

SIX RIVERS



Flood waters on State Sign Route 36 rush past the Dinsmore Veneer Company in the Mad River Ranger District.

Preliminary estimates of flood damage to the improvements and resources of the Six Rivers National Forest have recently been completed, according to Forest Supervisor Wes Spinney.

With the Forest Service road system almost completely impassable it was necessary to survey the damage by air, which was done over the past two-week period whenever weather conditions permitted, and with the cooperation of Army helicopter personnel based at Eureka. Spinney pointed out that these initial damage estimates are not exact, and that the figures may change as ground surveys become possible.

Of particular interest to the Forest Service land managers was the fact that virgin lands and rivers suffered almost as much as did the managed areas, with some of the landslides and timber losses occurring on virgin areas without the influence of man's activities.

Roads and bridges received the most damage on the Six Rivers Forest, and it was estimated that at least fifty miles of Forest Service roads will require complete relocation and construction before they are suitable for travel and timber access. Forty-five major stream crossings

must be reconstructed or made safe. Engineers cost estimates for this work come to about \$9,000,000, and Spinney re-affirmed that timber access roads will receive first priority.

A large volume of timber was lost in landslides, with an estimated 65 million board feet down. Of this amount, about 20 million feet should be salvageable when roads are restored.

Recreation improvements located along the rivers suffered extensive damage, with some campgrounds lost completely, some buried under silt, and some only partially damaged. An estimated \$168,000 will be necessary to restore and clean out campgrounds which can be used again, with some areas wiped out so completely that there is no possibility of reconstruction.

Buildings and improvements other than campgrounds suffered relatively minor damage, with the Orleans Ranger Station water system being the largest item lost, at a cost of \$20,000. Other water and sanitary systems were partially damaged, with an estimated cost of \$11,000 for repairs. Two \$700 radio antenna towers were lost.

Watershed damage on the Six Rivers Forest has been tremen-

dous, with numerous slides and streambed changes occurring on both virgin and managed lands. Engineering surveys must be made before we can even estimate the costs of soil stabilization projects necessary to prevent further erosion and damage, Spinney stated. The 1,400 miles of fishing streams within the Six Rivers Forest are almost all devastated by scouring, silt, and debris. Whether or not the major rivers can recover naturally from this damage and regain their fish spawning beds cannot be predicted at this time. Debris blocking smaller streams will have to be removed to permit fish access.

Supervisor Spinney added that most of the funds necessary to accomplish this flood damage repair and reconstruction work would have to come from special legislation in Congress, and that details of these initial damage reports have already been furnished members of the Congressional Public Works Committee for this purpose.

Total damage to date for the Six Rivers National Forest is estimated to be \$10,000,000.

Photos by Neil McGill of Six Rivers National Forest

Prime Virgin Forests Suffered Heavy Damage In Christmas Flooding



Over seven million feet of timber was destroyed by this slide in Bear Basin Butte. The slide was in virgin national forest land east of Gasquet in the Smith River Drainage. It was over two miles long and 700 feet wide at the widest point.



Approximately 1.6 million feet of virgin timber was destroyed by this 45-acre slide on virgin National Forest land during the Christmas week flood. The slide was located at the forks of Harrington Creek and the South Fork of the Smith River. There are no roads or logging operations in the area.



Christmas week flooding wiped out 12 and five-tenths miles of Highway 199 east of Gasquet in Del Norte County. Note the battered section which remains (left).