

At around roughly 8:30 pm on January 1, 2019 a landslide occurred at mile post 3.46 on the Kasaan Road closing the road as well as taking out electricity to Kasaan and South Thorne Bay. After a preliminary assessment it was discovered the landslide is 1,214 feet in length, goes from sea level to 722 feet in elevation and at the widest point where the road used to be it is 184 feet. There is between 1600-2000 cubic yards of material on the road, including logs, boulders, mud, and other debris. . Until we can move the debris we have no idea what is left of the road. Just pushing the debris off the road as some suggest is not an option as there is Thorne River Estuary and salmon stream directly below. The material will need to be hauled to a suitable waste site. A large deposit of landside debris and boulders rests about half way down the landslide above the road. The potential instability of this deposit presents a risk to people in and around the slide as well as future work on removal of debris and road reconstruction. Opening the road without considering this is not an option. Please see images below showing the aerial view of the slide, the top of the slide, below where the road was located and image of boulder sizes with a person in the photo for scale.

In the interim The Organized Village of Kasaan (OVK) has established an agreement with the State of Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands Office for 30 days to allow for approved improvements on the Lake Ellen Bypass Road. This will allow residents of Kasaan and South Thorne Bay to have some access to supplies such as heating fuel, propane, groceries, medical services & a safe route for Southeast Island School District to transport children to school. The current condition of the Lake Ellen Bypass road is not optimal; there are several locations where there are water bars, sink holes and the brush is encroaching on the roadway. The Cities of Thorne Bay and Kasaan and the OVK have committed funding to improving the roadway but with current weather conditions improvements are on hold. These weather conditions have also stopped the deliveries of heating fuel, propane and other supplies as well as making it difficult for people to access medical services.

The Organized Village of Kasaan, the City of Kasaan and the City of Thorne Bay are all working together to obtain funds for permanent repairs on the road through applying for emergency state & federal funding. With the government shut down this situation has been extremely difficult to handle, as the slide occurred on USFS land. Since January 3rd, Forest Service staff have been working to assess the landslide and coordinating with the City of Thorne Bay, Organized Village of Kasaan and other State and Federal agencies.

Update on the Lake Ellen Bypass Road Work from OVK:

"Friday, January 11, 2019 the Thorne Bay Maintenance Crew will be finishing snow removal on the bypass road beginning at the detour sign headed towards Kasaan up to 6 miles in.

The OVK DOT Crew will be on the bypass road working from the Kasaan side headed towards Goose Creek from Friday through the weekend. PLEASE USE CAUTION, pay attention to signs & respect our Crew. Reworking of the road and tree thinning will be occurring, heavy equipment will be in the roadway, EXPECT DELAYS & USE CAUTION.

We thank you again for your extreme patients & understanding! Any questions please call Sara Yockey at (907) 617-9970 or (907) 329-2012"