

BETHEL SEARCH AND RESCUE

BOX 2633, BETHEL, ALASKA



To Report a Missing or Overdue Person Call 911 or 907-545-HELP (4357)



EXTREME DANGER:

Very thin rotten ice and deep open water in the Gweek River below the 2nd bend from the mouth

3.29.19 BSAR River Report:*

"May in March"

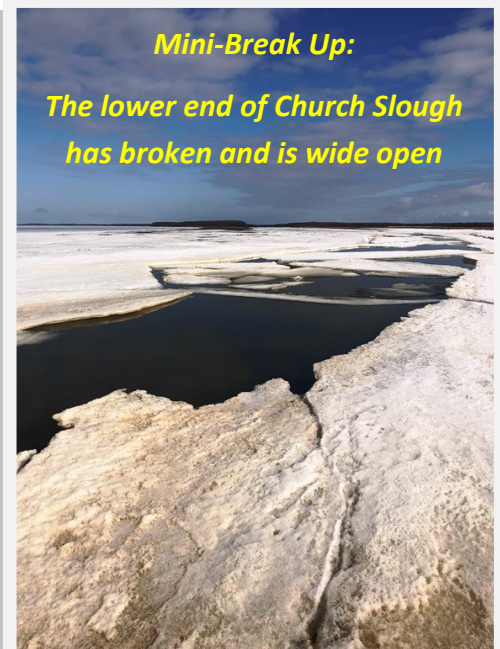
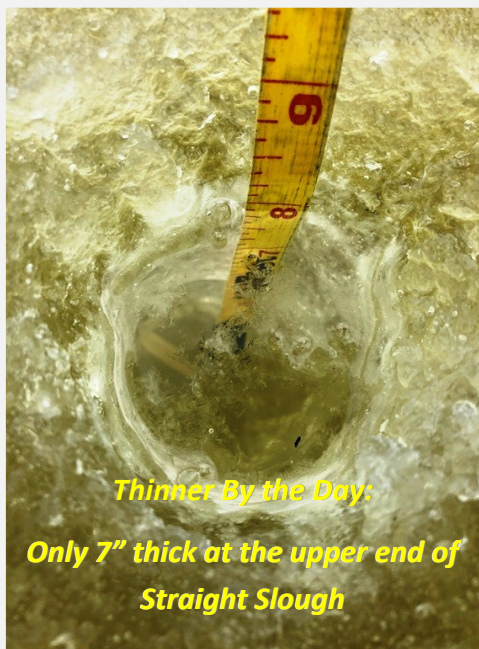
Summary:

After the warmest February in 95 years for our region, March is working towards setting a new record as well. With weeks of above normal temperatures, rain, and the sun growing stronger by the day Kuskokwim River ice conditions have been deteriorating rapidly. BSAR has been working overtime to monitor the changing conditions. On Sunday, March 24th BSAR put out an advisory that no further truck/car travel was recommended on the River. **Just four days later, BSAR recommends that even travel by snow machine and ATV be done with: EXTREME CAUTION.**

Ice thickness was only about half of what it normally should be for late March, and it is getting thinner by the day.

Today a BSAR team made the Big Loop through Straight Slough, around the main channel, into the Gweek River, past Kwethluk through Kuskokwak Slough, down the Akiachak Channel, and through Church Slough back to Bethel to assess River ice conditions. This is what they observed:

- **The Upper End of Straight Slough has gotten 5" thinner since Saturday. It is only 7" thick.**
- **All Ice that was drilled is SOFT**
- **The Gweek River ice is thin, rotten, and opening up from the second bend all the way out to the lower tip of the big (Pavilla's) island on the main Kuskokwim.**
- **The east side of the Kuskokwim below the Y and across from the upper end of Church Slough is only 4" to 6" thick. The ice however is deceiving—it looks white but is very thin and full of small open holes.**
- **Kuskokwak Slough above Kwethluk is only 6" - 8" thick through most of its length.**
- **The Akiachak Channel just above the Y has gotten 4" thinner since Saturday. It is only 8" thick in this area.**
- **The lower end of Church Slough below the little short cut slough is wide open with strong current**
- **Traveling near the beaches along the tide crack appeared to be safe but there are many small open drain holes along the crack.**



Closing:

At tonight's meeting a local Elder reminded us that, "The trail you went out on in the morning will not be the same when you return later in the day". With River ice way below normal, conditions rapidly deteriorating and no cool weather in the short-term forecast this is especially true this year. We may be seeing things we haven't seen before. If you must travel do so with extreme caution.

And please, please don't let anyone drink and travel.

Thank you and Happy....Spring? From BSAR

***Please note that this report is for informational purposes only and is not an advisory that it is safe to travel**