



Alaska Central Railroad

**The Newsletter of the Alaska Live
Steamers
Jan. 2016**



Zach Barnes operating Lutz Braun's Steam Engine July 11 2015

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Page 2**Presidents Message
Mark Engebretsen**

First of all I would like to personally thank each and every Member who helped with yet another successful construction season.

2015 was a great construction year. The great spring gave us another early start on track laying and construction. The track crews put down over 2000 feet of track, with another 1600 feet of roadbed ready for rail in the spring of 2016. The station was moved and rebuilt, it looks great. Several new bridges have been installed on the McKensie Loop .

All in all we have had a very productive year.

We have many projects in the works for the summer of 2016. We will be completing The Mackenzie Loop with all its sidings and industrial spurs this summer. That will give everybody a sweet ride. We will be putting in a few more bridges. We are building track panels, switches, and crossings. We are making road bed materials and moving it around. We have plenty of space for you to build a scale home, town or even an industrial park.

Bring your friends and neighbors out this year and have some fun. Although we will never be the biggest 7-1/2" gauge railroad in the world, that doesn't mean we cannot be the best. Being the best takes a lot of time and effort, and a desire to keep making it better. Let's grow ALS, as many hands make light work. You can make a difference, come on out and get dirty with us.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make 2015 an exceptional year of construction.

Something that each potential new member must understand: We do not wish to have you as a member because we need the money. On the contrary! We are a non-profit, charitable corporation and we make (barely) enough income from our ticket sales to pay for the upkeep of the track, equipment, and insurance. We certainly don't get rich and absolutely nobody gets paid for what we do. It is a labor of love. So please understand when we say **"If you are not willing to work as a member of the Alaska Live Steamers, please don't bother to send in your application."**When we say "work", we mean all kinds of things. Engineer, conductor, stationmaster, dispatcher, signal maintainer, ticket sales, track maintenance, painting, plumbing, electrical, bottle washer, chief cook, gopher – you name it. It doesn't seem like work because we have fun doing it. No experience needed – we will teach you the skills to do whatever you want to do! We keep our dues low because we really want your talents and support, not your money!

Station help is always needed. This task has fallen on Cherish for a few years now and it would be nice to have others share the duties of managing the station. Either in a rotational basis or volunteers. Please help her out if you can, she would like to run her engine once in awhile also.

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Meeting Notice

The Annual meeting of the Alaska Live Steamers will be on Sat. February 6, 2016 at the new Pendergrass Station located at the new track site at 400 E Riley Ave. Wasilla, AK. Please bring your favorite dish as this again is a potluck lunch/dinner. Please contact Vicki with what you are planning to bring. The meeting will start at 1 pm and continue until?? If you have an agenda item you would like to discuss contact vicki at 907-373-6412 or e-mail vicgres1@gmail.com

Dues

As we start off our New Year it's time to think about renewing your membership. Your continued support is what keeps ALS moving and growing.

Remember: Dues are due at the time of the meeting. Anything passed the meeting date by 30 days will be considered null and void. Dues are only \$25.00 per year. Cheap compared to other groups. New membership cards will be issued 30 days after the membership meeting. After March 7 2016 anyone not having a new membership card will not be allowed to participate in any membership functions.



From the Office of The Littlest Hobo

The Hobo said "To be safe this season, watch out for me and our visitors".

All train crews must be certified in order to operate trains. The 2016 Certification will be May 7, 2016 from 10am to 4pm this will include a work day as well. Remember, using your private equipment on club tracks means you still have to take these courses. This year's classes will be more intensive, covering all of the Alaska Central RR GCOR rules and regulations Please put this day on your calendar we need to have all of you here. The classes will cover radio operation, safety, requirements for conductors, engineers trainmaster, yard masters, MOW crews and dispatchers.

GCOR (General Code of Operating Rules) rules are the guidelines that all railroads use for safety and proper operating procedures. Alaska Central Railroads GCOR rules are somewhat different than those of the real railroads but a lot will still apply. A GCOR Handbook will be handed out at our annual meeting on Feb. 6, 2016.

Page 4 Pendergrass Station



This Station was built at the old site several years ago. How to move it was the problem. There was years of debate on how we were going to move it. Among many ideas were to sell it and build a new structure at the new site. Moving it was an almost impossible situation due to the high cost of the move. \$7000.00 was the lowest bid we had. That did not include the cost of any low hanging lines that had to be moved, permits or pilot cars. Jerry Pendergrass took on the project. He tore down the building board by board by himself and rebuilt it at the new track site. Insulation was added with an extra room on one end for storage and an office space. Many, many, thanks to Jerry from all the members.





Freight Train crosses Jacks Creek bridge headed towards the end of track at Lake Victoria.



Mark and Zach driving piling for Jacks Creek bridge April 25, 2015



Zach holding a piling while Mark tries to drive it into the ground. The bridge was finally installed in July of 2015.

John Whitney's Caboose

It appears that John is going to have to move his caboose this summer from the old track site over to the new site. This will require a couple of days of hard work to get ready for the move. We will have to lay real railroad rail and ties before the movers will be able to move it. It will also be expensive. Any help we can give John will definitely benefit our group.



John cleaning His caboose #1074 at the old track site.

Donkey Engine

Another much smaller project is moving the Donkey engine. We will need some sweat labor to move this. It requires cutting some skids from timbers and bolting or screwing them to the bottom of the engine. Then trying to get it skidded onto Jack's trailer. We also have to take off the smoke stack before it is moved to meet the over height requirements.



On Track –The MOW Corner

By Zach Barnes

The month of Oct. saw the MOW crew building 62 track panels over the span of just a couple of Saturdays. This is enough track panels to finish the 1600 feet of track left on the McKensie Loop. Now all that is needed are enough ties and switches to put in the 4 sidings that are needed.

Soon the new season will be starting up and the work days beginning, we need to get those 62 track panels on the ground as soon as the weather permits. I would like to have this section of track in and ready for the first run day in May. This means we need help. Please sign up with your phone number if you can help. We will contact you when the weather is good enough to start laying track.

On March 21, 2015, Zach Barnes, Jack Klingbeil, Mark Engebretson, laid down two hundred feet of track along the Point McKenzie loop in three hours. If we want to do this again we will need helpers with battery powered drills.

New Bentonite Plant Announced

CEO of Clay Products Zach Barnes announced that his company will begin building a bentonite plant at the soon to be “Clay Spur” which is on the McKensie Loop.

Ground work has already started with the gravel fill in place. Track for the spur should be in place early this summer along with the foundations for the bag house and mill. Zach said “with the coming of the mainline near the proposed plant it gave the company a much cheaper way of moving the product than by truck.” Zach also pointed out that Clay products is expecting to ship out at least 20 carloads of bentonite a week at full production.

Visitor

July 11, 2015 saw a surprise visit from Lutz Braun and his wife. They came to Alaska via the Train Mountain Tri-annual meet. Along with them he brought his 2-6-0 propane fired Mogul steam engine. They drove from Tennessee to Train Mountain, then to Alaska. After staying a few days they were anxious to get home but not after running their engine around our track for a few days. What a site that was. Our first steamer at the new site.



Machine shop hints:

The wife had a lot of old makeup glass bottles lying around the house. What could I use them for. Bing, the light went off. I cleaned them up and they make great spot oilers for drilling or tapping. They give only a drop of oil, are clean to use and we are recycling. WD 40 works good in them. Less mess than the spray can.

For Sale

Circus cars. 3 Ringling Bros. Barnum and Baily Circus cars \$600.00 each. Comes with trucks and couplers. Contact Chris Manacher at 373-3221.



The cars have been actually riveted together with oak hardwood decking. Circus wagons etc. could be built for these beautiful made cars.

T-Shirts

Alaska Live Steamers has a number of t-shirts for sale. Sizes are available in limited quantities. Prices do vary but generally are in the \$15.00 range. Please e-mail Cherish at: forevercherish@gmail.com

South Bend 10X40 Lathe \$800.00

South Bend Lathe **OLDIE ~ AMERICAN MADE ~ Real Work Horse**

6" Chuck--Aprox. 40" Ways--Stand Table about 5'0"--Cross Feed Leather Belt Drive / 110v Motor (free belt dressing - Included ...) Pictures upon request. **Chris e-mail at akcgrafx@hotmail.com**

Phone: 907-373-3221

Both these machines are very,very, heavy, Help will be needed to move these items.

Donations

Allied Steel: With their donations of steel we have been able to install several bridges and we have a very good supply of 3 inch by 1/8th inch strapping steel that is very good for making flat cars. Any one in need of this steel to make cars please e-mail Vicki at vicgres1@gmail.com

Vannoy Electric: The use of their post driver which allowed us to drive the piling for the bridges. Many thanks also for the help in running the wiring to the car barn.

Dick Morris: The donation of many railroad related magazines and machine shop practices will defiantly expand the clubs library.

Milling Machine w/Automatic feed 16-3/8" Swing 12-Speed Mill / Drill Used very little

Mill/Drill Package
with Power Down
Feed & Stand
Model 105-1298
\$2509⁹⁸



Only: \$2200.00

Includes:
52-Pc. damping kit, angle drill press vise, drill chuck with key, drill chuck arbor, face mill & shell mill arbor.



Chris at 907-373-3221 e-mail akcgrafx@hotmail.com

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The Alaska Central Railroad
(2010) Year one

Due to airport expansion we were having to move the railroad from the site we had occupied for 22 years to a new city site located on Riley St.

With this site, came a thirty year lease.

In the beginning there was nothing but trees and swamp. Lots of swamp, more swamp and more marshy areas. All this swamp had hidden springs.

There were warm springs during the winter with dangerous soft spots. In the summer there were hidden holes that most of us had fallen into and then had to be pulled out.

All that water and billions of mosquitoes, on top of all that . The main question was how to build a miniature railroad that would have as little maint. as possible.

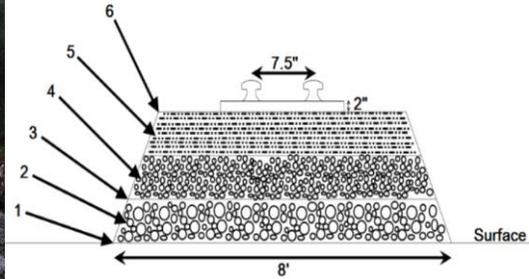
The answer was with the Corp of Engineers. A permit had to be obtained to fill in the wetlands. This permit required that we maintain an 8 foot roadbed. First there was a layer of geo-textile required. Then a layer of course rock 4 to 12 inches around, another layer of geo-textile a layer of regular pit run gravel, textile with a layer of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch screened material. On top of that we put a layer of non-woven geo-textile then the track. This was to keep weeds at a minimum.

While we were waiting for the permit, we were allowed to work on the high ground. The first thing we had to do was clear trees and make an access road to the property of approximately 300 feet. This included removing a vast amount of trees and leveling for a parking lot. Little did we know that the next year the city would extend the road to our property. Oh well, live and learn.

By the end of 2010 there had been a considerable amount of work accomplished even with the rainy weather. Jack brought out his collection of John Deere tractors and Gator and Cherish with her 2 Gators. Total Equipment. 4 John Deere Gators, Three JD Tractors, Hitachi Excavator(John Deere), 1 screening plant, and some rental equipment. All of the gravel, over burden, and stumps have been hauled with the John Deere Gators. The roadbed across the swamps all done with the John Deere Gators. A real work horse for sure.



- 1) Layer of geotextile (C-250 Woven)
- 2) 6" to 8" layer of screen 3" to 12" rock
- 3) Another layer of geotextile (C-250 Woven)
- 4) 4" minus screened gravel (6" thick)
- 5) 3/4" minus screened gravel (4" to 6" thick)
- 6) Layer of geotextile (non-woven fabric)



Typical Alaska Live Steamers Track Profile

Looking towards the entrance of the property with the access trail we had to build. The Illustration of the required roadbed over the swamps.



Looking at where parking is today

Roughed in track bed



Working in the mud fall 2010

Removing topsoil to get to the gravel