



The Western Pacific Railroad was founded in 1903 and was financed by the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad to form a WP-D&RGW transcontinental route to compete with the Southern Pacific (original Central Pacific)-Union Pacific transcontinental route. The WP is noted for the engineering feats needed to cross the Sierra Nevada via the Feather River drainage, but those feats end here at the town of Beckwourth, California. Beckwourth is at the western end of the Sierra Valley, where water and groundwater from many creeks and marshes in the valley converge to form the Middle Fork Feather River.

This eastbound consist climbs out of the canyon of the Middle Fork Feather River into the Sierra Valley.



The same eastbound train as above from the same location as it enters the Sierra Valley. The hills in the distance are the Pacific Crest with Beckwourth Pass, 20 miles from this location at the town of Beckwourth. At Beckwourth Pass, this train will pass through the last of the 34 tunnels on the Feather River Route.





The yard at the town of Portola, about 5 miles west of Beckwourth along the Middle Fork Feather River. Lumber cars await the next load. Note the older, lighter rails in the foreground.





Portola boasts the Western Pacific Railroad Museum, which preserves the history of the Western Pacific Railroad and is operated by the Feather River Rail Society. Among its many treasures is this huge snow plow. The museum runs excursions and is a premiere rail fan destination.

