



The Apache Railway was incorporated in September 1917, grading began in October 1917 from Holbrook, Arizona, on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (formerly Atlantic & Pacific (1883)) mainline, and in July 1920 was completed the 72 miles to what would become the logging town of McNary. In 1923, James McNary and William Cady purchased the railroad. In 1943, McNary's Southwest Forest Industries was awarded the timber contract for the Maverick Unit and a year later the railroad was extended eastward from McNary through this location near Greer, Arizona, to the town of Maverick on a route with elevations exceeding 9,000 feet. The Apache Railway offered passenger service until the 1950's. In 1964, the route from Maverick to McNary, including this location, became the White Mountain Scenic Railroad, which operated steam powered passenger excursions over the SWFI-owned line. As track conditions deteriorated, the excursions were cut back and in 1976 the railroad ceased operations. In the 1970's, the White Mountain Apache Tribe stopped selling logs to Southwest Forest Industries and the mill shut down in 1980. The SWFI (1944) line and the southern half of the original Apache (1920) line were abandoned in the early 1980's.

The fill grade in the center carried the Southwest Forest Industries (1944) line over Honey Creek on the northwest flank of the 11,000+ foot White Mountains. The fill grade was either a continuous grade with a culvert for the creek, or was abutments for a now-gone bridge. The small bridge that now connects the two parts of the grade is a pedestrian bridge for the Railroad Grade Trail, a rail-to-trail.





Three miles southwest of and up-grade from the previous location on the SWFI (1944), which runs across the photo immediately in front of the trees.





Same location as previous. The ditch provided fill for the SWFI (1944) grade on the left, which curves to the right in the distance.





Northeastward view one mile southwest of and up-grade from the previous location on the SWFI (1944) as it approaches the crossing of the Little Colorado River. Note the light gray ballast.





Southwestward view of the SWFI (1944) at the same location as previous. The light gray ballast in the foreground contrasts with the red cinder used to cover the Railroad Grade Trail, which leaves the railroad grade to switch back and cross the Little Colorado River. The railroad continued on a broader curve and crossed the Little Colorado River in the center distance, where some snow remains on the far embankment. The clear area across the river to the left is where a large fill grade once carried the railroad across the river, using culverts for the river flow (see below historical photo of the SWFI (1944) crossing of the Little Colorado River). All evidence of the crossing has been obliterated.



*From Arizona Highways Magazine, January, 1963. Photography by Darwin Van Campen.*