

BETHEL SEARCH AND RESCUE

BOX 2633, BETHEL, ALASKA



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



NEARLY A MONTH AND NOT MUCH CHANGE IN SIZE - STILL A GIANT OPEN HOLE:

At lower end of Gweek (Pavilla's) Island 11.18.2022 (LEFT) & 12.16.22 (RIGHT)

This hole has been marked by BSAR with willows and BLUE reflectors

12.16.22 BSAR Kuskokwim River Aerial Survey—Report 2022 - 07* *

"Slowly but Surely"

Summary:

It has been nearly a month since BSAR flew our first River Survey of the 2022-23 winter season. The weather has been up and down—warm and cool. No deep cold yet, but with temperatures hovering around 0 in recent days conditions have been slowly improving. With the upcoming holidays travel activity on the River has also been increasing, including early season truck trails to the closer villages. BSAR has spent the past few days looking at conditions on the River by snowmachine, plane and even truck. This is what was observed:

Open Water in the Bethel Area:

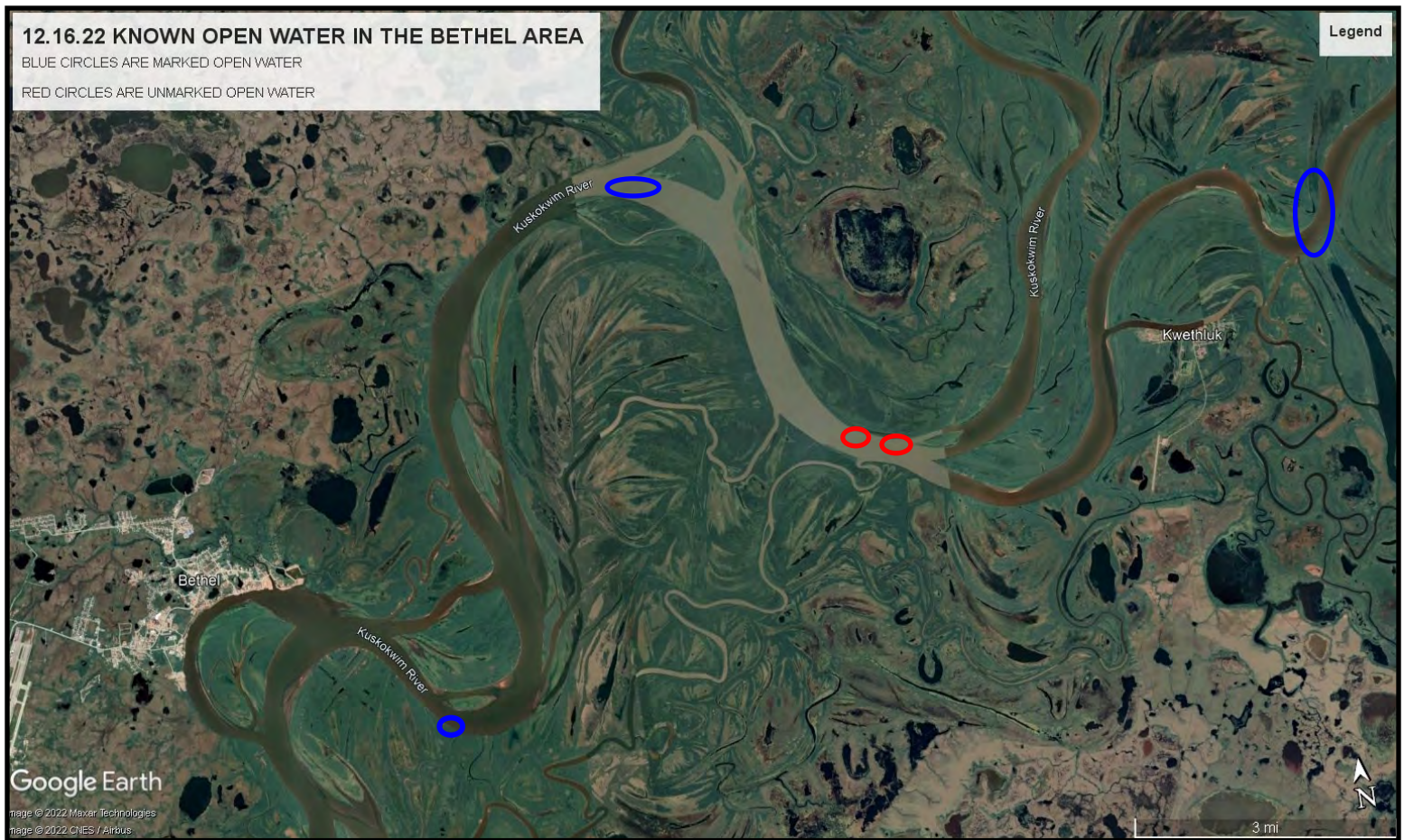
In the past weeks BSAR teams have marked eight open holes in the Bethel area. The smaller ones have frozen over.

FIVE HOLES ARE STILL OPEN IN THE BETHEL AREA. THE TWO CLOSEST ONES ARE MARKED.

TWO ARE UNMARKED.

In order of closeness to Bethel these holes are located:

- 1. Joe Pete's Bend**
- 2. Lower end of the Gweek (Pavilla's) Island**
- 3. Two unmarked holes are along the east bank of the Kuskokwim across from the Upper End of Church Slough**
- 5. Kuskokuak Slough from the Upper End of Kwethluk Short Cut towards Wassillie B. Evan's Camp**



Open Water Kwethluk to Akiak:



ANOTHER GIANT: huge open hole right when you come out of the Kwethluk Short Cut Slough. Left picture is looking upstream toward Wassillie B. Evan's camp. Right picture is looking downstream into the Kwethluk Short Cut and the other Slough that goes behind the Children's Home. This open hole is marked. The trail is along the east/south bank.

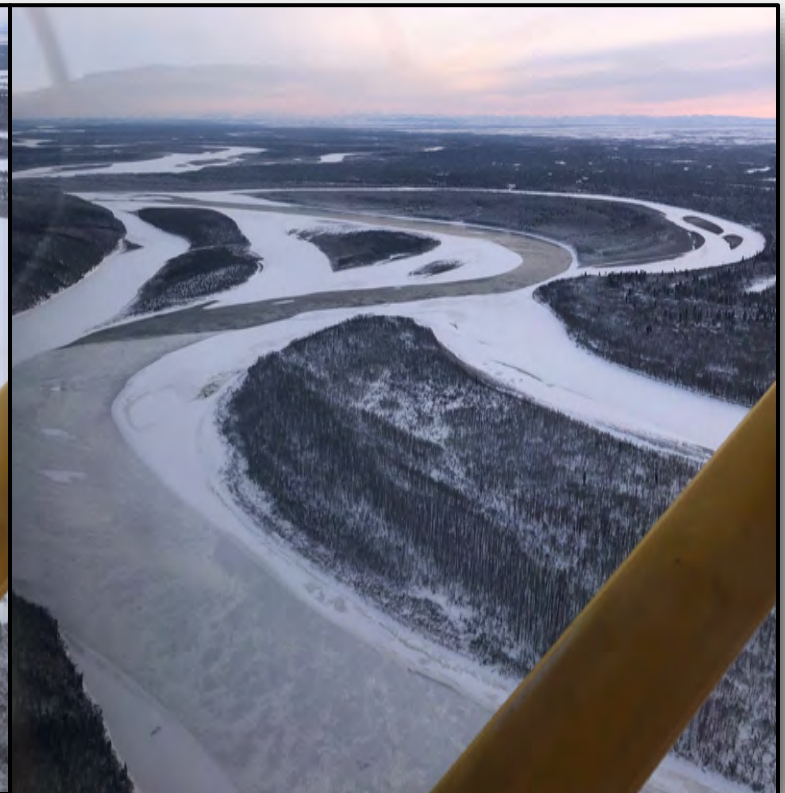


Numerous open holes below Akiak

Big & Long: open hole by Joe Boy's old fish camp between Akiak & Tuluksak

WARNING: UPSTREAM OF KUSKOKUAK SLOUGH NO OPEN WATER IS MARKED. THERE ARE MANY SMALL HOLES. THE ONES SHOWN HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES

Further Up the River - Ice Snakes!



Left: 29 miles below Lower Kalskag the main channel below Edward Wise's old fish camp is wide open bank to bank

Right: The Tail of the Snake - on November 18, 2022 the open water between Kalskag and Aniak was 16 miles long. On December 16, 2022 it had shortened to 3 miles long.

The Head of the Snake - Jaws wide open! Upper end of the open water 14 miles below Aniak



Truck Trails:

Truck trails are opening up to the villages closest to Bethel. These early season truck trails always get established before the official plowed and marked ice road starts. They generally follow the snow machine trails and may or not be marked with willows and white reflectors. Use these early truck trails with extreme caution. BSAR measured the ice along the truck trail to Napaskiak on 12.15.22. We found it to be ranging from 14" to 22"

Closing:

It's been a long month of up and down weather but River conditions are slowly getting better. Holiday travelers will still need to be cautious and the back trails may still be the best routes to use for awhile yet—especially in the Akiak and Tuluksak areas. Further upstream even more patience and colder weather is needed.

A big thank you to those search and rescue groups that have been out working to keep travelers safe - a lot of good people out there doing a lot of good work!

Happy Holidays and Safe, Sober Travels to All from Bethel Search and Rescue!

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

****This flight was sponsored by the Native Village of Napaimute Ice Road Development Division**