Spring Breakup Outlook for Alaska
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Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center
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www.weather.gov/aprfc

EXPERIMENTAL PRODUCT
Spring Breakup Outlook for Alaska

Statewide Summary

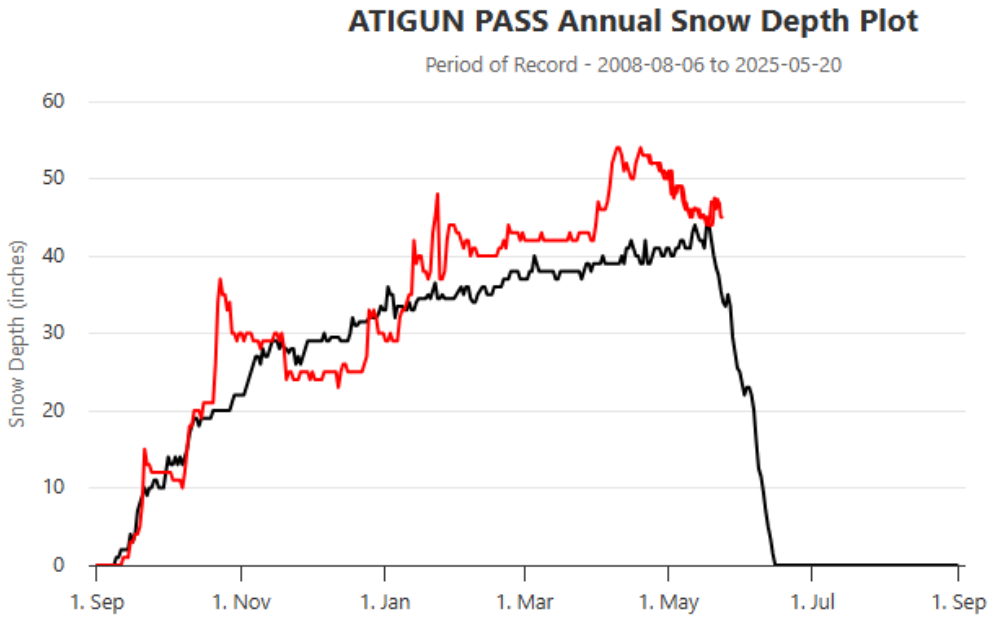
Breakup has largely concluded across areas south of the Brooks Range. Remaining intact ice is primarily limited to the lower Kobuk River and much of the Porcupine River. Streams and Rivers will continue to respond to higher elevation snowmelt with gradual increases in water levels. Attention has now shifted to breakup on the North Slope, where winter conditions persist and snowmelt has been minimal to nonexistent. **The flood risk for North Slope rivers is increasing due to above average late season snowpack combined with the potential for a rapid warm-up in early June.**

Northwest Alaska: On Thursday, May 22nd, webcam imagery indicated breakup on the Kobuk River near Ambler. Satellite imagery and on-the-ground reports confirm that ice remains in place from downstream of Ambler to the river's mouth; however, no flooding is anticipated. The Noatak River has broken up at Noatak and open water extends downstream, upstream sections still contain some intact ice.

Porcupine River: The Porcupine River adjacent to Fort Yukon is open. Areas upstream are still ice-covered. The river ice continues to slowly degrade with a gradual onset of snowmelt beginning upstream from Old Crow. The risk of snowmelt flooding at Fort Yukon is low.

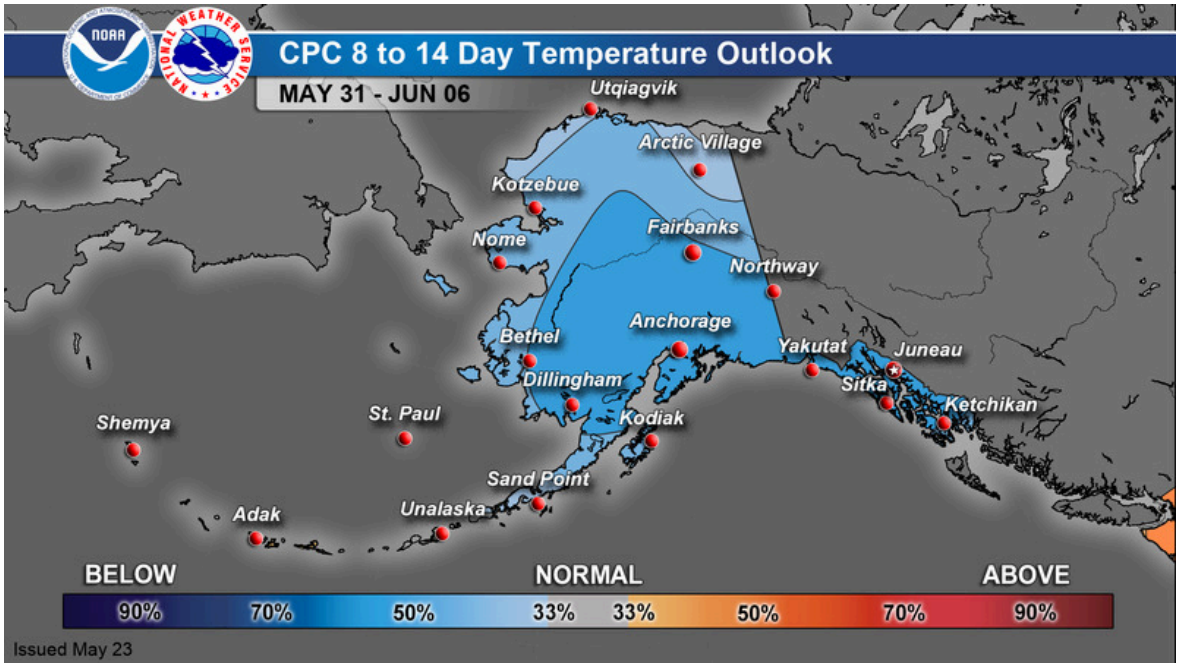
Chena Basin: A notable late-season snowpack persists at higher elevations in the Chena Basin, with several sites near 3,000 feet still reporting over two feet of snow. This snow is melting rapidly. Below 2,500 feet, little to no snow remains. Given the current temperature forecast, ongoing snowmelt is expected to cause modest rises in the Chena River, but flooding is not anticipated in the coming week.

North Slope
Snowpack remains widespread across the North Slope, with snow depths varying between 1 to 2 feet with nearly 4 feet reported at Atigun Pass (4,800 ft)—well above average for this time of year. Snow depth gauges across the region show little to no indication of spring melt (see graph below).

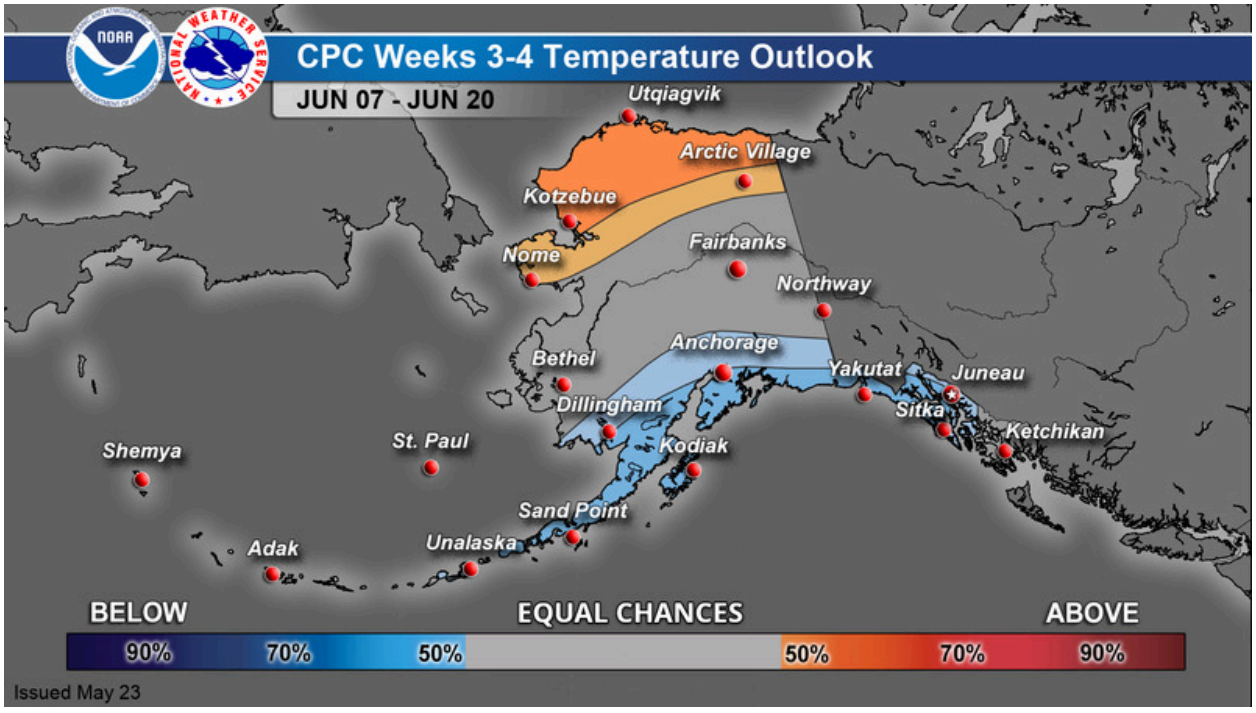


Atigun Pass (4800 ft) current snow depth plot (red) compared to median (black)

Climate Prediction Center (CPC) guidance indicates that below-average temperatures are likely to persist into early June (see below), further delaying snowmelt and river breakup across the region.



However, recent CPC forecasts suggest the potential for a rapid warm-up beginning late in the first week of June (see below). **This abrupt transition from cold to warmer conditions, combined with the significantly above-average snowpack, raises concerns about breakup-related flooding and erosion—particularly along the Sagavanirktok (Sag) and Kuparuk Rivers—in early June.**



Summary of 2025 Breakup Dates

*** indicates date of actual breakup in 2025*

Tanana-Fairbanks				
River-Reach	**Location**	**Median Breakup Date**	**Years of Record**	**2025 Breakup Date**
Chena River				
	Chena Lakes Project			4/23**
Tanana River				
	Northway	4/26	32	4/25**
	Salcha	4/26	3	4/28**
	Fairbanks	4/30	22	4/30**
	Nenana	4/30	45	4/27**
	Manley HS	5/3	33	5/2**

Yukon River				
River-Reach	**Location**	**Median Breakup Date**	**Years of Record**	**2025 Breakup Date**
Yukon River (Upper)				
	Dawson, YT	5/4	45	4/30**
	Eagle	5/4	45	5/1**
	Circle	5/9	41	5/5**
	Fort Yukon	5/11	41	5/6**
	Beaver	5/11	28	5/12**
	Stevens Village	5/11	26	5/13**
	Rampart	5/12	28	5/13**
Yukon River (Mid)				
	Tanana	5/8	40	5/8**
	Ruby	5/9	39	5/7**
	Galena	5/11	44	5/8**
	Koyukuk	5/10	18	5/9**
	Nulato	5/12	27	5/9**
	Kaltag	5/12	39	5/10**
	Anvik	5/14	36	5/12**
Yukon River (Lower)				
	Holy Cross	5/14	38	5/12**
	Russian Mission	5/15	38	5/12**
	Marshall	5/15	33	5/12**
	Pilot Station	5/13	28	5/12**
	Mountain Village	5/15	38	5/13**
	Alakanuk/Emmonak	5/20	39	5/17**

Kuskokwim River				
River-Reach	**Location**	**Median Breakup Date**	**Years of Record**	**2025 Breakup Date**
Kuskokwim River				
	Nikolai	4/23	39	4/22**
	McGrath	5/4	45	5/3**
	Stony River	5/2	37	4/27**
	Sleetmute	5/1	36	4/27**
	Red Devil	5/3	39	4/28**
	Crooked Creek	5/4	39	4/28**
	Aniak	5/5	42	5/1**
	Kalskag	5/5	36	5/5**
	Tuluksak	5/7	33	5/2**
	Akiak	5/8	39	5/7**
	Kwethluk	5/5	13	5/6**
	Bethel	5/9	45	5/6**
	Napakiak	5/10	30	5/8**

Southeast-Southcentral				
River-Reach	**Location**	**Median Breakup Date**	**Years of Record**	**2025 Breakup Date**
Southeast				
Kenai River				
Anchor River		4/17	16	Early April**
Matanuska River				
Susitna River				
	Gold Creek	5/2	9	4/25**
	Sunshine	5/2	36	4/28**
Talkeetna				
	Talkeetna	4/28	5	4/24**
Yentna River				
	Lake Creek	5/1	33	4/23**
Skwentna River				
	Skwentna	4/30	30	4/24**
Copper River				
	Gakona	5/1	36	4/29**
	Gulkana	5/1	34	4/29**

North Slope-Northwest				
River-Reach	**Location**	**Median Breakup Date**	**Years of Record**	**2025 Breakup Date**
Koyukuk River				
	Bettles	5/10	43	5/16**
	Allakaket	5/11	38	5/12**
	Hughes	5/11	38	5/13**
Seward Peninsula				
	Buckland	5/18	35	5/15**
Kobuk River				
	Kobuk	5/14	40	5/16**
	Shungnak	5/16	32	5/16**
	Ambler	5/16	38	5/22**
Noatak River				
	Noatak	5/19	27	5/20**
Brooks Range				
	Colville at Umiat	5/25	22	5/22-5/28
	Colville at Colville Village	6/3	23	5/31-6/6

The next Spring Breakup Outlook will be published May 30, 2025.

For more detail and to see the Flood Potential Map refer to the APRFC website at:
https://www.weather.gov/aprfc/floodpotential

This product is experimental. For more information and to submit comments, please contact:

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