



ALASKA RAILROAD

Track & Yard Vegetation Management: Current Methods of Control

ARRC has not sprayed chemical weed killers since the early 1980s, instead employing other methods of control.

Current Controls

- **Mechanical Cutting** - using chain saws and clippers, rail-mounted brush cutters and mowers, and off-track brush cutters.
 - Cutting and Grubbing are slow, labor intensive methods, with temporary results.
- **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.

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
 - Radiant heat
 - Abrasion
 - Hot water
 - Flaming and burning
- None of these methods, nor any of the methods still employed, provide a broad spectrum of control with a thorough and lasting effect.

They are not enough...



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



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.

