



The West Side & Mendocino Railroad was conceived in 1884 to build a railroad west from Willows to the Pacific coast of Mendocino County. It was anticipated that the railroad would haul redwood and sugar pine lumber from Mendocino County as well as local fruit along the route. A contract was awarded in October 1886 and grading to the coast was completed in April 1887. In March 1888, track laying began using Chinese labor, continued through this location 9 miles from the start-of-track at Willows, and on July 1, 1888, the line was opened 17 miles to Fruto, where construction stopped. During construction, the Northern Railway/SP acquired the WS&M, so the 17-mile branch line to Fruto became known immediately as the "Mendocino Branch" of the Northern Railway/SP. In 1951, the SP abandoned most of the branch line, including this location, except for the first two miles west of Willows, which was left in place to serve the Johns-Manville Fiberglass Plant.

Southward view of the WS&M/Mendocino Branch (1888) grade and concrete culvert, with orchards in the background. The hilly terrain is the eastern foothills of the California Coast Range.