



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Governor Declares Disaster for Interior Flooding Event
*Yukon, Kuskokwim, Kobuk and Susitna Rivers all show
potential to damage communities***

May 6, 2009, Anchorage, Alaska - Governor Sarah Palin declared a disaster for the flooding event in the Interior of Alaska, including the drainages of the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Kobuk, and Susitna Rivers. The disaster declaration will allow greater coordination between state agencies and easier access to state disaster relief funds, and will pave the way for receipt of federal funds from a possible federal disaster declaration.

River watch teams are in communities right now, assessing the current flooding stages in Eagle and Aniak, and are preparing to go downriver from the current flooding to help other communities protect their homes and critical infrastructure. Disaster Immediate Response Teams are preparing to deploy to communities that have received flood damage to assess the situation and relay information back to the State Emergency Coordination Center.

"This disaster declaration provides for the most effective rapid response from the state government to help these people in their time of need," Governor Palin said. "I am committed to helping rural Alaskans stay safe and recover as quickly as possible from this spring flood."

The spring flooding event is in its beginning stages, and will be monitored until all of the ice jams break apart, and all of the ice clears from the major rivers. A formal written declaration of disaster will be finalized when the event is complete and the total number of people affected and the total damages can be assessed by state and local governments.

Ice jam flooding has occurred in Salcha, Crooked Creek, Red Devil, Aniak, Napaimiut, North Pole, and Kobuk. Severe flooding is anticipated in many more communities as the river drainages continue their seasonal thaw and more ice jams occur. The unusually high snow pack and ice thickness throughout Interior Alaska and Northwest Alaska, combined with recent warm weather are contributing to this season's significant flooding.

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