



In 1878, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe built from Colorado to Raton Pass and was the first railroad in New Mexico. AT&SF construction to the south and west from Raton Pass was performed under other names as affiliates, subsidiaries, joint ventures, or other railroads. In 1881, the AT&SF affiliate New Mexico & Southern Pacific completed a line from Raton Pass southward, famously bypassing Santa Fe then through Albuquerque and this location at today's Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge to the new Southern Pacific Sunset Route (1881) at Deming, New Mexico, forming a new AT&SF transcontinental mainline (using SP trackage rights west of Deming).

Southeastward view of the AT&SF's NM&SP (1881) with a southbound train of gondolas. The thick vegetation between the train and the distant hill is the riparian growth along the Rio Grande.



Eastward view of the of the same train from the same location as previous. The grade is cut through relatively soft alluvium that fills the Rio Grande Valley.