



The Eel River & Eureka Railroad was organized in 1882 by a group of Eureka businessmen. The initial 25 miles of the ER&E ran southward from the line's office and depot at the port of Eureka across the Humboldt Bay salt marsh at this location 4 miles south of Eureka and was completed in 1884 to Burnell's station, a town near Hydesville. Subsequent construction was limited to small extensions and spurs too small to show on the Southwest Railroad History Map. By 1896, the ER&E was running passenger trains twice a day, but lumber was its main payload. In October 1902, all the property and rights of the ER&E were transferred to the San Francisco & Northwestern Railway and became part of a continuous line from San Francisco to Trinidad in the summer of 1914 when the AT&SF/SP-controlled San Francisco & Eureka Railroad was completed from Willets (at the junction with the California Western Railroad & Navigation Company line) through the Eel River Canyon to a junction with the ER&E at Alton Junction. In 1918, the San Francisco & Northwestern Railway transferred the assets to the Northwestern Pacific Railroad.

In 1929, the NWP became a full SP subsidiary. Freight service on the NWP picked up in the 1950's due to demand for lumber during the post-war housing boom. By 1980, freight was still running between Willits and Eureka (including this location). In 1983, the SP unsuccessfully tried to shut the line down and in 1984 sold the line north of Willits to Bryan Whipple, who ran it as the Eureka Southern Railroad but was bankrupt within several years. In 1989, the North Coast Railroad Authority was founded to save the NWP from total abandonment. In 1992, what was left of the Eureka Southern was sold to the NCRA, which operated it for a few years as the North Coast Railroad until 1995, when severe flooding of the Eel River washed out too much of the line to justify repairs. The line north of Willits has been cut off from the national railroad network and inactive since 1995.

Southwestward view of the inactive ER&E (1884)/NWP, 4 miles south of Eureka. A bridge was needed to carry the grade over a tidal creek through the Humboldt Bay salt marsh.



The ER&E (1884)/NWP yard at Eureka, the starting point of the ER&E. This was the northern end-of-track of the ER&E and now harbors rusting diesels.

In 1901, the California & Northern Railroad was built from this location in Eureka 10 miles northeastward along Arcata Bay to the lumber center of Arcata. The C&N made obsolete the steamboats that had for decades carried lumber across Arcata Bay from Arcata to Eureka.



A few steps northeast of the ER&E (1884)/NWP yard at Eureka, this is the southern end of the C&N (1901). The track leaves the yard here and goes onto First Street.



Looking back (southwestward) at the same location as previous. The tracks leave the ER&E (1884) yard and the C&N (1901) enters First Street. By 1918, this was all NWP trackage.



A few blocks northeast of the previous location, the C&N (1901)/NWP trackage runs along Eureka Harbor.



Same location as above.



A few blocks northeast of the previous location, the C&N (1901)/NWP tracks leave the street and head out of Eureka toward Arcata.



Same location as above.





Four miles northeast of Eureka, southward view of the C&N (1901)/NWP, which skirts a lumber facility; Arcata Bay is on the other side of facility.