

2021 Operating Season Ends

- Loren Ross
Superintendent of Operations

This year, we suffered through the continuing drama and headaches of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were able to open to the public with a shortened schedule on July 1st, and train rides began that weekend. We also opened the RAL schedules and began accepting reservations, but due to maintenance issues, we only had the use of two locomotives, the SP 1100 and the WP 1503. And, because the SP 1100 was having air pressure difficulties, the WP 1503 became our flagship train-ride locomotive for the entire season.

Overall, attendance at the museum could best be described as “spotty”, as there were days when 30 visitors would come in, and others where we were lucky to have 8 people on the premises. By the Labor Day Weekend, our visitors were just not coming in.

We did host a large group of Cub Scouts in August, and on September 11th we hosted a Boy Scout Troop from Paradise CA that took the Railroading Merit Badge class. The Boy Scouts spent a couple of hours in the classroom, and after lunch and some free time, participated in an RAL with the WP 1503. That evening after dinner, the scouts attended a campfire session led by Vice President Steve Habeck. Because open fires were not permitted in Plumas County, the scouts brought out a propane fire pit and we

used that for the fireside chat.

It was also nice to run on our newly reconstructed Balloon Track. In June, over 350 ties were replaced on the balloon, and the entire outside rail was replaced with new sticks of rail. There is still a lot of tamping left to do to complete the track, so the speed limit remains at 5 MPH at this time. Because we have cancelled this year’s Pumpkin and Santa Trains, we have plenty of time to conduct track work sessions, which will be announced by the Roadmaster. Once the track is tamped, the yard limit will be reinstated to 10 MPH.

My one concern is the apparent lack of participation of our Operating Department. This year’s operating season was run by the same 7 people every weekend. Where are all the operators? Is there something we are or are not doing that is causing this lack of participation? Fully half of the department did not show up for even one day of work this season, and that puts a huge strain on everyone else to make sure someone is there for the visitors. If you have something to share that will help us get people back to the museum, please let me know. If you want your comments/concerns to be confidential, I can guarantee that they will remain that way.

Dates for the 2022 Crew Training will be announced just after the first of the year, please check the website for additional information.



*Opening Day July 3, 2021
Caboose Train*

*WP 1503 served as our
workhorse for the 2021
WPRM Caboose Trains*

*Opening Day Crew: Greg
Elems, Fred Elenbaas, Loren
Ross and Charlie Spikes*

- Photo by Kerry Cochran