

Published: Tuesday, May. 03, 2011

Updated: 7:19 am Tuesday, May. 03, 2011

## **Tour of California won't include Cambria and San Simeon because of Hwy. 1 slide**

Debris is main concern for organizers, and state of Santa Rosa Creek Road is another



By Photo courtesy of Caltrans

Bulldozers and other tractors working at the top of the mountain at the Alder Creek landslide.

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The nation's largest professional bicycle race won't be coming down Highway 1 through San Simeon and Cambria en route to a finish in Paso Robles, North Coast officials have been told.

Amgen Tour of California organizers haven't made an official announcement that a landslide along Highway 1 will force rerouting of the event's 144-mile fifth stage May 19, 2011.

The North Coast's ambulance service, though, has been advised that the race route will not go through Big Sur and Cambria, according to Don Melendy, administrator of the Cambria Community Healthcare District. At the district board's regular meeting last week, Melendy said he was told the Tour de France-style race would still start in Seaside, north of Monterey, but head inland via Carmel Valley and south through the Salinas Valley to Paso Robles.

That matches information given last week by race route coordinator Eric Smith to Mary Ann Carson, executive director of the Cambria Chamber of Commerce. Smith told her in an email that Highway 1 wasn't the only concern about the original Stage 5 route, though it was the most serious.

When the organizers did a recent recheck of Santa Rosa Creek Road east of Cambria, Carson said, "they found it was hurt worse than usual" by the winter storms. "It needs a lot of repair, too."

Business owners who had been anticipating the increased number of tourists and international exposure from the race going through downtown Cambria are disappointed but philosophical about it, said both Carson and Allan Forrest of Cambria Bicycle Outfitters.

The bicycle firm was planning to sponsor a special event in Cambria during Stage 5.

"There's always next year or the year after," Forrest said. "I think now that we've organized here and gotten their attention, it will be easier to pull it off again in the

future. I think it's a no-brainer for Amgen to bring it back through here. They like going down Highway 1."

Forrest added, half-jokingly, "And maybe this will give the county a chance to fix some potholes" on Santa Rosa Creek Road.

Carson said she'd written tour organizers, asking them to "please remember us for next year."

The tour came down Highway 1 through Big Sur and Cambria in its first three years, 2006 to 2008, on its way to San Luis Obispo, but it followed Highway 1. This year, the peloton was to ride along Main Street through Cambria's West and East villages.

Landslides have closed Highway 1 through Big Sur at one spot or another since March 16. On Monday, just 16 days before the Stage 5 date, Caltrans was still estimating that it expects it will take four to six weeks to clear the latest and largest slide. About 350 feet of Highway 1 is covered by about 100,000 cubic yards of dirt and rocks that came down the hillside April 14.

Caltrans' contractor is working with specialized equipment and techniques to clear away the deep swath of mud, rocks and debris, having gotten permission to do so from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the California Coastal Commission.

Read more: <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2011/05/03/1586078/tour-of-california-cambria-highway.html#ixzz1LLZzBxf6>