

Good Photo Locations Along the Former Western Pacific

What follows is a listing of some good-quality photo locations between Sacramento, California and Elko, Nevada, devised by Vic Neves and Wayne Monger in preparation for the 1991 and 1992 Union Pacific Steam Excursion trains photo run-bys on the former Western Pacific Mainline.

Both Vic and Wayne have photographed trains along this former WP mainline for over 20 years each. Combining their knowledge of the physical aspects of the railroad across California and Nevada with their own criteria for proper sunlight angle, for getting a clear shot of the track, and for getting better than average elements of photo composition, this listing should be of great use for those venturing out with cameras in hand to photograph present day operations on the former Western Pacific Mainline between Sacramento and Elko. Vic and Wayne visited each of these sites utilizing 4-wheel drive vehicles and/or walking into a site from the nearest road access. A final point: This list was designed for use with the Steam Excursion trains where large numbers of people had to be accommodated trackside along with many other restrictions. For one or two people on a day's outing, many more locations are suitable. Use this listing as a starting point and enjoy exploring on your own.

Good photo locations for photographing westbound trains:

 **SP MILEPOST 525.8** (approximate) Palisade, Nevada
This site is 8 miles west of Carlin Yard, located on the north bank of the Humboldt River at the end of a sweeping left-hand curve in Palisade Canyon. Geography of the site is an area nearly level with the tracks approximately 50 yards wide between the tracks and the river. This is also at the east end of a grove of cottonwood trees. This area is accessible by a few miles of dirt roads.

 **SP MILEPOST 518 TO 516;** 2 to 4 miles west of Barth
In this stretch, the SP (westbound paired track) is on the south side of the Humboldt River cutting through low hills. This area 2 miles west of Barth and beyond is basically inaccessible by road or vehicles and is on the opposite side of the river from the UP mainline (eastbound paired track) near Cluro.

 **UP MILEPOST 494.35;** 1 1/2 miles west of Jungo
This location is approximately 1 mile up from the base of the grade up Antelope Hill out of Jungo. The selected site is the only point between Winnemucca and Sand Pass where the tracks actually head southeast into the morning sun.

 **UP MILEPOST 396.90;** 2 1/2 miles east of Sand Pass
This location is excellent for BOTH westbound and eastbound trains. Just a couple hundred feet east of the intermediate approach signals to Sand Pass on a 6 degree curve to the right (westbound), this location provides a natural amphitheater for photographing trains in both directions. This site also makes for some spectacular photos as the railroad is well above the floor of the Smoke Creek Desert on a shelf. It should be noted that a known rattlesnake nest area is west of this site by 1 mile. Also, this location is on the Pyramid Lake Indian Reservation. When traveling here, make sure that you are obeying all of the rules and regulations of the Reservation. Check with the ranger station at Sutcliffe.

 **UP MILEPOST 349.70;** 3/4 mile east of Pozla
The tracks are a 1061' tangent which follows a 2 degree curve to the left along a low sloping hillside. The light at this location is best before late in the day before the sun has gone behind the mountains immediately to the west.

 **UP MILEPOST 319.0;** 2 miles west of Portola Depot
This is at the east end of the former siding of Mable, the level roadbed being on the south side of the mainline. Access to this site by the public from the highway is prevented by the fence and locked gate of the rancher that owns the ground between the highway and the railroad.

 **UP MILEPOST 318.0;** 3 miles west of Portola Depot
At this point, the tracks are heading due south and there is

a peninsula of land where the river bends away from the tracks.

 **UP MILEPOST 286.3;** 1 1/4 miles west of Quincy Jct.
This is one of the few spots where the tracks have actually curved around to the northeast putting the right-hand side of trains in the sun in the middle of an "S" curve.

 **UP MILEPOST 284.9;** east switch of Sierra
This is the middle of another "S" curve at or near the east end of the former siding of Sierra.

 **UP MILEPOST 236.33;** west portal of Tunnel #9
About 20 feet in elevation up a moderate sloping embankment is the level remains of a now isolated construction road, which is nearly 400 feet long and from 15 to 40 feet wide. The photos are dramatic coming out the west end of Tunnel #9. The east end of Tunnel #9 is on a narrow shelf.

 **UP MILEPOST 217.5;** 2 miles west of Elsey
Actually, there are many good possibilities in the foothill area at the base of Table Mountain all the way from below James at MP 223.5 to the east end of Kramm siding at MP 214.5. The best location is at MP 223.5 is near the east end of a long 4 degree curve to the left where the mainline swings over halfway around a sloping hillside.

Good photo locations for photographing eastbound trains:

 **UP MILEPOST 223.4;** 2 miles west of James
On a 1708' tangent, there are several wide cuts through hills here. At or before 11:30 AM, the light is good. The Highway 70 overpass is less than 1/2 mile to the east around the 4 degree curve.

 **UP MILEPOST 304.1;** 1 1/2 miles east of Sloat
This is a good late afternoon location that is rather isolated. An alternative to this is the public road crossing at the east end of the former siding at Two Rivers at MP 305.85. A good location is across the river bridge, where you can photograph trains from track level on the bridge or along the south bank of the river. This location is less than 1/8 of a mile off of the main highway down a paved road.

 **UP MILEPOST 629.0;** 1 1/2 miles west of Barth
This location is between the bridges over the Humboldt River in the area west of Barth. Along this section, the mainline cuts through several small hillsides and over a few fills along the north bank of the Humboldt River. Once you get east of the mainline "fly-over" and the bridge over the Humboldt River at MP 633.3, the mainline stays along the south bank of the river up against cliff faces until out of the canyon at MP 638.5.