



C&TS DISPATCH

VOLUME 36 NO. 4
WINTER 2023

***A Diesel on the Cumbres & Toltec? (Don't panic!)
Welcoming Steve Butler to the C&TS
Remembering Senator Hugh Fowler***



***Fall 2023 Work Sessions E, F, and G
and D&RG Express Car 163 Restoration***





C&TS DISPATCH

Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.

William Lock, Founder-1988

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C&TS DISPATCH

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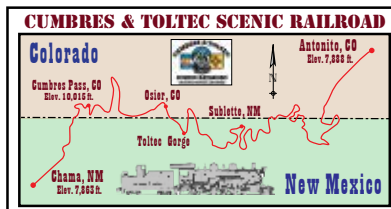
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The *C&TS Dispatch* is published four times each year by *The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Inc.*, a New Mexico nonprofit corporation. The Friends is the official museum arm for the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a sixty-four mile-long Railroad and museum of railroad history and technology, operating between Antonito, Colorado, and Chama, New Mexico. The Railroad is owned jointly by the States of Colorado and New Mexico. As the museum arm, the *Friends* is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of the Railroad. The Friends is an Affiliate Member of the *Heritage Rail Alliance (HRA)*. Family membership in the Friends is \$40.00 per year; outside the USA membership is \$50.00. All contributions are fully tax deductible and will be gratefully accepted. For information, please write us in Albuquerque at the *Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc., 4421 McLeod Rd. NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM, 87109*, or call us at (505) 880-1311.



Denver & Rio Grande Railway: 1880-1886
 Denver & Rio Grande Railroad: 1886-1921
 Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad: 1921-1970
 Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad: 1970-today

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is both a National Historic Landmark and a State Registered Historic Site.

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President's FORUM



Wrapping Up Twenty Years

Where has the time gone? This is the age-old question we often ask ourselves. As we enter 2024, it's hard to believe that I've been President/CEO of the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad for going on twenty years. For those who haven't heard, the time has come for me to look toward retirement at the end of 2024.

It was early January 2005 when my wife Judy and I drove to Albuquerque from Green Bay so I could begin my job with the Friends. The move came with some complex logistics: Judy would return to Wisconsin on Amtrak's Southwest Chief, then a local Hiawatha train, so we had to leave a car in Milwaukee. My daughter Kristen had been staying with us and was getting married in June, so we didn't sell our home and or move west together until August, five months later. I sure was glad to get out of that small studio apartment I was renting.

We settled in Rio Rancho and the house we purchased has been our home for the last 19+ years. We've been blessed with some wonderful neighbors. When one moves a great distance away from family it is a huge transition, so establishing new

friends is so beneficial.

My new job became a bit more interesting in late 2005 and early 2006. After six years of operating and managing the C&TS, the Rio Grande Railway Preservation Corp. gave notice to terminate its management agreement with the Railroad Commission, and the Friends were pulled into the mix to help with reorganization. To make a long story short, another entity was formed, separate from the Friends, to manage the Railroad's operations, the C&TS Management Corp. I was drafted to be General Manager. That position consumed me for the Railroad's 2006 and 2007 operating season. Fortunately, Warren Smalley and Bill Lock stepped in as Interim Executive Directors of the Friends during my absence.

Throughout this period, Judy was put in a difficult situation: Here we had moved to a new state and community and Judy then loses her husband for a huge chunk of time on a seasonal basis. I'd work ten days on in Chama and then four days off back in Rio Rancho. It was a tough situation for her. Judy enjoyed sitting on our patio in the privacy of the backyard so we bought a lovely granite fountain which adds to the serenity of the setting. And the birds also adore it!

After the 2007 season, I returned full-time to the Friends CEO position where didn't have to play musical chairs anymore and could stay closer to home.

I calculate that I've spent approximately 30% of my life as the Friends CEO which is more than half of the organization's 35-year existence. We've accomplished a lot during this time. The Friends has matured as a organization. Over time, organiza-



On the cover:

White Pass & Yukon Locomotive 114 idles at Bennett, British Columbia, on June 14, 2014. Ten years hence, it will be idling in a similar environment in a very different location. Last November, the C&TS Board of Directors agreed to purchase the locomotive for maintenance-of-way duties on the Railroad. But don't expect to see it pulling passenger trains unless it is found to be absolutely necessary, such as during a high fire season. See the complete No. 114 story beginning on Page 8.

Photo by John B. West

tions improve the way they conduct business and that has certainly been the case with the Friends.

Communication is important within any organization and we've been fortunate to have an outstanding quarterly publication, the *C&TS Dispatch*, which has evolve over the years with great editors from a black-and-white newsletter to a full-color magazine.

Our online presence has increased as well. Over the past year the monthly newsletter, the *Dispatch Extra*, was developed and e-blasted to our members providing an excellent means to inform our members between the quarterly *Dispatch* issues.

The Friends' updated website presence has also been critical in our fast-changing world. This is our face to the online world, so it needs to be current in both design and technology.

We have also made a significant impact in the world of social media. Facebook, YouTube and Instagram have provided the organization with excellent platforms to communicate with our members and introduce non-members to the wonders of the Cumbres & Toltec and maybe even convince them into joining the Friends!

The organization's importance within the C&TS family and relationship with the Commission has always been solid but not without some challenges. I have seen quite a difference in how the Commission conducts business since my arrival. Twenty-plus years ago the Commission of was not, in my opinion, as successful in procuring capital funding from the States of Colorado and New Mexico. Fortunately, since 2006/2007 the Commission has had great success. With adequate funding, look at what John Matthews and his track crews have done with improving the overall track infrastructure. It is an impressive feat when one compares the Railroad's condition today to what it was twenty years ago.

Railroad management and its basic structure has changed over the course of time here as well. It has evolved from what was once an "operator"

model, to a "management company" model to the Commission itself managing the Railroad through a separate entity, Cumbres Toltec Operating, a non-profit LLC. The C&TS as a whole is now run as a year-round business even though trains only operate May through October. It wasn't that way when I got here, but the improved overall financial health of the Railroad has helped rectify this situation.

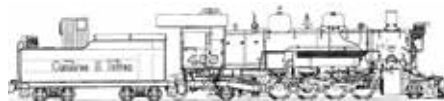
As I look back at some of our accomplishments over the years, a couple stand out as first and foremost: they include the many improvements to the Ed Lowrance Memorial Car Repair Facility and the rebuilding and restoration of Locomotive 463. The total restoration and return of Pullman Tourist Sleeper 470 to active duty was another outstanding project we can all be proud of.

Over these last twenty years I must acknowledge all the fine people that have been or are still associated with the Friends. Whether Friends members or members of our Board, many people have touched my life. Unfortunately, way too many have passed on but it's the special moments that I remember. I think about the people who hired me, and members who I'd see show up for work sessions and having the time to talk at length with them or the support from Gwen Lotz and, Katharina Root, who have endured my presence in the office for all these years. Some Board meetings really stick out in my mind as well, such as in Manitou Springs, Colorado, and the "coffin races" they held there in advance of Halloween.

I have a few more *Dispatch* columns in me before year's end and I'll continue to reflect on the past twenty years. As always, I appreciate everyone's support and efforts. Wishing you all a very Happy New Year!



Tim Tennant



DON'T WAIT! JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE C&TS!



2024 is going to be a great year for the Railroad and the Friends!

If you love trains, history and volunteer activities, JOIN US as we help preserve the "Living History" of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

For \$40 a year, you and your family can become Friends and receive the quarterly *C&TS Dispatch*, train ride discounts, invitations to special events and the opportunity to participate in restoration projects each summer, along with the satisfaction of supporting and investing in the historic cultural heritage that is the Cumbres & Toltec!

Only \$40 per year for a basic Family Membership! Foreign: \$50

To join, send us this application (or a facsimile):

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

My check for \$ _____ is enclosed,
or

Charge my Visa / MC / Discover
[circle one] for \$ _____

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Email _____

Mail to:

Friends of the C&TSRR, Inc.
4421 McLeod Road NE, Suite F
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505-880-1311

www.friendsofcumbrestoltec.org

**Already a Member?
Give this to a friend!**

Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. is a non-profit, tax exempt corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. All contributions are deductible to the fullest extent of the law. IRS# 85-036487



Friends of the C&TS: TELEGRAPH AND NEWS

HELP REALLY NEEDED FOR RPO 54!

But first, big news!

If you are concerned about the cost of attending any of the Work Sessions or Special Sessions this summer, you're in luck: *Beginning this year, as a two year trial, there will be:*

NO REGISTRATION FEE!

NO INSURANCE FEE!

NO COST FOR LUNCHESES FOR 2024!

We are hoping that these fee waivers will be just the incentive you need for this year's important projects. We are behind on painting because we had to cut back from four painting/lettering work sessions to two after we found Sessions E & F did not work well. With the monsoon rains getting the wood wet, the primer and paint would not properly adhere to the wood. The painting will begin early in **Special Session 1, June 10-14 (Project 720, just prior to Session C in Chama) and will continue throughout C and D (Project 720)** in Chama and elsewhere along the line. These projects will include:

D&RGW Reefer 157: Prep, prime & paint in Reefer Yellow colors.

D&RG Stock Car 5553: Currently painted for the 1916 period, paint in Stock Car Black to match a later period.

D&RGW Stock Car 5549: Paint black.

D&RGW Stock Car 6633: Paint black.

D&RGW Rider Box Car 3537: Paint car Boxcar Red.

Cumbres Pass: Car Inspector's House: Paint trim and porch.

Cumbres Pass Coal Bin: Paint after needed wood repairs.

Cumbres Spring House: Prime & paint.

Osier Station: Prep and repaint windows, sills, doors and trim.

But most importantly, Project 1390, Sessions A and B, Sessions C & D, Antonito CRF.

D&RGW RPO 54: Scrape and prime to prepare for future painting.

Built in 1880 for the Denver & Rio Grande at a cost of \$1,841 by the Billmeyer & Small Company, RPO 54 was part of the U.S. Government's Railway Mail Service (RMS). The D&RG contracted with the RMS to collect, sort and deliver mail for the isolated communities it

served. It was a profitable venture that ended with the discontinuation of the Southwest Extension's *San Juan* passenger train in 1951. The car was sold to the C&TS in 1970.

Restoration of RPO 54 began in 2007 and within a few years it was fully restored, inside and out, and primed and painted. And repainted. And repainted. The problem was that poor choice of the original restoration paint, followed by a cheap paint job by a Hollywood movie crew and then yet another post-movie coat by the Friends. The car looked great but the paint never lasted long. It's time to start over.



Work on RPO 54 (Proj. 1390) will begin during Sessions A and B, May 20-May 31, with Team Leader Jim Hickman, scraping the car down to bare wood. The scraping needs to be completed by the end of Session B to prepare for the primer to be applied. Please consider joining us. **This is an important project on a tight schedule, and the Friends will need a lot of volunteers during Sessions A and B to complete it prior to Session C and D, June 17-June 28, (Proj. 0722) when a new primer coat will be applied.**

And if you are worried about your volunteer skill level, no worries: painting is a manual-labor sort of task that almost anyone can participate in. It's important and we'll need you!

Registration for any of these projects will begin in March, with the official announcement appearing in an upcoming edition of the *Dispatch Extra*.

In the meantime, please look through the 2024 FIDO schedule to the right. Along from the painting projects, you are sure to find something that is both interesting and within your skill set. Even if it's not in your skill set, you can always learn something new!

And remember: **NO registration fee, NO insurance fee, and FREE lunch and snacks this year!**

Whoever said, "There is no free lunch" isn't working with the Friends this summer!

Work Session Schedule, 2024 (as of January 16, 2024)

Listed below is the schedule for Sessions A-G, although remember that the project schedule is often quite fluid and may change throughout the season without notice. The more current schedule will be posted on the Friends website in March at www.friendsofcumbrestoltec.org or through the QR code to the right. Go to the "Volunteer Registration" link.



Support Services Projects								
Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
	Registration Deadline	5/14	5/21	6/7	6/14	7/19	7/26	9/13
0200	Chama restoration session Site Leader.			C. McMullen + none	C. McMullen + none			
0201	Antonito CRF restoration session Site Leader.	J. Hickman + none	J. Hickman + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	I. Kelly + none
0210	Work Session Check-In for Chama			TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none			
0211	Work Session Check-in Antonito CRF	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none			M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none
0222	Friends merchandise sales - registration location.	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none	M. J. Smith + none
0230	Food Preparation - Chama lunches and snacks.			C. Tower +3	J. Lauffer +2			
0231	Food Preparation - Antonito CRF Lunches.	M. Barlen (Asst: J. E. Mitchell) +1	M. Barlen +1	L. Aldrich +1	L. Aldrich +1	M. Barlen +2	M. Barlen +2	J. E. Mitchell +1
0240	Tool Car Operation - Chama			C. McMullen +1	C. McMullen +1			
0241	Bolt Car Operation - Chama			R. Brigham +1	R. Brigham + none			
0245	Tool & Bolt Operation - Antonito CRF.	M. Smith (Asst: D. Barlen) + none	M. Smith (Asst: D. Barlen) + none	G. Davies + none	G. Davies + none	M. Smith (Asst: D. Barlen) + none	M. Smith (Asst: D. Barlen) + none	M. Smith (Asst: G. Davies) + none
0246	Paint Car Operation - Chama			F. Higgins + none	F. Higgins + none			TL NEEDED + none
0248	Lettering Coordinator - Stencil Car			TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none	TL NEEDED + none	
0250	Carpentry Shop Operation - Chama			J. Hickman +2	J. Hickman +2			
0262	Project Chronicling - Chama			S. Stewart +2	S. Stewart +2			
0263	Project Chronicling - Antonito CRF	S. Stewart +1	S. Stewart +1	S. Stewart +1	S. Stewart +1	S. Stewart +2	S. Stewart +2	S. Stewart +1
0280	Work Session Preparation at Chama		B. Reib +2					
0282	Work Session Close at Chama				B. Reib +2			
0294	Hauling & Vehicle Operation	B. Reib +1	B. Reib +1	B. Reib +1	B. Reib +1	B. Reib +1	B. Reib +1	B. Reib +1
0310	Safety Coordinator for Chama yard			J. Engs + none	J. Engs + none			
0781	Inspection of AED Defibrillators.	J. Engs + none		J. Engs + none				
Projects in Antonito, CO								
Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
0311	Safety Coordinator for Antonito CRF	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	D. Atkinson + none	D. Atkinson + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: I. Kelly) + none
0701	Landscaping Antonito Yard and Friends Ed Lowrance CRF / CSF complex	TL NEEDED +1	TL NEEDED +1			TL NEEDED +2	TL NEEDED +2	TL NEEDED +2
0722	Car Painting Antonito CRF and AN based painting			D. Stewart + none	D. Stewart + none		D. Stewart +1	
0732	Car Lettering Antonito CRF				S. Jorgensen + none	S. Jorgensen + none	S. Jorgensen + none	
0741	Caboose Annual Maintenance and Roof Repair	D. Atkinson +1	D. Atkinson + none					
0779	Mechanical Maintenance - Antonito CRF	B. Kepner +3	B. Kepner +3			B. Kepner +3	B. Kepner +3	
1197	Construct Period Trucks for Passenger Coaches	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1	I. Kelly +1
1246	Restore UTLX Tank Car 11050 original GRAMPS car				C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) +1	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) +1	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) +1	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) +1
1304	Restore Converted Stock Car 5774							D. Pyzel +2

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1332	Restore GRAMPS Tank Car 11056 to operational condition				C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none	C. Trunk (Asst: R. Worwag) + none
1354	Maintain and Repair MW02 to operational condition	J. McGee + 1	J. McGee + 1				J. McGee + 1	J. McGee + 1
1360	Addition of a Covered Structure on west end of Antonito CRF.	B. Oltmanns + 2	B. Oltmanns + 2			B. Oltmanns + 2	B. Oltmanns + 2	
1369	SHPO - Repair Telegraphphone booths, wood structures at key locations along the right-of-way.			D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + 1	D. Atkinson + 2	D. Atkinson + 2	
1378	Add identifying number plates to all tank cars						TL NEEDED + 1	
1389	Rebuild Box Car 3263 for use as Friends Stencil Car.					D. Myers (Asst: S. McCollough) + 2	D. Myers (Asst: S. McCollough) + 2	
1390	Railway Post Office Car 54 - Repair windows and windowsills then strip old paint and prime, repaint and re-letter	J. Hickman + 6	J. Hickman + 6			D. Atkinson + 2		
1391	Rebuild Flat Car 6649 to roadable condition for MOW service			B. Oltmanns (Asst: B. James) + 2	B. Oltmanns (Asst: B. James) + 2			B. Oltmanns + 3

Projects in Sublette, NM

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1343	SHPO - Repair Shingle Bunk House (SBH) exterior			B. Conry + none	B. Conry + none			
1344	SHPO - Repair Log Bunk House (LBH)			B. Conry + none	B. Conry + none			
1345	SHPO - Maintain and repair deteriorated Sublette Section House (SSH) structure and exterior. Please see NOTE for a health and safety recommendation.		B. Conry + 2	B. Conry + 5	B. Conry + 4			

Projects in Cumbres, CO

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1005	SHPO - Reconstruction of Car Inspector's House			J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + 3	J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + 2	J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + 5	J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + 5	
1365	Construct Walking Trails - Cumbres Section Town and Rail Yard, joint project with Scouts BSA.			J. Engs (Asst: T. Stewart) + none	J. Engs (Asst: T. Stewart) + none			
1398	Develop Master Plan for Cumbres Section Town			R. Young + none	R. Young + none			
1401	Repair Cumbres Station Pump House			J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + none	J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + none			

Projects in Chama, NM

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
0700	Landscaping Chama - Yard and Gardens			TL NEEDED + 2	TL NEEDED + 1			
0720	Car Painting - Chama Based			D. Stewart + 10	D. Stewart + 10			
0730	Car Lettering - Chama Based				S. Jorgensen + 2			
0780	Mechanical Maintenance - Chama Based			M. Wissler + 4	M. Wissler + 3			
1017	SHPO - Stabilization and Repair of Coal Tipple (2024 - Advise contractor for Installation of lightning protection system).			TL NEEDED + 2	TL NEEDED + 2			
1186	Cosmetic Restoration Engine 483 and Tender for Static Display			R. Schoen (Asst: B. Sargent) + 6				
1307	Install Sign Garden in lower garden area below the stairs on the west embankment in the Chama Yard.			J. Ferrell + 2				
1310	Remove and replace west side hand rail on stairway from Terrace Avenue			J. Lauffer + 3				
1312	Reconstruct High Side Gondola 1000			M. Hagemann + 5	M. Hagemann + 4			

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
1372	Joint Project RR / Friends Excavate Material, Install Retaining Wall, Swell, Sump Drain and Stabilize Track Bed			TL NEEDED + 4	TL NEEDED + 4			
1376	Rebuild boxcar 3566 as a Hollywood Movie Boxcar (HMB) for public display			R. Young + 5	R. Young + 4			
1379	Rebuild double deck Stock Car 5600 to road-able condition.			B. Lock + 5				

Projects Along the Right-of-Way

Proj Num	Project Description	Session A 5/20 - 5/24	Session B 5/27 - 5/31	Session C 6/17 - 6/21	Session D 6/24 - 6/28	Session E 7/29 - 8/2	Session F 8/5 - 8/9	Session G 9/23 - 9/27
0710	Removal of plant material along the Right of Way (ROW) that may impair SAFE and efficient Railroad operations. The ROW extends from the Yard Limit in Chama to the Yard Limit in Antonito.				P. Davenport (Asst: A. Green) + 5			
0740	Wood Preservative Treatment - Along the Line and Rail Yards				F. Higgins + 1			
0750	Maintain All Railroad Signage Along the 64-Mile Long Track			M. Mahoney (Asst: P. Davenport) + 4				L. Marquess (Asst: P. Davenport) + 2
0770	Project Discovery - Identification of New Projects Along the Line	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none	J. Engs (Asst: D. Atkinson) + none

Projects in Chama

Proj Num	Project Description	Session SS1 6/10 - 6/14						
	Registration Deadline	6/6						
0200	Chama restoration session Site Leader.	D. Stewart + none						
0210	Work Session Check-In for Chama	D. Stewart + none						
0310	Safety Coordinator for Chama yard	D. Stewart + none						
0720	Car Painting - Chama Based	D. Stewart + 5						

Projects in Chama - Antonito

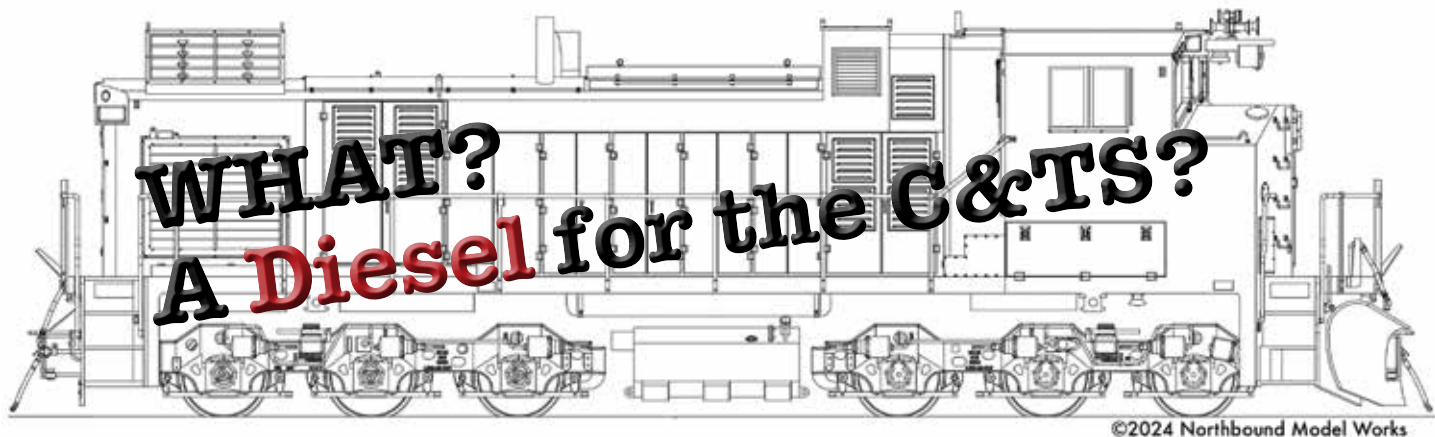
Proj Num	Project Description	Session I 5/11 - 10/23						
0400	Docents Program on the C&TSRR	R. Muth + 40						

Projects in Chama yard - Antonito yard

Proj Num	Project Description	Session H 1/1 - 12/31						
0208	Volunteering on the Railroad Outside Scheduled or Special Work Sessions	VOL NEEDED + 12						
0270	Equipment Preparation - Chama/Antonito	L. Beier + none						
0294	Hauling & Vehicle Operation	B. Reib (Asst: L. Beier) + 4						
0705	Historic Signage at Osier. Install May - Remove October	T. Stewart + 1						
0790	Mowing of Grass (Rider Mower) Chama Yard and Stock Pens.	T. Stewart + 1						
1005	SHPO - Reconstruction of Car Inspector's House	J. Pierce (Asst: V. Behr) + 10						
1286	Construction of Friends Storage Building.	B. Conry + 10						
1345	SHPO - Maintain and repair deteriorated Sublette Section House (SSH) structure and exterior. Please see NOTE for a health and safety recommendation,	B. Conry + 10						

Projects in any location

Proj Num	Project Description	Session J 1/1 - 12/31						
1394	Social Media Volunteer Assistance	K. Walser + 5						
1395	Three-Part Education Program - Interpretations Committee	M. Sellers (Asst: K. Walser) + 25						



by Chris James

To read some of the posts on the Narrow Gauge Discussion Forum (NGDF), the world, or at least the Cumbres & Toltec, has entered The End Times. A diesel locomotive on Cumbres? Heresy! Sure, there is already the GE center-cab diesel but it's old, like 1943-old. And tiny! It lives in the yard and we hardly ever see it! Now the C&TS is buying a big, full-sized Alco diesel, built in 1982! What's the world coming to? Are we becoming a diesel-powered Railroad like the Durango & Silverton or the BNSF?

OK, don't panic. Yes, the C&TS is acquiring a big, full-sized diesel, built in 1982. But it's not the end of the world. Read on and you will learn more about what is happening, why it's happening, how it's happening and what it all means.

For starters, we need to turn back the clock about five-and-a-half years to June 1, 2018. The "416 Fire," as it was called, began about ten miles north of Durango, west of US Highway 550 and adjacent to the tracks of the Durango & Silverton Railroad. It spread quickly into the dense dry timberlands of the San Juan National Forest. By the time it was declared fully contained, sixty-one days later, it had burned nearly 53,000 acres. Fire-fighting costs were more than \$43 million. Federal officials have alleged that embers emitted from a coal-burning D&S steam locomotive were the source of the blaze.

The D&S reached settlements with the government on March 31, 2022, in two lawsuits stemming from the 416 Fire: one settlement required the Railroad to pay \$20 million to the federal government and institute a fire mitigation program. A second suit paid local home and business owners impacted by the fire and the subsequent closures, and mud slides and flooding brought about by the summer monsoons.

The effects of the 416 Fire echoed about eighty miles east at the C&TS. There had been closures on the Cumbres in the past: in 2002 the Railroad was forced to close for five weeks because of high fire

danger. In 2022 there was a similar closure, fortunately for a shorter length of time, though it resulted in a truncated season. Last October, the Railroad wasn't so lucky. A C&TS locomotive started a fire just west of Sublette. Most right-of-way fires are tiny and are quickly extinguished by the fire crew following the train in a speeder. Not so this time. The fire quickly spread up into the timber requiring six helicopter water-drops and on-the-ground manpower to contain it. Fortunately, it was close to the end of the season and the fire didn't affect the schedule. Still, it was a close call. C&TS could ill-afford a \$20 million lawsuit.

According to Scott Gibbs, General Manager of the Cumbres & Toltec at the time and President of the Durango Railroad Historical Society, Zurich, an international provider of commercial property casualty insurance and one of the two major railroad insurers in North America, pulled out of the railroad market following the 2018 Durango fire. The remaining insurer doubled the liability rates for railroads running coal-powered steam locomotives. To avoid being caught in a \$20 million bind again, the D&S converted its K-36 locomotives to oil and began shopping around for diesel locomotives. The C&TS was watching closely and converted K-36 No. 489 to oil. K-36 No. 487 is currently undergoing a similar conversion. Moreover, the problem wasn't just fire danger: coal has been getting more expensive to acquire and truck to Chama and Antonito.

When Scott Gibbs took over the GM position at the C&TS, he discussed the situation with Mark Graybill of the bi-state Railroad Commission, asking the question, "If we can't move anything, what are we going to do?" The fire suppression speeder (sometimes two speeders spaced several minutes apart) still followed the trains but given the number of dead and dying trees and the changes in the Rocky Mountain's climate, this was no longer enough. It was decided to shift the Railroad's fire mitigation priorities from suppression

to outright prevention. Folks visit the C&TS to experience historic narrow gauge steam railroading in the Rockies but, as Scott has said, “No one is going to want to ride through a blackened forest.” Oil-burning locomotives still produce steam, go chug-chug, and blow their whistles. And they reduce danger of fire. With oil, all that is lacking for the passengers is the smell of coal smoke and cinders in their eyes.

But there is more than the potential of catastrophic fire in play. There are a number of more positive advantages to running a diesel locomotive on the C&TS now and then.

(Note the choice of words: “*Now and then.*”)

It is neither the plan nor intent for the Cumbres & Toltec to begin running regular diesel revenue passenger service. Stored and maintained, most likely in Antonito, the new diesel will be used for specific non-revenue operations such as maintenance-of-way tasks, particularly delivering ballast and other MOW materials. The Railroad has traditionally used steam power to perform these tasks; this is not only an expensive operation, it puts additional wear and tear on any of the Railroad’s historic locomotives. It also adds time to their 1,472-hours of operation before the FRA-required inspection takes them out of service. The Railroad has used the little 1943 center-cab diesel for some MOW tasks, but it lacks the power to pull a string of loaded ballast cars up the kind of grades found on the C&TS. The tasks then fall on the steam roster, costing the Railroad up to \$1,000 a day.



Fire in the C&TS, October, 2023
Photo: USDA Forest Service

A diesel can also be on “standby” for any rescue operation, should a scheduled train have a mechanical problem. Currently, one steam locomotive is generally kept “hot” so it can respond to any situation quickly. This is an expensive proposition, as coal and water for the engine must be monitored by a Railroad employee, twenty-four/seven, just in case it’s needed. If it’s sitting cold in the yard, it takes five to six hours of start-up time before it can generate enough steam to operate. A

diesel locomotive can be started cold with the push of a button, and be ready to roll in fifteen minutes. Like moving the ballast cars, the center-cab diesel doesn’t have the ability to “rescue” a train with two-hundred passengers stranded, say, between Sublette and Osier, somewhere with no bus access. A little center-cab diesel couldn’t move an entire passenger train.

Another more positive use would be snow removal. Using a K-36 with a front plow puts a lot of strain on the locomotive, putting one of the Railroad’s key assets at risk. In 1999, Locomotive 484 was clearing the line west of Los Pinos when it hit a patch of ice between the rails, derailed and nearly rolled over. The accident put the locomotive out of service until 2004. A powerful diesel with a front-end plow can make short work of many of the heaviest drifts and do the job more quickly. It also has the advantage of being able to open the line sooner for revenue service. In the fall, the line can also remain open longer, again lengthening the operating season. According to the Durango & Silverton, when they began using their new plow-equipped diesels for snow removal last year, they discovered that they could open the Railroad faster than had ever been done in the past, even following a winter with a near-record snowfall. This is a valuable lesson for a Railroad that crosses a 10,000-foot pass like the C&TS.

The White Pass and Yukon Railway was completed in 1900 between Skagway, Alaska and Whitehorse and Carcross, Yukon Territory, Canada, a freight and passenger line into the Canadian interior. Now primarily a tourist-oriented line, the WP&Y had upgraded their diesel fleet and four of their older locomotives were sold to the Durango & Silverton, a direct result of the 416 Fire. A fifth locomotive, No. 114, not part of their normal passenger fleet, was also available but not included in the D&S sale. No. 114 was primarily a MOW locomotive on the White Pass road, similar to its intended use on the C&TS.

On November 11, the C&TS Railroad Commission approved the purchase of Locomotive 114. The “sticker price” was a bargain at \$120,000. Fortunately, in 2021 President Biden had signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill with funding going to every state in the Union. New Mexico was “very supportive” of using a portion of their New Mexico ARPA stimulus funding, not only paying for the locomotive, but also budgeting for transportation from Skagway, rebuilding of any necessary components, and support infrastructure at the C&TS. The Railroad has also applied for \$500,000 from the State of Colorado for

fire mitigation, primarily between Sublette and Osier, though this has not yet been approved by the Colorado legislature.



No. 114 on the White Pass & Yukon Railway, June 14, 2014
Photo: John B. West

No. 114, a Bombardier DL535E, was manufactured in September 1982 by Montreal Locomotive Works, one of four Alco locomotives built specifically for the WP&Y with plows attached to their prows. However, just prior to their delivery to Skagway, a growing recession and the collapse of Canadian mining operations forced the White Pass to terminate freight service. The four units were never delivered and remained in Montreal. There they stayed until 1991 when two of the units, No. 112 and 113, were purchased for U.S. Gypsum's narrow gauge railroad in Plaster City, California. One of the units, No. 113, was totaled in an accident at U.S. Gypsum and the third of the four, No. 111, was purchased out of mothballs as a replacement. This left No. 114, still lettered for the WP&Y, stored in Montreal. In 1988, the White Pass & Yukon returned to operation as a mostly tourist-oriented railroad and took delivery of the orphan locomotive in 1995, still "new," thirteen years after it was built.

Locomotive 114 has its own checkered past. On September 3rd, 2006, the locomotive was pulling eight loaded ballast cars from Log Cabin, British Columbia, down grade to Bennett, BC, about seven miles north. As the train descended a 1.5% grade, the engineer began to lose control of the train. As the grade increased to nearly 3.5%, and the train approached 20 mph, the conductor jumped from the train. The locomotive derailed and plowed 135 feet on its side into an embankment. One crew member was killed, and the engineer and a second crew member were trapped in the cab. All three survivors were seriously injured.

So, what happened?

According to the Railway Investigation Report by the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, "Locomotive 114 was equipped with a dynamic braking system. Dynamic braking causes traction motors to act like generators. When dynamic braking is used, the locomotive wheels are used to turn the diesel-electric motors and the electrical current generated is dissipated as heat... Locomotive 114 had a defective dynamic brake from the date of purchase... Numerous attempts to repair the problem were made without success."

The Transportation Board concluded that the accident was based on a cascade of failures, including overloading the ballast cars, absence of instructions for operation on a steep grade, the depleted state of the charge of the air brakes at the start of the descent and more. Above all, the accident report concluded, "Locomotive 114 had a defective dynamic brake... When used, only maximum braking effort was available... Safe dynamic brake operation requires a gradual transition from motoring to braking. The rapid build-up dynamic brake effort that occurred each time dynamic braking was activated on this locomotive led WP&YR locomotive engineers to avoid its use altogether because it was considered dangerous." (The complete accident report and summary can be read at <http://tinyurl.com/mrx2cudf>)



Runaway and derailment! Locomotive 114 on the White Pass & Yukon Railway, September 3, 2006
Photo: Transportation Safety Board of Canada, Used with permission.

The conclusions about the "malfunctioning dynamic braking system" seventeen years ago is what has caused the most concern among the C&T community. However, unlike No. 113 at U. S Gypsum, No. 114 wasn't totaled in the wreck and was shipped to the Coast Engine and Equipment Company in Tacoma, Washington, to be completely rebuilt and returned to the WP&Y. Recent employees have stated they found no faults with the dynamic braking electron-

ics. According to Scott Gibbs, “there is (a substantial amount of) money in the budget for the acquisition” to completely go through the electrical system. Further inspection of the systems by Brad Wujcik, the Chief Mechanical Officer of American Heritage Railroads, owners of the Durango & Silverton Railroad, gave No. 114 his seal of approval. It would appear that the dynamic braking issue is a thing of the past.

Still, other concerns have been raised in the narrow gauge world regarding Locomotive 114.

Clearance: Will WP&Y No. 114 fit through the tight tunnels on the C&TS?

Scott Gibbs, Marvin Casias and Steven Butler, from the C&TS, and Brad Wujcik from American Heritage Railroads visited Skagway, Alaska in the fall of 2023 to inspect and evaluate the locomotive. Says Scott, “Brad and Steven grabbed a tape measure and went all over 114.” They compared the measurements with tunnel clearance diagrams provided by C&TS Roadmaster John Mathews and also compared them with the exact measurements of C&TS Rotary OY and concluded that the tunnel clearance of Locomotive 114 and Rotary OY equipment are basically identical and fully compatible with the Railroad’s ROW.

Curvature: Will WP&Y 114 be able to navigate the tight corners on the C&TS?

The minimum curvature on the WP&Y is 20°. On the D&S, there is one 30° curve that the former WP&Y locomotives negotiate without trouble. On the C&TS, the tightest curves, at 24°, are the two balloon loops, Antonito and Osier. Again, no concerns.

Aspiration: Will No. 114 even run at the C&TS high altitude compared to the WP&Y?

10,020-foot Cumbres Pass is three-and-one-half times higher than the highest point on the White Pass & Yukon. Yet the WP&Y locomotives on the D&S run all the way to 9,318-foot Silverton, Colorado with what Brad Wujcik called “a minor adjustment” to their turbochargers. Again, there was little concern about the Railroad’s purchase decision and the C&TS has an ongoing contract with the D&S to monitor any possible operational issues.

Diesel Shopping: Where do you go to find a used narrow gauge diesel?

Used narrow gauge locomotives are a rare breed. Some may be found elsewhere in the world but the ARPA stipulated that its funds could only be used in the USA. It was fortunate that No. 114 was not only in exceptional condition, it was on a railroad based out of Skagway, Alaska. And at \$120,000 it was a deal that was too good to pass up.

Following the measurements and inspection, Scott,

Marvin, Steven and Brad, along with a WP&Y engineer, did a “test drive” up White Pass. Scott and the C&TS crew were “amazed at the overall condition of the locomotive.”

It shouldn’t have been a much of a surprise. It had been mothballed in Montreal for nearly twelve years and didn’t arrive on the White Pass line until 1994. Now, with less than thirty years of operation under its belt, it was offered to the Cumbres & Toltec.



Scott Gibbs, Steve Butler and Marvin Casias with No. 114 at the WP&Y Shop, October, 2023, Skagway, Alaska

Photo: Scott Gibbs

Gibbs, Butler and Casias reported their findings back to the C&TS Commission who agreed to the purchase of Bombardier DL535E No. 114 for \$120,000, as well as budgeting for all related acquisition costs.

Don’t expect to see No. 114 on the C&TS rails immediately. It still needs to be shipped by barge from Skagway to the U.S. and then trucked or trained to Antonito. There it will receive another complete on-site inspection and any needed maintenance will include the assistance of the experienced D&S motive power staff. It will also need to be painted to represent something other than the WP&Y livery before it’s put into service, a design still to be decided.

Rest assured, you will not see No. 114 pulling a C&TS passenger train unless there is severe fire danger, or it is rescuing a passenger train from a stalled steam locomotive. You may, however, see it being a workhorse, clearing snow, delivering ballast or other MOW activities, giving the Cumbres & Toltec’s steam roster a well-deserved rest.



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Welcoming Steve Butler

General Manager Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

By Paul Davenport

Steven Butler had been on the job more than a month as the new General Manager of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad when Friends member Paul Davenport conducted, on behalf of the *Dispatch*, a Zoom interview with him this last November 14th.

The Bi-State Commission that oversees the Railroad voted Oct. 3 to hire Butler to replace Scott Gibbs, who held the titles of interim president and president while running the Railroad since mid-2021.

In this interview, Butler addresses a variety of subjects, including his background, challenges facing the Railroad, the Friends and locomotive fuel options.

(Note: Some questions and answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.)

Friends: The Railroad's announcement of your hiring said you're a "life-long rail enthusiast with a passion for preserving 19th and 20th century steam trains." What got you interested in railroading and preservation And how does that interest figure in your life today?

Butler: My family had a tourist railroad so I grew up around a standard gauge, four-mile-long railroad that had a steam engine. That's kind of where it started. All through middle school and high school, I spent my weekends working on the train, maintaining it and learning (its operation.) After college, I decided to see if I could make a living working on steam trains. And that's 32 years ago.

Friends: Is it fair to say you're a rail fan *per se*, as most people would think (of that term)?

Butler: Not really anymore. I think probably early on more so. Now that I have done this for a living for so long, I kind of went and found other hobbies to enjoy.

Friends: Do you ever get out to watch trains and take pictures?

Butler: You know, I will every once in a while. It has to be something I find interesting, so like this last fall I was in Scotland and took some pictures of the Flying Scotsman and a couple of other heritage lines over there. Here in the U.S. ... I usually end up working around the trains (and) I don't have the opportunity to take pictures. Like several years ago I was at a *Trains Magazine* charter and I ended up being an engineer and I never got a chance to really photograph any of the run-bys. I saw some great pictures of them though.



Friends: Do you have a favorite restoration/preservation project.
Butler: I think for me one of the most spectacular ones was ... the Skookum Locomotive. It is a 1910 Baldwin 2-4-4-2 articulated locomotive, pretty much the first articulated locomotive,

(and) it is presently at Niles Canyon in California. It was restored up in Oregon at the Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad.

Friends: What attracted you to that project?

Butler: It was a pile of parts. The engine had derailed in the woods, was disassembled around 1960, got moved around to various different sites as a pile of parts and was finally purchased by its present owner and he paid to have it restored. It's a pretty amazing thing and I have had a lot of chances to work on it too, which I'm kind of partial to.

Friends: What was your first experience with the C&TS?

Butler: My first experience with the C&TS, I'd been to it as a visitor in the summer of 1989. I had a graduation gift from my parents to visit all the narrow gauge stuff that I could find in Colorado at that time. That's my first trip here.

Friends: What made this Railroad's GM position something you wanted to do?

Butler: I'd been working here as a contractor pretty much for the last year and I've always followed the C&TS, and some friends of mine had worked here over the years. My first boss in California, Dan Ranger, had been the general manager during the 80s so I heard lots of early stories. I worked a lot with Earl Knoob when I was at Iowa Pacific and Texas State and heard lots more stories there. And actually I had worked for the Railroad in 2002 as CMO (chief mechanical officer).

Friends: Have you had experience in working with

volunteer groups? Those arrangements can be mutually beneficial for everybody but sometimes it isn't all peaches and cream. What's going to be your mindset in working with the Friends?

Butler: So my family's original railroad is where I started. We were all volunteers, so the entire railroad was run by volunteers and when I took over the railroad ... from 1994 to 2001, we pretty much did the whole railroad with volunteers. Every position there was somebody doing it on their own nickel.

Friends: And what's your take on volunteers and their involvement now that you're a professional railroader in charge?

Butler: A couple of different railroads that I have worked at had volunteer groups associated with them over the years. When I was at Texas State we had two different groups that had some active involvement with the railroad—nothing like the Friends though. It wasn't to that extent. They kind of strived to be that but never had really gotten that organized. The Friends for me is a valuable part of the Railroad and without them a lot of historic stuff just wouldn't get taken care of. We have a whole yard full of freight cars that if it wasn't for the Friends, they would just be piles of kindling wood by now. And it's important to maintain the cars and unfortunately the Railroad can't support it themselves.

Friends: Is the Friends' presence in the Chama yard during work sessions an operational hindrance or bothersome for the Railroad? Does the Railroad want the Friends operation in Chama to be moved to Antonito or scaled back and changed in some fashion?

Butler: I think ultimately it'd be great to have a facility like they have in Antonito in Chama as well where they can get projects in out of the weather and work on them in a shop setting vs. out in the cinders. That would be my ultimate goal with it because it's so much easier to work in a shop environment than outside. If you have to stop work every time it's sprinkling or raining, it's hard to get stuff done, especially with the work sessions where you come into town for a couple of weeks and then leave a project outside unfinished for however long until the next session. Stuff can happen to it over time ... and having some lights or a restroom nearby—all those things are great benefits that we enjoy. That would be my goal with it, to have a facility like that on the Chama side.

Friends: Coal, oil or diesel? What do you think the future of heritage railroading—and the C&TS in particular—holds for fuel choice or choices? It might help to reference that as we conduct this interview that the commission has just decided to purchase another diesel locomotive, a bigger one than we now have.

Butler: Yep. Ultimately the Railroad is known for being a coal-burning Railroad and I hope we can maintain that as long as possible, but one of the challenges I think we're going to run into politically is coal is a four-letter word now and it is a hot topic in both states and unfortunately I

think at some time we're going to get pressured away from it. I grew up around oil burners. I've also worked around coal burners. I've fired both over the years. They both have their advantages and disadvantages. If we have to switch to oil

to maintain operating (steam engines) on the Railroad, unfortunately it's something that we'll have to do, but we will hang onto coal as long as we can.

The diesel locomotive that we are in the process of acquiring, the main thing with it is going to be for work trains, being able to rescue a train if we need to, or use it as a locomotive that we can basically go out and push the button and have it ready to go in 15 minutes. Here, in the last couple of weeks, we've been doing a lot of ballast trains, and to run a ballast train with a steam locomotive is pretty expensive whereas with a diesel locomotive it brings that cost down and we're not burning service days of a steam locomotive and we're not taking away from time in the shop where it could actually be worked on right now.

Friends: The commission's posting for the GM job said the Railroad has a dedicated workforce that requires regional diversity and "a management style of respect, teamwork and persuasion." How do you envision taking on those needs?

Butler: Having worked in the region when I was up at Alamosa—I was up there for seven years with Iowa Pacific—you learn a lot about the area. Everyone respects the uniqueness of that part of Colorado and New Mexico and everybody that has been there for many generations, and my goal is to try to have as many local people working for the Railroad as possible. We want people that are going to stay in the area and have

"I've always followed the C&TS, and some friends of mine had worked here over the years. My first boss in California, Dan Ranger, had been the General Manager during the 80s.... I worked a lot with Earl Knoob when I was at Iowa Pacific and Texas State and heard lots more stories there."

their families around. It's hard when you have people that just float in and out of the job all the time. If you have a revolving door of people coming in and out, it's hard to maintain a good balance of employees, and if you have people that are connected to the area by their families, we want to support that.

Friends: Given that the Cumbres & Toltec has had employee retention issues and a lot of turnover—more empty jobs than actual turnover is perhaps a better way to put it—how do you plan to address those needs and challenges, particularly that the Railroad is in a largely rural region, not a major metro area with many more people and a larger potential work force?

Butler: We're definitely not a major urban area but there are quite a bit of talented people in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado that we'd like to be able to attract to the Railroad. We can offer often-times full-time employment with really good benefits to the employees. We have tried to bring wages up over the years. I know they've done several increases trying to keep above the local averages in the area to try to make it an attractive job.

Friends: How do you prioritize maintaining historical authenticity vs. streamlining operations and holding down expenses? As a general manager, how do you approach that sort of factoring?

Butler: That's an interesting balancing act. In the operating part of the business, we definitely will have to think about what stuff costs. We have to look into the benefits of what we put our money into and the return on it—definitely maintaining our locomotives

and cars safely is a priority and sometimes we're going to have to deviate from some of the historical aspects just because of safety. It's a priority over history right now.

Friends: What are you doing in your new job to become more familiar with and knowledgeable about the C&TSRR? What kind of learning curve or process do you have?

Butler: The first thing I really did was in essence go around and kind of spend time with all the different managers, get to know them, get to know what their jobs entail, what issues they struggle with, what issues need to be addressed, and we've been working to get involved and get some of that stuff taken care of.

Friends: With the short staffing experienced by the Railroad, the office staff has had to augment the operating staff. If you were to qualify yourself for another job on the Railroad, what would it be?

Butler: Probably brakeman. In order to get qualified on this Railroad as a conductor or fireman or engineer, you're looking at multiple years of training to do it, and to be really truly qualified. If I had to go out and do some train service, it probably would be as a brakeman because that is something what would be easier to step in and fill in.

Friends: Is there anything else you'd like to say to Friends members through this article?

Butler: Scott has pretty big shoes to fill, after him departing from the Railroad and what he's been able to fill in his last couple years. Those are pretty big shoes that I need to fill behind him.



Paul Davenport and the C&TS Dispatch thanks the Friends members who suggested interview questions.

Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad Steven Butler's career at a glance:

October 2023 to present: Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Chama, NM. General Manager.

April 2019 to present (inactive): Morton Locomotive & Machine LLC, Morton, WA. Owner and Master Mechanic.

March 2016 to April 2019: Mt. Rainier Railroad & Logging Museum, Mineral, WA. Assistant General Manager and Chief Mechanical Officer.

July 2013 to March 2016: Texas State Railroad, Rusk, TX. Chief Mechanical Officer (2013-2014) and General Manager and Chief Mechanical Officer (2014-2016).

September 2007 to July 2013: San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, Alamosa, CO. Master Mechanic-steam (2007-2010) and Chief Mechanical Officer (2007-2013).

March 2003 to September 2007: Mid-West Locomotive & Machine Works, North Lake, WI. Vice President and Master Mechanic.

November 2002 to March 2003: Independent contractor working on steam locomotives.

September 2001 to October 2002: Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Chama, NM. Master Mechanic.

August 1994 to November 2001: Kettle Moraine Railway, North Lake, WI. General Manager and Master Mechanic.

April 1993 to March 1994: Ohio Central Railroad/Sugar Creek Amish Tours, Sugar Creek, OH. Machinist, Fireman and Engineer.

June 1991 to March 1993: Roaring Camp & Big Trees Narrow Gauge Railroad, Felton, CA. Machinist and Fireman.

August 1989 to May 1991: Waukesha County Technical College, Pewaukee, WI. Student and work-study employee.

SOURCE: Resume provided by Steven Butler.

Hugh Fowler:

How a reluctant candidate with a vinyl “choo-choo” record and an engineer’s cap helped buy a railroad and changed the world

In memoriam, 5/21/1926 - 10/25/2023

OVER CHRISTMAS you might have watched *It's a Wonderful Life*, starring Jimmy Stewart, for the umpteenth time. It's a Christmas-time tradition telling the tale of George Bailey and the lovely and sublime town of Bedford Falls. But George is a depressed businessman who is about to throw himself off a bridge because he feels he should have never been born. His Guardian Angel steps in and gives George a revealing look at not only his life in Bedford Falls but the lives of those around him, even generations into the future, had he never existed.

Panned when it was first released in 1946, the film is now rated as one of the Top One Hundred Films of the 20th century.

There could be a similar film, let's call it *It's a Wonderful Railroad*, made about the Cumbres & Toltec, where decisions made more than fifty years ago by a number of individuals have, as former Friends Board Member Bob Ross has said, affected “hundreds of thousands of people throughout time, just like in *It's a Wonderful Life*.” Everything points back to those earlier George Bailey-like days.

Over the years, most of the C&TS George Baileys, all fundamental to the purchase, formation and success of the Railroad by way of politics, promotion, negotiation, photography or downright persistence, folks like Clarence Quinlan, Joe Vigil, Carl Turner, Ernie Robart and Governors John Love and David Cargo and so many others have passed away. But all of them left their George Bailey mark and legacy on the C&TS.

On October 25, 2023, Hugh Fowler, one of the last of the “founding fathers,” passed on. As the saying goes, “Some people are born into greatness. Others have greatness thrust upon them.” When it comes to the Cumbres & Toltec, Hugh was definitely in the second category.

In 1968, Hugh was Secretary of the Arapaho County Colorado, GOP when his district's senator announced he wasn't going to run again, a scant three weeks



Photo courtesy Laurie Beckel

before the election. Hugh, “a reluctant candidate,” agreed to run for the Senate seat. Reluctant, but victorious, he was sworn in January, 1969.

1969 was an inauspicious time for narrow gauge railroading in Colorado and New Mexico. Four months earlier, on September 14th, 1968, the Denver & Rio Grande petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to scrap the entire Southwest Extension from Alamosa all the way to Durango. Nine

months later, in July 1969, the ICC agreed and handed down the decision to abandon the narrow gauge line.

Into this political cauldron stepped—or perhaps jumped—Hugh Fowler. Hugh and his twin brother, Parker Fowler, were avid railfans. Hugh and his new bride, Shirl, had ridden the length of the Southwest Extension in September 1950, and fell in love with the narrow gauge line, a love that endured with both Hugh and Parker for the rest of their lives. Parker passed away in 2011.

There were already movements afoot in both Colorado and New Mexico to stop the abandonment by the D&RG. Soon after Hugh took the oath of office in the Colorado Senate, House Representative Clarence Quinlan of Antonito introduced a bill that “would permit Colorado and New Mexico to buy and then operate... the railroad between Alamosa and Durango.” A seasoned politician, Quinlan easily guided Bill 1321 through the House. But the bill also had to pass the Colorado Senate.

The task could have been taken on by Durango Senator Wayne Denny but as Hugh himself put it in a presentation at the Colorado Railroad Museum in 2021, “Senator Denny was the Senate sponsor of Bill 1321 until the Durango Chamber of Commerce informed him that if he persisted in creating a competitor for the Silverton line, he could forget about winning the next election.” The sponsorship was given to Hugh, the new guy, whose career wouldn't be damaged if the bill passed or failed, though at the time they probably

didn't know they had a railfan on their hands.

While Hugh's primary focus was education reform, he set out to garner the necessary eighteen Senate votes for Bill 1321. He knew Conejos County, part of Representative Quinlan's district, was basically dirt poor and Hugh began appealing to his Senate colleagues that a tourist train running out of Antonito would bring economic development to the region which could, in turn, improve the county's education system. The Senate showed little interest.

With his ten-year background of running a marketing firm, Hugh set out to change that. "To get attention for what was generally considered a non-issue," he said, "I began wearing my striped engineer's cap... (which) worked pretty well with the press." With a friend, he flew the length of the Railroad from Antonito to Chama, shooting aerial photographs. In the Senate chambers, he put his marketing background to work, set up a slide projector, and showed photos of the line while playing "a vinyl record of train sounds, whistles and choo-choos... over the Senate sound system," all the while, of course, wearing his engineer's hat. He continued, "(My) marketing 'Dog and Pony show' experience was valuable—though unprecedented—in convincing a number of my buddies that saving this almost one-hundred-year-old relic was a reasonable investment for the people of Colorado."

House Bill 1321 passed the Senate by a small margin and Governor Love promptly signed the "Railroad Authority Act" into law. The State then began negotiation with the Denver & Rio Grande to purchase at least a portion of the 170-mile line.

In New Mexico, efforts to keep the rails shiny had been under way since before 1968 when it became clear that the D&RG wanted out of the narrow gauge freight business. The Railroad Club of New Mexico became the "umbrella group" for citizens and organizations to speak up about the abandonment. Terry Ross, Herman Barkmann, Warner Johnson and Larry Mayer formed the *Citizen's Committee for the Preservation of the Denver & Rio Grande Narrow Gauge Railway*, proposing that the line should become a National Monument. In Colorado, Hugh and others established the *Colorado*

Society for the Preservation of the Narrow Gauge, and issued bonds that could be purchased to help fund the effort.

In both states, public pressure to "Save the Narrow Gauge!" grew stronger as more individuals and organizations signed on to the proposal and the local press showed interest in the idea. It was a bi-partisan project; New Mexico's Governor Cargo was a Republican and the New Mexico legislature was strongly Democratic, yet they were able to come to an agreement. And on April 9th, 1969, Governor Cargo signed House Bill 230 that basically mirrored Hugh Fowler's Colorado bill to create the New Mexico Railroad Authority with the

goal of acquiring and operating a railroad. As John Bush, former General Manager of the C&TS, put it, "This is the way any law is supposed to work; two groups with two agendas work together to create a common marriage." Ironically, the bill was shepherded through the New Mexico legislature by another newly-minted freshman representative, Jack Stahl.

It wasn't an easy pathway but with focused legislators like Fowler and Stahl, the die toward acquiring the portion of the line between Antonito and Chama was cast. In the end, the \$547,120 purchase from the D&RGW included the right-of-way, locomotives, rolling stock and structures, though all were in fairly rough shape from years of neglect by the Rio Grande. It would take months of further negotiation to establish the two-state commission that supervises the Railroad today, hire an operator and prepare the Railroad for passengers. In the end, it all came together to form the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a unique cooperation between two states to save an historic asset.

Which brings us back to all those George Baileys, beginning with folks like Hugh and Parker Fowler in Colorado, and Governor David Cargo and Ernie Robert and others in New Mexico.

Unlike George Bailey, Hugh Fowler never saved his twin brother Parker from drowning (nor did Parker receive a Congressional Medal of Honor for saving



Left to right: Wayne Denny, Clarence Quinlan, Colorado Governor John Love and Hugh Fowler share a copy of the Conservation Bond issued to help finance the purchase of the Railroad from the D&RGW in 1970. Photo courtesy John Bush

his troops in World War II), but Parker did go on to become a long-time member of the Friends Board of Directors and an active Friends volunteer who helped preserve and restore the Chama Coal Tipple. Well into his 80s, Hugh continued testifying to the Colorado legislature for continued funding for the Railroad for its economic impact to both states. According to Deborah Wagner, a legislative liaison for History Colorado, the statewide historical organization, “His arguments were persuasive, and... (his) testimony helped thwart efforts by legislative staff to reduce funding for the Railroad.” He, and the men and women who organized and fought to “*Save the Narrow Gauge!*” made a difference. Without pressure and politics from people like Hugh Fowler, there would be no narrow gauge C&TS Railroad today. As John Bush has said, “Without people like Hugh pushing for tourism and economic development, Chama would be a ghost town.” Cumbres, Osier and Sublette would be forgotten. Along the right-of-way, only remnants would remain. And Antonito would be known, not for a railroad, but for potatoes. The schools in Antonito, a focus of Hugh’s interest in educational reform, would probably be closed, with students bused to Alamosa for their education.

Without the Railroad, there would be no Friends of the C&TS. Without the Friends volunteer restoration efforts, the Railroad’s historic structures and rolling stock would be gone. Without Parker Fowler’s help and skills preserving the iconic coal tipple in Chama, the tipple would be, like its twin in Durango, but a memory.

And the people? The C&TS carries thousands of passengers every year, who ride and learn about narrow gauge railroading and history or to simply enjoy the scenery. But it’s more than passengers. Meals have been served and motel beds been made, store shelves are stocked by and for the citizens of Northern Rio Arriba and Conejos Counties, high school graduates in both counties have gone on to university studies or professional careers that began in an “economically depressed” area. Digging deeper, books have been written that employed printers and book sellers. Contractors and dealers in building materials have hired laborers who then feed their families. Hollywood movies, video productions, TV commercials, even music videos have been made on the Railroad and viewed by thousands of people who may have never even seen the trains in person but still enjoy their presence on the screen. Employees of the C&TS have helped build and support not only their families and the Railroad, but their home towns. Many others, from around the world, have spent local dollars, pounds, euros or yen because the Railroad is still there.

Do the math: Like a viral video on your computer, economic and tourist activities spurred by keeping the Railroad running between Chama and Antonito have spread exponentially. People and economies worldwide can be linked back across borders and through time to the C&TS and the efforts of Hugh, Parker, Terry, Ernie, two states, two governors and so many others.

But unlike *It’s a Wonderful Life*, where the film faded to black and credits rolled in 1946, our theoretical film, *It’s a Wonderful Railroad*, has no ending. Not only did these visionaries keep the trains rolling, the Cumbres & Toltec continues to roll with as much momentum in 2024 as Jimmy Stewart’s movie had in 1946.

Nowhere is this more true than with the Friends of the C&TS. Every member, every volunteer at the work sessions or participating in a local train show or working remotely in the Friends library, photo archives or in communication and outreach, is contributing to the success of the Friends, the Railroad and its surrounding communities. Each Friends member has something to contribute. Perhaps it’s little more than paying their annual dues. Or perhaps it’s construction skills or a steady hand for lettering freight cars, or high-end skills in machining or woodworking. What about preparing food or taking high quality photographs, wielding a paint sprayer or planting and maintaining decorative landscaping at the depots? Friends members can all trace their lineage back to those who showed us how important it was—and still is—to *Save the Narrow Gauge!* In a way, we have all become “Hugh,” helping to pass the Railroad into the future.

George Bailey had a greater effect on Bedford Falls than he ever imagined. Like *It’s a Wonderful Life*, Hugh and Parker Fowler, like so many others, helped save, recreate and maintain the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, a historical asset that has meant so much and done so much over time for so many people and places, far and wide, and will continue to do so well into the future long after Hugh’s, and our, lifetime.



This remembrance of Hugh Fowler was created with the kind assistance of Laurie Fowler Beckel, Hugh’s daughter; Chuck Fowler, Hugh’s son; Frank Fowler, son of Parker Fowler and Hugh’s nephew; Charly Fowler, Hugh’s sister-in-law; Bill Lock, founder of the Friends of the C&TS; Bob Ross, Chairman Emeritus of the Friends Board; John Bush, former General Manager of the C&TS; Deborah Wagner, retired legislative liaison for History Colorado, and Hugh’s own words at a 2021 presentation at the Colorado Railroad Museum.

Chris James, Editor

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ON THE C&TS, 2023

SESSION E (JULY 12-28), SESSION F (JULY 31-AUGUST 4), SESSION G (SEPTEMBER 25-29)

Photos by Michael Mee, Don Atkinson and Sharon McGee. Reports are based on Team Leader submissions to FIDO. Some reports submitted to FIDO only indicate crew leaders. Photos are shown when available. The Editor regrets any errors in content.

SESSION SUPPORT

The work session support volunteers are the folks who keep us safe, fed, hydrated, organized, supplied and documented. To Mary Jane, Bob, John, Craig, Mike, Sharon, and everyone “behind the scenes” with computers, pencils, notebooks and good ideas, we all give you a hearty, **thank you!**

Note: Crew members’ names were taken, when provided, from the Team Leaders’ Reports.

Proj. 0211/0222: Work Session Check-In and Merchandise Sales



Proj. 0231: Food Preparation



Mary Jane Smith rules the kitchen!



Proj. 0245: Tool and Bolt Supplies



Marshall Smith and George Davies handle the tool and bolt distribution in Antonito.

Proj. 0294: Hauling and Vehicle Op.



Bob Reib can be found everywhere, anywhere, all the time.

Proj. 0262/0263: Project Chronicling

Mike Mee and Sharon McGee took photos and documentation. Both come up from Denver each year. Sharon is retiring after this year.



ANTONITO, COLORADO

Proj. 0701: Landscaping Session F, Antonito

Kathy Bargsren and Cathy Rheinbeger, the weed whacking landscapers, along with Vance Benson spruced up (though there were no spruces) the Antonito Depot and CRF space, pruning and trimming to beautify the area.



Proj. 0732: Car Lettering Sessions E and F, Antonito

Steve Jorgensen and Tim Frade applied lettering, numbering and reporting data to a variety of roll-



ing stock at the CRF. Lettering also includes preparing the stencils for each car.



Proj. 0779: Mechanical Maintenance Sessions E and F, Antonito

Mechanical Maintenance, better known as COTS (Clean, Oil, Test, Stencil) is required on all C&TS equipment. Team Leader **Bill Kepner** and his maintenance crew

inspected a long list of rolling stock, too long to enumerate in detail here, fifteen cars total. You can look at some of the photos, instead.



Suffice it to say that Sessions E and F “kept them very busy!”

Proj. 1115: Restoration of Pullman Sleeper 0252/470, Antonito.

Steve Jorgensen was finally able to do the final installation of Pullman 470’s reproduction gas lamps. And ain’t they pretty, even if they are really LEDs!



Proj. 1118: Restoration of Tank Cars 11036, 11037, Session E and F, Antonito

The Friends tank car experts, **Chris Trunk** and **Randy Worwag**, arrive every summer to continue the restoration of the C&TS Tank Car Fleet.



The project cars for this year were UTLX 11036 and 11037.



They were assisted this year by Bill McCall and Ron Schaefer.



Proj. 1197: Construction of Passenger Trucks, Sessions F and G, Antonito

Ian Kelly, along with a lot of muscle-power help, continued the work on the trucks that will roll under Cook Car 053.



Proj. 1360: Covered Shelter at CRF Sessions E, F and G, Antonito

Team Leader **Bill Oltmann** reports that "Phase one: Grading for new concrete pad was completed, with forms installed, rebar and wire



mesh installed. With ties and track in place, the next step will be pouring the concrete floor.



Proj. 1354: Restore MW Inspection Car 02, Session G, Antonito



Proj. 1246: Restoration of Tank Car 11050, Session G, Antonito

Chris and Randy continued their projects, working on Tank Car 11050, an original GRAMPS car.



Inspection Car MW02 had been an ongoing project for several years and it's finally nearing completion. Team Leader **Jim McGee** and crew are down to completing the new body fitting, the doors and window regulator, modifying the roof brackets, rear light housing and more.



Proj. 1389: Rebuild Boxcar 3262 as Stencil Car, Sessions E, F, and G, Antonito

3263 was received in deteriorated condition from the D&S RR and required roof work, and new siding and doors to serve as the Friends stencil car. **Dean Myers** supervised the work.



The car was torn down to its frame for inspection, repairs were made and new siding and roofing material was installed. New doors will be built later. This car will be for stencil storage.



Proj. 1390 Restore RPO 54, Session F, Antonito

Lynn Aldrich and others stripped, sanded and primed the windows and sills on RPO 54.



Plywood was installed over all window openings and the car was secured with padlocks.



Next year, the body of the entire car will be stripped, primed and repainted. See Page 4 for details.

CUMBRES, COLORADO
Proj. 1005: Car Inspectors House Sessions E and F, Cumbres

Work continued on the Car Inspectors House, both inside and out. Led by **John Pierce**, the crew included Dax Pierce, Pete Dalberg, George Trever, and Brice and Remington Templeton.



Exterior work was done to recreate the historic covered walkway between the house and the outbuildings, based on earlier photos and archaeology surveys.



Interior work included installation of wall and ceiling woodwork.



SUBLETTE, NEW MEXICO

Proj. 1345: Repair Section House Session E and F, Sublette

The Sublette Section House has needed repair for a while and turned into a priority project. Much of the roof was rotten and the entire roof needed to be repaired and re-shingled. The project was led by **Bob Conry**.



The entire re-roofing was completed in two work sessions.



The old rotten shingles were disposed of and a new shipment arrived via Bob Reib and Ian Kelly. These and new roofing paper were applied to the repaired roof base.



D&RG EXPRESS CAR 163 RESTORATION AT THE COLORADO SPRINGS CRF

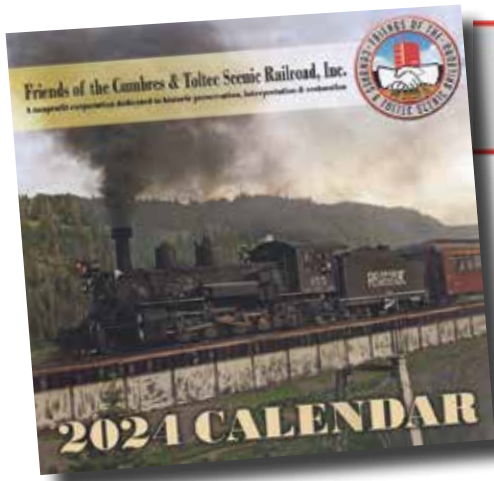
Text and photos by Don Atkinson from the October, November and December Work Sessions at the Colorado Springs Car Restoration Facility

The Friends of the C&TSRR Colorado Springs group held their first work session in October. They finished welding the side-to-side truss rods on the south side of the car, installed new cross bracing between the outside and intermediate sills as needed, finished cribbing, installed the roof jacks on the north side of the car, and completed some repairs to the tent. The north side of the car is now ready to have the roof raised so they can start remove and replace the north outside sill.



December work included finishing the repairs to the intermediate sills by drilling and bolting steel plates to the repaired areas. They also moved roof supports to allow this work to be completed, removed various frozen bolts on metal parts, and fabricated the needed upright structural supports on the north side of the car.





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Whistle in the New Year!

2024 Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Calendar!

Order one for you and one for every one of your railfan friends!

How can you rely on a *digital* calendar when you are working with a *steam* railroad? Keep track of all your important dates (like the work sessions you'll be attending) in analog mode with your **2024 C&TS Calendar**, filled with a dozen 12x12-inch photographs along with two extra photos that accompany every month of the year, all taken by some of the Friends' best photographers. **Order yours today!**

Quantity _____ (\$20 each, shipping inc.) For shipping outside the USA call, 505-880-1311 or email info@cumbrestoltec.org for postage and total. Payment type: (circle) Check Credit Card No. _____ Exp. Date ____ / ____

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You can also order your calendars directly from the Friends website at
https://bit.ly/CTS_Calendar

SUBMISSIONS WANTED for the 2025 Friends of the C&TS Calendar!
Submission deadline is **February 15th**. See submission requirements and guidelines at:
<https://bit.ly/2025Photos>



Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.
Statement of Financial Position
December 31,

ASSETS	2022	2021
Current Assets		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 565,144	\$ 391,830
Receivables	\$ 214	\$ -
Inventory	\$ 6,000	\$ 12,291
Prepaid Expenses	\$ 11,473	\$ 15,144
Total Current Assets	\$ 582,831	\$ 419,265
Property, Furniture & Equipment - Net	\$ 645,087	\$ 551,506
Investments, Unrestricted	\$ 546,076	\$ 545,182
Investments, Permanently Restricted	\$ 90,150	\$ 90,150
Collections	\$ 241,343	\$ 241,343
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,105,487	\$ 1,847,446
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 49,808	\$ 41,227
Deferred Revenue	\$ -	\$ 154
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$ 49,808	\$ 41,381
Net Assets		
Net Assets without donor restrictions:		
Reserved For Future Operations	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Total designated	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Undesignated	\$ 1,283,246	\$ 1,097,828
Total net assets without donor restrictions	\$ 1,533,246	\$ 1,347,828
Temporarily Restricted	\$ 522,433	\$ 458,237
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$ 2,055,679	\$ 1,806,065
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 2,105,487	\$ 1,847,446

Support and Revenue	
Grants and Contributions	\$ 620,947
Reimbursed Commission projects	\$ 140,235
Member Dues	\$ 131,985
Work Sessions and Merchandise	\$ 58,595
Charters net of expenses	\$ (365)
Investment and Interest Income	\$ 1,057
Other Income	\$ 1,245
Total Support and Revenue	\$ 953,699
Expenses	
Program Services	\$ 360,260
Supporting Services	
Management and General	\$ 149,061
Fundraising	\$ 194,764
Total Expenses	\$ 704,085
Change in Net Assets	\$ 249,614

To review a full set of audited financial statements, go to our website at <https://www.friendsofcumbrestoltec.org>, then go to ABOUT: BOARD and scroll down to 2022 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS.



Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.
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Conservation Bond No. 1, presented by the Colorado Society for the Preservation of the Narrow Gauge to Colorado Governor John Love in 1970. The bonds were issued to help purchase the as-yet-unnamed Colorado-New Mexico narrow gauge railroad from the Denver & Rio Grande Western. See Page 15.
From the Hugh Fowler Collection, Bill Lock