

# Inundation Threat to Fairbanks

State and Federal agencies are gearing up to be ready for *any spring flooding this year.*

And although the situation doesn't look critical for most of Alaska, the Corps of Engineers and the Alaska Disaster Office are worried about deep snow in the upper Tanana and Chena River watersheds and the almost-certain danger of floods to Fairbanks, Nenana,

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Minto and possibly Tanana.

State Disaster Office Director Don Lowell, in Fairbanks for a one-day conference of state and federal agencies on spring flood action planning, said that floods this spring may surpass the record levels of the 1948 and 1937 floods in Nenana and Minto.

Representatives of the many state, federal and military agencies involved in Alaska flood prediction, rescue and prevention work met in Fairbanks yesterday to plan for any flooding that might hit Alaska this year.

They met to eliminate any problems of communication between the agencies during the flood crises, and to map out a planned, coordinated method of flood prediction, bush communication of flood information, and possible evacuation.

"With the floods," Lowell said, "we're getting into a situation that demands some very close cooperation between everybody concerned, whether it is the villages, towns and cities, the state and federal agencies, or the military."

One of the real problems flood-fighters face during the spring breakup is getting accurate information on water levels, river and ice conditions from isolated areas of the bush.

The Corps of Engineers has set up a rough river-level gauge in many villages, but success in getting the village people to radio in information has been limited during the past three years the system has been in effect.

"We're hoping to do a little better on it this year, though," said Mason Wade, hydrologist with the Corps of Engineers.

Wade also told of a new explosive developed by the Corps of Engineers to help

break ice-jams. A simple fertilizer, "Ammonia nitrate, is mixed with diesel oil, creating a powerful explosive when detonated with special fuses.

To break an ice-jam, helicopters would drop crews on to the ice-jam itself. A charge would then be planted under the pack and not detonated until the men were safely lifted off the jam by helicopter.

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