

Association of Village Council Presidents Press Release

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For Immediate Release

With Very Low Risk of Additional Flooding for Kuskokwim Communities, Focus Pivots to Monitoring Potential Breakup Flooding in Yukon Communities

Bethel, Alaska - Regional Resources Coordination Committee (RRCC) Chair, Alvin Jimmie Sr., Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP) Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Coordinator, lead a teleconference with updates on the status of the Kuskokwim River spring breakup and proposed a shift in focus to the Yukon River. All participants agreed.

The RCC is made up of representatives from the following regional organizations: AVCP, the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC), City of Bethel, the Lower Kuskokwim, the Alaska National Guard, and Orutsararmiut Native Council. The RCC monitors and prepares for possible flooding conditions every spring as river ice melts and begins flowing down the river.

Although water levels are still high, communities along the Kuskokwim are no longer experiencing a high risk of flooding. All communities report large amounts of ice, flowing freely, and steadily. In Napaimute, water levels have dropped by 30 feet. In Upper and Lower Kalskag flood water is receding. Water levels have remained high in Akiak, but without change. Although airport cameras are not functioning in Kwethluk and Napakiak, based on the observations of participants, the communities do not appear to be in danger. In Bethel, water levels remain high.

"I think we're going to be ok, knocking on wood. And we'll be out there getting steam bath wood soon I hope." says Alvin Jimmie Sr. Through consultation with Elders, Alvin Jimmie Sr. expects water levels to continue to fluctuate significantly in sequence with the tides.

Capt. Madison with the Alaska National Guard expected the augmented crew in Bethel, Alaska, to be packing up and heading back home to Anchorage.

Questions were raised about flood damage to primary residences in Napaimute, Lower Kalskag, and Upper Kalskag. No one has clear answers at this time. It is known that several summer cabins have been either partially or entirely damaged.

If communities do not declare a federal disaster, Ramona Van Cleve, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Tribal Liaison, offered her assistance in connecting people to funding; specifically the Elder couple who were rescued by a Alaska National Guard helicopter from their home in Napaimute.

Turning attention to the Yukon River, Alvin Jimmie reported large amounts of ice moving along Chena Hot Springs area. He says, "That's the Mighty Yukon over there. I think it moves faster than the Kuskokwim. He is most concerned about potential breakup flooding in the following communities near

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the mouth of the Yukon River: Alukanuk, Nunam Iqua, Emmonak, and Kotlik. Participants expressed interest in participating in monitoring the Yukon River breakup, including a participant from FEMA and the Alaska National Guard.

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For additional information, please contact AVCP Director of Communications, Azara Mohammadi, at 907-543-7317 or email at azaram@avcp.org.

AVCP is a regional nonprofit tribal consortium comprised of the 56 federally recognized tribes of the YK Delta. The geographic boundaries of AVCP extend from the Yukon River Village of Russian Mission downstream to the Bering Sea coast, north up through Kotlik and south along the coastline to Platinum and then extending up the Kuskokwim River to Stony River, including Lime Village on the Stony River tributary. The area encompasses approximately 6.5 million acres, or 55,000 square miles, in Western Alaska.