



In 1898, the El Paso & Northeastern Railroad completed its initial line north from El Paso to the future town of Alamogordo and immediately started building the Alamogordo & Sacramento Mountain Railway. The railroad reached 28 miles to Cloudcroft, New Mexico, in 1900, where a lodge was built for summer tourists to enjoy the cool mountain air. Cloudcroft was laid out in several villages so tourists might avoid associating with loggers and railway workers. The railway was extended 4 miles from Cloudcroft to the small community of Russia, New Mexico, in 1903, and several temporary logging branches were built to reach timber for the Alamogordo Lumber Company. The A&SM climbs 4,747 feet up the steep Sacramento Mountain fault block escarpment, which required numerous trestles, switchbacks, and grades as steep as 6.4 percent. The A&SM was one of the most spectacular railroads of the American west, described as an "engineering marvel." The construction was supervised by Horace Sumner, whose experience in Colorado included construction of the Denver & Rio Grande and Florence & Cripple Creek railroads, and the result has been described as a standard gauge railroad built to narrow gauge standards. The logs harvested in the mountains provided the lumber to make ties, poles, and structures for the EP&NE's northward expansion. The El Paso & Southwestern Railroad purchased the EP&NE in July 1905, which in turn was leased by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1924. Summer excursions from El Paso were discontinued in 1930 and passenger and mail service ended in 1938. Freight service ended in 1947 and the line was dismantled through the summer of 1948.

The Mexican Canyon trestle is 323 feet long and rises 52 feet over the canyon; the trestle has been restored and stands as a historic landmark. The upper part of grade, including Cloudcroft to the Mexican Canyon trestle, is a rails-to-trail.



The Trestle Trail follows parts of the old "Cloud Climbing Railroad" grade and begins at a reconstruction of the A&SM Cloudcroft Station.