



Spring Breakup Outlook for Alaska

Valid May 22, 2026

[Alaska-Pacific River Forecast Center](https://www.weather.gov/aprfc)

Next Product Issuance: May 29, 2026

www.weather.gov/aprfc

2026 Spring Breakup Outlook for Alaska

Spring Breakup Outlook Update and Current Breakup Status

This breakup outlook contains updates on the current breakup status, snowpack analysis, short and long term temperature predictions, and revised flood threat and breakup timing for individual communities.

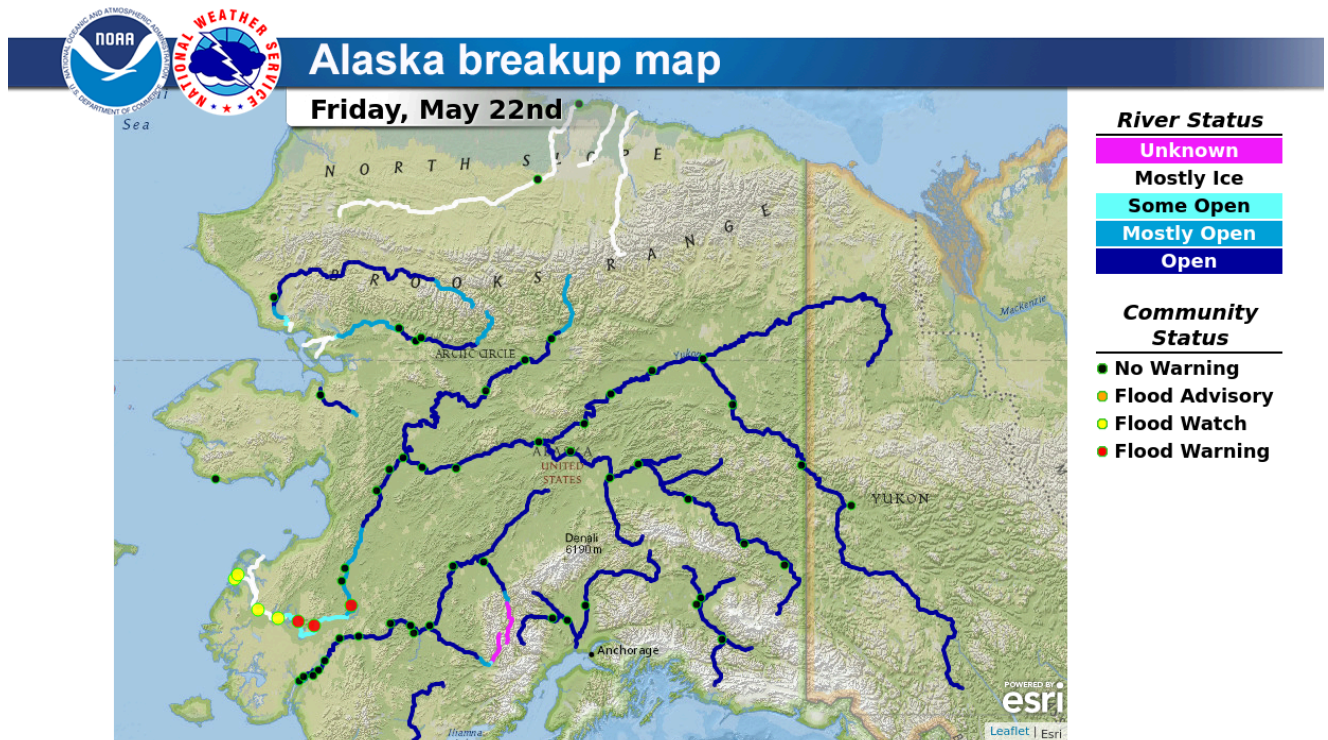
The end of river breakup across the state is rapidly approaching with just the last section of the lower Yukon and North Slope Rivers remaining. Currently (as of May 22nd), the breakup front on the Yukon River is located between Marshall and Pilot Station, roughly 140 miles upstream from the river mouth.

A 4-day-long ice jam downstream of Russian Mission released yesterday after causing extensive overbank flooding from Russian Mission upstream to Grayling, with the most severe flooding occurring near Holy Cross where major flooding was reported. Flooding is now occurring downstream in Russian Mission and Marshall and is expected to develop in Pilot Station and low-lying areas of Mountain Village over the next day or so. Farther downstream, the communities of Emmonak, Alakanuk, and Nunam Iqua should also expect flooding in the coming days as the breakup front advances toward the mouth of the Yukon River, releasing a large volume of water that has been impounded behind multiple ice jams.

Across the North Slope, winter conditions continue to persist with a substantial snowpack still in place across much of the region. However, melting has begun near the Brooks Range, and some leads are beginning to open along the Sagavanirktok River. River breakup across the North Slope is expected to begin by the middle to latter part of next week and continue through the first week of June.

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[Link to Current Breakup Map](#)

Locations of significant ice jams and flooding during 2026 Breakup:

- Black River at Chalkyitsik
- Lower Chatanika River north of Murphy Dome
- Koyukuk River at Hughes
- Kuskokwim River at most locations from Aniak down to Napaskiak as well as McGrath
- Yukon River from Ruby down to Marshall
- Buckland River at Buckland

Snowmelt flooding was reported for:

- near Anderson due to a blocked culvert
- Fort Yukon and Stevens Village

This Spring Breakup Outlook for Alaska is based on observed snowpack, ice thickness reports, and seasonal temperature outlooks. The term 'normal' is defined as being at or near the climatological average, which is typically defined over a 30-year period of record.

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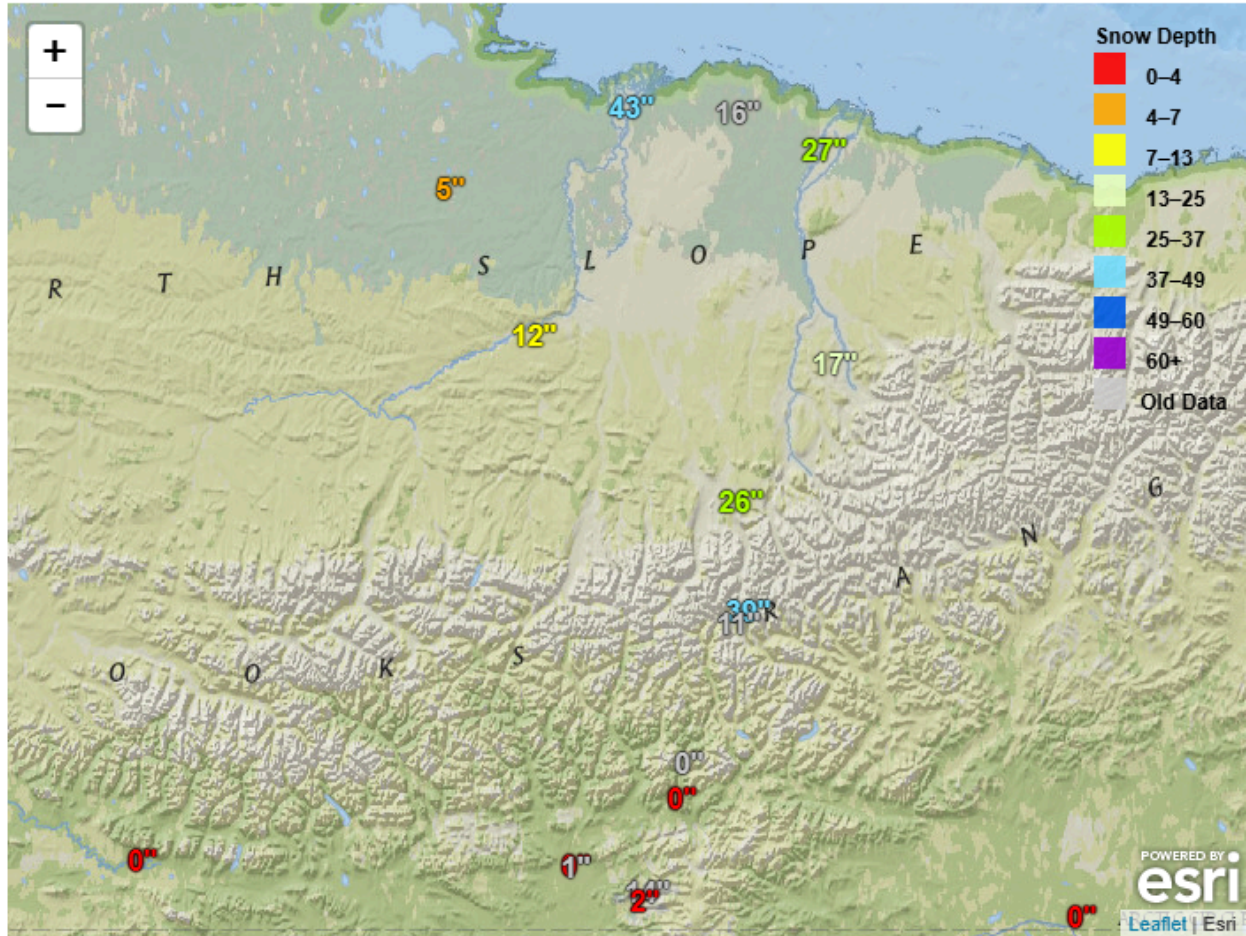
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Snowpack

Much of the low to mid elevation snowpack across the state has melted off with just snowpack remaining in the Brooks Range and the North Slope. Automated snow depth gauges along the North Slope are showing 1-2 feet of snowpack, with some sites along the southern portion of the North Slope beginning to show signs of melting.

Snow Depth - 05-22-2026 13:11



[Link to Alaska Snow Depth map](#)

Climate Outlook

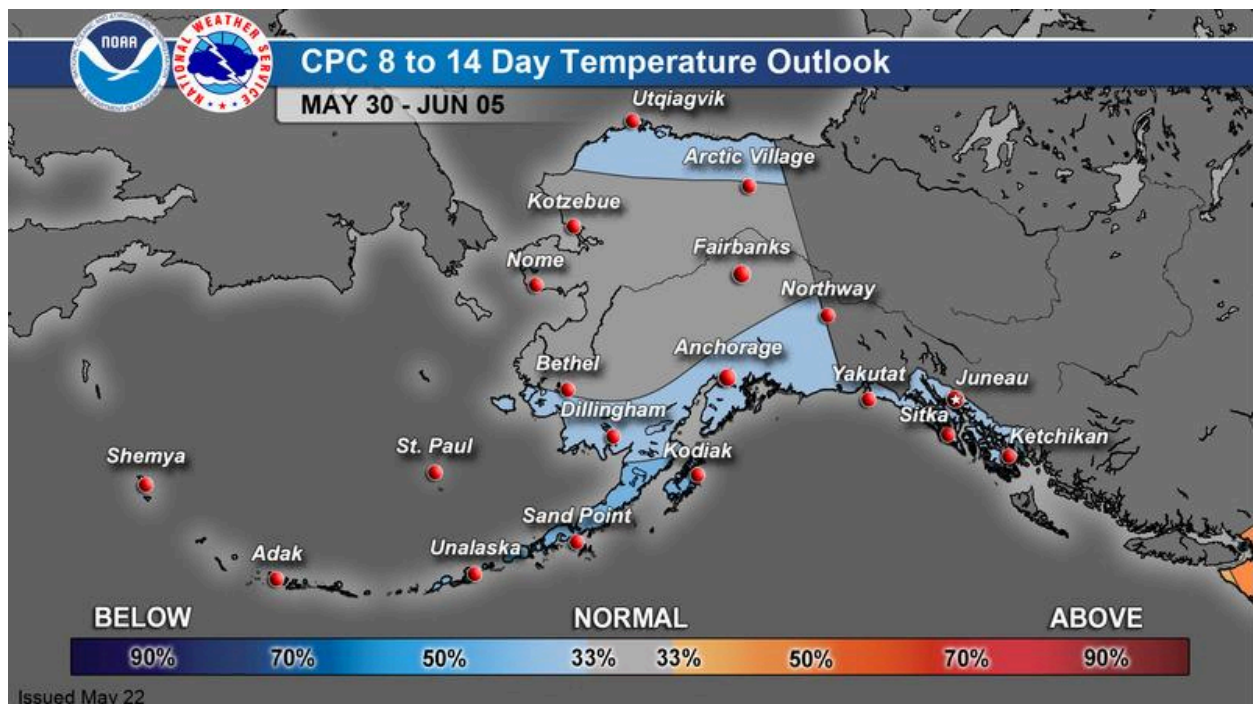
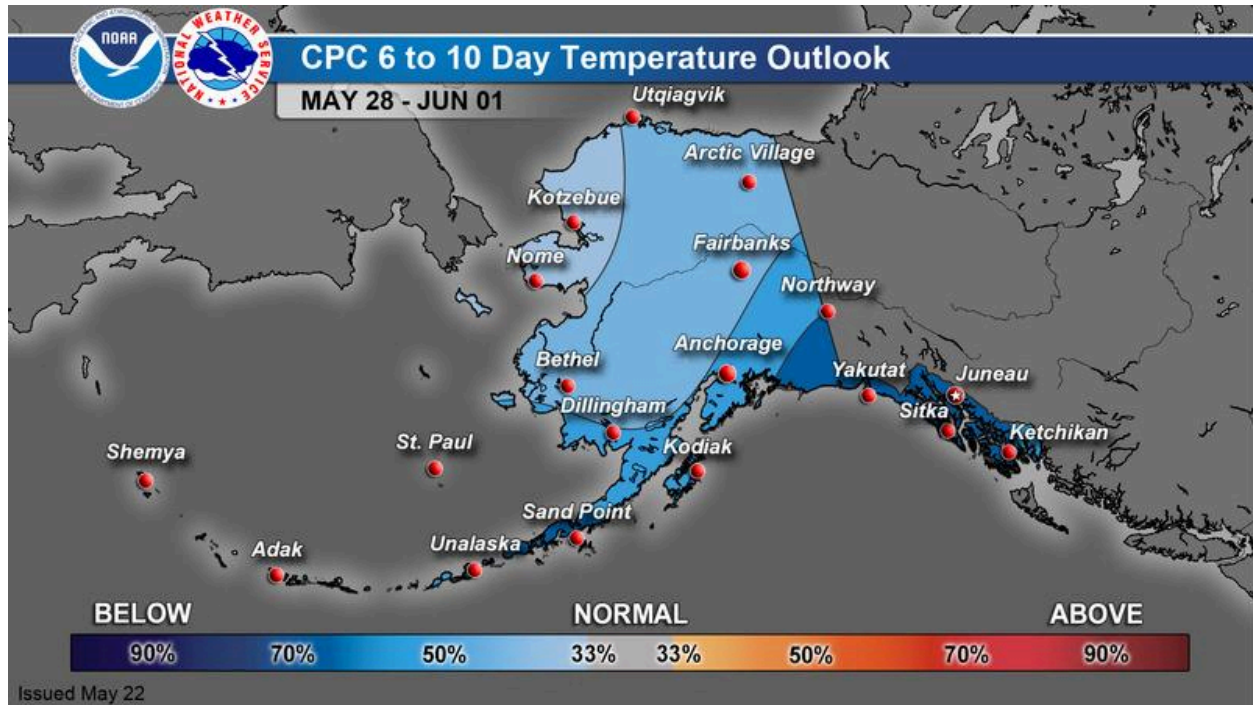
The Climate Prediction Center's (CPC) latest outlook favors generally below-normal temperatures across most of Alaska through the end of May and into the first week of June. Across the North Slope in particular, this extended period of cooler weather is expected to further delay snowmelt and river breakup. If a period of above-normal warmth were to develop

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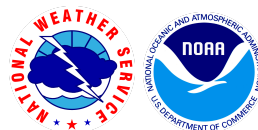
during the first week of June, it could lead to a more dynamic breakup scenario; however, there is currently no strong indication of such a warming trend developing.



[Link to CPC Outlooks](#)

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Breakup Flood Potential and Timing

The likelihood of flooding from snowmelt and/or ice jams is initially based on flood frequency within the 2000–2021 historical record and then adjusted to reflect current conditions. The remaining communities which have an elevated flood threat are along the Lower Yukon and North Slope. The rest of the Yukon River is expected to breakup by the beginning of next week and the North Slope is expected to breakup by the middle-end of next week through the first week of June.

There is a high likelihood of flooding in the remaining downstream communities on the Yukon River as high water impounded behind the breakup front moves downstream over the next couple of days. Across the North Slope, above average snowpack and a delayed melt is increasing the likelihood of a dynamic breakup and flooding over the next 2 weeks.

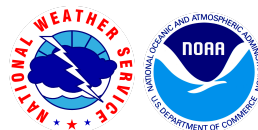
The following tables give an estimation of snowmelt runoff volume, flood potential, and forecast breakup date range for various locations across the state. Median breakup dates are for the period 1980 through 2023 and are calculated for locations with at least 5 years of data. Forecast breakup timing is expressed as a range based on snowmelt runoff volume and flood potential.

Locations where breakup has already occurred are identified with two asterisks following a single date; for example, Kuskokwim River at Nikolai breakup occurred on April 25, 2026 (4/25**).

Tanana-Fairbanks						
River-Reach	Location	Snowmelt Runoff Volume	Village Flood Potential	Median Breakup Date (1980-2025)	Years of Record (1980-2025)	Forecast Breakup Date Range
Chena River		Above				
	Chena Lakes Project		Broken Up			5/2**
Tanana River		Above				
	Northway		Broken Up	4/26	32	5/2**
	Salcha		Broken Up	4/26	5	5/2**
	Fairbanks		Broken Up	4/30	23	5/4**
	Nenana		Broken Up	4/30	46	5/4**
	Manley HS		Broken Up	5/3	33	5/6**

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Yukon River						
River-Reach	Location	Snowmelt Runoff Volume	Village Flood Potential	Median Breakup Date (1980-2025)	Years of Record (1980-2025)	Forecast Breakup Date Range
Yukon River (Upper)		Above				
	Dawson, YT		Broken Up	5/4	46	5/5**
	Eagle		Broken Up	5/4	46	5/5**
	Circle		Broken Up	5/9	42	5/7**
	Fort Yukon		Broken Up	5/11	42	5/8**
	Beaver		Broken Up	5/11	30	5/9**
	Stevens Village		Broken Up	5/11	28	5/10**
	Rampart		Broken Up	5/12	29	5/11**
Yukon River (Mid)		Above				
	Tanana		Broken Up	5/8	41	5/11**
	Ruby		Broken Up	5/9	40	5/14**
	Galena		Broken Up	5/11	45	5/14**
	Koyukuk		Broken Up	5/10	19	5/14**
	Nulato		Broken Up	5/12	27	5/15**
	Kaltag		Broken Up	5/12	40	5/15**
Yukon River (Lower)		Above				
	Grayling		Broken Up	5/12	17	5/16**
	Anvik		Broken Up	5/14	37	5/17**
	Holy Cross		Broken Up	5/14	39	5/21**
	Russian Mission		Broken Up	5/15	39	5/21**
	Marshall		High	5/15	34	5/22-5/23
	Pilot Station		High	5/13	29	5/22-5/23
	Mountain Village		High	5/15	39	5/22-5/23
	Alakanuk/Emmonak		High	5/20	41	5/23-5/25

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Kuskokwim River						
River-Reach	Location	Snowmelt Runoff Volume	Village Flood Potential	Median Breakup Date (1980-2025)	Years of Record (1980-2025)	Forecast Breakup Date Range
Kuskokwim River		Below				
	Nikolai		Broken Up	4/23	40	4/25**
	McGrath		Broken Up	5/4	46	5/11**
	Stony River		Broken Up	5/2	38	5/7**
	Sleetmute		Broken Up	5/2	37	5/6**
	Red Devil		Broken Up	5/3	40	5/3**
	Crooked Creek		Broken Up	5/4	40	5/4**
	Napaimute		Broken Up	5/1	13	5/3**
	Chuathbaluk		Broken Up	5/3	15	5/6**
	Aniak		Broken Up	5/5	43	5/6**
	Kalskag		Broken Up	5/5	37	5/11**
	Tuluksak		Broken Up	5/7	34	5/14**
	Akiak		Broken Up	5/8	40	5/14**
	Akiakchak		Broken Up	5/15	11	5/14**
	Kwethluk		Broken Up	5/5	13	5/12**
	Bethel		Broken Up	5/9	46	5/13**
	Napaskiak		Broken Up	5/8	6	5/14**
	Napakiak		Broken Up	5/10	31	5/15**

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Southeast-Southcentral						
River-Reach	Location	Snowmelt Runoff Volume	Village Flood Potential	Median Breakup Date (1980-2025)	Years of Record (1980-2025)	Forecast Breakup Date Range
Southeast		Average				
Kenai River		Below				
Anchor River		Below				4/19**
Matanuska River		Below				
Susitna River		Below				
	Gold Creek		Broken Up	5/2	10	5/6**
	Sunshine		Broken Up	5/2	37	5/6**
Talkeetna		Below				
	Talkeetna		Broken Up	4/28	5	5/6**
Yentna River		Below				
	Lake Creek		Broken Up	5/1	34	5/6**
Skwentna River		Below				
	Skwentna		Broken Up	4/30	31	5/6**
Copper River		Average				
	Gakona		Broken Up	5/1	36	5/6**
	Gulkana		Broken Up	5/1	34	5/6**

North Slope-Northwest						
River-Reach	Location	Snowmelt Runoff Volume	Village Flood Potential	Median Breakup Date (1980-2025)	Years of Record (1980-2025)	Forecast Breakup Date Range
Koyukuk River		Below				
	Bettles		Broken Up	5/10	44	5/12**
	Allakaket		Broken Up	5/11	40	5/12**
	Hughes		Broken Up	5/11	39	5/12**

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Seward Peninsula		Below				
	Buckland		Broken Up	5/18	36	5/16**
Kobuk River		Below				
	Kobuk		Broken Up	5/14	42	5/14**
	Shungnak		Broken Up	5/16	34	5/16**
	Ambler		Broken Up	5/16	40	5/17**
Noatak River		Average				
	Noatak		Broken Up	5/19	27	5/16**
Brooks Range		Above				
	Colville at Umiat		Moderate	5/25	25	5/27-6/1
	Colville at Colville Village		Moderate	6/3	23	6/5-6/9
Sagavanirktok River		Above				
	Dalton Highway		Moderate			

The next Spring Breakup Outlook will be issued on May 29, 2026.

For more information and to submit comments, please contact:

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