

Work begins this summer to improve Moke River bridge

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Motorists on State Route 49 between Amador and Calaveras counties can expect delays this summer as work begins to upgrade the Mokelumne River Bridge.

The \$10.1 million project is scheduled to begin in late July or early August and will be conducted over two, possible three construction seasons due to a late start this year because of weather and environmental-related issues, according to Caltrans.

The purpose of the project is to improve safety and ride quality for motorists and enhance the mobility of pedestrian and bicycle traffic crossing the bridge.

New bridge rails that meet current crash safety standards will be installed, and the bridge, which was built in 1952, will be widened to include 4-foot shoulders that will better meet the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists.

The roadway approach shoulders also will be widened on both ends of the bridge for approximately 75 feet to match the widened structure and the adjacent roadway segments. In addition, the existing, deteriorated chip-seal overlay will be replaced to seal cracks in the bridge deck.

One-way traffic control, utilizing a temporary traffic signal, will be in place to allow work on one side of the bridge at a time. The signal will be configured to allow emergency vehicle override and adequate timing for bicycle traffic accommodation.

Flaggers also may be utilized during the day to minimize delays. There will not be designated detours on local roads.

“Caltrans is committed to maintaining as much access to the Mokelumne River’s recreational amenities as is consistent with public and construction safety, including keeping the Big Bar Recreation Area available for watercraft coming from upstream (Electra-Middle Bar Run) and to those wishing to use Big Bar as a take-out for their watercraft,” Caltrans said in a statement about the beginning of work on the project.

Work on the bridge will be conducted by Bridgeway Civil Constructors of Vacaville.

Although scheduled to begin this summer, work on the project is subject to change due to factors such as availability of equipment, or related issues.