

October 8, 2018

It was great to have our first rain of the season, last week. It has been so dry in Northern California, which has led to one of the most active fire seasons in recent memory. Obviously the small amount of rain we received won't be enough to end the fire season but it is a start and this now brings up the concerns of mudslides due to the burned out hillsides throughout Northern California.

I had an experience with muddy conditions during that first rain of the season. I was pulling a boat home from Ruth Lake for a friend of mine, which meant I had to drive through the eight mile road construction area west of Dinsmore. Highway 36 is being widened and the sharp curves in the road removed. This was made possible through federal funding and the work has been in progress now for two years.

Well with no rain for six months and the vast amount of dirt being moved around and new roads constructed over deep ravines the drive became very interesting. With the new rain the top few inches of road bed, in many places became slurry like and very slippery. In a number of spots I had to put my truck into 4 wheel drive due to the loss of traction, the added weight of the boat made that necessary. I saw a number of others sliding by as we passed each other on the road.

After dropping off the boat in town my friend went back to Ruth Lake, he called me later and said he barely made it back, due to the condition of the road. He said that he saw a number

of vehicles off to the side of the road or just stopped in the middle of the road because of the conditions. Hopefully after this first rain the top surface will settle and these conditions will improve.

As far as the construction, it is going very well. When you drive through it is evident that the road has changed immensely. Curves in the road are now broad and sweeping with the sharp serpentine curves removed. I believe the construction was supposed to be completed by November, but it doesn't look like that deadline will be met.

The only other issue, that I believe needs to be dealt with, on Hwy 36 is educating a number of drivers on that road who foolishly endanger others. The ones who pass over a double yellow line especially on blind corners. If they wish to endanger themselves that is their right but what they don't seem to realize is that they are jeopardizing the safety of many others by their foolish behavior.

I know it is inconvenient to get behind slower drivers, especially on Hwy 36. I am also aware of the many paved turnouts along the road and will pull over in order for the road warriors to pass. Road warriors is the name I have given those who in their large trucks pull out around you, in places they shouldn't, and leave you in a cloud of black smoke as they pass and nearly run you off the road as they pull back in front of you.

So safe travels especially on Hwy 36. This has been Mike Downey for Community Comment.