

A storm and flash flood in San Diego, and Chula Vista, CA on January 22, 2024

Some people may have seen the news reports, photos, or the videos on Facebook or Youtube, of the flash floods that hit California from the Oregon state line to the Mexican border, with mud slides to feet of snow drifts. A 100 year flash flood hit Chula Vista, CA and the Sweetwater river valley in northern Chula Vista, and Bonita. Because of storms from January to March 2024.

The storm and flash flood that resulted, severely damaged 4,000 feet of the track from the 8,000 foot layout at the Chula Vista Live Steamers (C.V.L.S.). Now this does not negate the fact that people lost their homes and businesses in San Diego during the flash floods, but the C.V.L.S. is one small part that has been mostly overlooked by the more important issues in San Diego county and by some of the local media.

On January 22, 2024 at approximately 10am flash flood alerts started sounding in San Diego county, by 12pm PST the flood waters were raging. Especially the Sweetwater river valley, where the Chula Vista Live Steamers is located. Then, by 5pm the city of Chula Vista had closed Rohr park pending a safety evaluation before reopening.

On Tuesday morning the videos, and photos, started showing up on Facebook by a few members of the Chula Vista Live Steamers; they were let into the park by the rangers to check the layout. The C.V.L.S. track was severely damaged, twisted, wrapped around trees and covered with debris from the Sweetwater river almost 500 feet south, in the middle of the Chula Vista Golf Course, not to mention the thousands of lost golf balls, river silt, and trash that came in with the water.

An emergency online meeting was called by the board of directors of the C.V.L.S. on Tuesday evening to make plans to start cleaning up the debris and remove all 4,000 feet of damaged track. C.V.L.S. members and members for other local live steam clubs signed on to attend the emergency meeting. Plans were made and ideas were suggested, schedules were agreed upon during the meeting. The clean up started on Wednesday morning, 1-24-2024 at 8am, and then everyday until Saturday 1-27-2024 when the city officially reopened the park. That's when members from other clubs also showed up to help, as they vowed to do during the meeting on Tuesday night, with their other plans set aside on extremely short notice, some as little as 12 hours, for which the C.V.L.S. and its members are extremely grateful.

On Wednesday morning 1-24-2024 at 8am the first C.V.L.S. members showed up to start cleaning a huge mess. People from Work For Hope started going through the park and picking up old wooden ties that were torn from the track and scattered all across the park. The members of the C.V.L.S. were starting to remove twisted track and stacking it in the steaming bays, with help from the park rangers. The track with wooden ties was pretty much unusable, while the sections with Accu-Tie plastic ties made it through with very little damage, mostly small sections of track with plastic ties damaged from nonmovable objects such as trees. The sections with plastic ties were reused in parts that were rebuilt quickly on the next Saturday. The few sections of track with plastic ties that were damaged were disassembled and the ties

saved for later use. The sections with wooden ties were damaged beyond repair. Clean up continued the same way for the next 2 days.

On Saturday the 27th, 2024 about 9am people started showing up at Rohr Park where the Chula Vista Live Steamers is located. Members of the C.V.L.S, Orange County Model Engineers (O.C.M.E.), Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum (L.A.L.S.R.M.), Riverside Live Steamers (R.L.S.), and Bonita Kiwanis club were represented. Everybody broke up into groups after a safety meeting, and got to work breaking down the damaged track, and reinstalling the main lines so rundays can continue. The track that was installed with the Accu-Tie plastic ties made it through the flood with minimal damage and then was reinstalled in place of the severely damaged sections of the main line. Other people were also making new 10 foot track sections as fast as possible. KUSI channel 51 news reporters showed up for a quick news clip that aired on Sunday night, with a major portion of the interview done by the vice president David Belleper. Scotty Lewis the C.V.L.S. the city representative, did an interview later the next week, for the news reporters from KGTV channel 10 which aired the same night.

There is still a lot of work to do, with members from the other clubs saying they will come to help with the rebuilding process in the future. Main lines are next up with ballasting, and leveling within the next month, as the main lines are our major source of revenue from donations, during rundays while giving rides. Then on to the west end, (Staver loop), where most of the damage occurred, with an unknown timeline as of this writing 2-29-2024. On that note the C.V.L.S. is preparing for the next rain storms within about a month from the original clean up work.

The Chula Vista Live Steamers and its members are extremely grateful to all the members that helped from the other clubs, and individuals, we (the C.V.L.S.) would have been in serious trouble without it. It also shows that Live Steamers can step-up to help others in times when we really need to.

A very special Thank You goes to all groups, clubs and everyone that has helped in any way. There are just too many to list individually, without all of you the C.V.L.S. could not have been able to clean up the damage for the park to reopen so soon. Then restart the rebuilding process.

Some of the major contributors that helped are included below.

Kurt Nelson from Utah for flying out for the day only, Saturday, to help repair the track.

Alice Lewis and Vicki Harley for BBQing lunch for everybody on Saturday.

David Belleper for starting the Go-Fundme and working with KUSI news.

Sam the park ranger for working with the C.V.L.S. and for bringing in crews from Work For Hope.

Last but not least Scotty Lewis for basically being the go to guy from Wednesday through Saturday. Then with KGTV news.

Also all the other clubs, groups and members including but not limited to.
Bonita Kiwanis club

Work For Hope
Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum L.A.L.S.R.M.
Orange County Model Engineers O.C.M.E,
Riverside Live Steamers R.L.S.
The San Diego All Gaugers Club

For people wishing to provide additional help please see the links.

Chula Vista Live Steamers
<https://chulavistalivesteamers.com/>

CVLS Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/CVLSRR>

Go-Fundme
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/552kdn-flood-damaged-track>

Venmo page
https://account.venmo.com/u/CVLS1974?fbclid=IwAR2jcn0L_hr3KOOoKdS9vESR06G6_1w-l9c0zOV9fFddOpEbsHseb2GGTB4

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