unusually large amount of fallen trees and other debris piling up on shore from the recent rains. “I’ve never seen that many in all my years,” she says. “And they can do a lot of damage.”

1:30 P.M.

■ **Neely** [files a dispatch](#) from inside the City of Santa Cruz’s emergency operation center, where the manager tells him the New Year’s Eve storms caught the city off guard and he’s expecting Wednesday’s storms to be even worse.

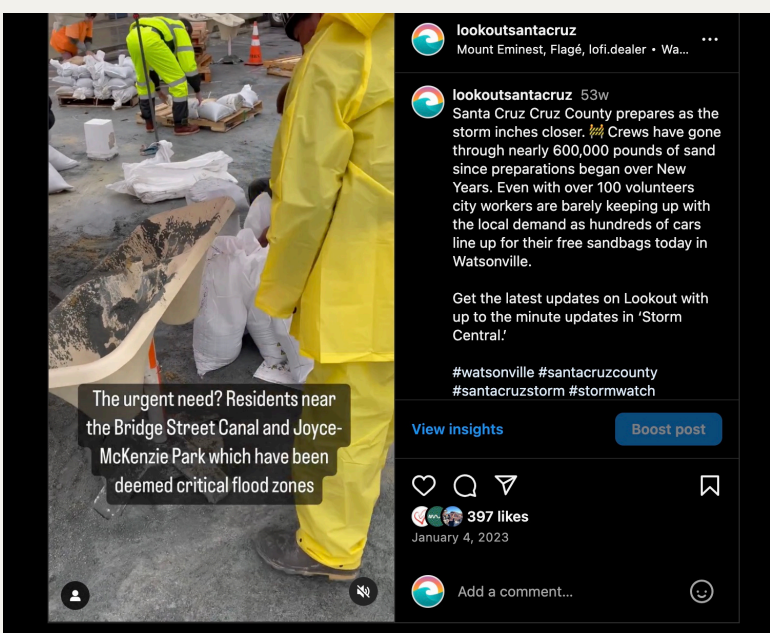
1:45 P.M.

■ As the cyclone draws nearer, **Ojeda reports** that the Sheriff’s Office is ordering parts of Felton, Capitola, Soquel, Paradise Park and the Pajaro Valley to evacuate. In South County, **Baine** reports that long lines of cars are beginning to snake through the streets of Watsonville as residents rush to pick up sandbags. **Chun** reports that the high winds are knocking down trees and that several communities in the Santa Cruz Mountains and North County have lost power.

2:30 P.M.

■ **Ashley Harmon**, Lookout’s Director of Partnerships & Audience, works on the business side but jumps in to help the newsroom. Using video footage from **Baine** and **Painchaud**, she creates an Instagram reel to update residents on social media about the growing emergency.

Over the course of the storms, Lookout’s Instagram reels will be viewed more than 1.8 million times.



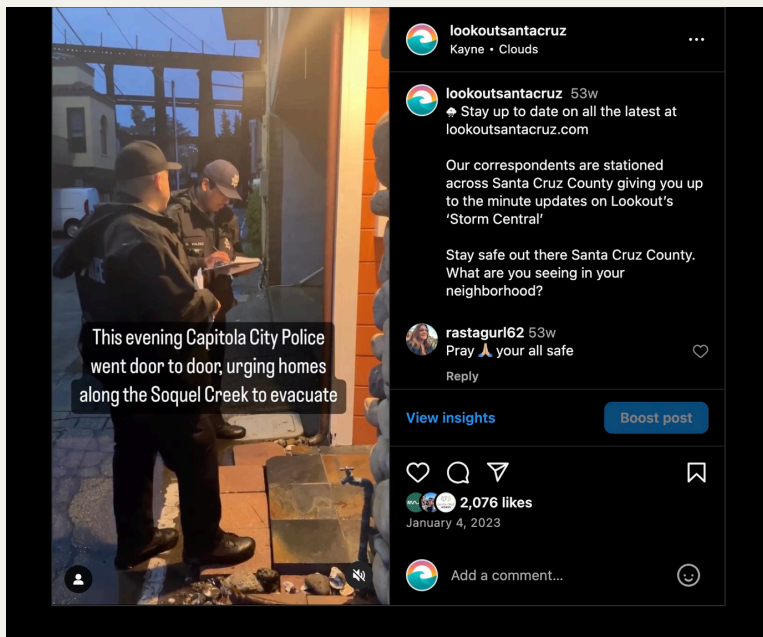
Screenshot from Instagram reel Jan. 4 / Ashley Harmon



JAN. 4 - THE STORM ARRIVES

4 P.M.

■ As the bomb cyclone makes landfall, **Ojeda** arranges a ride-along with Capitola police officers going door to door to tell residents to evacuate. [Many tell Ojeda](#) that they plan to stay despite the risks. She files a story to **McMahon** and video to **Harmon** for social media.



Screenshot from Instagram reel Jan. 4 / Ashley Harmon, with video shot by Hillary Ojeda and sent to Harmon via text.

■ Long Beach Post reporter **Haro** speaks with residents in Watsonville and Soquel who are preparing to hunker down in their homes for a difficult night. **Neely** reports that a transformer has blown by the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, leaving 17,000 people without power.

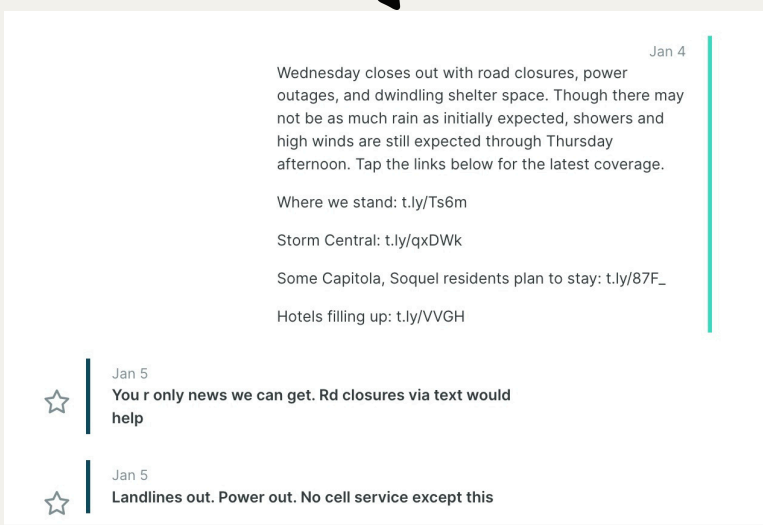


PG&E staff prepare for the coming bomb cyclone / Kevin Painchaud

6:12 P.M.

■ **Chun** sends a text message alert with the latest updates and links to all of the day's coverage. The alerts go directly to readers' phones and allow them to respond with questions or comments. One reader replies that **Chun's** text message is the only information she is able to receive on the storms. "You r only news we can get," she writes. "Landlines out. Power out. No cell service except this."

Lookout staff continued to regularly text updates to readers throughout the storms.



Text message alert sent to readers evening of Jan. 4 / Max Chun

9:52 P.M.

■ **Chun** builds and sends an evening newsletter summarizing the published stories of the day. He sends another text alert at 9:28 p.m.

Reporters head home. Unable to safely drive the winding mountain highway home in the torrential downpour, **McMahon** spends the night in a hotel, where she sends an email alert shortly before 10 p.m. with the most updated information on road closures, power outages and evacuation orders.



6 P.M.

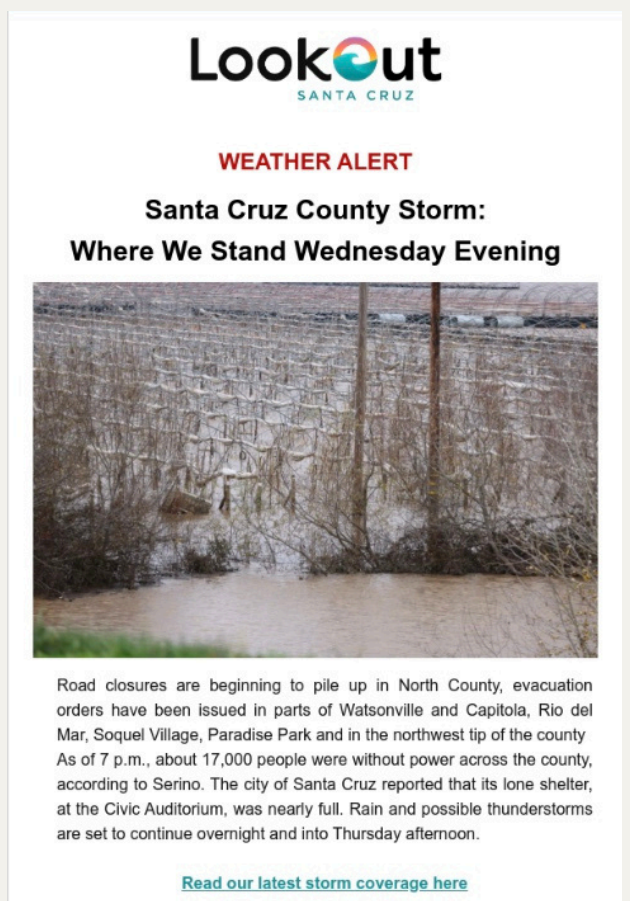
■ **Baine** heads to hotels in Watsonville, which are beginning to [fill with evacuees](#). He reports that neighborhoods in Watsonville have lost power, sending him scrambling to find a place to plug in and file his story. When he finds power, he also [files a second story](#) based on posts he's gathered from across social media as residents start sharing their storm stories and videos.

7:30 P.M.

■ **Chun** files a report about local bus drivers rescuing 200 residents of an assisted living community stranded in the mountain community of Boulder Creek, along with 180 children who had been attending a science camp.

8:30 P.M.

■ **Ojeda** reports that the emergency shelter opened at noon at the Civic Auditorium is already nearing capacity. **Neely** files a new story from the county's emergency operations center that at least 16 roads are closed for downed trees, power lines and mudslides. He then [files a writethru](#) of the day's events and the weather expected to hit overnight and into the morning.





JAN. 5 - THE DAY AFTER



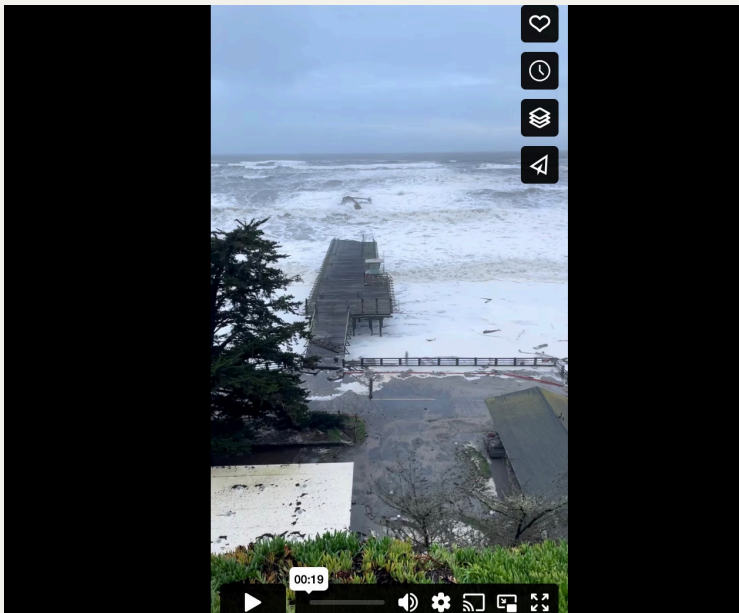
Aerial shot of the damage to Capitola Village and pier on Jan. 5 / Kevin Painchaud

6:40 A.M.

■ **McMahon** files a morning newsletter alerting readers to overnight reports of damage.

7:30 A.M.

■ A reader sends us a message on social media that the wharf at Seacliff State Beach in Aptos has been destroyed by ocean swells. **Painchaud** and **Haro** head out to survey the damage. They report that half the pier is gone and even parts of the sidewalk are missing. They file a blog update and send video to Harmon, who shares it on social media. The damaged pier will eventually be demolished.



Screenshot of video published to Vimeo and Instagram on Jan. 5 of the damaged pier at Seacliff State Beach / Kevin Painchaud

9:00 A.M.

■ **Conley** reports in from Capitola and says the historic wharf has been heavily damaged by ocean swells. Many of the restaurants and hotels of the oceanfront Esplanade, popular among tourists and locals alike, have been battered by huge waves and are taking on water. With the tide still rising, Capitola Police tell **Conley** they are shutting down access to the village. **Conley** [files a story with interviews](#) by the police chief, city mayor and city clerk.

■ **Story posted Jan. 5: [Capitola Wharf taking a beating, Esplanade taking on water](#)**



Damage to Capitola Village on Jan 5 / Kevin Painchaud

8:30 A.M.

■ **Painchaud** gets word that dozens of homes in the Rio Del Mar neighborhood of Aptos have been damaged by waves and that the roads are beginning to flood. He and **Haro** wade through [knee-deep water to file a story](#), photos and several videos.

After an hour, **Painchaud** and **Haro** rush back to the car, where the water has now reached the bottom of the door. Within 30 minutes, the street would be entirely engulfed in flood water.

■ **Story posted Jan. 5: [‘It’s crazy’: Massive flooding strikes the Rio Del Mar flats](#)**

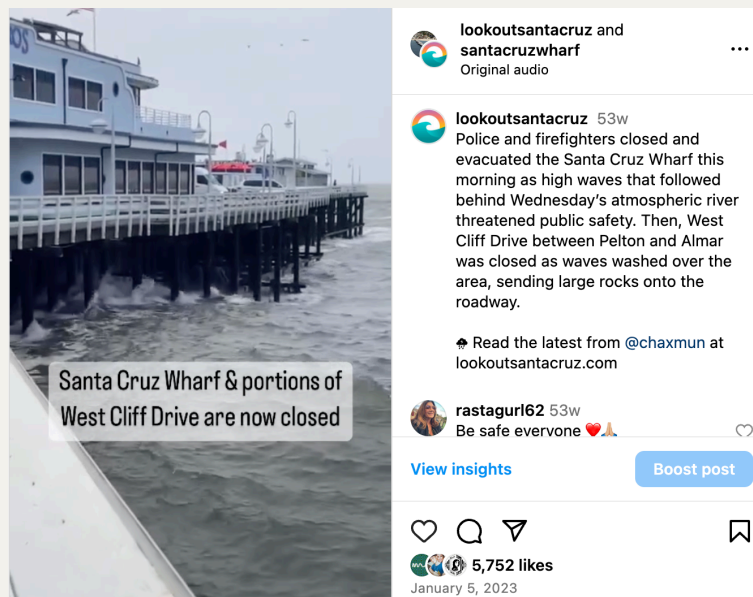


Screenshot from an interview with a Rio Del Mar resident published to YouTube on Jan. 5 / Kevin Painchaud

9:10 A.M.

■ **Chun** reports that the Santa Cruz Wharf is being evacuated as it gets pummeled by 20-foot waves. He also writes that large chunks of the city’s famous coastal roadway, West Cliff Drive, have been smashed by boulders and are crumbling into the ocean.

■ **Story posted Jan 5: [Santa Cruz Wharf evacuated, portions of West Cliff Drive closed as storm batters Central California coast](#)**



Instagram post on wharf evacuations Jan 5 / Ashley Harmon



JAN. 5 CONT'D



The damaged pier at Seacliff State Beach that led to the beloved Cement Ship on Jan. 5/ Kevin Painchaud

10:30 A.M.

■ **Ojeda** heads back to the emergency shelter at the Civic Auditorium. She then meets up with University of California, Santa Cruz scientist Gary Griggs, the region's foremost expert on coastal erosion, for a tour of the damage to West Cliff Drive. The storms have left gaping holes in the street, some as wide as 20 feet. She [files a story for Friday morning](#) on the implications of sea level rise and climate change for the future of the scenic roadway. "This storm is going to show we need to make decisions," Griggs tells her.

■ **Story posted Jan 6. at 5 a.m.:** ['I have never seen anything this dramatic': Santa Cruz's most-tenured ocean observer in awe of storm damage.](#)

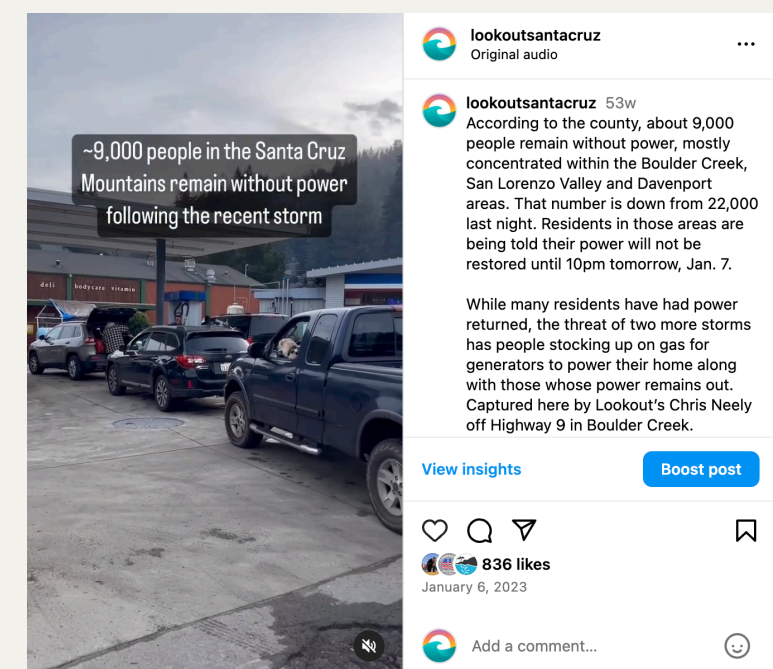


Damage to West Cliff Drive on Jan 5 / Kevin Painchaud

3:04 P.M.

■ **Neely** files an update to his story focused on 23 different road closures in the Santa Cruz Mountains. He then heads into the mountains to report on communities cut off from the rest of the county by landslides. That includes Boulder Creek, a community that has been without power for three days.

■ **Story posted Jan. 5:** [Where we stand on Thursday evening: Storm damage and up 5 more inches of rain coming in next 2 storms](#)



Instagram reel posted morning of Jan. 6 based on video from Neely reporting from Boulder Creek/ Ashley Harmon

11:20 A.M.

■ **Painchaud** [sends video from the damaged](#) pier at Seacliff State Beach, which has cut off access to the Cement Ship, a beloved landmark. **Baine** writes a story filling in the history of the ship, a concrete boat built for use in World War I. We publish a visual story of the destruction.

■ **Chun** updates the liveblog with the latest information on damages and flooding. **McMahon** sends another email alert on evacuations, road closures and damage. She calls a noon news meeting to discuss how to cover the aftermath of the bomb cyclone and preparations for yet more wet weather.

2:10 P.M.

■ **Neely** [files a story on the local damage](#), power outage and road conditions and the forecast for more storms on the way. **McMahon** sends an email alert sharing the update.

3:30 P.M.

■ **Chun** updates the blog with an interview with a PG&E spokesperson that nearly 11,000 residents are without power and the utility company has been dispatched to 71 different locations around the county. **Chun** then interviews geologists and engineers for a [story for the morning](#) about the mounting risk of landslides.

■ **Story posted morning of Jan. 6:** [Landslide fears mount with more storms set to hit Santa Cruz County into next week](#)

4:00 P.M.

■ **McMahon** [posts a selection of photos](#) from staff and readers of storm damage from around the county. She also edits and builds Lookout's regular non-storm features, including a weekend events newsletter by **Baine** and a Friday newsletter by Food writer **Lily Belli**.

■ **Story posted Jan 5:** [Santa Cruz Storm 2023 in photos](#)

5:30 P.M.

■ **Ojeda** files a blog post of an interview with a storm evacuee based on interviews from the morning. **Harmon** posts a reel.

■ **McMahon** sends an evening news alert at 7:51 p.m. wrapping up the day's events and warning of two more storms on the way. **Haro** returns home to Long Beach.



BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE CONTINUED

Lookout continued to cover the atmospheric rivers that slammed into the Santa Cruz County coast through Jan. 17. Here is a selection of stories, photos and social media posts published through the end of the storms, along with coverage of President Joe Biden’s visit on Jan. 19. We updated our liveblog through Jan. 17.



Aerial footage of a massive landslide on Highway 9 in Ben Lomond/ Kevin Painchaud

SATURDAY, JAN. 7

Lookout typically does not publish on Saturdays but on Jan. 7 we published a special storm package:

■ **Neighbors along Soquel Creek say they had little warning their homes were about to flood**
 By *Hillary Ojeda*

Summary: Officials say the National Weather Service assured the county three times that the creek was not at risk of flooding.

Link: <https://lookout.co/neighbors-along-soquel-creek-say-they-had-little-warning-their-homes-were-about-to-flood/>

■ **Santa Cruz County storms in pictures**
 By *Kevin Painchaud*

Link to photo gallery: <https://lookout.co/santa-cruz-county-storms-in-pictures/>

■ **A shot of tequila while you sandbag? In Soquel Village, a community comes together during the storm**
 By *Mark Conley*

Summary: As the flooded Soquel Creek threatened local restaurant Tortilla Flats, the word “village” in Soquel Village was suddenly taking on new meaning.

Link: <https://lookout.co/a-shot-of-tequila-while-you-sandbag-in-soquel-village-a-community-comes-together-to-save/>



■ **Damaged and without power, Capitola Village restaurants struggle to reopen and brace for next surge of storms**
 By *Lily Belli*

Summary: The Esplanade in the Capitola Village remained closed to pedestrians and traffic on Friday after a storm surge damaged many businesses.

Link: <https://lookout.co/damaged-and-without-power-capitola-village-restaurants-struggle-to-reopen-and-brace-for-next-surge-of-storms/>



■ **As ‘Pineapple Express’ morphs into ‘bomb cyclone,’ how do we make new sense of our relationship with water?**
 By *Wallace Baine*

Summary: At the heart of the wet apocalypse is a great irony: so many of us are in Santa Cruz exactly because of an abiding love of water.

Link: <https://lookout.co/in-the-disaster-roll-call-the-winter-storm-deserves-more-respect/>





SUNDAY, JAN. 8

Where we stand: Fast-coming storm prompts fears of major flooding in Santa Cruz County

By Hillary Ojeda and Christopher Neely

Excerpt: “We need people to understand that this is a very serious event,” said Santa Cruz County Supervisor Zach Friend. “And it may be the kind of flooding that we haven’t seen here in the last generation.”

Link: <https://lookout.co/where-we-stand-fast-coming-santa-cruz-3-inches-of-rain-prompt-fears-of-major-flooding/>



Instagram post of reader-submitted photos, Jan. 8

‘This is extremely serious’: All PVUSD schools closed Monday amid flash flood warnings

By Hillary Ojeda

Summary: With flash flood warnings in effect, the Pajaro Valley Unified School District announced that classes were canceled Monday at all of its schools.

Link: <https://lookout.co/this-is-extremely-serious-several-pvUSD-schools-cancel-monday-classes-due-to-potential-flooding/>



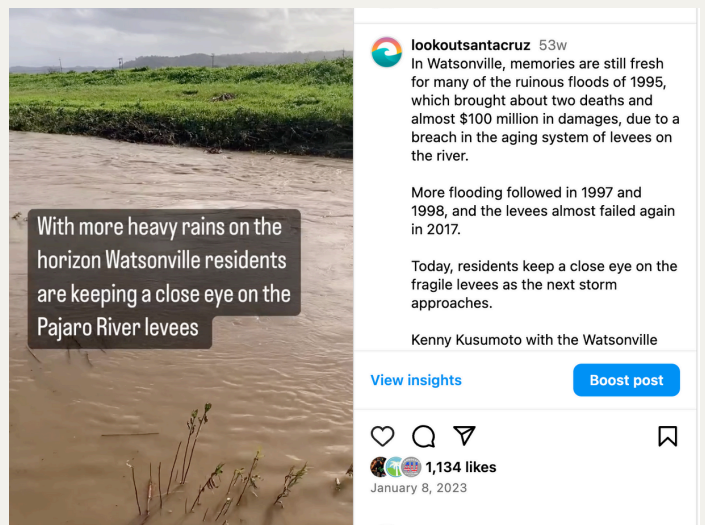
A Watsonville resident digs out / Kevin Painchaud

‘There’s very little we can do.’ Watsonville residents eye fragile levee system with growing sense of alarm

By Wallace Baine

Summary: In Watsonville, memories are still fresh for many of the ruinous floods of 1995 due to a breach in the aging system of levees on the river.

Link: <https://lookout.co/theres-very-little-we-can-do-watsonville-residents-eye-fragile-levee-system-with-growing-sense-of-alarm/>



Instagram reel of the Pajaro River, Jan. 8

MONDAY, JAN. 9



Aerial shot of storm damage to West Cliff Drive in Santa Cruz / Kevin Painchaud

Chainsaws, generators and beer: Amid dayslong power outage, Santa Cruz Mountains community perseveres

By Christopher Neely

Summary: The unrelenting deluge battering the Santa Cruz Mountains left hundreds in Boulder Creek without power for days.

Link: <https://lookout.co/santa-cruz-storms-boulder-creek-mountain-community-makes-its-way-amid-dayslong-power-outage/>

Riders on the storm: Santa Cruz surfers’ yin-yang relationship with historic megaswell events

By Mark Conley

Summary: In the surfing mecca of Santa Cruz, some live their best lives tapping into the ocean’s energy, often risking their personal safety for reasons few others can understand.

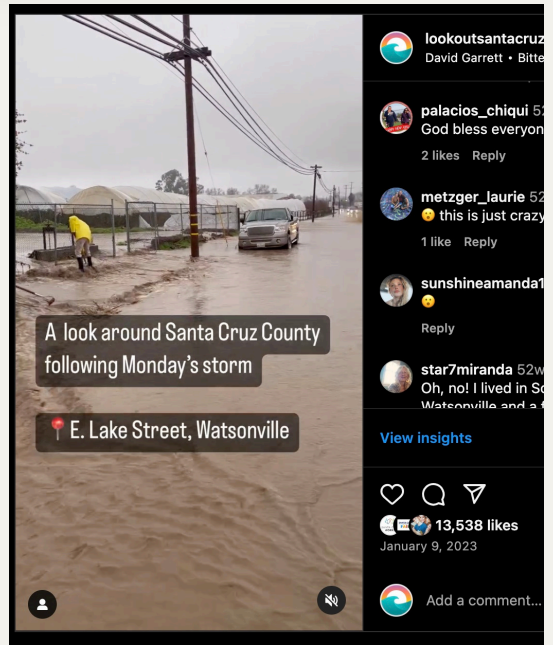
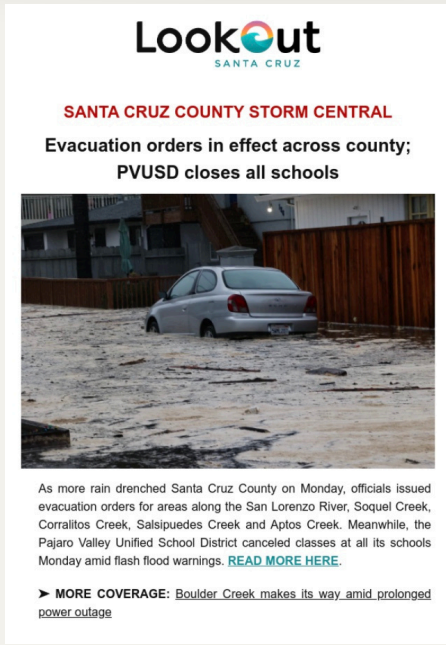
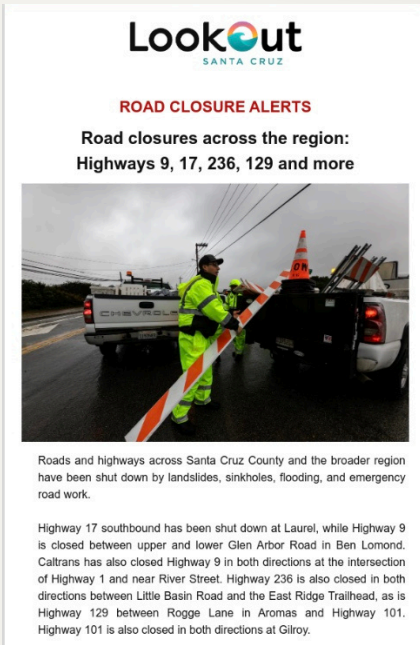
Link: <https://lookout.co/california-storms-santa-cruz-surfers-yin-yang-relationship-with-historic-megaswell-events/>



Lookout

SANTA CRUZ

PULITZER PRIZE FOR BREAKING NEWS REPORTING 2023 TIMELINE



Screenshots of two email breaking news alerts and an Instagram reel published Jan. 9

TUESDAY, JAN. 10



A father carries his daughter through the flooded streets of Watsonville on Jan. 9/ Kevin Painchaud

How much will California help pay for Santa Cruz storm repairs? Newsom signals 'assessments'

By Wallace Baine

Summary: During a visit to Santa Cruz County, California Gov. Gavin Newsom pledged to helping businesses rebuild but was circumspect when it came to details.

Link: <https://lookout.co/how-much-will-california-help-pay-for-santa-cruz-storm-repairs-gov-newsom-signals-assessments/>



Silhouette of Gov. Gavin Newsom Jan. 10/ Kevin Painchaud

Pajaro River levee system to undergo emergency repairs Wednesday after showing signs of seepage

By Wallace Baine and Christopher Neely

Summary: The County of Santa Cruz said late Tuesday that it would carry out emergency repairs to the Pajaro River levee system, which was showing signs of seepage after more than a week of heavy rains.

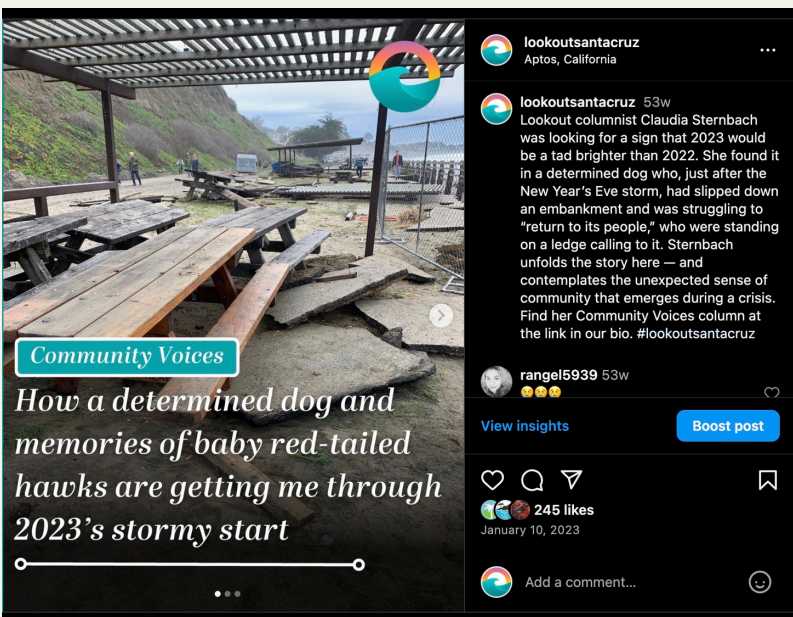
Link: <https://lookout.co/watsonville-residents-watch-nervously-as-pajaro-river-continues-rising/>

Santa Cruz County storms: Where we stand Tuesday

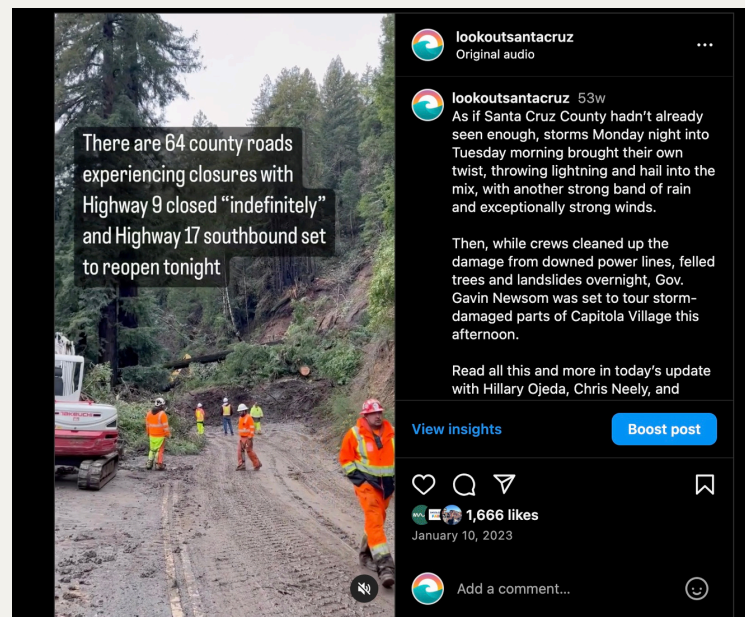
By Hillary Ojeda, Christopher Neely and Wallace Baine

Summary: More than 19,000 people were without power, 64 county roads were closed, and the Pajaro River stood at 31 feet and rising.

Link: <https://lookout.co/santa-cruz-county-storms-where-we-stand-tuesday-afternoon/>



Instagram post of op-ed posted Jan. 10



Instagram reel updating the latest storm news Jan. 10



OTHER NOTABLE STORIES DURING THE STORMS

Wednesday, Jan. 11: With floodwaters quieted, Felton Grove residents dig out from under the muck and mire

By Christopher Neely

Summary: The people of Felton Grove, a neighborhood along the San Lorenzo River in Felton, have seen two floods hit their community since the start of the new year, leaving feet of mud in the streets and debris scattered across properties. Some residents are thinking of leaving for good, while others see the floods as a way of life.

Link: <https://lookout.co/california-storms-flooding-felton-grove-residents-dig-out-from-under-muck-mire/>



Anastacia Burns digs out in Felton / Christopher Neely

Thursday, Jan. 12: Santa Cruz County agencies, community groups scramble to coordinate recovery efforts

By Hillary Ojeda

Summary: Several local organizations are providing info sessions on filing storm damage claims Thursday and Friday while at the same time preparing for coming storms. Officials say recovery efforts have been hampered by the fact that the damage is so widespread, from Pajaro to Boulder Creek, and involves everything from power outages and flooding, to destruction from ocean swells.

Link: <https://lookout.co/santa-cruz-storm-recovery-resources-agencies-community-groups-scramble-to-coordinate-2/>

Friday, Jan. 13: Newsom, Congress push Biden to declare a major disaster in California following storms

By Christopher Neely

Summary: If Santa Cruz County and the rest of the Central Coast are going to receive the money needed to recover after the winter storms, President Joe Biden will need to formally declare a major disaster in California. On Thursday, the powers that be turned up the heat to ensure that happens.

Link: <https://lookout.co/california-storms-newsom-congress-push-biden-to-declare-a-major-disaster-in-california-following-storms/>

Saturday, Jan. 14: Biden should expedite disaster declaration, Panetta says after visit to devastated Santa Cruz Mountain towns

By Christopher Neely

Excerpt: With rain beading off his raincoat, U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta stood stunned in front of the massive landslide blocking Highway 9 in Ben Lomond. “That sucks, Bruce. That really sucks, Bruce,” he told Santa Cruz County Supervisor Bruce McPherson. “I didn’t realize it was going to be that big.”

Link: <https://lookout.co/biden-should-expedite-disaster-declaration-panetta-says-after-visit-to-devastated-santa-cruz-mountain-towns/>



Lawmakers tour storm damage Jan. 13. / Kevin Painchaud

Wednesday, Jan. 18 editorial: President Biden, please come to Santa Cruz County and visit those who need help the most

By Lookout Staff

Excerpt: As the governor and the president visit storm-torn California, where they visit is a meaningful act. Beyond scenic photo ops, it’s a sign of where their attention — and funding — might go. Santa Cruz County deserves a stop — but not just in scenic Capitola.

Link: <https://lookout.co/editorial-storm-recovery-president-biden-please-come-to-santa-cruz-county-visit-those-who-need-help-most/>



Alexis Ortiz in his red-tagged mobile home / Kevin Painchaud

Thursday, Jan. 19: Biden pledges full federal support for disaster recovery during tour of Santa Cruz County storm damage

By Christopher Neely and Tamsin McMahon

Excerpt: Biden is the [first sitting president to visit Santa Cruz County](#) in more than 30 years. His visit to parts of Watsonville, Capitola and Aptos, comes days after he authorized a major disaster declaration for the county and several others in California ravaged by weeks of flooding, landslides and ocean swells.

Link: <https://lookout.co/biden-touches-down-in-california-headed-to-santa-cruz-county-to-tour-storm-damage/>



Spectators line the streets for Biden’s visit / Kevin Painchaud



Lookout

SANTA CRUZ

PULITZER PRIZE FOR BREAKING NEWS REPORTING 2023 TIMELINE

BY THE NUMBERS

Between Jan. 3 when we launched our liveblog and end of the atmospheric rivers on Jan. 17, Lookout published or sent:

83 Staff-written stories

86 Updates to our Storm Central liveblog

30 Email and text alerts

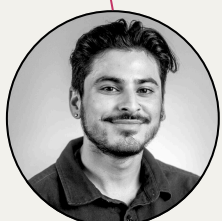
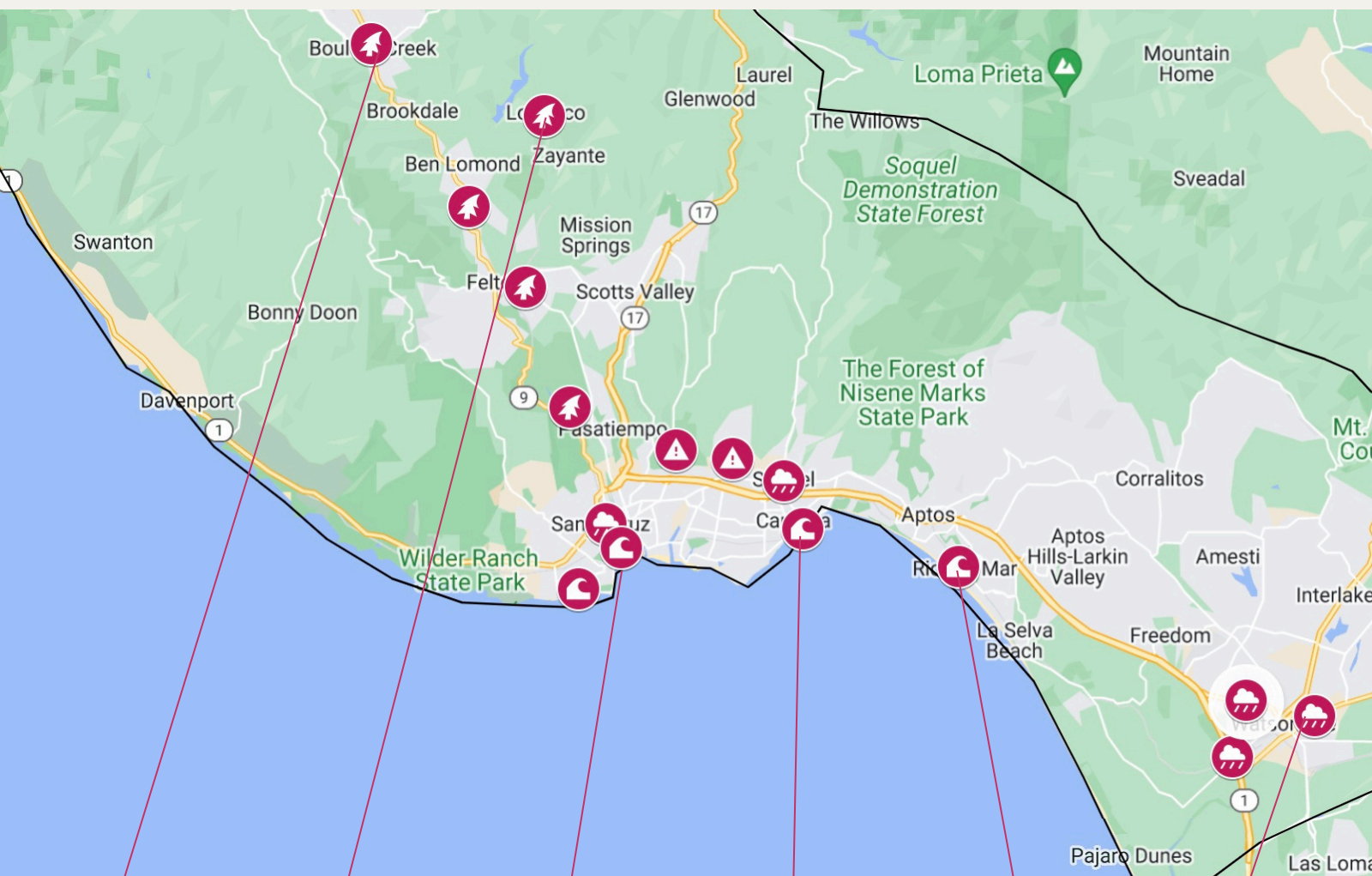
157 Twitter, Instagram, Facebook posts

WHERE WE WENT

One of the biggest obstacles Lookout faced in covering the January 2023 storms was that the damage was spread out across a vast geographic area. Getting across the county can be an exercise in frustration even when the sun is shining. With such a small staff and dozens of roads closed — including several major highways shut down for flooding and landslides — we gambled in sending our reporters and photographer into areas we knew would be difficult to access, fearing that they could be stranded or have trouble getting to breaking news on the other side of the region.

Our journalists reported from 16 different locations, capturing the wide swath of the storms' destruction. This map does not include photographer Kevin Painchaud, who logged hundreds of miles to chronicle the devastating toll of the storms in photos and videos.

Lines represent one example. Each reporter visited multiple locations. Click the map ([or this link](#)) to visit an interactive version with the full details of where each reporter traveled.



Christopher Neely

Hillary Ojeda

Max Chun

Mark Conley

Fernando Haro Garcia

Wallace Baine



The pier at Seacliff State Beach was demolished after suffering damage during the January 2023 storms / Kevin Painchaud