

GRAVEL TRAIN TRAFFIC

Information and Impacts on Glenn Highway Access

updated 5/10/2022

Gravel Train Traffic Reminder

With spring comes Alaska's construction season, and an associated demand for gravel. We want to remind folks traveling to, from and around Palmer that gravel train traffic is resuming. The first trains to Palmer in 2022 began running in early May.

Trains load at the Anchorage Sand & Gravel (AS&G) gravel mine on the east side of the Glenn Highway, just south of the highway intersection with Outer Springer Loop. The Alaska Railroad (ARRC), hauls gravel from the Palmer facility to Anchorage processing plants that supply material for construction projects during the summer. The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) is responsible for the highways and roadways along this stretch.

Background

Over the years, the ARRC, ADOT&PF, City of Palmer and Matanuska-Susitna Borough have discussed various solutions to blocked crossings along the Glenn Highway. The timing of gravel train activity has been modified, taking into account many factors. These include gravel customer requirements, Anchorage municipal noise ordinance restrictions, scheduling for other passenger and freight train operations, and local traffic impacts. Gravel train operations have also been revised.

ARRC continues to work with ADOT&PF to investigate infrastructure solutions as part of the ongoing Glenn Highway improvement project. While the project will improve some crossings, temporary closures at Inner and Outer Loop crossings are not avoidable.

AS&G, ADOT&PF and ARRC have focused on mitigating traffic conflicts at Inner and Outer Springer Loop crossings with Glenn Highway. They have worked with local legislators to address constituent concerns and better communicate with area residents. Internet-based solutions prove most effective in getting temporary crossing closure information to the affected public so they can make better-informed travel decisions.



Online and smart phone solutions include:


1. ADOT&PF 511 Traveler Information

Road conditions and other travel advisories are available from the 511 website and phone apps. In spring and summer, a description of general crossing blockage times is posted, as well as conditions that vary significantly from general operating times. Ways to access 511 for affected roadways:

- **WEBSITE – 511.alaska.gov**

- In the top-right corner, select “Mat-Su” on the locator drop-down to view a Mat-Su area map.
- At right, in the Legend Box, check these items:

 Mileposts  Roadwork / Maintenance

Use +/- to enlarge the map to view the Glenn Highway between Mileposts 38 and 40. Click  icons near intersections with Outer Springer Loop and Inner Springer Loop to see details.

- **PHONE – Dial 5-1-1 from inside Alaska**
Say “Glenn Highway” then “southbound” then “Palmer” for gravel train activity impacting Glenn Hwy traffic MP 38-40.

- **MOBILE APPS**

- Download the Alaska 511 app for Android (Google Play) or iPhone (Apple App Store). The 511 mobile site is available on most smartphone browsers.



2. Gravel Operations Web Camera

An AS&G webcam feed is available for the public to check for a gravel train on the track near Outer Springer Loop.

To directly access the real-time feed on your computer, phone or other internet-connected device, type this address into your browser:

www.anchsand.com/springerroad

Gravel Train Loading in Palmer

Generally, gravel train loading in Palmer occurs daily during spring and summer (May - October) from about 6 to 10 a.m. (and also 6 to 10 p.m., if gravel demand requires two trains per day).

Once the empty 75- to 80-car, mile-long gravel train arrives in Palmer, hopper cars are loaded under the tipple as the train moves slowly north. Outer Springer Loop is blocked for about three hours. Grandview Circle is blocked 10-20 minutes at the start of loading. Inner Springer Loop is blocked for 20-30 minutes while the final cars load.

Anchorage ordinances prohibit noisy industrial activity 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., factoring into gravel train schedules.



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QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about...

- **Alaska Railroad** gravel hauling operations, contact ARRC Corporate Communications Officer Stephenie Wheeler at (907) 265-2671 or ARRC Communications Officer Stephenie Wheeler at (907) 265-2671 or email Public_Comment@akrr.com. Gravel operations information is also posted online at: www.alaskarailroad.com/corporate/community/gravel-trains.
- **Anchorage Sand & Gravel** mine operations or web cameras, contact the AS&G office at (907) 349-3333. Ask to be connected to Operations Manager Ryan Morman.
- **Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF)** 511 Traveler Information, contact Alicia Stevens at alicia.stevens@alaska.gov; or for the ADOT&PF Glenn Highway Improvement project, contact Jill Reese at (907) 269-0772, or jill.reese@alaska.gov.