



The Burro Mountain Railroad was completed in 1914, with the backing of the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad to access Phelps-Dodge's Burro Mountain Mine. The 13-mile line started at Burro Mountain Junction, at a connection with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (originally built by the Silver City, Deming & Pacific Railroad in 1883 as a narrow gauge line) to the mining town of Tyrone at the end of the line. When Phelps-Dodge closed the mines at Tyrone in 1924, the EP&SW sold the line to the Southern Pacific Railroad, which abandoned the line in 1933. In 1952, Phelps-Dodge reopened the mines in Tyrone as open pit mines; the expansion of the mines forced Tyrone to relocate to its current location about 5 miles to the north. In order to support its operation, Phelps-Dodge rebuilt the Burro Mountain Railroad, using much of the original right-of-way (the original right-of-way is not shown separately on the map).

The rails in this photograph are the 1952 rails, installed to service Phelps-Dodge's open pit mines in the distance.





The Burro Mountain Railroad overpass at New Mexico Highway 90; the current town of Tyrone is about 5 miles up Highway 90 from here.





The mine and the end of the Burro Mountain Railroad are located along a topographically subdued part of the continental divide. As seen in this view, the topography is flat and the small cuts required for the railroad grade are in soft alluvium, not bedrock. The elevation of the divide is only about 5,800 feet above sea level, so the vegetation includes junipers, but is well below pines and firs.