



In the late 1800's both the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad had interests in building lines north from San Francisco to Humboldt County to transport logs south. As plans went forward it became clear that only one railroad would be profitable in the Eel River Canyon (including this location), so the SP and AT&SF entered into an agreement and in 1906 merged 42 railroad companies between Marin and Humboldt Bay to create one railroad line stretching from Schellville (just north of San Francisco) to Eureka. The two companies constructed the final stretch of railroad under the name San Francisco & Eureka Railroad through this location in the unstable Eel River canyon and completed the SF&E in 1914 with a "golden spike" ceremony. The SP controlled the southern end of the line from Willits (at the junction with the California Western Railroad & Navigation Company line) south to Schellville, and the AT&SF controlled the northern end from Willits to Eureka (including this location). There were also dozens of miles of narrow gauge trackage in Marin, which were controlled by SP, and together these roads were operated as 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 in the SF&E-built Eel River Canyon between Willits and Eureka (including this location), at that time the most expensive stretch of rail line to be operational and maintained in the United States. 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.

Southward view of the Eel River and the SF&E (1914) line just south of Dos Rios, California. The Middle Fork Eel River comes in from the left (east), thus the two rivers in "Dos Rios." Note the box car in the shadows of the riverbed on the other side of the confluence of the *dos rios*; I assume this box car was moved to its current location during the 1995 flooding that closed the line.



Closer view of the stranded box car in the bed of the Middle Fork Eel River, marked "Cotton Belt."



Some rolling stock was left at Dos Rios when the line was closed. Because the northwest California coast is the most humid area in the Southwest and the line north of Willits has been out of use for more than 20 years, this line is the most overgrown railroad in the Southwest.



The railroad crane and sidings at Dos Rios.



Another view of the railroad crane and other rolling stock.



The railroad crane and sidings at Dos Rios.



A switch for sidings at Dos Rios.



The railroad crane and sidings at Dos Rios.





The railroad crane and sidings at Dos Rios.



Southward view of siding and depot at Dos Rios.



Rolling stock at Dos Rios.



The Dos Rios siding is in the foreground, the small engine is on the SF&E/NWP main line.



Switch for a siding at Dos Rios.



Siding and main line at Dos Rios.



The SF&E/NWP grade along the Eel River, one mile south of Dos Rios. Note the grade is covered by a landslide in the left (south) part of the photo.



Southward view of the SF&E/NWP grade along the Eel River, 2 miles south of Dos Rios.





Southward view of a tunnel on the SF&E/NWP grade along the Eel River, 3 miles south of Dos Rios.