



Quarterly Newsletter of the Truckee Donner Railroad Society

Snowshed

Keeping Truckee's Railroad History Alive!

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Event Calendar

Truckee River Railroad first run of season	May 17
TDRRS Table and information at Donner State Park "Legacy Day"	June 21
Trestle Tour: Downtown Truckee Railroad Walking Tour	June 28
TDRRS Board of Directors Meeting	July 2
"Truckee 1927" Model Railroad at Engel & Völkers "Flying A"	July 4-6
Trestle Tour: Boca & Loyaltan Railroad	July 12
Trestle Tour: Donner Summit railroad sites	August 24

President's Letter

Dan Cobb

Each year at this time we clean the tracks, oil the switches, service the engines, and test everything in preparation for another season of fun rides on the Truckee River Railroad in the regional park. This year Bob Bell and Tom Smith are expanding our run schedule from 10 days to 14, and we could really use some additional help. Imagine the thrill for your kids or grandkids of riding the train with you at the controls! There are lots of volunteer roles, it's a small time commitment, and we'll teach you everything you need to know. Contact us at info@tdrrs.org to find out more. See Bob's article on page 5 for the full 2025 schedule.

We continue to work on our Truckee 1927 HO-scale pop-up model railroad, and will have it on display over the Fourth of July weekend at Engel & Völkers "Flying A" station downtown. We're also looking for help with the model railroad – even if you're not a modeler, you (age 12 and older) can join us for our exhibits and help us run the trains! Drop us a note at info@tdrrs.org for that as well.

Spring also kicks off another season of history talks at the Truckee-Tahoe Airport, sponsored by the Museum of Truckee History, which we jointly operate with the Truckee-Donner Historical Society. In April, Judy DePuy and I gave a talk about the Hobart Estate logging railroad and Life in Hobart Mills. Jerry Blackwill will present Truckee's Chinese Railroad Society on May 13th, Ron Grove will talk about the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party on June 10th, and Dave DePuy will discuss National Recognition Comes to Donner Summit on July 8th. There's no charge for these presentations; donations to the museum are appreciated.

Last month, the Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District (TDRPD) Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding to work with us to build a railroad museum and workspace in the Truckee River Regional Park. While TDRPD will provide the location near our riding railroad in the park, we're responsible for funding and managing the construction process. We'll soon be getting estimates from contractors and rolling out a TDRRS members' pledge drive to kick off our capital campaign.

Truckee Train Cam

Jay Jacobs

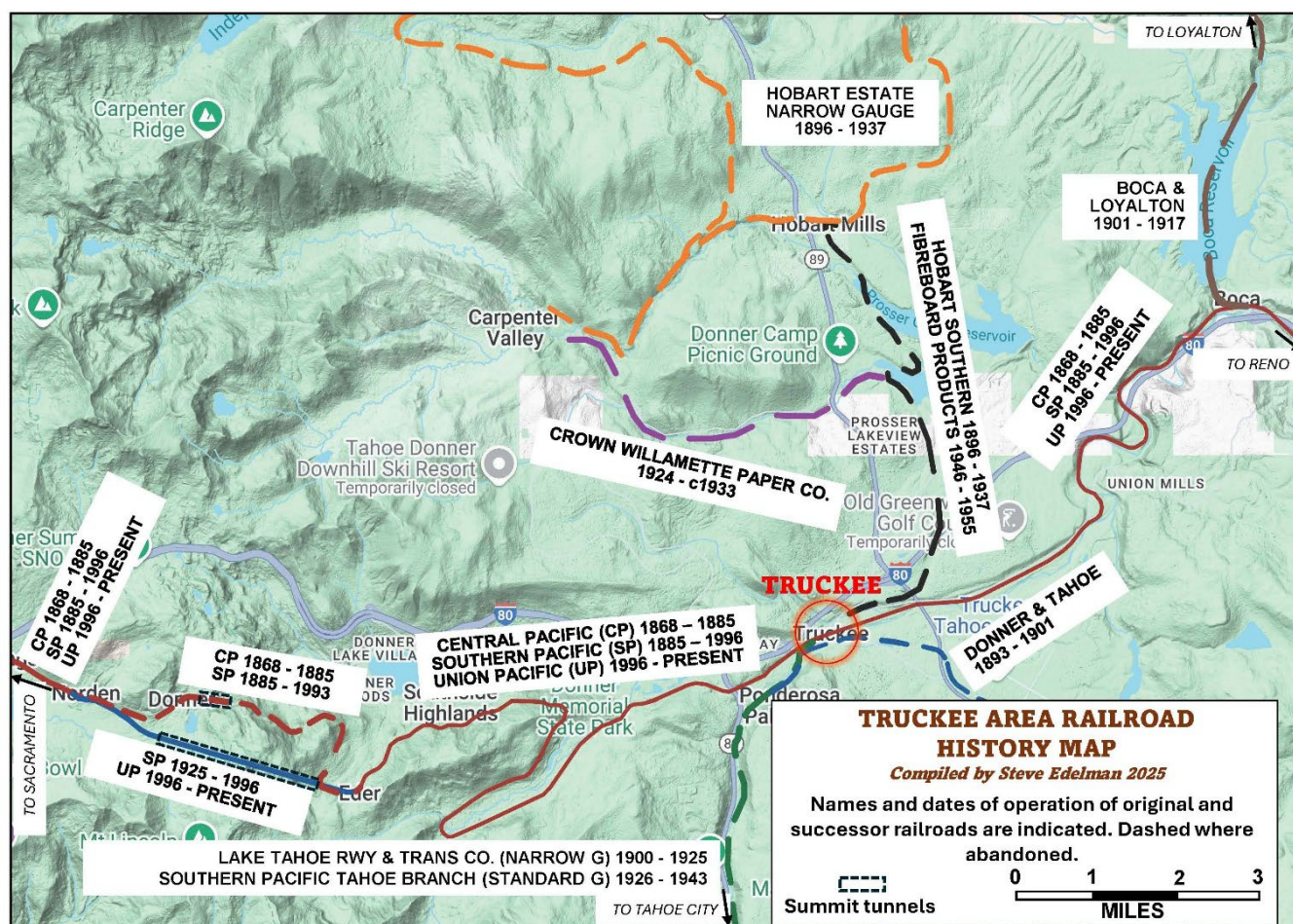
We now have a webcam mounted on our Truckee Railroad Museum caboose, thanks to Todd Santos (RRPhotographer on YouTube). The webcam is sound enabled so you can hear the trains and the railroad radio from the museum. You can watch and hear all of the UP, BNSF, and Amtrak action on your computer, phone, or tablet. You can see the video feed at <https://tdrrs.org/traincam>.



Truckee Area Railroad History

Steve Feldman

With the upcoming Trestle Tour season and the rapidly developing "Truckee 1927" Model Railroad, we thought it would be a good time for a review of the railroad history of the Truckee area. Our railroad history begins with the Central Pacific Railroad coming through Truckee in 1868 after completing the most difficult 1,659 feet of America's first transcontinental railroad (Tunnel 6 at Donner Summit). Numerous lumber railroads and one tourist railroad were built from this mainline and supported major local industries for several decades. All but the transcontinental mainline were abandoned by the 1940s, once the timber was cut and automobiles and planes replaced trains for most passenger travel. A longer version of this history is presented in the map and table below.



Our Trestle Tours explore the vestiges of this history around Truckee and areas north to Sierra Valley (narrow gauge Sierra Valleys Railroad and later Western Pacific Railroad), east to Reno (Verdi Lumber Co. Railroad and Virginia & Truckee Railroad), south via the Lake Tahoe Railway tourist railroad to isolated lumber railroads around Lake Tahoe (including the famous incline railway), and west to Donner Summit and snowsheds. The "Truckee 1927" Model Railroad depicts the junctions of the CP mainline (Southern Pacific in 1927, now Union

Pacific) with the now-abandoned branch lines that once connected with the mainline at Truckee, as shown in the map above.

TRUCKEE AREA RAILROAD HISTORY

1866	Heavy snows in late 1866 stop work on the eastward-building the Central Pacific Railroad (CP) at Dutch Flat, California. In order to keep construction moving on America's first transcontinental railroad, the CP uses animal and human power to haul 3 locomotives, 40 rail cars, and material for 40 miles of track, through heavy snow, up and over Donner Summit and down to the Truckee River at Coburn Station, which would later be re-named "Truckee."
1868	After two years of drilling and blasting through glaciated granite at Donner Summit, the CP finally holes through the summit Tunnel 6 and connects with the trackage already built from Truckee.
1885	The Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) leases and begins operation of the CP.
1893	The Pacific Lumber & Wood Company constructs a narrow gauge railroad, the Donner & Tahoe Railroad, from Truckee Lumber Company's mill in Truckee southeastward 11 miles into timber stands around Martis Creek.
1896	With the depletion of timber around Lake Tahoe, the Sierra Nevada Wood & Lumber Company dismantles its operations and moves its equipment to Truckee. From there, it builds the standard-gauge Hobart Southern Railway northward from the SP mainline to its new mill at Hobart Mills, where affiliated Hobart Estate extends temporary, ever-moving narrow gauge tracks into the woods.
1900	With the depletion of the timber around Lake Tahoe, the Bliss family salvages its rails and equipment from its operations at Glenbrook-Spooner Summit and incorporates the Lake Tahoe Railway & Transportation Company to transport tourists, not lumber, from the SP mainline at Truckee to Tahoe City via its new narrow-gauge railroad – the Lake Tahoe Railway.
1901	The Donner & Tahoe Railroad is abandoned.
1901	The Boca & Loyalton Railroad is completed from the SP mainline at Boca to the logging center of Loyalton in Sierra Valley.
1917	The Boca & Loyalton Railroad is abandoned.
1924	Crown Willamette Paper Co. builds a standard gauge branch westward from the Hobart Southern to timber stands in Carpenter Valley.
1925	The SP completes Tunnel 41, which is longer and lower than the original 1868 Tunnel 6. SP trains use both tunnels until 1993.
1925	The SP leases the Lake Tahoe Railway and converts it to standard gauge following in 1926.
c1933	Crown Willamette Paper Co. abandons its line.
1937	The Hobart Southern and the narrow gauge Hobart Estate tracks are abandoned.
1943	The SP abandons its Lake Tahoe Branch.
1946	Fiberboard Products, Inc. builds a new standard gauge railroad on the former Hobart Southern grade from Truckee to Hobart Mills.
1955	Fiberboard Products abandons its line to Hobart Mills. This was the last branch line in the area.
1993	The SP abandons its original line over Donner Summit, including Tunnel 6 and associated trackage that had been bypassed in 1925 by Tunnel 41 and associated trackage between Norden and Eder.
1996	The UP acquires the SP.

2025 Trestle Tours

Dan Cobb

For 2025, we're planning three tours. On Saturday, June 28th, we'll do the downtown Truckee walking tour. This tour will highlight historical railroad sites such as the granite roundhouse, passenger depot, freight depot, SP

hotel, Hobart Southern track and buildings, and the grade of the Lake Tahoe Railway. Many of these locations have been bulldozed and repurposed, so some imagination will be necessary. This tour starts at 9 AM and will last about 3 hours. For those who want more, in the afternoon we'll visit several sites along the grade of the Hobart Southern Railroad, which ran from Truckee past present day Prosser Creek Reservoir to Hobart Mills. You'll want to bring a lunch if you plan to join us for the afternoon.

On Saturday, July 12th, we'll follow the route of the Boca & Loyalton Railroad (1901 to 1917) from Boca to Loyalton. This tour includes the Boca Townsite, evidence of the B&L grade along the Little Truckee River, railroad ties and intersecting grades in Sardine Valley, a collapsed trestle, and a visit to the Milton Gottardi Museum in Loyalton. This tour starts at 9:00 and runs until mid-afternoon (bring lunch).

On Sunday, August 24th, we will lead a walking tour of Donner Summit railroad sites, including Tunnel 6, China Wall, Summit, Norden, and the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road. We'll also see the location of the Summit Camp National Historic Landmark (to be dedicated July 20th), and Summit Tunnel plaques recently placed by the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) and National Historic Civil Engineering (ASCE). The tour also starts at 9 AM and lasts until about noon.

Truckee River Railroad

Bob Bell

The season has started. On Saturday May 3 we had a great workday thanks to Tom Smith, Durk Stelter, Dan Cobb, Dave DePuy, Bill Ramsey, Greg Zirbel, Bobby Carter, and Tom Nixon. They cleaned the track of pine needles, lubed and maintained the switches, serviced the crossing gates, cleaned the engines and riding cars, completed the cable fence at the station, and installed new batteries in the Big Blue. The first run day is May 17 and Durk Stelter will be the Trainmaster with Bobby Carter in charge of the equipment set up for the day, and then the usually big Memorial Day weekend run on Sunday May 25. A big thanks to the workday crew for getting everything up and running for the season, so be sure to thank them when you see them at the park. We scheduled a few more run days this year than we have in past seasons so please check out the schedule, which is also on our website, and plan to make as many of them as you can. Your help is always needed and appreciated. Keep up your steam and hope to see you at the park this summer.

TRUCKEE RIVER RAILROAD 2025 OPERATING SCHEDULE (TRAINS RUN 11 AM – 2 PM)

May 17	August 2
May 25	August 10
June 1	August 16
June 14	August 30
July 5	September 13
July 19	September 27
July 26	October 11



Volunteering and Membership

The Railroad Society could use your help in the following areas:

Truckee River Railroad (ride-on train) – Issue tickets, load the train, run the crossing gates, operate the trains as engineer or conductor, and help keep our riders safe. Training is provided and new volunteers are always welcome.

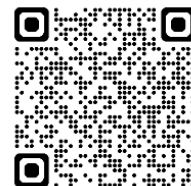
Museum Volunteer – Learn and share your knowledge of Truckee's history and local railroading in the Truckee Railroad Museum (caboose) or the Museum of Truckee History. Volunteers work as individuals or pairs in three-hour shifts. Training is provided.

Newsletter Contributor – Contribute articles on local railroad history or other topics of interest for publication in our *Snowshed* newsletter.

Cosmetic Restoration of Railroad Equipment – We'll hire professionals to do hazardous materials abatement and retore our wrecking crane to its full mid-century glory, but we can use some help with detailing and ongoing maintenance of the crane and the rotary snowplow.

Model Railroad – We need additional railroad modelers and builders to design and build structures, create scenery, run trains, and talk with visitors about Truckee's railroad history. Join our committee and build "Truckee 1927"!

To volunteer, drop us a line at info@tdrrs.org. Memberships are open to anyone interested in preserving Truckee's railroad history and supporting the ongoing activities of the society. To join, renew your membership, or make a donation to the society, visit our website at <https://tdrrs.org/membership> or scan the QR code.



Board of Directors	Our History
<p>Dan Cobb — President and Historian</p> <p>Bob Bell — Executive Vice President and Treasurer</p> <p>Jerry Blackwill — Vice President and Museum Manager</p> <p>Steve Edelman — Newsletter Editor</p> <p>Chip Huck — Rolling Stock Restoration & Preservation</p> <p>Jay Jacobs — Webmaster</p> <p>Tom Smith — Truckee River Railroad</p> <p>Bill Ramsey – Secretary</p> <p>Durk Stelter</p>	<p>Railroads of the Truckee area played a significant role in founding and developing the town of Truckee. From the blasting of black powder in the granite over Donner Lake, to the hissing of the first steam engines coming into town, to the whistles of lumberjacks in the mountains, to the crack of ice being loaded in the reefers, to the tourists flocking to enjoy the beauty of the area, Truckee's story is very much the story of its railroads.</p> <p>Our Mission</p> <p>Our mission is to preserve and celebrate Truckee's colorful railroad history and to educate residents and visitors about the important role of railroads in making Truckee what it is today. We strive to enrich the experience of residents and visitors through railroad-related entertainment and education.</p>
The Truckee Donner Railroad Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization. EIN 91-1917864.	