

Lack of trees in Angora burn area destroying county roads

By Kathryn Reed

Groundwater in the Angora burn area is so high it is creating impassable roads.

El Dorado County public works crews don't anticipate being able to fix the crumbling roads until mid-June at the earliest. They must wait for the water to subside to be able to dig.



Mule Deer Drive in El Dorado County is a wet, crumbling mess.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

“The ground is saturated 4 to 5 feet in there,” said Tom Celio, deputy director of maintenance and operations for the county’s transportation department. He was able to stick a shovel handle down 4 feet in the middle of Mule Deer Drive. “We will have to put in a drain system to carry the groundwater into the corner and tie it into a culvert.”

He is speaking of the mess on Mule Deer that has made the road

impossible to drive on in one section. The good part is the decaying asphalt and flowing water are between driveways so residents can come and go. It's just that no one can drive the length of the road because of the decay.

Celio said other roads in the burn area are bad, but not to the extent of Mule Deer.

He blames the unusual wetness to the lack of trees in the area since the 2007 fire. This means no roots to absorb the water. He also points to the abundance of snow this winter.

"The whole hillside is leaking water. There are places where it's like boiling out of the ground," Celio said.

He said things could get worse before they get better because as the sun comes out it pulls the water to the surface. But he also said once the snow is gone, the ground dries quickly.

"I wouldn't call this routine. We have significant more pavement damage due to the saturated base than we have had in recent times. It's probably been 15 or 20 years since we've had this much saturation," Celio said.