
The Big Fill Trail, Part 2

A short walking tour along two rival railroad grades

Ed De Leonardis - June 22, 2019



After you exit the cut, there is a straight section along the ridge before you reach The Big Fill. Barely discernible is the now narrow Union Pacific Grade directly below. Golden Spike Drive is seen curving in the distance.

Below is The Big Fill with Cell Phone Tour Stop #6. Fresh green grass covers the grade's slope.





This aerial view plaque above shows The Big Fill and the approaches to the long removed Union Pacific Big Trestle. Below is a prominent nearby cut in the mountain used to obtain material for The Big Fill. Wisely, the material was moved downhill.





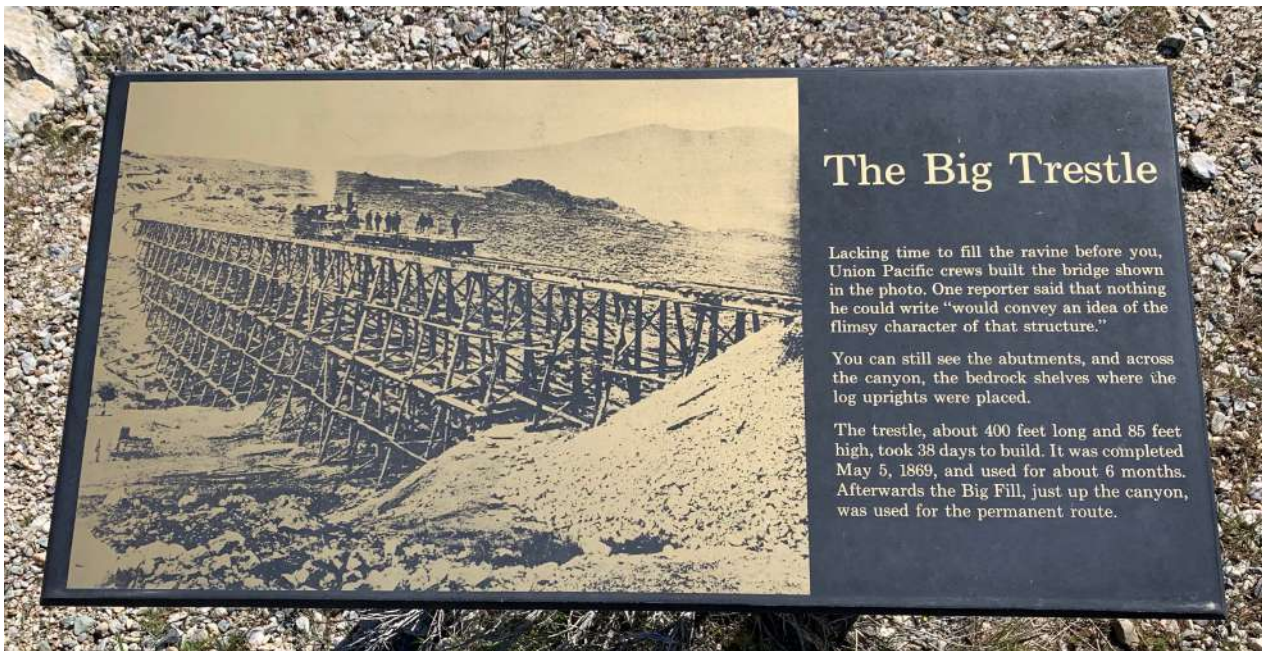
From the beginning of The Big Fill, you may continue on the Central Pacific grade or hike down on the Loop Trail 20 feet to the west end of the UP grade at its Big Trestle Site. Above, we are near the end of the west grade for the UP trestle site.



<-East Abutment

West Abutment ->

The UP Big Trestle site.



The Big Trestle

Lacking time to fill the ravine before you, Union Pacific crews built the bridge shown in the photo. One reporter said that nothing he could write "would convey an idea of the flimsy character of that structure."

You can still see the abutments, and across the canyon, the bedrock shelves where the log uprights were placed.

The trestle, about 400 feet long and 85 feet high, took 38 days to build. It was completed May 5, 1869, and used for about 6 months. Afterwards the Big Fill, just up the canyon, was used for the permanent route.



Beginning to return on the original UP grade through its cut, camera looking westbound. Note how narrow the long abandoned grade is without any significant maintenance for nearly 150 years.