

# The Track Car

*The Official Newsletter of West Coast Railroaders Group*



## President's Message

Welcome to our newsletter! As we look back on a very safe and successful 2023, I look forward to the opportunities 2024 brings to our organization. In 2023, WCRG operated our on-track equipment services and excursions thousands of rail miles, without a single accident or injury. We are extremely proud to be able to achieve this level of safety year after year. Our excursions operated over numerous railroads, totaling thirteen excursions in 2023. Our fundraisers were also very successful in 2023, ranging from animal shelters such as High Sierra Animal Rescue to fire departments such as the Quincy Volunteer Fire Department, to Honor Flight Oregon and Nevada, and retired railroader and author Rebecca Wellet, who is battling cancer.

As we begin the 2024 excursion season, we start with a new Track Car Excursion Operating Rules & Standards Rulebook, with several important revisions. One revision is the requirement that aftermarket/owner-built turntables be pre-approved by a WCRG manager, as well as new turntable switch requirements. Another is the requirement to report track car defects not only at set-on, but at any point defects become known during excursion operations.

I want to thank everyone for their continued support year after year. We continue to grow each year with new excursion participants, as well as new excursions. WCRG will continue to operate the safest, most professional track car organization possible, with professional railroaders continuing to lead the way.

Stay safe and see you on the rails,

Ken Marty

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## Upcoming WCRG Events:

### Track Car Excursions

**April 27th:** Roaring Camp R.R.

**May:** Quincy R.R.

**June 21/22:** Goose Lake Railway

**July:** V&T RR

**Aug:** Nevada. State R.R. Museum  
Carson City

**Sep:** V&T R.R.

**October 25th-27th:** Nev. Southern

**November 2nd:** Roaring Camp R.R.

### More Track Car Excursions

coming in 2024! Visit our website  
for regular updates!




# WCRG's Latest Safety Advisory 2023-03 "Eye Protection"

WCRG's latest Excursion Participant Safety Advisory highlights the importance of eye protection during WCRG excursions. WCRG's Track Car Excursion Operating Rules & Standards Rule 412 reads:


"Safety glasses must be worn by all excursion participants at all times while on railroad property and during track car operations. This includes while operating enclosed cab track cars. Corrective lenses or sunglasses will be considered compliant in the application of this rule. Excursion participants must not wear sunglasses at night, or under other low light conditions."

Eye protection is essential to keeping sand, metal grindings, dirt and other debris from injuring your eyes during operations.







## WCRG EXCURSION PARTICIPANT SAFETY ADVISORY 2023-03

### "Eye Protection"



**Eye protection is required at all times on WCRG excursions. This includes anytime while on railroad property, and during track car operations. Eye protection protects excursion participants from eye injuries due to metal grindings, dirt, sand, and other debris on the top of the railhead or roadbed that become airborne during operations. Eye protection also protects against flying insects that may cause eye injuries during the operation of open track cars.**

**Below are examples of eye hazards as well as proper use of eye protection on WCRG excursions.**

 <p><b>Sand On Top of Rail</b></p>	 <p><b>Metal Grindings at Base of Rail</b></p>
 <p><b>Proper Eye Protection</b></p>	 <p><b>Proper Eye Protection</b></p>

WCRG Excursion Participant Safety Advisory 2023-03 10/2023  
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## Turntable Failures Revisited



Broken Baseplate



Broken Coupler On Ram

As a follow-up to our turntable article in our Winter 2023 newsletter, we want to revisit turntable failures, focusing on aftermarket and owner-built turntables, especially hydraulic units. After a locking plate turntable failure in 2022, WCRG immediately revised our turntable rules to ensure the safety of our operations, including changes in equipment safety requirements such as a light in addition to an audible alarm, as well as an ignition interlock to shut the engine down should a turntable become out of correspondence at any time during operations. Additionally, operating practices were also revised to require a second person to visually inspect the turntable after operation to be sure the turntable is fully retracted and safe for movement. Those safeguards have prevented turntable accidents since being implemented. Even with the above-mentioned safeguards in place, we are still concerned about turntable safety.

On a recent excursion in the fall of 2023, another aftermarket/owner-built turntable on an excursion participant's turntable failed, causing the baseplate to break off of the ram assembly while tuning the track car. Fortunately, the track car was already turned and the wheels lined up with the rail when the failure occurred. Upon inspection, the threaded coupler that was welded to the baseplate split and broke off. This aftermarket turntable failure was the result of a turntable design which was insufficient to withstand the repeated horizontal and rotational loads placed on the ram and baseplate while turning. Continued use caused metal fatigue of the baseplate and threaded coupler until it finally failed. Given the danger turntable failures pose on excursions, WCRG will no longer allow any aftermarket/owner-built turntables to operate on our excursions without prior inspection and approval of a WCRG Manager. If there is any doubt regarding the design or structural integrity of the turntable, the track car will not be allowed to participate on any WCRG excursion.

This new design/structural approval requirement will not affect factory hydraulic turntables or Les King/Fredericksburg Shops electric turntables. In addition to these new requirements, WCRG has also updated the requirements for turntable switches used to detect when the turntable is out of correspondence/not fully retracted. To ensure the reliability of the audible alarm, visual light, and ignition interlock, all track cars must be equipped with a Honeywell/Micro Switch 1SL1 precision roller lever limit switch. No other switches will be allowed. Switches such as automotive push button or lever brake light switches, magnetic proximity sensors, or other similar switches that are not designed for this purpose are prohibited. All other current WCRG turntable requirements, i.e. audible alarm, light, ignition interlock, and "Willits" modification remain in effect. Our new Track Car Excursion Operating Rules & Standards Rulebook effective 1/1/2024 reflects these important changes for the 2024 operating season.

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## Track Car Daily Inspection and Defect Reporting Requirements



Brake Hardware Defects



Brake Light/Marker Light Out

WCRG continues to see various mechanical defects on our motorcar excursions, ranging from brake defects, lighting defects, as well as other items such as radio failures. Many of these defects are discovered at set-on, others develop en route. We can't stress enough the importance of inspecting your track car for defects before you arrive at set-on. Set-on is not the time to attempt repairs to a track car. It is imperative that the Employee in Charge is immediately notified of defects at set-on. Additionally, defects that become known en route must also be immediately reported to the Employee in Charge. We cannot assist you if we are unaware when a mechanical problem develops. Our latest Track Car Excursion Operating Rules & Standards effective 1/1/2024, Rule 431 addresses these concerns with additional reporting requirements when defects become known at set-on or en route. Rule 431 reads in part:

"Any defects or non-complying conditions which become known at set-on or before excursion begins, which are not immediately correctable, must be reported to the Employee in Charge immediately. Depending upon the defect, restrictions may be placed on the affected track car up to and including not being allowed to set-on or being set-off."

"Any defects or non-complying conditions that become known at any point during the excursion (en-route) must be reported to the employee in charge immediately. Movement must not start or resume until the Employee in Charge authorizes the track car to proceed. Depending on the defect, movement restrictions may be placed on the affected track car, up to and including setting-out or setting-off at the first available opportunity."

Addressing defects will be one of the items WCRG will be focusing on during upcoming excursions. WCRG will also be focusing on defects that become known en route to ensure the safety of the excursion at all times. As a reminder, each individual excursion participant is solely responsible for the maintenance, condition, and safety of any and all privately owned (non-WCRG) on-track equipment they own, possess, control, and/or operate during a WCRG excursion. This requirement applies regardless of any inspection, or absence thereof, by WCRG personnel of privately owned on-track equipment operated during a WCRG excursion.

Let's keep WCRG excursions safe and efficient with properly maintained track cars that are inspected before the excursion begins, as well as during excursion operations.

## Niles Canyon Rides For The Public Fundraiser



Excursion Group At Niles



Excursion Group At Sunol

WCRG teamed up with the Niles Canyon Railway for a rides for the public excursion fundraiser benefiting the Railway on July 29th and 30th, 2023. While WCRG regularly hosts excursions on the Niles Canyon Railway, this event provided rides on our excursion participants' motorcars to raise funds for the railway's continued operations and restoration projects. Saturday morning started out with a full platform of passengers waiting to board. After supplying each rider with a safety vest, safety glasses, and hearing protection, riders were placed with our excursion participants' motorcars. Large families rode in John Allmen's large gang car. The kids definitely enjoyed John's intercom system that allowed the family members to talk among each other while the motorcars were underway.

Both days had five trips scheduled from Niles to Brightside and return, each one sold out. Saturday morning's first trip included Fremont Mayor Lily Mei, as well as Planning Commissioner Ben Yee. It was fantastic to see local elected leaders supporting the Niles Canyon Railway. Mayor Mei even took Niles Canyon Railway's handcar for a ride. She was a natural at pumping it! After the five trips were completed Saturday afternoon, the excursion group enjoyed a special evening trip to Verona and return. The Verona trip even included a handcar coupled to the rear pilot car. As the excursion reached Sunol, the handcar was cut off. The owner, Tuka Gafari, then pumped his handcar from Verona all the way back to Niles. He was joined by one of our excursion participants, Steve Elkins. Both enjoyed the ride back as the sun quickly set behind the hills during the trip down the canyon. With the excursion group back at Niles, the group was secured behind a portable derail for the night. Several of the excursion participants then met at Bronco Billy's Pizza in Old Town Niles for dinner.

Sunday morning, the excursion group was met with another full platform of riders. As the group came to a stop, enthusiastic children pointed at the motorcar they wanted to ride in. The kids were especially intrigued by the two-stroke motorcars, popping and steaming as they idled in preparation for departure. Sunday's excursion also had five trips to Brightside and return. At Brightside, the riders took photos of the excursion and the vintage Magnetic Flagman automatic crossing warning devices swinging back and forth. Many had never seen such a device before, as well as a few older gentlemen commenting on how they remembered them from decades past. With the last trip completed just after 4:30 p.m., it was time to set off and conclude a fantastic weekend and highly successful fundraiser for Niles Canyon Railway. If you're not a member of this fantastic organization, please consider joining. More information at: [NCRY.org](http://NCRY.org)



## WCRG Helps A Retired Railroader With Medical Expenses



Rebecca And Bill At Virginia City



Rebecca And Bill At Eureka

Rebecca Wellet, retired Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway Brakeman and author of "The Railroad Jewell," is well known in railroad social media circles. She often shares stories from her book chronicling her time as a Brakeman/Switchman starting in the mid-1970s. Her stories, such as "Yosemite Sam," are interesting and entertaining. When we heard about Rebecca's cancer diagnosis and GoFundMe account to help with medical expenses, we knew WCRG had to step up and lend a hand to a fellow "rail." WCRG decided to host a motorcar excursion fundraiser on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad on September 8th-10th, 2023, to benefit Rebecca's medical expenses. Excursion participants from four different states came to participate in the three-day excursion, with the highlight of the event being Rebecca attending in person to ride along with the excursion group on Saturday.

With just a few weeks of planning, the excursion came together to support Rebecca and her family during these difficult times. With the annual Camel and Ostrich races in Virginia City for the same weekend, we knew getting Rebecca a hotel room was going to be a challenge. Luckily, a cancellation had just come up for a hotel room in Virginia City, a perfect accommodation for Rebecca. Arriving Friday evening, everyone was excited to meet Rebecca on Saturday morning. After taking Rebecca to breakfast with the WCRG crew, it was off to the Virginia City depot to meet the excursion group and prepare to depart for a round trip over the railroad. During the job briefing, Rebecca highlighted her career and book and how she came from a family of railroaders.

Rebecca made two round trips over the railroad on Saturday, enjoying every minute on the rails with former Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway Brakeman, Bill Rust. Rebecca rode in Bill's restored Fairmont S2 motorcar, the same vintage that would have been running the rails when they both hired out in the 1970s. During the lunch layover, Rebecca enjoyed the Virginia City Jerky Company, a local BBQ favorite. Rebecca also was treated to a cab ride in the steam locomotive from Virginia City to Gold Hill. After the excursion tied up for the evening at the Virginia City depot, Rebecca and the excursion participants had a fantastic dinner party with Rebecca signing dozens of books for excursion participants and guests. After the dinner party, Rebecca prepared for the early flight out of Reno for the trip home Sunday morning. The excursion continued Sunday, finishing late afternoon as a huge success. Another successful fundraiser supporting a fellow railroader in need. The experience also gave Rebecca a few new stories to share as well!

## The Fourth Annual "Santa's Toy Express" Returns To The Goose Lake Railway



WCRG 6634 At Lakeview



Santa Arrives At Lakeview

Santa's Toy Express returned for the fourth year in a row on December 16th, 2023 to the Goose Lake Railway in Lakeview, Oregon. This annual event has become a favorite of the community each year. The event enjoyed sunny above average temperatures into the high 40's, compared to the previous year, when over a foot of snow was on the ground with sub zero temperatures. Set-up began early in the day with tents and tables full of food, drinks, face painting and a truckload of toys for children of all ages. Motorcars were staged for rides, as well as a locomotive on display. With the event scheduled to start at 11:00 a.m., carloads of families were already pulling into the parking lot well before the starting time. With 11:00 a.m. quickly approaching, Santa was loading up a few blocks away into the railroad's "railbus" to great families upon arrival.

As the event got underway, a loud air horn alerted everyone that Santa was approaching the event on the railbus, waving and greeting everyone with "Merry Christmas!" As Santa de-boarded the railbus, children gathered around him with smiles galore. Hot chocolate, hot soup, and snacks were available for everyone, as well as a custom decorated tow truck from Hall Motors loaded with toys and warm coats for children of all ages. After each child picked out a gift, next they lined up for a ride on the railbus and motorcars. Rides were offered to the railroad's yard office and return, a 10 minute round trip. The railbus and motorcars operated nonstop for hours, making sure every child big or small got a ride. By late afternoon everyone had picked out a gift and had their share of treats for the day. With the last carload of children departing the parking lot, the event came to a close, but not before a group photo was taken of all of the volunteers. A fantastic day giving back to one of the communities we serve!



Kids Enjoy A Motorcar Ride



Group Photo Of The Volunteers



## Niles Canyon Railway Excursion March 5th, 2023



Excursion Group At Sunol



Excursion Group At Verona

WCRG returned to Niles Canyon Railway on March 5th, 2023. Despite a very wet winter still raging over the West Coast, showers didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the group. The morning started off with partly cloudy skies during set-on. With all motorcars set-on and the job briefing complete, the excursion was ready to depart Niles for Verona. Departing Niles, the sky turned dark, and the rain started falling. Showers continued throughout the trip to Verona, with localized downpours heavy below Sunol. Arriving at Sunol, snow-capped mountains came into view just off to the east. Seeing snow-capped mountains in the San Francisco Bay Area is a rare sight and treat for excursion participants.

At Sunol, the excursion group bunched up to shunt the crossings equipped with automatic crossing warning devices. These crossings only have an island circuit, so keeping the group bunched up and on the circuit all at the same time is important for the group's safety. As the rear motorcar cleared the circuits, the gates went up. Arriving at Verona, the rain suddenly stopped and the skies cleared. Everyone was relieved as excursion participants grabbed snacks off the push-car full of food and drinks. With everyone turned, the excursion departed for Niles. As the excursion got underway, rain began to fall again. Proceeding through Sunol, rain was pounding sideways, soaking excursion participants with no curtains or doors on their motorcars. Despite the conditions, everyone safely proceeded back to Niles for the lunch break. Back at Niles, the rain had stopped again.

With lunch over and the job briefing complete, the excursion group departed for the second trip to Verona. Departing Niles, the rain began to fall again. With rain falling most of the way, the wet winter's damage could be seen throughout the canyon, as slides, washouts, and mud were all evident along the tracks. The Niles Canyon Railway crews had done a fantastic job of keeping the line open against all odds during this historic winter. Arriving at Verona, the rain suddenly stopped again. Excursion participants enjoyed the warm sunshine as air temperatures were in the high 40s, unusually cold for the San Francisco Bay Area. With the excursion group ready to proceed back to Niles, the group once again got underway. Rain began again, and fell all the way to Brightside. Safely arriving at Niles, everyone sets-off and loads up for the trip home. As the last motorcar pulled out of the parking lot, rain starts again. We're not sure if rain gods exist, but if they do, they were watching over our excursion and planned it perfectly!



## Sierra Pacific Industries Quincy Railroad/Western Pacific Railroad Museum Excursion May 13th And 14th, 2023



Excursion Group Outside Of Quincy



Excursion Group At M.P. 175

WCRG returned to the Quincy Railroad and Western Pacific Railroad Museum on May 13th and 14th, 2023. The Quincy Railroad excursion was a fundraiser for High Sierra Animal Rescue, located in Portola, California. Excursion participants arrived in Quincy for another leisurely trip through the Quincy Valley to the Union Pacific Railroad interchange (Quincy Junction) along the famous Feather River Route. A warm morning was on hand for excursion participants as motorcars were set-on and prepped for departure. With a thorough job briefing completed, the excursion departed Quincy.

Proceeding through the valley, deer and other wildlife grazed on the green grasses of the valley. They seemed unfazed by the sound of Onan and Fairmont two-stroke engines passing by. As the tracks crossed Greenhorn Creek, the group stopped for a photo on the bridge, as the water from the melting snowpack was flowing cold and fast. Underway again, the excursion started up the steep climb out of the valley floor to Quincy Junction. Arriving at Quincy Junction, the motorcars shut off their engines and enjoyed the peace and tranquility of the quiet mountain setting. Seemingly unchanged from the passage of time, one could imagine seeing streamlined passenger trains such as the California Zephyr passing by as if it were 1949, the first year of service for the famous passenger train. After a 20-minute break, the excursion proceeded back to Quincy.

At Quincy, the excursion group turned and made another round trip to Quincy Junction. Returning from the second trip, the group took a short break for lunch. With the lunch break over, the excursion made two more round trips to Quincy Junction and back. The afternoon weather was warm and enjoyable for everyone, including the local community residents who came out to wave as the excursion rolled into town on the last trip back into Quincy. With the excursion complete and everyone set-off, the excursion group traveled 45 minutes east to Portola, arriving at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum before sunset.

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## Sierra Pacific Industries Quincy Railroad/Western Pacific Railroad Museum Excursion May 13th And 14th, 2023 (Continued)



Excursion Group At The WPRM Museum



Excursion Group On The Balloon Track

Arriving at the museum, motorcars were set-on in preparation for Sundays activities, and secured in front of the museum complex for visitors to experience and enjoy. After set-on, a Spaghetti feed cooked up by Eugene Vicknair was held at the museum complex for excursion participants, museum staff, and guests. Also attending the dinner were representatives from High Sierra Animal Rescue. It was a fantastic dinner and evening of socializing, although the train talk was getting pretty serious toward the end of the night!

Sunday started out with excursion participants treated to a personal tour of the museum by Eugene Vicknair, before the museum opened to the public. After the tour, a job briefing was held with excursion participants and museum staff in charge of operations. With the museum ready to welcome visitors, the motorcars were warmed up for visitors that wanted a unique experience riding a motorcar around the balloon track. Several visitors had seen advertising on social media about the motorcars being at the museum, and made the trip just to see the motorcars up close. With motorcars from several Western railroads in attendance, it was Steve Elkins Fairmont M19AA, built in 1956 for Western Pacific Railroad that stole the show, once again being on home rails. After a steady day of visitors riding, taking pictures, and asking questions about the motorcars, it was time to set-off for the day. The excursion wasn't quite finished though, as Steve Elkins and Chris Mesel offered to treat everyone to Portola Frosty, the local ice cream hangout. A wonderful tasty finish to a memorable weekend for sure!





## Goose Lake Railway Honor Flight Oregon Excursion Fundraiser June 9th And 10th, 2023



Excursion Group At Lakeview



Excursion Group At Sugar Hill

Wild weather greeted excursion participants for our Goose Lake Railway Honor Flight Oregon motorcar excursion fundraiser on June 9th and 10th, 2023. Typically warm in June, the first day of the excursion was met with cool temperatures, rain, thunder, and even lightning. The morning started out with showers that transitioned to a steady rain in the afternoon. With a 3:30 p.m. call time for the job briefing, skies were becoming darker as the job briefing started. With the briefing complete, rain began to fall. It was going to be a wet trip to Goose Lake State Park. The excursion departed Lakeview on schedule and briefly stopped to protect the city crossings in this small community of 2,500 people. After placing lit fuses on each side of several streets, the excursion carefully proceeded through the crossings and headed out into the open valley of the area. Just outside of Lakeview, the excursion group pounded the frog of the new spur switch leading into the defunct biofuels plant. Planned as a state-of-the-art alternative fuel refinery, the project went bankrupt during the Covid Pandemic.

Past the biofuels plant, the excursion entered the Goose Lake Block. Using Block Register Territory, this system utilizes a set of blocks to authorize main track authority. Proceeding to Goose Lake State Park, the railroad has performed extensive track work resulting in upgraded speeds and fewer speed restrictions. The excursion participants enjoyed the upgraded track as the excursion continued through the pouring rain. Arriving at Goose Lake State Park, the excursion group turned and staged at the crossing as operations were suspended for excursion participants to use the porta-potty and grab a snack and drink from the push-car. Fortunately, the rain had stopped. At the crossing, old signal bond wires were visible on the rails, remnants of long-gone automatic crossing warning devices that once protected the crossing. Today, this crossing is lightly used, leaving one to wonder what was once at this dead-end road to warrant the protection long ago. Back underway, the excursion proceeded through the valley and back into Lakeview. At Lakeview, the motorcars were turned and staged on the shop track for departure in the morning. With a 7:00 a.m. call time, excursion participants had just enough time to get dinner and some rest before Saturday's departure.

Saturday morning brought clear skies and cool temperatures to Lakeview. The temperature was a cool 40 degrees as the job briefing got underway. Preparing to depart Lakeview, the excursion backed out of the shop track and onto the main track. With everyone ready, the excursion departed Lakeview for the first stop, Goose Lake State Park. The group arrived at the park just ahead of schedule. With operations suspended, participants took a 10-minute break. Ready to depart again, the excursion got underway to the next stop, Davis Creek. Before arriving at Davis Creek, the excursion made a quick stop to drop electric fences across the track. Being open range, cattle graze freely through much of the valley. Arriving at Davis Creek, operations were once again suspended, and excursion participants enjoyed another break.

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## Goose Lake Railway Honor Flight Oregon Excursion Fundraiser June 9th And 10th, 2023 (Continued)



Excursion Group In The Pit River Canyon



Excursion Group At Alturas

With the temperature rising, excursion participants exchange coats and long-sleeve shirts for sunscreen and sunglasses for the remaining segment to Alturas. Departing from Davis Creek for Alturas, the excursion proceeds through the last part of the valley. Up ahead is the Pit River Canyon, which provides fantastic views of the river as the railroad winds its way through the canyon before entering the Alturas valley. Entering the Alturas Valley, the excursion passes the tribal lands of the Achomawi Indians. Passing the Chimney Rock Travel Center, the California Border Protection Station and the turn-around point come into view. Just past the Border Inspection station, the telemetry device (a flashing red marker that also relays air pressure on the rear of the train to the locomotive) of the Goose Lake train that left several hours ahead of us is flashing, indicating the rear of the train. At the Border Inspection crossing, motorcars are turned for the trip back to Lakeview. With all the motorcars turned, the excursion proceeds up to the Chimney Rock Travel Center for lunch.

After lunch, the excursion group held another job briefing before departure. With the return trip's instructions complete, the excursion departed for the next stop, Chimney Rock Historical Monument. Arriving at the monument, excursion participants had a chance to view the historic rock and plaque erected by the Native Daughters of the Golden West in 1932. Getting back underway, the excursion enters the Pit River Canyon again, climbing the grade for several miles up to the valley floor. Back in the valley, the excursion arrives at Davis Creek, another stop for food, drinks, and porta-potty use. With everyone ready to depart, the excursion gets back underway for Goose Lake State Park. Underway, the excursion proceeds through the open range and starts the climb up Sugar Hill.

Cresting Sugar Hill, the excursion group drops back to the valley floor for the remaining few miles to Goose Lake State Park. Arriving at the park, the excursion is met with fresh cottonwood seeds blowing in the gentle breeze, resembling snow on the track. As the last motorcar arrives, cottonwood seeds are thrust up into the air, resettling on the ground around the group. With this being the last scheduled stop, excursion participants grab a few more snacks and drinks for the remaining one hour trip back to Lakeview. With the outskirts of Lakeview in view, the set-off instructions are once again broadcast over the radio. With everyone safely arriving at the yard, motorcars are set-off and loaded up for the trip home. A big thank you to everyone at the Goose Lake Railway for once again hosting our excursions.



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## Virginia & Truckee Railroad Honor Flight Nevada/Stephanie Parker Memorial Excursion Fundraiser July 14-16th, 2023



WCRG returned to the Virginia & Truckee Railroad on July 14th-16th, 2023 for its annual summer excursion. The excursion served as a fundraiser for Honor Flight Nevada and also as the annual Stephanie Parker memorial excursion, in honor of Stephanie Parker, who we lost to the Covid Pandemic in 2021. The excursion was an action-packed three-day event with several surprises along the way. Friday afternoon began with set-on at Virginia City. Excursion participants from three different states had made the trip to participate. After completing set-on at 5:00 p.m., a job briefing was held before the excursion group prepared to depart. Following the job briefing, the excursion group departed Virginia City for Tunnel 2. As the excursion group proceeded downhill, the sun began to set behind Mount Davidson, providing welcome shade. With temperatures in the high 90's, it was an unusually hot evening. Upon arriving inside of Tunnel 2, the excursion group enjoyed the shade and cool air. After a 20-minute break, the group was again underway en route to Virginia City and was secured for the evening at the depot upon return.

Saturday morning began with a thorough job briefing outlining the day's operations. During the job briefing, Jon Yuspa, founder of Honor Flight Nevada, spoke about the importance of Honor Flight Nevada and how much Honor Flight Nevada appreciates WCRG's continued support. Following the job briefing, the excursion was ready to depart Virginia City. As the excursion departed, wild horses looked on as the group passed by. Proceeding through Gold Hill, motorists waved as the group crossed State Route 342, with gates down, lights flashing, and bells ringing. Continuing through American Flats, more horses are along the right of way. Arriving at Mound House, the group bunches up for the crossing at Linehan Road. With everyone ready to proceed, the excursion proceeds to Eureka. The absence of railbikes in 2023 allowed the excursion to operate over the entire line, including into the Eureka Canyon. Arriving at Eureka, operations were suspended, allowing participants to enjoy taking photos of the Carson River and to enjoy food and drinks off of the push-car.

With everyone ready to depart Eureka, the group departed for Scales, the next planned stop, and upon arrival, the lead motorcar stopped adjacent to "The Springs," a year-round natural spring. As the rear motorcar arrived, everyone made their way up to the lead motorcar. While this was a planned stop to remember Stephanie Parker, what Matt Parker, Manager of Operating Practices, Northern Region, didn't know was that a memorial plaque honoring his late wife had been placed there a few days before and covered up for this special dedication. As the cover was pulled off the plaque, Matt and his family were reminded of how much Stephanie meant to all of us at WCRG. Flowers were then laid on the plaque, which was surrounded by large river rocks at the edge of the water. With the dedication complete, the excursion group was underway again, en route to Gold Hill for a meet with V & T engine 29.

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## Virginia & Truckee Railroad Honor Flight Nevada/Stephanie Parker Memorial Excursion Fundraiser July 14th-16th, 2023 (Continued)



Excursion Group At "The Springs"



Excursion Group Inside Tunnel 2

At Gold Hill, the excursion waits for V & T engine 29 to arrive. As the train stops at Gold Hill, the excursion prepares to follow the train into Virginia City and break for lunch. After lunch, the excursion departs for the second round trip to Eureka and back. Arriving at Eureka, operations are once again suspended as excursion participants enjoy the warm breeze coming through the canyon. Ready to depart, the excursion proceeds back to Virginia City, arriving just before 5:00 p.m. With the excursion group secured at the depot for the evening, excursion participants and veterans enjoyed a special BBQ dinner in Virginia City. Over fifty hamburgers, hotdogs, and side dishes are served while everyone enjoys the warm evening surrounded by friends, some new, some old.

Sunday again started out unseasonably warm. The forecast was for record-breaking triple digits. With the job briefing complete, the excursion departs Virginia City for Eureka. Arriving at Eureka, operations are again suspended. With Eureka as the current end of the track, the excursion stops right at the end of the track, offering exceptional photo opportunities of the original right of way, now a dirt road. Ready to proceed again, the group departs for Gold Hill for a planned meet with V & T engine 29. Arriving at Gold Hill, the excursion is ahead of schedule, waiting for the arrival of the train. After 15 minutes, the train comes into view, along with the iconic sound of the 100-year-old steam engine coming down the steep 3.6 percent grade into Gold Hill. With the train stopped just ahead of the group, everyone prepares to proceed. Everything from vintage two-strokes to modern Onan engines comes alive to battle the 3.6 percent grade out of Gold Hill. Arriving back in Virginia City, the group proceeds into the siding again for the lunch break.

After lunch, one more job briefing is held before departure. Participants are reminded to stay hydrated due to the high temperatures. While the excursion originally planned to take a break at Eureka, the high temperatures forced a change in schedule. The group would proceed to Eureka, turn each motorcar, and then immediately depart for Tunnel 2 and wait inside for V & T engine 29 to clear Gold Hill, then proceed into Virginia City. Below Donovan, the excursion group encounters thermal misalignment (the technical term for a sun kink). The excursion proceeds slowly through the area that has shifted the ties and bent the rail out of alignment. With the group clear of the area, the excursion proceeds the rest of the way to Eureka. Arriving at Eureka, the excursion group turns and immediately prepares to depart for Tunnel 2. The blazing heat is apparent as everyone can't wait to get underway. Arriving at Tunnel 2, the group slowly proceeds into the tunnel. The shade and cool air are much welcomed. With 45 minutes to spare, the group enjoys snacks and drinks off the push-car. With it time to depart again, the excursion gets back underway. Exiting the tunnel, it felt like the excursion had entered a blast furnace. The heat is on for the last five miles of the excursion. Arriving back in Virginia City, participants set-off and load up after an unforgettable three days on the rails. The excursion proved to be hot, sweaty, tiring, and perfect!



## Nevada Southern Railway Excursion October 27th-29th, 2023



Excursion Group Departs Boulder City



Rebecca Wellet And Family

WCRG returned to the Nevada State Railroad Museum/Nevada Southern Railway on October 27th-29th, 2023, for another action-packed three-day excursion. The excursion started off early Friday afternoon with set-on at the railroad's yard in Boulder City. Excursion participants came from all corners of the West, including extreme Northern California, Northern Nevada, as well as the San Francisco Bay Area to participate in the excursion. Set-on was safe and efficient, with everyone set on and ready for the evening trip from Boulder City to Railroad Pass and return. After a thorough job briefing with the railroad and railbike staff, the excursion was ready to depart for Railroad Pass. Joining us for the evening trip was Rebecca Wellet, retired Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway Brakeman and author of the "Railroad Jewell." Rebecca had planned a trip to see family in the area around our excursion so she and her extended family could experience a WCRG excursion.

Departing Boulder City, the sun was beginning to set to the west. Clouds had been coming over the area all afternoon, making for a spectacular sunset during the stop at Railroad Pass. While stopped at Railroad Pass, excursion participants were able to enjoy the view of the Las Vegas skyline as it came alive with lights. New this year to the skyline was the addition of "The Sphere," the largest spherical building in the world at 875,000 square feet. The sphere lights up the Las Vegas skyline with constantly changing graphics, much like a large screen television. As the excursion prepared to depart Railroad Pass for Boulder City, the Employee in Charge gave the proceed signal to depart. The group was back on the move to Boulder City. Arriving at Boulder City, the excursion proceeded onto the "C" Lead and was secured for the evening. With the excursion group in the clear, the railbikes departed the depot and the "Halloween Express" train pulled into the depot to load passengers for the evening train.

On Saturday, the excursion had several trips planned from Boulder City to Railroad Pass and return. Railbikes were again running as were trains, making communication essential to the safe operations of the excursion group. The excursion departed Boulder City first, followed by railbikes, then the train. At Railroad Pass, the excursion group and railbikes waited for the train to arrive, then the railbikes and excursion followed the train back to Boulder City. Saturday evening again included a special evening trip from Boulder City to Railroad Pass and return. As the group departed Boulder City, passengers for the Halloween Express train were gathering on the depot platform. Smiles and waves from adults and children alike were enjoyed by everyone as the excursion group departed the depot. Arriving at Railroad Pass, the excursion participants were once again treated to the Las Vegas skyline coming alive. Rebecca Wellet and family had come again to ride not only the motorcars, but also the Halloween Express train as well. Rebecca's family had never experienced a motorcar excursion, much less a motorcar excursion with a view of the Las Vegas strip.

***Continued on next page***  
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## Nevada Southern Railway Excursion October 27th-29th, 2023 (Continued)



Excursion Group At Railroad Pass



Excursion Group At Boulder City

With the excursion safely back at Boulder City, the excursion group was once again secured for the evening on the "C" Lead. Several excursion participants had tickets to ride the evening Halloween Express train, including Rebecca and her family. As the excursion participants prepared to board the train, several people stopped to meet with Rebecca on the platform. Rebecca and her book have become quite popular, causing her to become a celebrity in the railroad world, wherever she goes. Boarding the train, everyone sat together, giving time for casual conversation with each other. Tim Broughton, a Locomotive Engineer whose father was a Trainman for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railway, drove all the way from Fresno, California to meet Rebecca.

The Halloween Express train was a huge hit with excursion participants. Everyone enjoyed the ride to Railroad Pass. Upon returning to Boulder City, the train proceeded through the depot and stopped at the east end of the Boulder City yard. At the yard, games, music, and treats met riders as they stepped off the train. Everyone had a great time. With the Halloween Express event over, several excursion participants met for dinner, including Rebecca, who had plenty of stories to share around the dinner table, including "Yosemite Sam" and others. Her book is a must-read to get the whole story.

On Sunday, the excursion group had four more trips scheduled from Boulder City to Railroad Pass and return. Overnight, strong winds had picked up in the area, reaching upwards of 40 miles per hour, causing the railbikes to cancel operations for the day. The first trip to Railroad Pass was breezy, to say the least. What had been warm weather in the high 70's was now a bone-chilling wind. The wind continued on the subsequent trips throughout the day but did not dampen the enjoyment of the excursion. On the last trip, wind speeds were averaging 45 miles per hour, causing dust storms across the valley to the south of Boulder City. With the excursion back at Boulder City, it was time to set-off, officially ending an unforgettable three days on the rails in Southern Nevada. A big thank you to all of the Nevada State Railroad Museum/Nevada Southern Railway employees and volunteers for once again hosting our excursions!





## Roaring Camp Railroads Excursion November 4th, 2023



Excursion Group At Rincon



Excursion Group At Santa Cruz

On November 4th, 2023, WCRG returned to Roaring Camp Railroads after a year absence due to severe storm damage in early 2023. The weather was perfect for early November in the San Francisco Bay Area. Two trips were made between Felton and Santa Cruz, one in the morning, followed by one in the afternoon. Set-on was safe and efficient, and after a thorough job briefing with the excursion participants, the excursion was ready to depart Felton for Santa Cruz. Underway, the storm damage from last season's record rainfall was evident. Several trees were down along the track, as well as dirt and rocks that had washed over the track in several areas. Closer to Santa Cruz, protective plastic coverings lined the steep grade next to the tracks for erosion stabilization. Arriving into Santa Cruz, the excursion group bunched up in preparation to proceed through the numerous crossings equipped with automatic crossing warning devices. With the excursion group shunting the track, the crossings all activate, and the excursion group safely proceeds through downtown.

As the excursion proceeds, the group comes out of the Mission Hill Tunnel and onto the street running to the Santa Cruz wye. As the group slowly made its way down the street trackage, pedestrians waved and took pictures and videos of the group. Arriving at the Santa Cruz wye, the excursion turned and stopped at the community park. A 20-minute break was welcomed by all. With the break over, the excursion got underway again, headed for Felton. Rolling through the redwoods, pedestrians and hikers waved as they hiked down to the San Lorenzo River, as people enjoyed the last warm days of the fall season. Back at Roaring Camp, the excursion group turned and prepared to depart for Santa Cruz after a 45-minute lunch break.

With the afternoon job briefing complete, the excursion got underway again. Proceeding through Rincon, a group of bicyclists stopped and admired the many different styles and eras of motorcars on the excursion. Dropping down into Santa Cruz, the excursion group was again bunched up in preparation to proceed through the numerous crossings through the city. Arriving at the Santa Cruz wye, the excursion group turned again and another 20-minute break was enjoyed by everyone. With the final break over, the excursion group departed Santa Cruz for Felton. While traversing the street trackage, motorists pulled over and waved, along with bicyclists pacing the excursion with thumbs up to each operator. Entering the Mission Hill Tunnel, water drips from the ceiling, a reminder of how damp the area is year-round. Out of Santa Cruz, the excursion group climbs the grade to Felton as the sun shines through the big redwoods, catching the last rays of sun before going behind the mountains for the day. Arriving back at Felton, the narrow gauge train was just pulling into the depot. People on the train waved to the motorcars as the group passed. Arriving in the yard, Set-off was smooth, with everyone set off before dark. Another memorable excursion at Roaring Camp Railroads is in the books!



# Photo Highlights 2023





# Photo Highlights 2023 (Continued)





# Photo Highlights 2023 (Continued)





# Photo Highlights 2023 (Continued)





# Photo Highlights 2023 (Continued)





# **West Coast Railroaders Group**



***WCRG is the only organization providing trained, professional railroaders on every excursion we host, because there is nothing better than a qualified railroader on the job.***

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