

<https://www.times-standard.com/2019/02/28/mans-body-recovered-from-floods-after-2-adults-4-children-rescued-wednesday-night-in-ferndale/>

Man's body recovered from floods after 2 adults, 4 children rescued Wednesday night in Ferndale

[Shomik Mukherjee](#) February 28, 2019 at 9:12 pm



An SUV splashes through the still somewhat-flooded Cannibal Island Road west of Loleta late Friday afternoon. The county is working to assess the storm damage left in the wake of recent storms this winter. (Shaun Walker — The Times-Standard)

A man's body was recovered from heavy flooding early Thursday morning after a failed rescue attempt Wednesday evening near Sage Road in Ferndale.

The man, who will remain unidentified until Friday morning when all next-of-kin are notified, worked as a dairy farmer in Ferndale, 1st District Supervisor Rex Bohn told the Times-Standard.

He was discovered dead early Thursday morning. A search for him the night before was suspended at 11 p.m. due to dangerous weather conditions.

Around 7 p.m. Wednesday, the man was swept into 4-to-5 feet of flood waters outside his home as he was returning from work at a nearby barn. Three people, two adults and an adolescent, tried to rescue him using a tractor, but the vehicle stalled in the water and they lost sight of the man, according to a sheriff's office release.



Sage Road is seen looking toward the 800 block, just north of Ferndale. Several people were rescued Wednesday night after waters got as high as 5 feet in the area. (Shaun Walker — The Times-Standard)

Humboldt County sheriff's deputies were called to the 800 block of Sage Road. They discovered flood waters had trapped three additional people, all children, within the home. A special unit arrived on scene and

rescued the trapped children, as well as the reporting party, which had become trapped in the tractor.

Other media reporting indicated the man had been swept away while trying to rescue the children inside the house. That is not the case, said Samantha Karges, public information officer for the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office.

"The juveniles were safe inside the home," Karges said. One of the children inside was the man's daughter, age 12. The other two children were both younger than 4 years old.

The fatality is the only reported death in Humboldt County in a week of inclement weather affecting the Eel River Valley and Southern Humboldt, Karges said.

Roads in Ferndale and Loleta have received extensive damage. Two Ferndale roads reportedly have sinkhole activity, said Karges. Sage Road and Pleasant Point Road, both in Ferndale, have both been reopened after heavy flooding, county Public Works director Tom Mattson confirmed. Williams Creek Road in Ferndale is still blocked off, he said.

Hookton Road, which connects to U.S. Highway 101 in Loleta, is currently closed and filled with silt and muddy water. Goble Lane is closed at two points in Ferndale, and Copenhagen Road in Loleta is closed due to a damaged culvert.

Ferndale Unified School District superintendent Beth Anderson closed the district's schools for a second consecutive day due to the weather. Elsewhere in the county, Freshwater Road and Howard Heights Road in the Freshwater area are closed. Remote roads in the Mattole Valley, Honeydew and Petrolia have been flooded with mud and water, and residents have begun trying to reopen the roads themselves, Bohn said. More than 50 cattle were rescued from the area, according to the sheriff's office.

At a special meeting Thursday, the Yurok Tribal Council declared a “state of emergency” in response to the storms, which have triggered landslides and community water system failures on the reservation, the tribe announced.

Closer to Eureka, Elk River Road at the Herrick Avenue intersection has been closed in both directions.

Response teams are currently doing damage assessments across the county.

“Today the county is really focusing on cleanup and assessing the damage,” Karges said.

Bohn said there may be fundraisers in the near future for those affected by the flood damage, including the family of Thursday morning’s victim. “We are very resourceful,” he said. “We tend to pull our boots back on and work together to get back to the normal days of living here in Humboldt.”

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