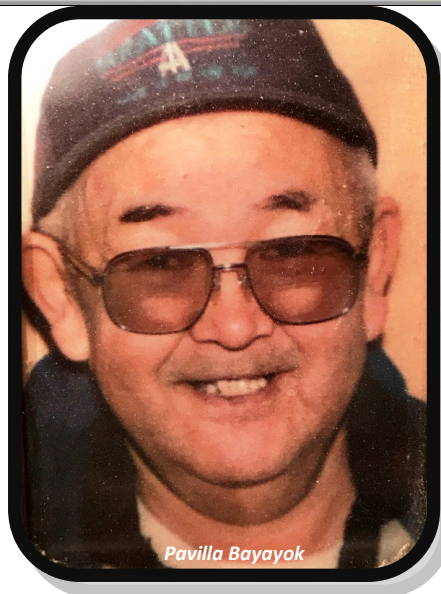




To Report a Missing or Overdue Person Call 911 or 907-545-HELP (4357)



12.22.17 BSAR River Update:

"In Memory of Pavilla"

Summary:

On December 23, 2000 we lost a beloved Elder to an unmarked open hole just a few miles above Bethel. Pavilla was returning from a funeral in Kwethluk, lost the trail in the dark on glare ice, and turned down to the open hole.

On Christmas Eve an initial search began by air along with a couple of small ground teams. The hope was that he was disorientated or broke down on one of the back (overland) trails. Some of us didn't go to church that night. Instead we watched from the Bethel Riverbank, while Earl flew the Alaska State Trooper plane back and forth in the dark east of Bethel looking for any campfire Pavilla might have lit. Nothing was spotted.

Christmas morning BSAR members were able to spend a few hours with their families before mobilizing. We went straight to the only place Pavilla could be—the unmarked open hole on the main channel side of the Gweek Island.

It was heartbreaking to follow his trail into the open water, and to think about what he went through all alone there—in the water in the dark. We were all thankful that his body was recovered in just a few hours.

From this tragedy BSAR learned that **NO UNMARKED OPEN WATER can be allowed in the Bethel area**. There's just too much traffic. BSAR vowed to never let this happen in our area again and over the years have worked hard to keep winter travelers to and from our community safe. After we take care of our neighborhood BSAR then moves on to assist with open water /trail marking in other parts of the River.

Today a BSAR team worked on the lower end of Kuskokuak Slough. Because of the number and size of the holes it was decided to make a line of willows with **BLUE** reflectors all the way across the River above and below this dangerous area.

This is what it looks like:



The Thin Blue Line: 90 willows with blue reflectors stretch across the lower end of Kuskokuak Slough

Like Father, Like Son: 15 year-old Neil Japhet, son of long time BSAR member Norman Japhet steps up to help keep winter travelers safe on the Kuskokwim

BLUE lines are willow open water markers

RED circles are the known open water areas in Kuskokuak Slough.

Please note that the area in the middle with the biggest open hole remains unmarked at this time.



Closing:

It looks like this is all that BSAR is going to be able to get done before Christmas.

We wish everyone the Happiest and Safest of Holidays. Our thoughts and prayers go out the Bayayok and Atchak families.

Thank you.