



The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad's original plan was to build a narrow gauge line southward from Denver, across Raton Pass to El Paso, Texas, where it would connect with a Mexican counterpart. D&RG grading south of Pueblo (including this location 7 miles south of Pueblo) started in 1874 and in 1876 the line reached El Moro, 5 miles short of the town of Trinidad (at the northern base of the climb to Raton Pass), which is as far as the line progressed; that is, until 1887). In 1887, the D&RG (1876n) was extended 5 miles south (not shown separately on the SWRRH Map) to Trinidad where it met the northwest-building, standard gauge Denver, Texas & Fort Worth Railroad (1888). The DT&FW intended to connect with the Denver & New Orleans Railroad (1882) at Pueblo, and rather than constructing a parallel route north of Trinidad, the DT&FW worked out a trackage rights agreement with the D&RG that involved dual-gauging of the D&RG (1876n) from Pueblo through this location 7 miles south of Pueblo to Trinidad.

In the 1890's, the Union Pacific was trying to access markets south of its Wyoming mainline (UP 1869) to Texas, and thus created the Union Pacific, Denver and Gulf Railway by purchasing the DT&FW and other railroads. The UPD&G invested in line improvements including, in 1895, the building of a new route from Trinidad to Walsenburg to circumvent the windy, originally narrow gauge D&RG (1876n), at least the part south of Cuchara Junction (this location). In 1911, to circumvent the part of the D&RG (1876n) north of Cuchara Junction, the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RG successor) and the Colorado & Southern Railway (UPD&G successor) jointly built a modern, double track mainline from Pueblo through this location 7 miles south of Pueblo to Walsenburg, the "Southern Joint Line," shown on the SWRRH Map as the D&RGW-Colorado & Southern (1911). At Walsenburg, both lines connected to their own rails. The parallel D&RG (1876n) was abandoned in parts from 1917 to 1936.

This northward view of the D&RGW-C&S (1911) Southern Joint Line is one mile east of the abandoned D&RG (1876n).



Southward view of the double track D&RGW-C&S (1911), which replaced the original D&RG (1876n). Note the Rocky Mountain Front – the beginning of the Mountain West – to the right (west) of the High Plains.



Eastward view of the double track D&RGW-C&S (1911) Southern Joint Line. Somebody conveniently marked the lines for us – the near (western) line is UP (D&RGW successor) and the further line is BNSF (C&S successor). These are well-used welded rails.