



The Nevada–California–Oregon Railway had its origins in the Nevada & Oregon Railroad, which in 1880 planned a narrow gauge line from the Central Pacific transcontinental line at Reno, Nevada, to the Columbia River at The Dalles to service cattle ranches and farms in northeastern California and eastern Oregon. Survey and grading work began in December 1880 and reached only to Oneida, California, 30 miles north of Reno, in October 1882. Regular service between the two cities began a month later, but track construction stalled. In April 1884, a bank took full control of the railroad and spent the next few years improving lines and building up business. The name of the railroad was changed to the Nevada–California–Oregon in 1893, northward construction resumed in 1899, and after 13 years reached southernmost Oregon at Lakeview in January 1912. The plans to continue farther north into Oregon never occurred. The railroad's best year was 1913, but decline followed quickly and by April 1925, the Southern Pacific purchased the N-C-O. By 1928, the SP had converted the N-C-O track to standard gauge. In the 1970's, SP abandoned the line south of Alturas south to a point near Oneida, California, where the N-C-O began its extension from the original N&O.

The N-C-O narrow gauge line reached Madeline, California, in 1902, and the SP's standard gauge tracks were removed in the 1970's. Most of the town of Madeline is in this view.



The N-C-O/SP grade about 7 miles south of Madeline.



A low bridge on the N-C-O/SP grade about 10 miles south of Madeline.



SP standard gauge tracks are still present on the N-C-O/SP grade at a road crossing about 15 miles south of Madeline at Termo. The grade is signed "The Modoc Line Rail Trail," in honor of the SP's name for the line.