

# Western Pacific Railroad 1503

## Diesel Electric Switching Locomotive

Western Pacific 1503 was part of an order for three locomotives numbered 1501-1503. These three were the last switching locomotives built for the Western Pacific. The 1503 could usually be found throughout the 1970s and 80s working the industrial areas of San Francisco. The carferry "Las Plumas" connected this isolated trackage to the WP system, moving railcars across San Francisco Bay between Oakland and "The City". The 1500s wore the 1970s green and orange paint scheme through their WP careers.

WP 1503 represents the style of later yard switching diesels from EMD, with large high cabs and a blockier appearance than older sisters such as WP 501 or 608. Competitor Southern Pacific owned hundreds of these engines and also used them in local train service, but WP's 3 tended to stay in the Bay Area yards where their relatively clean burning prime movers were appreciated by the local air quality board.

After the merger between the Western Pacific and Union Pacific in December of 1982, the UP retired many older Western Pacific locomotives, selling several to shortlines, scrapping a few and graciously donated several to the brand new Feather River Rail Society. The SW1500s, however, being fairly modern engines, were retained for use by the UP. In 2011, the decision was made to retire 1503 and her two sisters.

Realizing the historical significance of the 1503 being the last switcher built for the WP, then FRRS President Rod McClure appealed to the Union Pacific to donate the engine for preservation at the museum. In October 2011, the UP graciously agreed. The FRRS was excited about their new donation, but none more so than Rod, as the 1503 is the first engine he worked on for the WP, and the last engine his father had worked on. They often worked together on the same crew.

**builder**

Electro-Motive Division  
of General Motors

**built**

May, 1973

**type**

SW1500

**horsepower**

1500

**serial number**

72692-3

**original cost**

\$207,134.00

**top speed**

60 MPH

**operating weight**

257,870 lbs

**acquisition**

donated by Union Pacific

[tour.wplives.org/wp1503](http://tour.wplives.org/wp1503)

