



The Magma Copper Company built the narrow gauge Magma Arizona Railroad in 1915 to connect copper mines at Superior, Arizona, to the Southern Pacific (originally Phoenix & Eastern) Railroad at a junction called Magma. The Magma Arizona was converted to standard gauge in 1923. The Magma Arizona was the last industrial short line railroad in the U.S. to use steam power. The Australian mining giant Broken Hill Proprietary Company purchased the Magma Copper Company in 1996 and suspended rail operations in 1997. The railroad has since changed hands and is currently owned by Resolution Copper, a subsidiary of London-based Rio Tinto Group, which has indicated that the railroad may be re-opened if and when mining resumes.

This southwestward view is at the mid-point between Magma and Superior. The 15 miles from here to Magma is a straight line across a flat alluvial plain of mesquite and saguaro cactus. Note the black slag ballast.



Northeast view at same location as above, where the Magma Arizona grade makes its first bend as it enters the Pinal Mountains toward Superior.