



# Alaska Railroad 2012 Program of Projects

**E**stablished in 1923, the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) is the last of the full-service railroads in the United States, offering both freight and passenger services. From tidewater at Whittier and Seward to the heart of Interior Alaska, our route covers more than 500 miles. ARRC is a state-owned corporation, but it does not receive state funding to operate. ARRC relies on passenger, freight and real estate revenues to cover expenses to operate trains and maintain tracks and facilities. About \$49 million is budgeted in new spending for capital improvements in 2012. An additional \$68 million is budgeted for two special rail extension projects. Detailed project fact sheets are online at [www.AlaskaRailroad.com](http://www.AlaskaRailroad.com) -> **Capital Projects**.

## Federally-funded Projects

Since 1996, ARRC has received federal funds for infrastructure improvements. Funding has come from the Department of Defense (DOD), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and other federal sources, such as "Stimulus" money from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009. Most FTA, FHWA and FEMA funded projects require 9% to 25% matching funds from ARRC.

In 2012, ARRC expects to receive FTA formula funding to support an estimated \$11.76 million in capital projects; ARRC will contribute 9% of this amount. Other federal funds include \$1.26 million in FEMA-administered grants, \$1.43 million from the FRA, and \$295,000 from DHS. A \$2.7 million settlement will repair deficient track work originally paid by federal grants.

## Internally-funded Projects

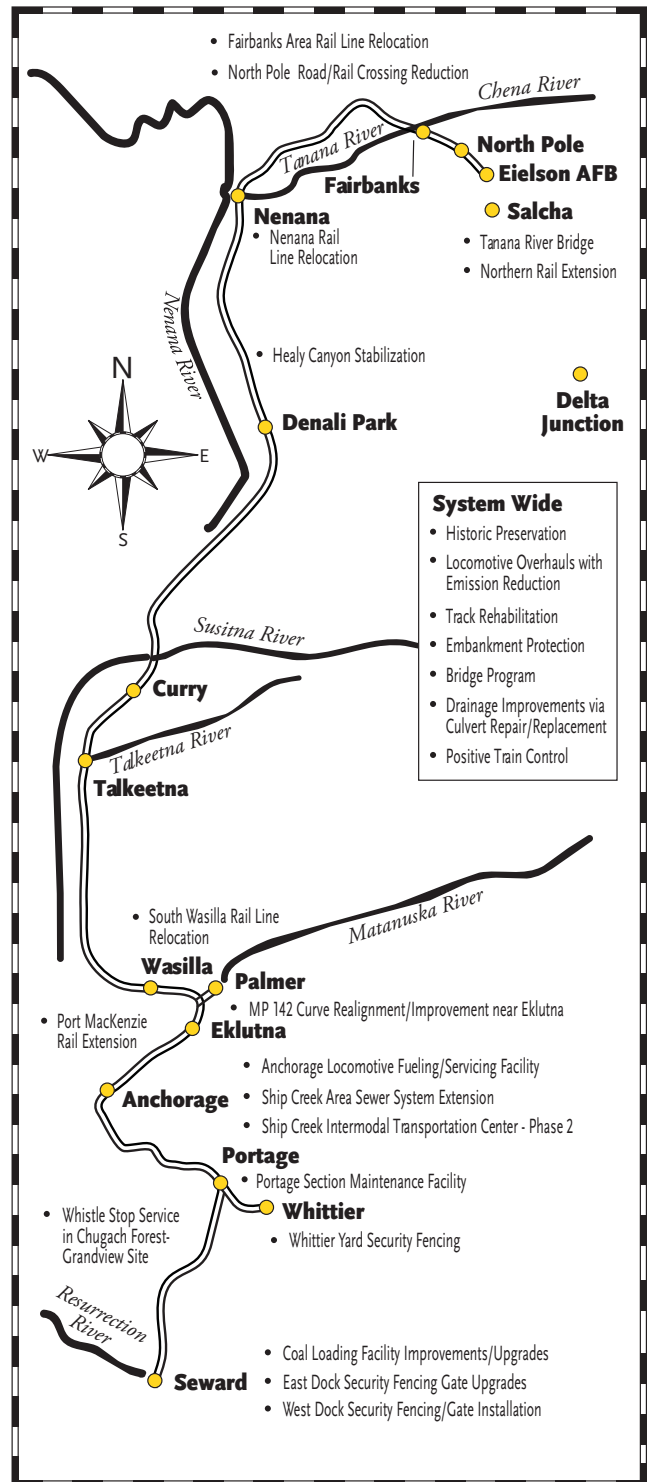
In addition to the match for federal grants, ARRC internal funds (funds generated by corporate freight, passenger and real estate business revenues) support ARRC's ongoing expense activities as well as an annual capital program. In 2012, internal funds will provide \$23.5 million toward capital projects that are not eligible or selected for federal funding support.

## Bond-funded Projects

In 2006, ARRC sold \$76.1 million in revenue bonds and another \$89 million in 2007. These funds are primarily used to accelerate track rehabilitation efforts. About \$8 million will be spent in 2012. Bonds are repaid with FTA formula funds.

## Special Rail Extension Projects

The State of Alaska appropriated FY2012 funds to support two major rail extensions. \$44 million was approved mid-2011 to close the funding gap for Phase One of the Northern Rail Extension.



ARRC will manage \$24 of the \$30 million the State approved mid-2011 to pursue Port MacKenzie Rail Extension construction.

Frequently used acronyms:

- ARRC = Alaska Railroad Corporation
- ARRA = American Recovery & Reinvestment Act
- FEMA = Federal Emergency Management Agency
- FTA = Federal Transit Administration
- FRA = Federal Railroad Administration
- FHWA = Federal Highway Administration
- DOD = Department of Defense
- EA = Environmental Assessment
- EIS = Environmental Impact Study
- STB = Surface Transportation Board

### Seward Coal Loading Facility

ARRC acquired the Seward Coal Loading Facility in 2003 and made subsequent improvements in order to increase facility efficiency, driving down the cost of operation, thus making Alaska's coal resources more competitive in the global market. ARRC completed an EA of proposed improvements and upgrades in 2004. FRA provided the original \$9.54 million grant, with \$8.3 million spent on acquisition and associated studies and \$1.24 million used for inspections, repairs and improvements. ARRC is underwriting ongoing maintenance and capital improvements. In response to community concerns over coal dust problems resulting from unusual dry, windy weather in early 2007, ARRC and facility operator Aurora Energy Services (AES) modified operations and ARRC hired industry experts to analyze and recommend future capital improvements. Since 2007, ARRC and AES have spent more than \$1.5 million on safety, operations and environmental improvements. \$720,000 is budgeted for 2012.



*A coal ship docks at the Seward Coal Loading Facility.*

### Seward East and West Dock Investments

ARRC built a new East Dock in Seward in 2000, and a section of the 640-foot long by 200-foot wide East Dock was expanded to 320 feet wide in 2007. Since 2001, the West Dock and its terminal building have been substantially improved to support intermodal passenger activity. In 2011, a 1,600-foot security fence with three roller gates was installed around the East Dock. In 2012, two of the three gates will be upgraded with card-reader control access and surveillance cameras. A security fence and card-reader access gates (with



*ARRC's West (left) and East docks in Seward.*

surveillance cameras) will also be installed on either side of the West Dock terminal building, 2012 fencing and gate upgrades funded by a \$295,000 Port Security Grant.

### Chugach National Forest Whistle Stop Service

ARRC and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) are partners in developing a whistle stop service in the Chugach National Forest. Plans call for five recreational sites between Portage and Moose Pass that will be accessible by rail and interconnected by trail. Sites include a passenger rail platform, passenger shelter, toilets and interpretive signage. Other features may include picnic, camping and wildlife viewing facilities. The project purchased a self-propelled diesel multiple unit (DMU) railcar, which arrived spring 2009. The first site was completed at Spencer in late summer 2007. Construction on the Grandview site began in 2011 and will be completed in 2012. Construction of a pedestrian bridge over Placer River at Spencer also began in 2011; it will be installed in 2012. \$1.8 million for Spencer site funded by USFS and ARRC. The \$5.35 million DMU was funded \$4.7 million by USFS and \$648,000 by FTA and ARRC. The pedestrian bridge at Spencer (\$1.6 million), and the Grandview site (\$1.2 million) funded by ARRA grants obtained by the USFS. Estimated \$14 million is needed to complete all five sites and facilities.

### Whittier Infrastructure & Master Planning

ARRC is pursuing a Whittier Master Plan to improve railroad infrastructure. Recent projects: **1)** built a pedestrian underpass (2002); **2)** built an equipment maintenance facility (2002); **3)** improved Delong Dock (2002); **4)** built barge slip side-loading structures (2002); **5)** demolished the old transit shed (2003); **6)** built a cruiseship passenger spur and platform (2004); **7)** improved security with a yard office at the entrance, seasonal yard fence and video cameras (2006/07); **8)** demolished the marginal wharf (2008); and **9)** extended barge slip ramp and replaced the stern (front) unloading area to include hydraulic lifts and pass/pass features (2009-2011). A security fence around the Whittier Yard will be installed in 2012 with a \$311,224 Homeland Security grant and \$82,000 from ARRC. Future actions recommended by the Master Plan include: **a)** construction of improved intermodal passenger

and public use facilities; **b)** rail yard reconfiguration and track improvements to separate freight and passenger activity; and **c)** additional security measures including lighting and detection equipment for passenger facilities.

### Portage Section Maintenance Facility

ARRC plans to build up to six section maintenance facilities. These steel-framed heated buildings house a shop area to store / maintain rail equipment and trucks, small office space, restroom and utility room. The prototype was constructed in Cantwell in 2006. Construction of a 47-by-65-foot facility at Portage began in 2011 (Phase 1: site prep). Phase 2 — building with shop area — will be complete in 2012. A final phase will add offices and restrooms at a later date. Phases 1 and 2 are budgeted to cost \$1.25 million, funded by ARRC.



*The prototype section maintenance facility built in Cantwell.*

### Ship Creek Intermodal Transportation Center

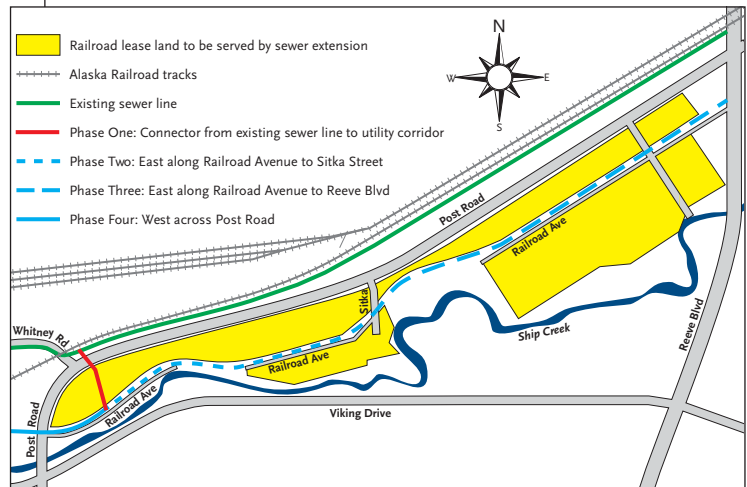
ARRC is pursuing an Intermodal Transportation Center (ITC) and associated improvements (pedestrian amenities, transit infrastructure, parking, track modifications, etc.) in the Ship Creek area. The ITC will facilitate connections from one transportation mode to another — rail, public transit, air, marine, bus, taxi, private vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian — and improve links to Anchorage’s downtown business district to meet passenger transit needs over the next 30 years. Phase 1, completed 2007-2009, included utility relocation, new track and passenger platform construction, and track rehabilitation. Part of Phase 2 (2a) began in 2010 to include Anchorage Historic Depot exterior improvements, electrical upgrades and boiler replacement. Phase 2a was completed in 2011. Future phases will construct a service / office building, a new departure lounge over the tracks and an elevated covered walkway connecting to downtown. Approximately \$23 million for conceptual and environmental work, preliminary design, and Phase 1 was funded 91% by the FTA and 9% by ARRC. Phase 2a budget of \$7.94 million funded by ARRA Stimulus money. ARRA money also funded \$300,000 in 2009-2010 to install 1,000 feet of security fencing east of the depot. Conceptual design for Phase 2b (replace annex building with smaller crew facility and improve pick-up /drop-off and other areas surrounding the depot) was complete in 2011. ARRC is seeking funding for 2b. Total cost for all phases is estimated at \$78 million.



*Phase 2a included installation of a paved-system roof along with more insulation for better energy conservation.*

### Ship Creek Area Sewer System Extension

ARRC plans to extend the existing Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility sewer system to provide sewer service to railroad leased land on the east side of the Anchorage Railroad Reserve, located south of Post Road and north of Viking Drive. Phase 1 of the four-phase project would construct a connector from the existing sewer line to a proposed utility corridor along an old right-of-way parallel to, and south of, Post Road. Phase 1 design complete in 2011 and construction will begin in 2012. Phase 1 cost of \$400,000 funded by ARRC. All four phases are estimated to cost nearly \$2 million; funding for later phases is not yet identified.



*Proposed sewer extension project in Anchorage Railroad Reserve.*

### Anchorage Locomotive Fueling/Service Facility

ARRC plans to replace an existing 1970s-era locomotive fueling delivery system in the Anchorage Yard. Plans call for a new facility to provide fueling, sand loading, inspection and minor maintenance of locomotives. First considered in 2003, conceptual planning and design resumed in 2011 to include a cost/benefit analysis of a stationary fueling/serving facility versus mobile fueling by truck. Efforts to optimize the design continue. Preliminary design first budgeted at \$200,000 in 2003; followed by \$100,000 in 2010 and \$150,000 in 2011. Funded by ARRC.

## Curve Realignment / Improvement near Eklutna

ARRC plans to reduce the curvature of the mainline track and parallel siding track along a curve at ARRC MP 142, near Eklutna. The project will relocate a maintenance spur track from the north end of the curve to the south, and lengthen the spur from 130 to 1,000 feet. The timber road/rail crossing across the mainline and siding will be upgraded to concrete, improving drivability access to Eklutna Inc. land. Design began in 2011, and construction will begin 2012. Funding 80% U.S. Department of Transportation and 20% ARRC.

## South Wasilla Rail Line Relocation

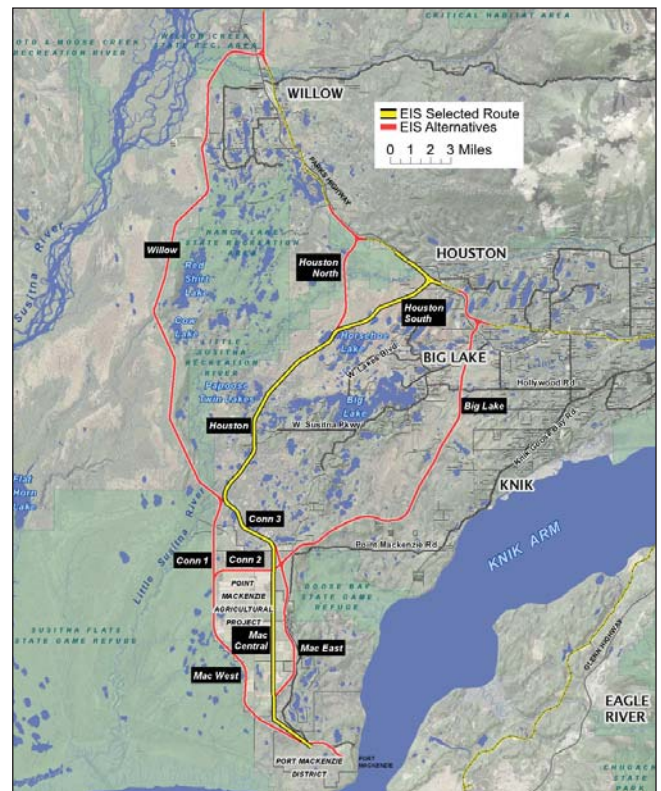
ARRC plans to straighten curves along the mainline track in South Wasilla, between ARRC MP 154 and 158. The track relocation would eliminate five at-grade crossings, reduce derailment risk, reduce operational and maintenance costs, and allow for faster train speeds. An EA of alternative relocation routes was completed in 2005. Land acquisition will be complete in 2012. \$246,000 for conceptual engineering and the EA and \$2.72 million for preliminary engineering and land acquisition, funded by 91% FTA and 9% by ARRC. \$2.5 million to continue right-of-way land acquisition funded 91% by FHWA and 9% by ARRC. Total cost to construct Phase 1 (MP 154 to 156) is estimated at \$37 million.



*A large curve in the track slows train speeds in south Wasilla.*

## Port MacKenzie Rail Extension

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough and ARRC are partners in proposing a new 32-mile rail line connecting Port MacKenzie to the existing mainline track near Houston. Extensive public involvement activities were conducted in summer and fall 2007 to obtain citizen and agency input. In early 2008, ARRC submitted an application to the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the federal agency with authority over rail extensions in the United States. The STB conducted an EIS which was complete in spring 2011. The STB's record of decision to approve construction came in late November 2011. The State of Alaska appropriated \$27.5 million (2007/2008) to support the EIS and supporting studies, and to construct a bulk commodities road loop. The State appropriated \$35 million in 2010 and \$30 million in 2011 to pursue design and construction of the first two phases. An estimated additional \$180 is needed to complete design and construction.



*Potential Port MacKenzie Rail Extension preferred route selected.*

## Healy Canyon Safety & Reliability Program

Healy Canyon lies between Denali Park and Healy. The tracks follow the Nenana River gorge on a narrow grade, originally through two tunnels. The area has steep slopes and erosion-prone soil. ARRC proposed a series of projects to: **1)** stabilize the track bed in Healy Canyon; **2)** control the rock fall problems; **3)** “daylight” (remove the top of) Moody Tunnel; **4)** realign tracks around Garner Tunnel; and **5)** realign the tracks to straighten the corridor. Total cost is estimated at approximately \$71 million. \$2.9 million in FRA funds were used to address the slide zone and realign track around Garner Tunnel in 2005. \$5.2 million in FTA grants and FTA-backed revenue bonds were used to daylight Moody Tunnel, which was completed in 2009. About \$5.86 million was spent in 2009-2011 to stabilize several areas (MPs 352.9, 354.1, 355.2 and 357) in the canyon, with a combination of funding from FEMA, FRA, ARRC and the Alaska Division of Emergency Services. MP 352.9 will be complete in 2012. ARRC continues to seek funding to pursue future stabilization.

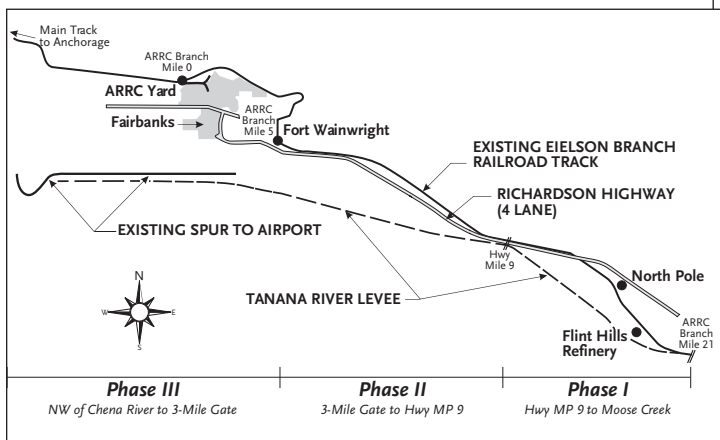
## Nenana Rail Line Relocation

ARRC proposes to realign the railroad mainline around downtown Nenana, following a route outside of the existing right-of-way, north of the airport and southeast of town, over the Parks Highway. The track structure through Nenana would be maintained to support port activities. ARRC completed an EA of three alternative realignment routes and a “no action” alternative in 2004. Right-of-way acquisition

was complete in 2009. A hydrology study completed in 2010 is being used to obtain flood plain permits. One such permit was approved by the City of Nenana in 2011. A \$1 million budget for the EA was funded 91% by the FTA and 9% by ARRC. \$2 million for land acquisition funded by 91% FHWA (administered via FTA) and 9% ARRC. \$225,000 for the hydrology study funded by ARRA Stimulus funding. Estimated \$37.7 million to complete final design and construction. Funding for construction has not yet been identified.

### Fairbanks Area Rail Line Relocation

ARRC is analyzing options to: **a)** realign and improve safety of the main line and branch track, including potential realignments outside the more populated areas of Fairbanks and **b)** realign and improve the Eielson Branch, from the Fairbanks Depot to the end of the branch near Eielson AFB. The Fairbanks Area Rail Line Relocation will likely require an EIS. As a pre-cursor to the EIS, ARRC conducted an Alternatives Analysis (AA) in 2007-2008 that capitalizes on the findings of previous reconnaissance and engineering studies. The AA recommends a three-phased approach. In 2007-2009, ARRC also commissioned a *North End Rail Public Transportation Study and Operation Plan* to explore options for passenger rail and commuter service. Findings indicate low demand for Fairbanks-North Pole commuter service and results are inconclusive for Fairbanks-Denali service options. The AA and public transportation study were funded by \$450,000 in grants from FHWA and FTA with 9% match from ARRC. Funding has been secured to pursue environmental work for Phase I, the North Pole area (see separate project description below). Funding sources are being sought for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental work to include an EIS for Phases II and III.



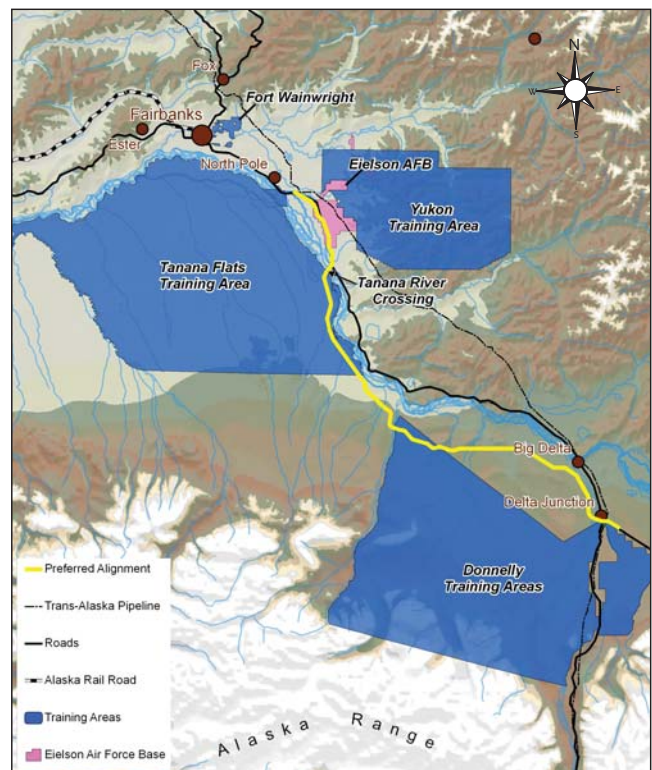
### North Pole Road/Rail Crossing Reduction

In cooperation with the FRA, FHWA and Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System (FMATS), the ARRC initiated an EA and preliminary engineering for a proposed project to reduce at-grade road/rail crossings by realigning an 8-mile section of the Eielson Branch that runs

through North Pole, between Richardson Hwy milepost 9 and the Chena River floodway. This project is essentially Phase I of the three-phased Fairbanks Area Rail Line Relocation. The EA is expected to be complete and ready for public review in early 2012. Funding of \$1 million comes from FHWA funds re-allocated by FMATS and the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. Cost for final design and construction will be determined through the EA process.

### Northern Rail Extension

ARRC proposes to extend its mainline track from North Pole / Eielson AFB, about 80 miles southeast to Delta Junction. The project would offer: **a)** commercial freight service supporting communities and commerce in the corridor; **b)** a passenger transportation alternative to the Richardson Hwy; **c)** support of military training; and **d)** support of regional tourism. ARRC initiated the conceptual development in 2004. The STB initiated an EIS in 2005. The final EIS was released in late 2009 and the STB approving a license to construct and operate a rail extension on January 5, 2010. The EIS, preliminary engineering and design was funded by \$16.5 million in DOD appropriations, administered by the FRA. DOD appropriated another \$44.2 million in 2007 and \$60 million in 2008 for planning, engineering, environmental work, design and to begin construction on the first phase of the project (see project description below). The project is expected to be built in four phases, beginning with the river bridge, followed by rail construction from the bridge to the end of the Eielson Branch. Later phases will continue the extension

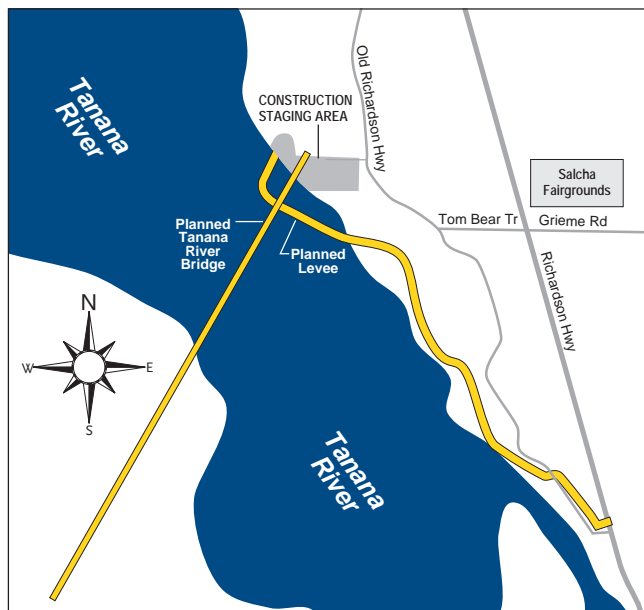


Area map showing the military training areas south and west of the Tanana River.

to Delta Junction. Cost of all phases is estimated at \$650 to \$850 million. Phase 1 is funded (*see below*). Funding for later phases is not yet identified.

## NRE Phase 1: Tanana River Crossing

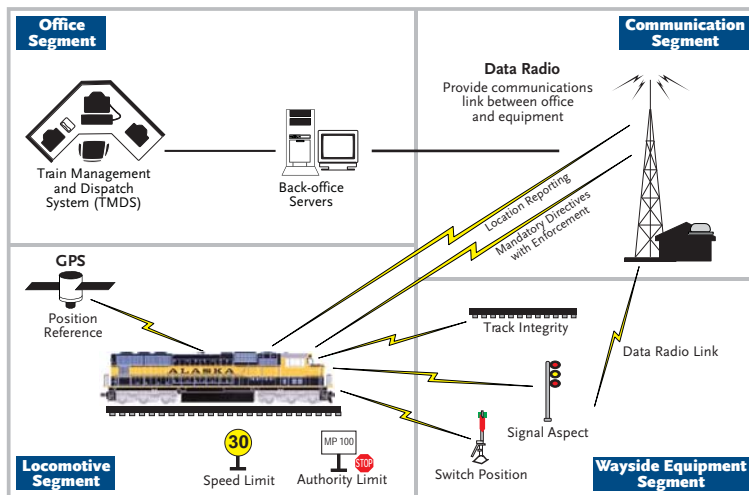
Design of the Northern Rail Extension Phase 1, Tanana River Crossing, got underway in 2010, after the STB had granted authority with a record of decision in January. Design includes a bridge over the Tanana River at Salcha as well as a levee to control river flow in the area. Kiewit was hired as Construction Management / General Contractor and construction on Phase 1 began in 2011. The bridge and levee are scheduled for completion in 2014. Budget is \$188.2 million, funded with \$104.2 million from the DOD and \$84 million from the State of Alaska.



Phase One: Tanana River Crossing - Construction area map.

## Positive Train Control

ARRC is pursuing a multi-phased program to design, develop and implement a communication-based train control system that uses data radio communications between train dispatchers and train crews, or dispatchers and roadway workers. The Positive Train Control (PTC) project is comprised of a replacement Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, an on-board computer system, VHF packet data radio technology, and Global Positioning System (GPS) locator technology. The PTC will provide regulatory-mandated safety enhancements to prevent train-to-train collisions, to detect infrastructure failure and potential operations violations quickly, and to intervene when necessary. To date, ARRC has spent \$53 million (1999-2011) on communications and preparational work, funded by FRA, FTA, ARRA and ARRC sources. An additional \$70 million is estimated to complete the PTC system. For 2012, \$5 million is funded \$4 million by FTA grants (91% FTA; 9% ARRC) and \$1 million by ARRC.



Positive Train Control System Overview.

## Passenger Rail Cars and Locomotives

ARRC has 45 passenger-related railcars, including 30 coaches, six diners, six baggage cars, two business cars (charters) and one DMU. ARRC also has 53 locomotives: 28 SD70MACs (12 equipped with head-end-power to supply electricity to passenger cars), 15 GP40s, eight GP38s and two cab/power cars. ARRC upgrades older equipment and buys newer equipment to meet current and future passenger demands. In 2012, several passenger cars will be upgraded with new lighting, public address systems, batteries, signs, new flooring, wall-covering, seat upholstery and galley modification. \$600,000 budget is funded by ARRC. Four SD70MAC locomotives and one or two GP40 locomotives will be overhauled to include installation of tier-plus kits to improve fuel efficiency, and installation of engine idle reduction systems (GP40s). SD70MACs funded by \$1.23 million from ARRC. GP40s funded by a \$1.4 million FTA "TIGGER" (Stimulus-funded) grant and \$328,000 by ARRC.



Left to Right: GP-38-2, GP 40-2 and SD70MAC locomotive.

## Bridge Program

ARRC's 500-plus miles of mainline track include about 160 bridges that cross barriers ranging from streams to gulches. ARRC's Bridge Program calls for major maintenance, overhaul and replacement needed to maintain railroad integrity, safety and efficiency. In 2012, ARRC plans to complete design for a structure to replace three culverts at Indian Creek (MP 88.1). Drainage and embankment work will be completed for a new bridge that was built over Skookum Creek Drainage (MP 59.4, near Portage) in 2011. Upgrades and



Timber piling and caps were replaced with steel pipe and pile caps on the bridge at MP 29.5 in 2011. In 2012, timber beams and ties will be replaced to complete bridge rehabilitation.

rehabilitation are also planned for 10 other bridges. In addition, a “rock shed” will be designed for the tunnel about 50 miles north of Seward to protect against falling rock and ice. Funding includes \$2.95 million by ARRC plus \$500,000 in FTA grants (funded 91% FTA; 9% ARRC).

### Track Rehabilitation

ARRC continues an aggressive track rehabilitation program in 2012 that calls for replacement of rail, ties and ballast in areas of critical need. Each year, ARRC converts several miles of track into continuously welded rail, which dramatically decreases maintenance costs and improves ride quality. ARRC also replaces a portion of its nearly two million wooden ties (45,000 ties in 2012). ARRC also plans to resurface many miles of track using 50,000 tons of ballast rock. For 2012, \$14.2 million is funded by current and prior year FTA grants (funded 91% FTA; 9% ARRC); \$8 million is funded through the sale of ARRC revenue bonds backed by FTA formula funds; \$6.3 million is funded by ARRC, and a \$2.7 million legal settlement will repair deficient work originally paid for by federal grants.



A tie crane operator positions a new tie during tie replacement operations in spring 2011.

### Drainage Improvement/Embankment Protection

ARRC will repair or replace up to 15 culverts along the northern half of the rail corridor. Several culverts in this area are at risk of washout, collapse or clogging. ARRC also plans to install riprap and armor rock to fortify track embankment that is susceptible to high water events, including flooding. Culvert repair/replacement budget is \$500,000, funded by ARRC. Embankment protection work is supported by \$2.52 million in grants funded 75% by FEMA and 25% ARRC; and \$446,000 in grants funded 80% by FRA and 20% ARRC.

### Historic Preservation

ARRC supports historic preservation efforts that are related to railroad assets and infrastructure. Some ARRC assets are historic properties and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and more than 50 ARRC properties are eligible for listing on the National Register. ARRC often consults with state and federal historic preservation agencies to mitigate impacts from capital projects that may adversely impact historic assets. Mitigation often takes the form of educational materials, including brochures, interpretive signage, archived photos and documentation.

**Alaska Railroad Corporation**

### Timber Trestle Bridges on the Alaska Railroad

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson charged the Alaskan Engineering Commission with charting a railroad route from a southern sea level harbor to the continent's interior. He sought to open this vast area to commerce. From 1915 to 1923, 5,000 men along with machinery built 500 miles of track linking Seward and Fairbanks.

Bridges were built along the Alaska Railroad to cross gorges, rivers, streams, drainages and other geographical barriers. Timber trestles were the easiest and least expensive way to negotiate these barriers and a great many were constructed. The railroad had up to 400 bridges or trestles at one time. Even though timber has a relatively short useful life (25-50 years) and other maintenance issues, its abundance promoted widespread practical use in early bridge construction.

Timber trestles were typically constructed in spans of 14 or 15 feet in accordance with *General Specifications for Piling for Trestle Bridges*, which were approved by the Alaskan Engineering Commission on May 25, 1915 (reprinted below). Specifications called for back-removed square ties to be used for piling for all timber trestle bridges. Starting in the early 1940s, untreated timber was replaced with creosote treated timber to increase the useful life of the timber. Local timber was used to the extent possible.

Most timber trestle rail bridges in the United States were constructed between 1900 and 1950. The majority of timber trestle bridges constructed on the Alaska Railroad were built from 1914, when initial construction began, through 1959. Since then, timber trestle bridges have been gradually replaced with bridges made of steel and concrete.

**Building to Standard**

"All piling shall be cut from sound live trees of the growth, free from knots, decay, large annular knots, or other defects that will impair their strength and durability. They shall be laid out, when the ground is level, and be perfectly true from butt to the tip. They shall be so straight that a line stretched from the center of the pile at the butt to the center of the pile at the tip will not leave the center of the pile at any point more than two (2) inches for piles twenty feet long, four (4) inches for piles thirty feet long, six (6) inches for piles forty feet long, and eight (8) inches for piles fifty feet long." — (Alaskan Engineering Commission)

This interpretive sign is posted in several common-use passenger railcars as part of a public education effort.

### Integrated Vegetation Management Program

The Alaska Railroad pursues an integrated vegetation management program to protect the millions of dollars invested each year in its infrastructure. Uncontrolled weeds pose safety risks to ARRC operations and employees, including: **a)** vegetation makes track and train inspection difficult; **b)** plants hinder automated equipment operation; **c)** overgrown weeds hide walking hazards, contributing to slips, trips and falls;

**d)** roots create uneven, heaving surfaces, again posing walking hazards for track workers; and **e)** vegetation accelerates rail and tie deterioration. Public safety is also impacted by uncontrolled weeds: **a)** overgrown bushes block line-of-sight; **b)** vegetation can obscure signs and signals that warn the public; **c)** plants cause heaving and slippery conditions at road/rail crossings; and **d)** dry vegetation can fuel brush fires.

The railroad has always, and will continue to use mechanical and manual methods to clean the ballast, cut and clip brush, mow grass and weeds, saw roots and trim limbs, etc. Mechanical and manual methods achieve limited and temporary success. ARRC has also tested many alternative and experimental methods of controlling weeds (including steam, hot water, radiant heat, abrasion, flaming and burning), with no lasting success. Herbicides provide an additional tool to help maintain safe operations and regulatory compliance, and to protect infrastructure investments. The railroad seeks to control vegetation with a combination of mechanical and chemical methods, using herbicides in the most critical and difficult areas.

In 2008, ARRC commissioned herbicide research to provide scientific information about use in Alaska's environment. Results indicate that herbicides behave the same as in other climates, and the glyphosate-based herbicide AquaMaster® does not linger or migrate in the soil. In 2009, ARRC applied for a Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) permit to use herbicides in the Seward yard and along 30 miles between Seward and Indian. The permit was approved in spring 2010 and Aqua-

Master® was applied selectively within the permitted area with good results. ARRC applied for additional permits in 2011 for herbicide use in the Anchorage Yard, Healy Yard, Fairbanks Yard and along the Eielson Branch. These were approved by ADEC and were used in July 2011. In 2012, ARRC is applying for three new permits covering 12 miles of track in the Palmer-Wasilla area, 38 miles of track between Gold Creek (34 miles north of Talkeetna) and Broad Pass, and 60 miles of track between Clear and Fairbanks. The ADEC will accept public comment through March 12, 2012. Public hearings are scheduled for January 31 in Fairbanks, February 1 in Wasilla and February 2 in Talkeetna.



*Post herbicide control near Seward. Note clear distinction at control area boundary at the end of the ties.*

*current as of 01/11/2012*

## **Alaska Railroad Corporation 2012 Program of Projects**

At the beginning of each calendar year, ARRC conducts project open house events in Anchorage, Fairbanks, the Mat-Su Valley and Seward to inform the public about the proposed Program of Projects (POP) for the year. While these events provide a good forum for residents to comment on any or all projects, the public is not limited to commenting at these events. Public input is accepted year-round, and in a variety of formats as outlined at the right. Detailed project descriptions are provided within fact sheets that are created for major federally-funded and internally-funded capital improvement efforts. These fact sheets are accessible at the Alaska Railroad web site [www.AlaskaRailroad.com](http://www.AlaskaRailroad.com) (click on "Capital Projects" and then select the geographica area of interest).

### **Public Input:**

Public comment on any or all of these projects may be submitted via:

- Mail to: Capital Projects  
Alaska Railroad Corporation  
P.O. Box 107500  
Anchorage, AK 99510-7500
- E-mail to [public\\_comment@akrr.com](mailto:public_comment@akrr.com)
- Fax to (907) 265-2365
- Call Stephenie Wheeler at (907) 265-2671  
ARRC's TTY/TTD 265-2620  
or voice 265-2494 or Alaska Relay TTY  
800-770-8973 or voice 1-800-770-8255