



## Arrive Alive – a Tribal Transportation Safety Project funded through the Federal Highways Administration



*What Open Water Markers Look Like at Night: BLUE reflectors spaced close together – this is one of the many open holes already marked by Akiachak SAR in their area*

### 11-23-16 TTSP Initial Implementation Report:\*

#### *“Better Later than Never”*

*Summary: Although we had another late freeze up on the Kuskokwim, recent cold temperatures and low snow cover is quickly catching things up. Subsistence trails are radiating further and further out from our villages and a few inter-community trails have been established. However we aren't quite there yet for full-time general traffic. There is still a lot of unmarked open water and thin ice areas out there.*

*A sincere thank you goes out to the Akiachak Search & Rescue for all the early season work they have already done in their area to keep travelers safe.*

*Today a small Napaimute ground team did a River survey of local area conditions. This is what they observed:*



*A Sign of Thin Ice: big flowery ice crystals on top of the ice*



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### *River Trails:*

- A marked trail has been established from Napaskiak to Bethel by Napaskiak SAR. Ice thickness is reported to be 8”-12”
- A marked trail has been established from Akiakchak to Bethel using the Gweek and Hangar Lake portages.
- A fairly well traveled trail has been established between Kwethluk and Bethel using both Kuskokwak Slough and Max’s portage, Church Slough, and Straight Slough
- There is no established trail past Kwethluk through Kuskokwak Slough. There are several **UNMARKED** open holes scattered throughout the Slough.
- There is no established River trail to Akiak or Tuluksak
- Most inter-community travel is still by back trails, but many of these are reported to be rough and rutted from ATV traffic during warm weather

**Ice thickness is still highly variable. Napaimute’s team measured thickness ranging from 4” to 16” during their 130 mile round trip survey. Shell ice was found to be an additional danger to early season travelers.**



*Using a chainsaw with a marked bar to take preliminary measurements of Kuskokwim ice thicknesses*



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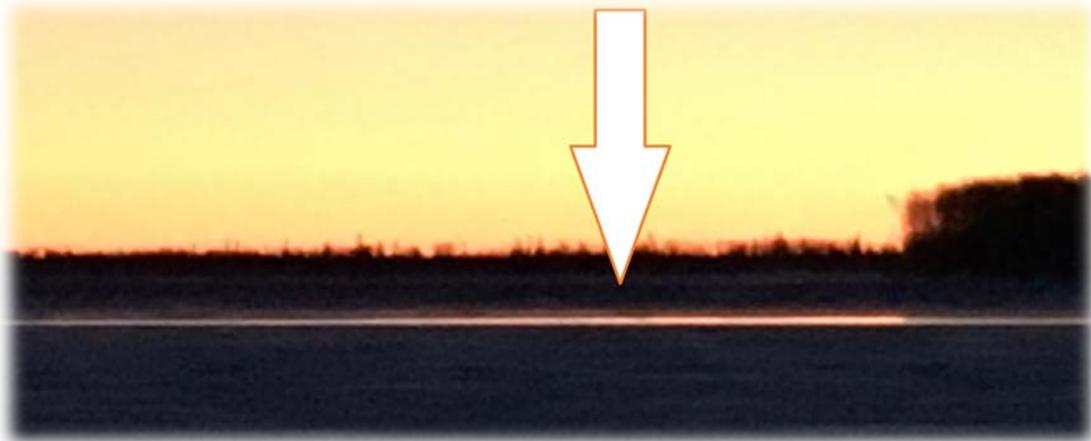


*Shell ice is present throughout the Lower Kuskokwim from the high water freeze up – these pictures show how much the water has dropped*

**BEWARE OF HOLLOW SOUNDING ICE AS YOU DRIVE OR WALK OVER IT**



**We have to remember that it's only November and that there are still large areas of open water and thin ice**



**The DANGER of unmarked open water in low light: If a traveler had his back to the sunset this open water would be very hard to see**



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Ice Crystals form when warmer River water is close to the cold surface air. These large flowery crystals can be mistaken for snow cover. These pictures were taken below Akiak. The two big bends below Akiak only recently froze over and are only 6" thick all the way across.



During freeze up when there's no traffic, wolves like to hunt the along the River. This moose kill is not too far from Bethel.

That's our first report for the winter of 2016-17.

Happy Holidays & Safe Travels from the Napaimute TTSP Crew

Thank you.



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