

So You Want to go to Truckee (Again)!

By Rod McClure

Once again, the FRRS was invited to the Truckee Railroad Days celebration in Truckee, CA. on September 6th, 7th, and 8th. With the cooperation of the Union Pacific Railroad we took our show on the road again. Learning from the problems encountered last year, we assembled our TGMTT train and had it outside the gate Saturday night and ready to depart first thing Sunday morning. We departed Portola westbound at 0900 on September 1st with the UP 4306 (SD70m) on the point with the following FRRS equipment:

GP30 UP 849, GP20 WP 2001, F9Bu WP 925C, GP7 WP 707, caboose WP 428, caboose UP 903005, caboose SP 4107, business car UP 105, lounge car FRRX 754, display/gift shop FRRX 5653, boxcar WPMW 37-6, caboose WP 484.

On the head end, was myself as Engineer and Greg Elems as Fireman. Steve Habeck was the Conductor riding and working from the WP 484 caboose. The weather was fantastic and there were many people out taking pictures of us on our way down the Canyon. We stopped briefly at Keddie to allow a Double Stack train around us but other than that we never stopped until we caught up to the Stack train which had two manifest trains in front of him. We followed the parade to Oroville where we made a Depot stop in front of the old WP depot in Oroville for pictures and to have lunch delivered by our chase crew of Gail McClure and Frank Brehm. We departed Oroville and headed North towards Marysville. Two of the three trains ahead of us were routed to Roseville via the Valley Sub and we ran on the heels of the Stack train all the way to Haggin. At Haggin we made a left and headed up the Martinez Sub for Roseville on the number one track while 'racing' a manifest coming off the Fresno sub also headed for Roseville. We threaded around him at Swanston and proceeded to Roseville heading right into the 582 track without delay. After tying the train down and talking to the Command Center the crew headed for dinner and bed. Total times on duty for us was about 10 ½ hours and thanks to many breaks from the dispatchers, were able to get over the road better than most trains.

Monday morning, September 2nd, we were back at the train getting ready for the climb over the hill to Truckee. It was officially a holiday, but the trains were running like streetcars and we had to follow Amtrak #6 out of town. We backed out of the yard westbound to Antelope where we got a "high green" and departed Roseville at 1300. More than a few comments were made on the radio at seeing a "working" caboose shoving backwards through the bowels of Roseville Yard. I sure miss having those things.....

With our SD70 in run 8, we attacked the grade at Rocklin doing track speed. We saw many old familiar faces on the trip this day taking pictures of our movement. Two people who followed us at least as far as Colfax were Dave McClain and Steve Milward. Great to see you guys, don't be such strangers!!! We stopped long enough to check the train over and get lunch delivered by the ever-faithful chase crew at Colfax and then departed for the top. After leaving Colfax we did not have any stops until our arrival at Truckee about 6:30. We ran around the train on the mainline and shoved the whole thing onto the Balloon track. We tied it all down and took the 4306 to Sparks.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday found volunteers preparing the train for display as well as setting up the gift shop. Preparations included interior and exterior cleaning, horn and builder plate installation, running electrical for lights, placement of steps and a host of other mundane tasks.

Friday morning brought the arrival of local school children for a tour of the display train and educational talks explaining the different equipment and its history. We had four groups of approximately thirty children each go through the equipment from 8:00 until noon. This was a very enjoyable experience for us as we were able to talk about the history of the WP and the equipment on display and also let them know we have more equipment preserved at the museum. Friday afternoon was spent on a thorough walk through of our displays correcting any deficiencies that were found.

Returning Saturday morning we opened up the equipment and shortly thereafter had the beginnings of what would turn out to be a huge amount of people viewing and touring our equipment. There were by some estimates in excess of 3000 people through and around our equipment Saturday alone. The days events scheduled end was 5 pm but some of the crowd of visitors did not clear out until about 6 pm. After securing things for the night, some of the members involved got together for pizza and either went home or to the Hotel for the night.

Nest issue, Sundays activities and the trip home.

A Brief Description of Truckee

Just as many early pioneers followed the Emigrant Trail through Truckee, visitors today make their way to the natural beauty of the Truckee area, high in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Steeped in the history of the ill-fated Donner Party, the railroad, logging, and ice-harvesting, Truckee proudly retains much of its Old West flavor.

Truckee has flourished, keeping the allure and charm of the turn-of-the-century town alive. Commercial Row hints at Truckee's colorful history along with present-day shops, galleries, dining establishments and historic buildings.

Donner Memorial State Park, home to the Emigrant Trail Museum and the Donner Monument, is a reminder of the area's emigrant history. The museum and surrounding grounds give an astonishing look at the perils of the Donner Party pioneers who were trapped in the Sierra Nevada because of an early winter.

Outdoor sports are prevalent and easily accessible year round. Truckee has something to offer everyone during the Winter. Ice Skating, Nordic Skiing, Downhill Skiing, and Snowboarding are popular at several internationally famous ski resorts within easy reach of Truckee. The National Forest Wilderness areas are home to many winter sports in the Truckee area including, snowmobiling, snow shoeing, sledding, back-country skiing, and snow play.

Visitors to the area can enjoy camping, boating, fishing, swimming, kayaking, windsurfing, rafting, canoeing and playing on the countless beaches at Donner and Serene lakes, Boca, Prosser and Stampede reservoirs, as well as, along the Truckee River.