



# Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

DATE: June 18, 2014

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Track washout continues to halt passenger trains

### *High water volume hampers track repair efforts*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska Railroad (ARRC) passenger train traffic southbound from Anchorage will continue to be interrupted at least through tomorrow due to high water damage to the track at Skookum Creek (ARRC milepost 59.7), located between Luebner Lake and Portage. While maintenance crews made solid progress on plugging an 80-foot-long washout, considerable water volume is hampering a complete restoration of the track infrastructure. As a result, the *Coastal Classic* train was cancelled yesterday, today, and at least through 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. On the freight side, one train scheduled to haul coal from Healy to Seward will be delayed.

The incident began about 7:30 a.m. June 17, when high water eroded the trackbed, leaving the track suspended over the water (see photos on the next page). The 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 remain on site, placing rock and gravel material from nearby sources in Portage. Powered by a GP-40 locomotive, a work train continues to ferry loads of rip-rap and other rock material to the site.

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, including links to video of heavy equipment and crews working on site, will be posted on the Alaska Railroad Facebook page [www.facebook.com/AlaskaRailroad](http://www.facebook.com/AlaskaRailroad). (Media Note: direct YouTube links to videos: [http://youtu.be/rVbt\\_hKZx18](http://youtu.be/rVbt_hKZx18); <http://youtu.be/uBewsyxX3us>)

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Crews hope to repair the track and restore service by Friday, although the track may remain closed into the weekend. “This area experienced significant isolated rainfall that measured as much as a half inch every 10-15 minutes for a sustained period,” said ARRC VP Engineering Clark Hopp. “We are essentially dealing with a new river channel that did not previously exist.”

From 300 to 400 passengers per day are impacted by the track outage. The railroad has not yet determined the final financial impact. However, revenue losses are expected to reach tens of thousands of dollars due to refunds and cancellations. Track repair expenses will also be considerable, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars.

ARRC is an Equal Opportunity Corporation. If you need special assistance (including language) in order to participate in any ARRC service, program, or activity, please contact: Alaska Railroad Corporation; Attention: Legal Department; P.O. Box 107500; Anchorage, AK 99510; or by email at: [zappasi@akrr.com](mailto:zappasi@akrr.com), (907) 265-2461; via Alaska Relay Service for hearing impaired – dial 7 11 anywhere inside Alaska, OR dial toll-free from anywhere outside the state 1-800-770-8255 (voice); 1-800 770-8973 (TTY). Upon request, printed materials can be made available in alternate formats.

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**A swollen creek leaves dangling track.**



**Material is pushed into place to plug the gap,**



**Crews make progress in plugging washout.**



**Rip-rap is hauled in by air dump railcars.**