

Erosion forces closure of road near Trollwood

Residents of mobile home park south of Kandi Lane worried about slippage

By Sarah Henning
The Forum

Kandi Lane is being devoured by the Red River, and neighbors don't think the situation is too sweet.

A 20-foot section of the road, which connects Broadway with Trollwood Park in north Fargo, eroded about a foot Sept. 3, forcing the Fargo Park District to close it.

Another 3 feet have dropped off the road in the last week, said Dennis Walaker, Fargo's public works manager of operations.

"That road is absolutely, totally unsafe," Walaker said.

City Engineer Mark Bittner said the erosion doesn't just cause an access problem for Trollwood Park. Bittner said the road serves as a natural dike and must be intact to prevent flooding.

"Even if we can't maintain that road, we must maintain the flood protection somehow," Bittner said.

The road is on top of a steep slope about 20 feet from the river's edge. Fargo Park Superintendent Roger Gress said a river current creates a fault line as the soil saturates in spring and recedes in fall. This essentially erodes the ledge from underneath, creating spongy, crumbly conditions on the slope.

The Park District has been struggling with riverbank slippage at Trollwood since the 1970s. Just this spring, several graves from an old county cemetery located in Trollwood had to be moved before falling victim to the river. "But now that problem has spread east," Walaker said.

Though the roadway technically belongs to the Park District, Bittner said the city has been working on a project with the Army Corps of Engineers to determine exactly why the road keeps failing and how to prevent it.

"We hoped construction could get started this year, but obviously now that isn't happening," Bittner said. "We hope to get some issues



Walaker

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Nancy Narum

Mobile home resident in park on south side of Kandi Lane

resolved over the winter so we can start working on it right away next summer."

A large mobile home park owned by Van Raden Properties Inc. sits on the south side of the road.

Walaker said he believes these homes aren't in any imminent danger, but said unless the slope is stabilized they may be threatened in the future.

A representative for Van Raden Properties said only that no mobile homes have yet been moved out of the area.

Several residents of the mobile home park said they are worried because no one has provided them with information on the road closing.

Nancy Narum, who lives on Kandi Lane, fears she won't be told to move until it's too late to save her home.

"I've worked my tail off to make my house not look like your typical trailer," she said. "I love the location, and would hate to move. But I'm not going to sit here and wait and see if it sinks, because it seems like it will."

"I'd rather know now what's going on so I can prepare," she said. "Even though these are mobile homes, you don't just hitch up and go. It costs."

While the corps searches for solutions, the Park District will be looking at possibilities for an alternate route into Trollwood, including buying land north of the park and building a new road.

The park has already hosted its last major event of the year, Christmas at Trollwood, but Gress said in the spring the school district will need the park for various annual activities, including Trollwood Performing Arts School which starts in June.

