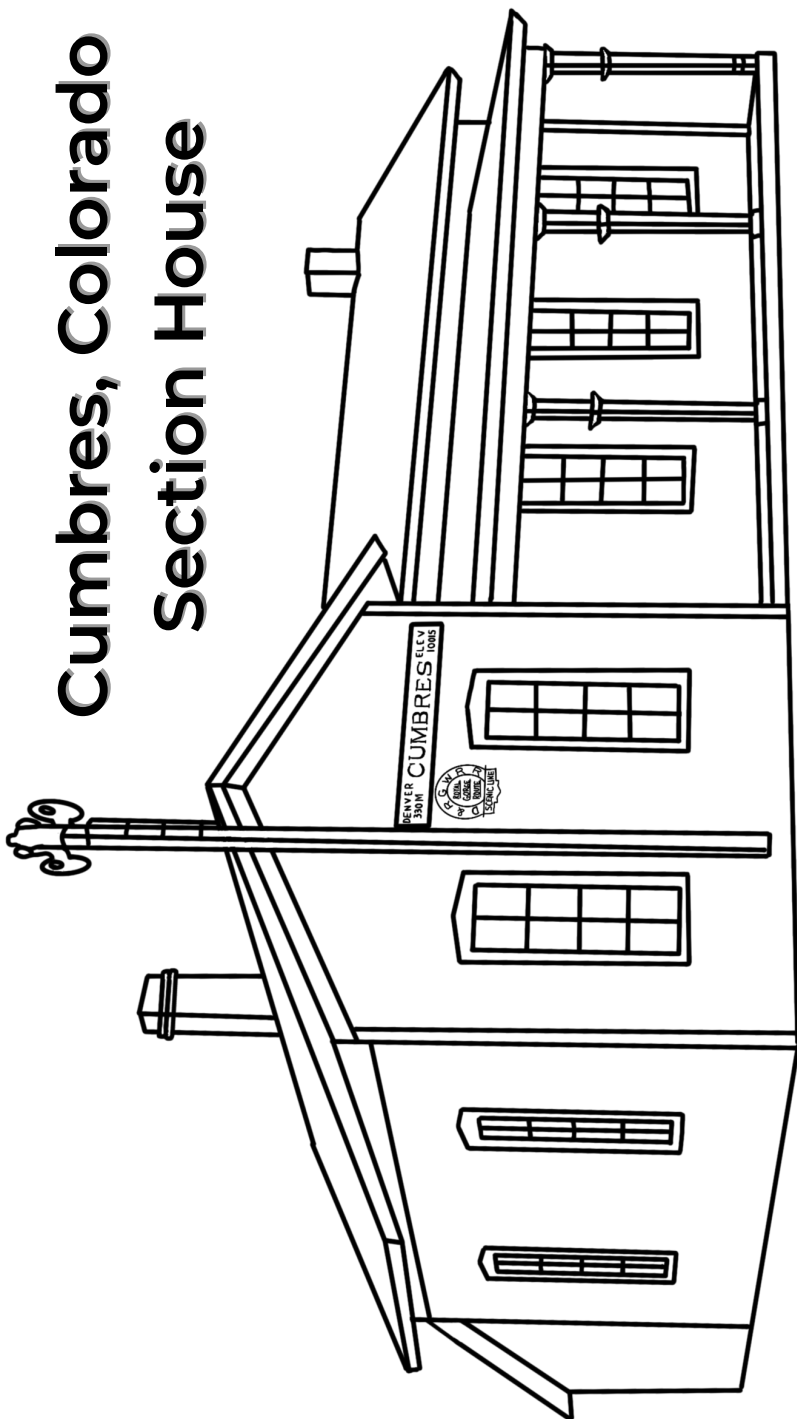


Cumbres, Colorado Section House



The Cumbres Section House was built in 1882. It has been restored and is maintained by the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We're actively dedicated to the PRESERVATION of the railroad's rich history and the railroad itself as a living museum... INTERPRETATION of its history, assets, and scenic tours.... and RESTORATION of its assets, which include buildings and property, track right-of-ways (areas along the railroad track), signs, and rolling stock (movable equipment and railroad cars).



A Volunteer Story

Many of our early members began their work in the late 1960s when the Denver & Rio Grande Western filed for abandonment; several men and women began working to find a buyer for the rail line between Antonito, Colorado, and Chama, New Mexico.

In 1970, the states of Colorado and New Mexico bought what is now the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Volunteers came together to rebuild the track and move equipment to its new home in Chama, New Mexico. When the states bought the line, many of the structures and pieces of rolling stock had not been used in many years and were in poor condition.



Early volunteers pose with a converted passenger car they had been building.

How can you help?

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad relies on support from the public. There are several ways you can help.

1. Donate
2. Become a Member
3. Volunteer
4. Share our Mission

Think about the type of projects done by the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad.

Draw a picture or write about the project you would like to help with.

Interpretive Projects

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad has created several interpretive exhibits and materials to share a love for the railroad with guests and railfans alike.

The Sign Garden is an exhibit in Chama, New Mexico that showcases the sights and sounds you can see on your railroad journey.

The 1880s Depot Museum is in Osier, Colorado. When the train stops for lunch, take a few moments to walk down to the depot and step back in time.

Cumbres, Colorado, can be accessed off Highway 17. This site is the only section town along the highway. A sign in the parking lot describes the historic section town. You can wander through the site to see what it would have been like to live along the railroad.



By 1980, the structures and railcars were in even worse shape. Our founder, Bill Lock, reached out to the railroad about establishing a volunteer-based organization. By 1988, this group had grown, and they incorporated as the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc.



Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, Inc. founder Bill Lock volunteers in 2021.

A volunteer prepares Railway Post Office Car 54 for a new paint job in 2024.



Since 1980, our organization has grown to roughly 2,000 members. We host approximately seven week-long work sessions, Monday - Friday, on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Volunteers come from around the world to help restore rolling stock and lineside structures and to preserve and interpret railroad history. In addition to on-site volunteer work sessions, we have volunteers who work remotely to plan and create interpretive signs and exhibits, and to create educational materials.

What do volunteers do?

As we mentioned, volunteers are the main workforce for the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. There are many ways volunteers can help.

Work Sessions

Work Sessions are where most of our volunteers help. Work Sessions happen 7 times per year. Volunteers come from all over the country and work together on a multitude of projects, from restoring historic structures to rebuilding authentic freight cars from the early 1900s. They also help paint railroad cars and buildings, do landscaping, and help prepare food for our volunteer lunches.

Youth Volunteers

Volunteers ages 10+ can also help the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad during work sessions. For young people wanting to volunteer, please reach out to our Project Coordinators, listed on our website, to find the best fit. We would love to work with you!



*The 2023 483
Cosmetic
Restoration Team
poses for a photo.*

Docents

When you ride the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, you will likely meet one of our friendly docents. These men and women ride the train and share stories and information about the railroad with passengers. They can often be found in the open-air car or walking through the train.

Docents also help with the Junior Engineer Program. When you complete the Junior Engineer Booklet, you show it to a docent and receive your Junior Engineer certificate and patch.

Docents can also give tours of the railyard in Chama or Antonito and teach you about the historic structures and equipment you see.



*A docent points out
sights to passengers
in the open-air
gondola.*

Other Volunteer Opportunities

The Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad also has volunteer opportunities with the Historic Interpretation Committee, Education Committee, Projects Committee, and more.