



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF HISTORY

Transcontinental Railroad Backcountry Byway

UTAH



Experience the Legacy of the Transcontinental Railroad Backcountry Byway

In 1862, in an effort to unite a nation engaged in civil war, President Lincoln signed into law the Pacific Railway Act, authorizing land grants and public funding for a transcontinental railroad. Two companies set to the task: the Union Pacific started building west from Omaha, NE, while the Central Pacific started east from Sacramento, CA, to cross the rugged Sierra Nevada Mountains. Both companies required the hiring of thousands of workers, mostly of Chinese, Irish, or Mormon descent. The project took six years, millions of dollars, and 1,800 miles of track to complete.

On May 10, 1869, the two east and west rail lines were officially linked by Presidential decree at Promontory, Utah – presently known as Golden Spike National Historic Site.

The Transcontinental Railroad Backcountry Byway, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, follows the Promontory Route, the remnant of what was once an epic achievement in American History.

Backcountry byways are BLM's unique contribution to the nation's byway program, combining America's century-old love affair with motor vehicles, hiking, and biking with the outdoors. Each byway provides the public with recreational opportunities while informing them about natural and cultural resources, and multiple-use activities.

On the Transcontinental Railroad Backcountry Byway, visitors are offered the experience of a vast and desolate landscape largely unchanged since the railroad's original construction. Several stops along the route provide a glimpse into Chinese workers' personal lives; pottery sherds, building foundations, metalwork, and other artifacts are easy to see. As you visit these irreplaceable historic sites, please remember to "Respect and Protect" this unique heritage.

For more information, contact:
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