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Birds and other wildlife frequent the area, and views of the Strawberry Wilderness Range peek between branches.

The easy trail — part gravel, part paved — is about a half-mile round trip. Motorized vehicles are not allowed.

Interpretive signs along the way explain the logging history of the area, the railway route and the operations of the switchback system that was designed so the trains could conquer the steep mountain passes. Paths also lead up to a fenced area overlooking the tracks, with more interpretive signs.

Incorporated in 1890, the railway was constructed in Baker City, extending farther and farther westward through the communities of McEwen, Whitney and Sumpter to haul logs from mills in those areas. In 1910, the SVRy stretched its reach into the John Day Valley at Prairie City.

In addition to rumbling across the landscape with endless loads of logs, the railway also ran a frequent schedule of passenger services.

By the 1930s, however, the double threat of automobiles

and improved roads led to the demise of the SVRy. The service finally slowed to a silent

halt in 1933.

The one-time depot in Prairie City is now the DeWitt

Museum, located at Depot Park — on the same site it served during the SVRy heyday.



Cheryl Hoefler
The Sumpter Valley Railroad Interpretive Site, 8 miles east of Prairie City on Highway 26, offers a historic stroll among the pines.

The Sumpter Valley Railroad Interpretive Site is on Highway 26, about 8 miles east of Prairie City and 60 miles west of Baker City.

For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/mal-heur/recarea/?recid=40170.

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