

Chama River Railroad Bridge

The Chama River bridge was the fourth 2004 project moved ahead to this year. The wood guardrail on the west side of the steel bridge was in deplorable condition, creating a significant hazard to the public who regularly walk on or across the bridge. The walkway was generally sound, but the planks were becoming split and loose at the ends. Many pieces of the supporting beams were broken, split, or decayed. Based on the date, April 27, 1948, carved in a side rail on the north end of the bridge, the wood was probably installed 55 years ago. Team members placed treated wood at various places between ties and under the rails to form outriggers for the walkway. Treated 4-x-4-inch posts were bolted vertically to these supports to hold the two guardrails in place. The top guardrail was completed along two thirds of the bridge when time and materials ran out at the end of Session F. The lower guardrail was completed using the best original boards. The team installed walkway planking, making both the bridge walk and guardrail secure for general use.

Sublette Buildings

The Sublette crew was successful in removing a considerable amount of rubbish and trash. Crew members hauled away two trailer loads of old tires, roofing tin, bottles, smashed buckets, tin cans, rotten and broken wood, old paint cans, and lots of other materials. The exteriors of all buildings were either fully painted or touched up in the historic white and green scheme, keeping it as a show place for train riders and drive-in visitors. There were additional minor roof repairs to prevent interior water damage as occurred several years ago. The team installed a new supporting post on the southeast porch of the section house. They also made new steps for one structure and railed various boards on every building. They made plans for next year's siding repairs and new roof on the speeder shed; this structure is of special historic interest as it is made from half of a very early standard-gauge boxcar. With the exterior of all buildings in good condition, plans for the interiors will have to be developed before much more work will be undertaken. Vandalism, i.e., broken doors and windows and kicked-in plaster walls will have to be given consideration in any future efforts.

Cumbres Cistern Cover

At the top of Cumbres Pass, just west of the historic early 1900 motel and gas station site, is a large cistern complete with old rusty pipe and pump. The wood cover was completely decayed with much of the remains down in the cistern. This created a considerable safety hazard that was solved this summer with the construction and installation of a heavy cover. In Chama, the crew built a frame of treated 2 x 6s sheathed and covered with green rolled roofing, then hauled to the site where it was placed on the concrete edging which surrounds the cistern. A considerable amount of wood was removed from the pit. This rock-lined cistern is about 6 feet across and at least 18 feet deep.



Looking north along the Chama River bridge. At the end of the bridge, team members are unloading lumber to repair the walkway (session F).



Crew members working on the Chama River bridge walkway and guardrail (session F).



The stock pens crew built and installed a replica historic sign from D&RGW days (session C). (Photo by Fred Springer.)

Cumbres Section House

The structure painting crew completed its work on the Cumbres section house after four years of work on this building. The crew members did a significant amount of trim and touchup painting during August's session E. They painted the ceiling, walls, and kickboards of the machine

room (formerly an interior coal bin) white and the coal bin door in the historic gold/brown exterior color scheme. The two transoms above the main doors, window frames, kick boards, and chair rails were painted dark brown, while the wainscoting was painted light brown, both historic colors for the original rooms. The crew also applied a third coat of clear gloss Verathane to the bedroom floor and treated the exterior stairway with a linseed oil and paint thinner mixture.

Chama Stock Pens

During June's session C, the team installed replica historic signs at the Chama stock pens (and a train bulletin board at Cumbres section house). The volunteers replaced and installed additional side rails in the area behind the scale house so that all stock pens are now secure and enclosed with working gates, except for two areas that were almost totally destroyed years ago and there are no plans to rebuild them. The stock pens are ready to receive stock for shipment east!



In the Chama carpentry shop, George Berkstresser (l) and Roger Briggs construct one of the eight picnic tables for Chama, Osier, and Antonito (session B). (Photo by Art Nichols.)



At Friday's BBQ at the end of session C in Chama, Ed Lowrance watches as Mary Jane Smith (l) and Mary Whelan serve Terri Shaw. Art Evans is next in line, and Susan Sutkus waits to serve condiments.

WORK SESSION SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

Tool Car

The team staffed the tool car during the May, June, and August sessions. Beside the usual distribution of power tools, in session A the tool car team set up a work bench at the south end of the carpentry shop for the maintenance of gas-powered tools. Each tool was gone over and prepared for the June work sessions. At the end of the August sessions, the tools were winterized and stored. Electric power tools were moved from car 3254 to tool car 3016. Office supplies and miscellaneous tools were moved to car 3254. The team painted numbers on each power tool, and in the future when a power tool is checked out, the number will be listed on the sign-out-sheet along with the name of the person who signs out the tool. During the May sessions, volunteers from several projects buried a conduit to carry the telephone line from the oil house to the tool car, instead of draping it out in the weather, as has been done.

Food Preparation

During the 2003 work sessions the boxcar lunch goddesses continued the tradition of serving nutritious and delicious lunches. The wide variety of menus gave the volunteers a rewarding feast each day. For the two sessions in May, the volunteers were treated to snacks, soft drinks, juice, and coffee. In June, over 1,000 lunches were prepared for the volunteers, and in August the crew prepared over 700 lunches. Breakfast snacks and lots of other goodies were always available. As always, some of the kitchen car crew (and their husbands) arrived daily at the yard before 7 a.m. They started the coffee and the lunches for the off-site groups as many crews leave early for their assignments. A typical boxcar lunch: roasted-turkey-breast sandwich with cream cheese, cranberry sauce, and lettuce; chips, celery sticks, fruit cup, brownies, green grapes, and a beverage.

Chroniclers

The work undertaken by chroniclers is photographic documentation of project work and accomplishments. All projects undertaken during the six work sessions of 2003 were documented by 10 chroniclers. For the first time, all chroniclers used digital cameras. Nearly 600 photos of volunteers at work, group photos, and project details have been placed on one computer disc with names of volunteers, information on work being accomplished, or other identifying features.

Carpentry Shop and Supply

Volunteers staffed the carpentry shop during all six work sessions. They ordered, received and distributed all wood used in numerous projects. They assisted many volunteers in cutting a variety of shapes and sizes, from window molding to large end sills. The shop also completed the rebuilding of one original baggage cart, which now stands in resplendent red and green colors on the station dock next to the baggage room. The rebuilding of a second baggage cart will be completed next spring. The shop crew built eight picnic tables for Chama, Osier, and Antonito. A major revamping during the May sessions of the storage racks in the shop (also known as the car shop, the wood shop, or the

wool warehouse) allowed for more work room in the building. The racks on the east side have been removed, and all lumber is now stored in the southwest quarter of the building. Additional benches have been built down the east side.

Registration and Administration

On the Sunday preceding each work session, these volunteers served as registrars, distributing registration materials for the volunteers as they arrived and dispensing merchandise that volunteers had ordered. During the work sessions the team members were responsible for record keeping and other administrative duties. They also arranged for special dinners at Chama restaurants for volunteers attending each June and August work session.

Contributors to this report were Doris Akers, Art Randall, Bob Tully, and the Project Team Leaders.

RGRPC Lends a Hand During June Work Sessions

Through cooperation and actions of C&TS General Manager Kim Flowers, two railroad employees were made available to the Friends on a full-time basis for the June sessions. Julian Martinez and Bobby DeYapp were very helpful in four areas. They operated the speeder and trailer for the tree trimming crew, as well as for the maintenance-of-way crew. They also obtained large bridge timbers which were put in the Chama yard along the east side of the parking area parallel to track one. Throughout the two sessions both men used the front end loader to haul away old wood removed from cars under construction. They also spent considerable time removing trees and other vegetation previously cut and piled at several places in the north end of the yard. Julian and Bobby also made great headway in the cleanup of the hill immediately northeast of the engine house. Nearly all old wood was removed and a portion of the hill cleaned and recontoured. A nearly new speeder was provided for Friends use by RGRPC President Bill Albert.

News from the Railroad

Compiled from "Friends of the C&TS News," a feature of the Friends' Web site—www.cumbrestoltec.org. Please refer to the Web site for more coverage of the events summarized here, as well as other news. The webmaster of the Friends' site is Director Curt Bianchi.

EDA Receives Award for C&TS Track Grants

On May 9 the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)—an independent federal agency that promotes historic preservation—presented its Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation to the Economic Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce. The EDA was recognized "for its vital role in saving a historic narrow gauge railroad in Colorado and New Mexico by helping fund track and railbed improvements." (On April 29 Secretary of Commerce Don Evans announced the funding involving \$1.5 million for the first year of what is hoped will be a three-year, \$3.3-million project, of which 80 percent will be funded by the EDA, with 10 percent matches each provided by the Friends and the Railroad Commission.) The Chairman's Award for Federal Achievement in Historic Preservation is given to federal agencies that exemplify leadership in building partnerships for sustainable historic preservation, particularly efforts that foster heritage tourism. Also recognized were the states of Colorado and New Mexico, the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Commission, the Rio Grande Railway Preservation Corporation (RGRPC), the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, and the state historic preservation officers. Representing the C&TS at the award ceremony in Washington, D.C., were Steve Malnar, Chairman of the Railroad Commission; Brian Shoup, President and CEO of the Friends; Rich Casford, Treasurer of RGRPC; and Kim Smith Flowers, General Manager of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

—Curt Bianchi, May 10, 2003

FRA Gives the Green Light

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), after conducting a track inspection on May 20–21, at Windy Point and at milepost 317, gave the nod for the C&TS to open its 2003 season on schedule. Sometimes, however, no secondhand reporting captures an event as well as the words of someone who was there. For that reason, here is an excerpt from an internal memo about the inspection from RGRPC Corporate Treasurer, Rich Casford.

"FRA Inspector Vince Haggard visited the railroad on Tuesday and Wednesday May 20–21 for the annual track inspection. Tuesday, 8:00 a.m., Vince, Max Pacheco, Mark Post (Commission Civil Engineer), Bob Witter, and myself rode a speeder from Chama to Cumbres. We were joined at Cumbres by Bill Albert, Kim Flowers, Richard Gomez, and Marvin Casias with a second speeder.

"Inspections were held at Windy Point, and east to MP 309 at the large rock overhang. Mud tunnel was inspected (no movement was noted in the measurement points inside the tunnel). One rail will need to be replaced at MP 326.5. We returned to Chama about 3:00 p.m. Wednesday morning, Vince inspected track records in the RGRPC offices and had a short meeting with Kim and myself. He noted that he was 'very pleased' with the efforts of RGRPC to continue to improve the physical plant (i.e., track structure) and he had no issues or restrictions for the 2003 operating season for RGRPC. Vince noted that the work at Windy Point and MP 317 might not be finished by opening day; however, he saw nothing on the line that would cause him to issue any restrictions to RGRPC.

"Vince was impressed with the contractor that Bill Albert has arranged to do the retaining wall work at Windy Point and MP 317. Vince will be returning sometime in June to see the progress on the walls and fills. Vince also told me he was impressed with Kim's organization and management style."

Building a constructive working relationship with regulatory agencies is a priority with the current board and management of the RGRPC as well as with the Commission and its newly appointed Executive Director Richard Gomez. Both the RGRPC and the Commission have taken the approach that coordinated good faith efforts and prompt responsiveness are key to establishing long-term credibility with regulators. The latest findings by the FRA appear to signal that this approach is paying off.

—Brian Shoup,
May 27, 2003

August Work Sessions Spur New Initiatives

Pull together the right people and good things start to happen. The New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) held three days of hearings in Chama during the last scheduled Friends work session of 2003. Although the hearings dealt with a number of state and local issues, it was the concern for the future of the C&TS Railroad that was one of the dominant themes. Holding the hearings in Chama was the brainchild of David Abby, Director of the LFC. "I just thought it would be helpful for our members to see the railroad first hand," said Abby during a special train movement on the evening of August 14 that carried the legislators and other officials to the Rendezvous Restaurant at Los Pinos Meadows.

A delegation headed by Railroad Commission Chairman Steve Malnar and composed of representatives of the Commission, the Friends of the C&TS, and the Rio Grande Preservation Corporation (RGRPC) provided testimony on the future needs of the railroad. Malnar estimated the capital investment needs in infrastructure and rolling stock to be approximately \$30 million over the next five to ten years. While no specific appropriations commitment was made by LFC members, the Commission was asked to present a multi-year plan this fall detailing its operating and capital

requirements. Expressions of support for the railroad were heard from virtually all the LFC members at various times throughout the three days of hearings.

Senator and LFC Chairman Ben Altamirano, Representative and LFC Vice-Chairman Luciano Varela, and former Governor Dave Cargo were chauffeured from the hearings to the Chama depot the evening of the "VIP



Dan Ranger receives the Anne and Frank Burton Distinguished Service Award from Friends President Brian Shoup (l) and Founder of the Friends, Bill Lock, at the Annual Meeting in Chama, June 20, 2003. Dan is former General Manager of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad for Kyle Railways and then for the Rio Grande Railway Preservation Corporation, a controlled affiliate of the Friends. (Photo by Tom Cardin.)

Special" in a beautifully restored Ford Model T, courtesy of Friends volunteer Skip Dunn of Los Alamos NM. Judging from the number of legislators who spent most of the time in the open gondolas, the trip was a success in introducing them to the pleasures of their railroad.

—Brian Shoup, September 10, 2003

C&TS Seeks Second Locomotive Shop

Limited capacity at the Chama shop has become a looming problem as the C&TS is faced with the task of overhauling its entire roster of serviceable steam locomotives. In a discussion earlier this summer with Andy Sperlock, president of Starfire Consulting (a firm retained by the Commission to provide project management services), he listed the sheer lack of adequate floor space on his "short" list

of critical problems affecting the availability of motive power. Add to that the need for a level of engine outshopping over the coming winter that has not been seen on the railroad since the Rio Grande days, and it becomes clear that a solution to the shop capacity problem must be found.

That solution may be at hand in the form of the shop in Antonito. Though lacking a machine shop, General Superintendent Marvin Casias believes it is more than capable of performing boiler work. And boiler work will be needed in spades given the requirements imposed by changes in the Code of Federal Regulations affecting locomotive boilers. According to General Manager Kim Flowers, developing the Antonito shop's capability to handle boiler work would not reduce the activity at the Chama shop but would augment it. Heavy running gear work would remain the exclusive province of the Chama shop. Boiler work would also continue to be done there, as well.

The Friends are seeking additional monies outside of the EDA grant to accelerate the motive power overhaul, utilizing the Antonito facility. But regardless of whether such funds can be obtained, Antonito will likely be the site of boiler work over the winter anyway. To ready the building for this work, Railroad Commission Executive Director Richard Gomez has located funds for upgrading the electrical and heating systems for the Antonito shop, and this work has begun.

Long term, there's been talk of building a new, well-equipped locomotive backshop as part of meeting the strategic infrastructure needs of the railroad. But this is speculative at best and a long ways off, given the level of financing that would be required. In the meantime, it makes sense to creatively deploy the assets that already exist.

—Brian Shoup, September 11, 2003