Crews close to restoring track damaged by high water

“Go / No-Go” decision for Friday passenger trains to be made at 7 pm

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Alaska Railroad (ARRC) track maintenance crews are making good progress on repairing an 80-foot washout that occurred June 17 at Skookum Creek, a roadless area south of Portage. High water damage has prevented trains from progressing south beyond Portage. Beginning Tuesday through today, Coastal Classic train passengers have been offered alternate motorcoach transportation between Anchorage and Seward, while Glacier Discovery train passengers have experienced a route shortened to stop at Whittier, or the option to cancel or reschedule travel to the Spencer or Grandview whistle stops. A decision on whether to resume full train service will be made at 7:00 p.m. tonight, based on the status of track repair efforts.

The Alaska Railroad will post the decision on tomorrow’s southbound passenger train service online at three locations:

- www.AlaskaRailroad.com > Transit or Travel > Reservations
- www.facebook.com/AlaskaRailroad
- www.twitter.com/akrr

The incident began about 7:30 a.m. June 17, when high water eroded the trackbed, leaving the track suspended over the water. Alaska Railroad track maintenance crews, heavy equipment and a rock-hauling work train have been working round-the-clock for three days to plug the gap and re-route a high volume of water. “Earlier this week, 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.”

For more information, scheduled passengers should call the ARRC Reservations Line between 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily at (907) 265-2494; and check the online updates noted above after 8:00 p.m. tonight.

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