



# Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Track Washout halts southbound passenger trains**

### ***Railroad maintenance crews anticipate track restoration by Thursday***

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska Railroad (ARRC) passenger train traffic southbound from Anchorage was interrupted today due to high water damage to the track at Skookum Creek (ARRC milepost 59.7), located between Luebner Lake and Portage. The 80-foot-long washout prompted cancellation of the *Coastal Classic* train today and tomorrow. Scheduled passengers are provided alternate motorcoach transportation between Anchorage and Seward. The daily *Glacier Discovery* train is also impacted, with the route shortened to stop at Whittier, instead of proceeding on to Spencer and Grandview whistlestop sites south of Portage. Freight train traffic is not impacted at this time.

The high water incident began about 7:30 a.m. when creek waters began eating away at the trackbed, and then quickly washed under and over the track, leaving the structure suspended over the water (see photo on the next page). Alaska Railroad maintenance-of-way (MOW) department responded immediately, sending repair crews, heavy equipment and a work train to the site. A D6 bulldozer, two excavators and a locomotive-transported crane are on site, placing rock and gravel material from nearby sources in Portage. Powered by a GP-40 locomotive, a work train is ferrying loads of rip-rap and other rock material via several hoppers and side-dump railcars.

Crews expect to repair the track by tomorrow and to restore train service by Thursday. “The safety of our passengers and employees are our primary concern at this time,” said Chief Operating Officer Doug Engebretson. “We will re-open the line once our field teams determine that it is safe to do so.”

To reschedule or cancel their train tickets, or to take advantage of the motorcoach option, passengers who have reserved seats on tomorrow’s *Coastal Classic* or *Glacier Discovery* trains can call the ARRC Reservations Line between 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily at (907) 265-2494. Updates will be posted on the Alaska Railroad Facebook page [www.facebook.com/AlaskaRailroad](http://www.facebook.com/AlaskaRailroad).

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Media Note: This area is only accessible by rail.

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**Skookum Creek high water eats away at the trackbed, leaving the tracks suspended.**