

Flooding continues to plague Yukon villages

by Holly F. Reimer

Tundra Times reporter

Many villages in Alaska are still experiencing flooding and flood warnings as breakup nears its end in some parts of the state, while other parts are just beginning to thaw.

Paul Meyer, hydrologist for the National Weather Services flood department, said that residents in Emonak and Alakanuk, along the lower Yukon River are still riding snow machines on the river.

While Russian Mission has been

almost completely flooded for the last week. But now the water level is slowly dropping, the Division of Emergency Services reported.

The emergency service also said water and chunks of ice are moving between Marshall and St. Marys with water levels rising at St. Marys and Pilot Station. Pilot Station sits on the lowest ground in that area.

Emmonak and Marshall, along the lower Yukon, have not experienced any flooding yet, but they are watching water levels closely.

"There's an ice jam between Kobuk

and Shungnak and there's one above Kobuk. That means there's a good chance Kobuk will flood," Meyer said.

"All the Brooks Range rivers are still frozen around the Nome area. It may start breaking up next week," Meyer said. "It's been a long winter."

The Alaska Native Medical Center's Emergency Health and Engineering branch has been involved since the beginning of breakup, when Circle and Fort Yukon flooded.

Steve Corp, chief, said the branch had to decontaminate Circle's water

supply.

"We've also worked with state agencies to help bring in food supplies and help with medical aid," Corp said.

Corp said the branch also informs villagers that they have to boil water before drinking it. The branch helps make sure food and water supplies are safe for human consumption.

The Federal Property Damage Assessment team will start assessing damage to the Kuskokwim villages of Aniak, Napaskiak, Oscarville and Kwethluk.