

Highway 1 work to delay traffic in Guadalupe

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Resealing a portion of Highway 1 through Guadalupe is expected to delay motorists, but officials say the project should not disrupt trucks taking contaminated soil from the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes to the Santa Maria Regional Landfill.

Starting today, crews from California Pavement Maintenance Company are expected to begin the work on 1.5 miles, from the intersection of Highways 1 and 166 to the Santa Maria River.

The \$175,000 project is expected to last until mid-August, with crews working Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Caltrans officials said.

To accommodate the work, crews plan to restrict traffic to one way by using flaggers to help motorists through the project site.

Caltrans officials have coordinated with Guadalupe staff on the project, said agency spokesman Colin Jones.

"Highway 1 is unique there since it is the main street," Jones said. "Ultimately, (the project) is an improvement and will extend the life of the highway."

Jones said the project shouldn't be too disruptive for the area's trucking operations, either for agriculture or the dunes cleanup.

"We have a pretty set schedule to get in and get out," he said.

Caltrans officials estimate drivers could experience delays of up to 15 minutes during the work.

For nearly a year, trucks have made dozens of daily trips through Guadalupe, along Highway 1, taking tons of contaminated sand from the dunes to the landfill.

Unocal, which is now owned by Chevron, has been working to clean up the dunes since 1990. Each truck carries up to 18.5 tons of sand and follows a predetermined route from the dune access on Thornberry Road in southern San Luis Obispo County to the Santa Maria Regional Landfill east of Santa Maria.

Part of the route takes the trucks on Highway 1 through Guadalupe before turning east on Highway 166.

Since the hauling began last summer, 18 trucks make four round trips daily, said Chevron spokesman Gonzalo Garcia.

In anticipation of the upcoming roadwork, he said, Chevron officials are planning to scale back the hauling to 10 trucks and then assess the situation.

If delays are too long then the company may suspend hauling during the roadwork, Garcia added.

"Our first priority is safety," he said.

So far, 200,000 tons of sand have been transported, Garcia said.