



The Denver & Rio Grande Western built its Cane Creek Branch in 1963 to provide access to the Cane Creek Potash Mine on the Colorado River near Moab, Utah, between Canyonlands and Arches National Parks. The Cane Creek Branch runs from the D&RGW (1883n) mainline at Crescent Junction, Utah (this location, also known as Brendel) southward 36 miles through the 7,050-foot Bootlegger Tunnel to the Colorado River and the mine. The Southern Pacific acquired the line in the 1980's along with the other D&RGW properties and the SP was since acquired by Union Pacific.

Eastward view of the D&RGW (1883n), which was converted to standard gauge in 1890. The switch in the foreground connects the Cane Creek Branch (1963), which is the track in the right foreground, to the mainline. This is a single switch junction, there is no wye (presumably because the line was built during the age of diesels, which do not need to be turned the way steam engines do). There is a siding to the left (north), which is lighter, bolted, rusty track, and another siding in the distance with cars stored on it. The distant cliffs are the Book Cliffs, one of the many cliffs typical of Colorado Plateau topography.



Westward view at the same location as previous. The tracks are, from left to right, the D&RGW Cane Creek Branch (1963), the D&RGW (1883n), and the rusty siding.



Eastward view 300 feet West of the previous location. The tracks are, from right to left, the D&RGW Cane Creek Branch (1963), which joins the D&RGW (1883n) mainline in the distance, and the rusty siding on the far left.



Westward view at the same location as previous. The Cane Creek Branch (1963), which is the welded track in the foreground, runs parallel to the mainline for 1,200 feet.



Westward view 1,000 feet west of the previous location. The welded-track Cane Creek Branch (1963) is in the foreground, with some spilled potash on the track, beyond which the alignment begins its left turn to the south. In the distance, note the stored car on the siding next to the mainline and the two stored tank cars that seemed to be out in the desert.



Westward view 200 feet west of the previous location. The welded-track Cane Creek Branch (1963) is in the foreground and to its right are the D&RGW (1883n) mainline and to the far right a siding with one stored car on it. The two tank cars are on a funny track that connects to the siding in the left distance and ends just to the right of those two tank cars.



Northward view 300 feet southwest of the previous location. The D&RGW Cane Creek Branch (1963) is in the foreground and the D&RGW (1883n) mainline and Book Cliffs are in the distance.



Northwestward view of the Cane Creek Branch (1963) at the same location as previous, showing the same stored cars as before.





Southwestward view at the same location as previous, as the Cane Creek Branch (1963) continues its curve to the south. Note the overpass for I-70.



Northward view of the D&RGW Cane Creek Branch (1963) 1,200 feet south of the previous location, where the I-70 frontage road crosses the tracks in the immediate foreground. In the distance, the Cane Creek Branch turns right (east) to parallel the D&RGW (1883n) mainline, beyond which loom the Book Cliffs.



Southward view at the same location as previous. The D&RGW Cane Creek Branch (1963) heads south under I-70. From this point the line continues southward for 36 miles to the Cane Creek Potash Mine on the Colorado River.