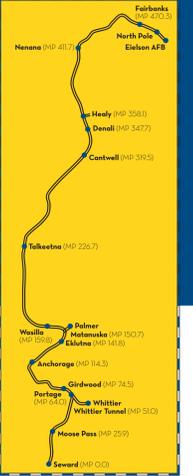


Track & Yard Vegetation Management: Non-Chemical Methods of Control



CURRENT NON-CHEMICAL CONTROLS

- › ARRC did not use chemical weed control from 1983 to 2009, instead employing other methods of management. The railroad continues to employ non-chemical methods of vegetation control in conjunction with herbicides.
- › **Mechanical Cutting** – using chain saws and clippers, rail-mounted brush cutters and mowers, and off-track brush cutters.
- › **Grubbing** – pulling or cutting weeds by hand.
 - › Cutting and Grubbing are slow, labor intensive methods, with temporary results.
- › **Ballast Cleaning** – cleaning or completely replacing the ballast.
 - › Expensive (\$30,000-\$50,000 per mile) and only possible in open track.



A rail-mounted brush cutter provides one method of mechanical vegetation control.

TESTED ALTERNATIVE METHODS

- › The Alaska Railroad has made considerable efforts and spent considerable money to research, test and implement alternative methods for weed control. These include the use of:
 - › Steam
 - › Hot water
 - › Radiant heat
 - › Flaming and burning
 - › Abrasion
- › None of these methods, nor any of the methods still employed, provide a broad spectrum of control with a thorough and lasting effect.



The ballast regulator is equipped with a broom that abrades or scrapes the tops off of vegetation between the ties and rails. Unfortunately, the roots remain and weeds return quickly.



Burning and hot water/steam have met with little success as alternative vegetation control methods.

They are not enough...

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