

Snowshed

November, 2019

Volume 12 Number 3



News & Events

- ◆ New fences have been installed to protect the rotary snowplow and wrecking crane at the Railyard pocket park!
- ◆ The Truckee River Railroad (TRR) at the Truckee River Regional Park is closed for the winter. The railroad will be back Memorial Day, 2020, weather permitting.
- ◆ TRR's "pop-up" railroad will provide train rides again this year at the Olympic Village Inn, Squaw Valley, December 19-23.

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Presidents Letter

Jerry Blackwill

Our commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad celebrations is now over. This has been a busy year and there's still more to do. We are working to get the exhibits and financing for the new Museum of Truckee History that will be in the railroad depot. In addition to that, we are working to complete the construction of the signs for our rotary snowplow and wrecking crane equipment in the Railyard Yard pocket park.

Thanks to all who came to the annual meeting at the Truckee River Regional Park and rode the train.

We still need docents. The next to last run of the Truckee River Railroad in September was cancelled because of insufficient volunteers. Our docents have a lot of fun. On the kid's train you can be an engineer, conductor, or help in many other ways. Seeing the boys' and girls' happiness is a huge reward. Granddads, grandmas, moms, dads, and other volunteers are all welcome. Come join the fun by volunteering at <http://www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com/involvement/volunteer.html>.

Jerry Blackwill

2019 Trestle Tours

Nelson Van Gundy

On June 22, I gave a private Trestle Tour to the Tahoe Donner Jeep Club—a friend of mine who is a member organized it. We had 15 Jeeps and 35 folks. They enjoyed it, and were good fun as they were quite prepared for the back-country experience. Many of the members were surprised to find out that they'd been driving abandoned logging railroad grades for years without knowing what those were! On a discouraging and upsetting note, we discovered that the first trestle, off highway 89, has been partially destroyed.



2019 Trestle Tours

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On July 28, we held our annual Hobart Estates, Boca & Loyalton and Verdi Lumber Tour, with 21 folks to start. We added Independence Lake to the Tour as Corri Jimenez, an Industrial Archeologist from Reno, joined us. She's been studying Independence Lake, and had some very interesting information about its history. Unfortunately, this addition of about 1.5 hours to the Tour made it too long for some folks, and only about 8 dedicated individuals remained with the tour by 5 PM at Boca. The ones leaving were very complimentary of the Tour, and donated generously to TDRS.

Both tours generated good interest in our local railroad history and in our Society. Also, a number of folks asked for additional information; I directed them to the "Bibliography" section of the TDRS website.

Nelson Van Gundy

TDRS Historian

Lake Tahoe Railway & Transportation Company Plaque

Dan Cobb

The society recently received a new plaque commemorating the Lake Tahoe Railway & Transportation Company's northern terminus just across the transcontinental railroad tracks from the Truckee depot. The plaque was funded by Union Pacific Railroad and dedicated by the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission. It will be installed outside the new Museum of Truckee History at the Truckee depot, probably next summer.

The LTR&TC was incorporated in 1898 by D. L. Bliss and built using rails and equipment from Bliss's highly successful logging operation in Glenbrook. It opened for seasonal traffic on May 1, 1900. The narrow-gauge railway ran 15 miles from downtown Truckee to Tahoe City, where it terminated on a 600 foot pier on Lake Tahoe. At Tahoe City, passengers could disembark at Bliss's Tahoe Tavern hotel or transfer on the pier to the Bliss-operated steamers *Tahoe* or *Nevada* for transportation to other resorts around the lake, including Homewood, McKinney, Meeks Bay, Emerald Bay, Tallac, Al Tahoe, Bijou, State Line, Glenbrook, Brockway, Tahoe Vista, and Carnelian Bay.



In addition to its passenger operation, the LTR&TC transported logs for the Truckee Lumber Company from timber operations along the Truckee River to mills in Truckee. LTR&TC's shops were located in Tahoe City.

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What Happened After Promontory?

Jerry Blackwill

We've spent most of the year celebrating the sesquicentennial completion of the transcontinental railroad, but what happened after the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads united at Promontory Summit, Utah in 1869?

First, Truckee became a railroad division point. A roundhouse was built for helper engines to push trains up Donner pass. Truckee now had a permanent population of railroad workers servicing the Central Pacific's needs.

Then, lumbermen saw the potential of the area's sugar pine forests. Hobart Mills and other logging operations sprang up around Truckee. A network of narrow and standard gauge logging railroads were built. These were used to pull cut logs to the mills and then haul the milled wood to the main line. In addition to the increased railroad traffic, the town saw bars and other establishments opened to supply the leisure-time needs of the loggers.

Truckee's third industry was ice production. In the winter the lumber mills had frozen ponds, idle loggers and saws. Entrepreneurs saw the opportunity to use the loggers and saws to cut ice from the ponds, put it on railroad cars, and supply it to California towns and farms. Enterprising central valley farmers packed this ice next to their fresh produce and sent it in railcars to the Midwest in winter. California agriculture boomed.

A brewer perceived the potential to ferment lager beer using area ice for the necessary low temperatures and the Boca Brewery went into business. California's lager beer was shipped throughout the country on the transcontinental railroad's freight cars.

Finally, an astute newspaper editor by the name of Charles McGlashan grasped the opportunity for winter tourism. He encouraged the construction of a temporary "ice palace" in downtown Truckee to induce train travelers to the town. Then, he pushed the idea of one of the first ski hills in California above the present-day Cottonwood restaurant. The Sierra's ski industry was born.

Today, Truckee's major remaining industry is winter tourism. This has permitted the town to grow into an important tourist destination. It all started with two railroads meeting at Promontory Summit, Utah.

Jerry Blackwill

Lake Tahoe Railway & Transportation Company Plaque

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In 1925, Bliss leased the railway to Southern Pacific for \$1 per year with the stipulation that SP would continue regular seasonal operations and upgrade the road to standard gauge. SP completed the upgrade in 1926, bought the line outright in 1927, and ran it until 1943, when it was abandoned due to the decline in tourism during WWII and increased competition from automobiles for transportation to the lake. Much of the current Truckee River bicycle path from Tahoe City to Squaw Valley is built on the abandoned railroad grade.

The LTR&TC locomotive *Glenbrook*, a narrow-gauge Baldwin 2-6-0 wood-burning steam engine, has been restored and is on display at the Nevada State Railroad Museum in Carson City.

Dan Cobb

Truckee Donner Railroad Society

Society Mission:

To preserve, interpret, and educate the public about railroading life and history in the Truckee region including its contribution to Truckee and the Nation. Specifically, depict railroad involvement in local industry through the acquisition, preservation, and restoration of relevant equipment, documents, and artifacts all to be part of a permanent museum facility in downtown Truckee.

Board of Directors:

Jerry Blackwill—President

Bob Bell—Executive Vice President/Treasurer

Ed Czerwinski—Secretary

Nelson Van Gundy —
Historian

Ed Larson—Vice President,
Museum Operations

Dan Cobb—Strategic
Planning

Chip Huck

Greg Kuzma

Jim Hood

Carolyn Wallace Dee

Truckee Railroad Museum Vision:

Keeping Truckee railroads alive!

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 coming into town, to whistles of lumberjacks in the mountains, to the crack of ice being loaded in the reefers, and tourists flocking to share the beauty of the area, the Truckee Railroad Museum tells the story.

A place to Discover

A Place to Interact

A place to Enjoy

Truckee Donner Railroad Society
P.O. Box 3838
Truckee, Ca 96160

www.truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com
501(c) 3 non-profit organization

Volunteer!

You can help TDRS and serve the community by volunteering for one of our projects or ongoing operations:

- ♦ Snowplow & Crane Restoration
- ♦ Truckee River Railroad Operations
- ♦ Museum Docent

Contact our volunteer manager volunteer_manager@truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com.

Donate!

You can also help by donating at our website, truckeedonnerrailroadsociety.com, at the bottom of the home page.

Truckee Donner Railroad Society
P.O. Box 3838
Truckee, Ca 96160