



Alaska National Parks News Release

May 5, 2009 4:30 p.m.

NPS Responding to Yukon River Flooding, Community Damage

Flooding on the Yukon River has caused significant damage in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve gateway communities of Eagle and Eagle Village in northeastern Alaska, including losses to employee homes, and has brought the evacuation this afternoon of at least one family living near the National Park Service unit.

There is a high potential of additional damage to National Park Service assets in Eagle and in several locations downstream within the 2.5 million acre preserve. Flood waters are being driven by a combination of higher than usual snow pack (up to 150% of normal), higher than usual ice formation on the river (up to 140% of normal) and several days of unseasonably warm weather which caused rapid melting and ice movement downstream on the Yukon.

Using a NPS charter helicopter, rangers evacuated a couple living just outside the preserve boundary about 12 miles downstream of Eagle. The family had seen one of their sled dogs and riverboat crushed by ice on Monday night and was in significant danger. The couple – who spent the night on their roof amid rising flood waters -- was evacuated from their cabin's roof along with their remaining 24 sled dogs this afternoon to Eagle.

NPS rangers are evaluating options of evacuating up to five other people who live on private land within the preserve and who are in danger from the ice and high water.

“We’re concerned about our neighbors and will be seeing how we can best help out,” said Greg Dudgeon, superintendent at Yukon-Charley Rivers. “We’ve got employees in Eagle who have lost property as well, so we’ll be looking out for them and moving in staff and supplies from Fairbanks to assist them.”

Eagle Village, about 3-4 miles from the NPS field headquarters in Eagle, has seen many of its buildings damaged or destroyed by flooding. Within Eagle, at least two employee homes have had water damage and one of them had water up to the second story. An estimated 10 homes in Eagle had been damaged or destroyed, and an estimated 30 of the area's 125 residents were homeless this morning.

Dudgeon said this afternoon that several Eagle Village residents were reported to be stranded by the flood waters, and that a second National Park Service helicopter will be providing either evacuation or bringing supplies to those families late today. Through this afternoon, the NPS has provided the only emergency air response in the northeastern Alaska community.



The park has also flown reconnaissance flights up and down river from Eagle and reported significant ice between Eagle and the Canadian border which could cause additional ice jams and flooding as it moves downstream in the next several days.

Park staff and NPS responders from Fairbanks have assisted the community by providing packaged meals, water and toiletries to the Eagle school which is serving as an evacuation center. The staff has also evacuating its own computer equipment, historical documents and other vulnerable supplies to NPS buildings on higher ground in Eagle.

After the flooding subsides, Yukon-Charley staff will assess damage downstream to resources in the preserve. Flooding and ice movement along the riverbanks is common, but this year's damage likely will be significantly above the usual flood levels. The preserve maintains several historical public use cabins along the river including the landmark two-story Slaven's Roadhouse at Coal Creek. Other smaller cabins and artifacts from the early 1900s and earlier dot the riverbanks. An additional concern is that house debris, fuel tanks and other waste from damaged residences will wash through the preserve this spring causing possible cleanup work for the NPS.

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