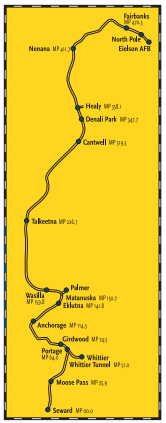

ALASKA RAILROAD

Track & Yard Vegetation Management: The Number One Reason = Safety

Public Safety

- Uncontrolled plant growth can create unwanted consequences:
  - Overgrown bushes can block the line of sight, particularly on curves.
  - Overgrown vegetation can obscure signs and signals that serve as warnings to the public.
  - Vegetation can cause heaving and slippery conditions at road-rail crossings.
  - Dry vegetation can fuel brush fires.

Obscured signs and infrastructure pose safety concerns.

Operational Safety

- The regular inspection of trains, switches, ties and rail fasteners is made more difficult by overgrown vegetation on and along the track and in the yards. Inspection is the first defense against operational failure.
- Plant growth can hinder or prevent the operation of automated equipment, including switch heaters, laser guided track alignment equipment, and devices that detect problems with wheels, train load, rail friction and broken rails.
- Plants and roots impede drainage, damaging ballast (track bed) integrity. Vegetation also accelerates the deterioration of rails and ties, contributing to derailment risk. Good track condition is essential to the safe transport of passengers and hazardous materials.

Employee Safety

- Overgrown vegetation can hide walking hazards, leaving employees vulnerable to slips, trips and fall injuries.
- Mowing and cutting leave behind sharp skewers. Root growth in the ballast creates uneven, heaving surfaces. Both situations pose a danger to employees working along the track.

Overgrown vegetation in a rail yard poses trip, slip and fall hazards to employees.