



Mendocino County's World Famous **SKUNK TRAIN**

Redwoods | Trains | Railbikes | Hikes | Glen Blair Bar

NEWS RELEASE

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Mendocino Railway

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SKUNK TRAIN EXPANDS OFFERINGS IN INLAND MENDOCINO COUNTY

New Railbikes, Presidential Class service, and collaborations in Willits for 2026

Willits — (February 26, 2026) — The **Skunk Train** is launching a major expansion in Willits, introducing a new premier class service, the debut of Railbikes on the inland corridor, and announcing the first-ever circus experience on the Skunk Train. With most of the railway's 2026 development focused in Willits, inland Mendocino County is taking center stage for the Skunk Train's newest and most ambitious experiences.

2026 Willits Launch Lineup:

- **The Railcoaster** – launching May 16
- **The Noyo Presidential Class Experience** – launching early summer
- **Skunk Train x Flynn Creek Circus** – running September 11–27; tickets available beginning April 1

“This 2026 season marks a meaningful evolution in our guest experience, with Willits at the center of our investment,” said Robert Jason Pinoli, CEO and President of Mendocino Railway. “We know that for more than half of our riders, the Skunk Train is the primary reason they visit Mendocino County. We’re excited to introduce several new incredible experiences that invite travelers to inland Mendocino County.”

Drive times to the Skunk Train's Willits Depot are less than 90 minutes from Santa Rosa, just two hours from San Francisco, and under three hours from Sacramento.

Introducing the Railcoaster — A Thrilling Railbike Experience

The first of the new offerings to launch in Willits is the Railcoaster, a Railbike experience unlike any other. The route delivers a roller coaster-like sensation as riders dip, climb, and weave through some of the highest and most dramatic terrain on the Skunk Train's historic line, including a trip through the 1,100-foot Summit Tunnel. The Railcoaster features pedal-powered Railbikes built with proprietary electric-assist technology,

making the adventure accessible to a wide range of riders. Guests are not required to pedal continuously, allowing them to set their own pace.

The multi-hour tour travels ~15 miles roundtrip into the remote redwoods of the Noyo River Canyon. A souvenir T-shirt and a picnic lunch are included with each ticket. The Railcoaster is slated to launch to the public on Saturday, May 16. Media professionals will have the opportunity to preview the experience in early May. Once operational, the Railcoaster will run Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, spring through fall.

“This route is unlike anything else we offer,” said Efstathios Pappas, General Manager of the Skunk Train. “Mendocino Railway operates Railbike experiences in Fort Bragg, West Sacramento, and Ventura County, and this experience stands apart from all of them. In fact, we believe it is unlike any other Railbike experience in the world.”

The Skunk Train Launches Its Next Presidential Class Experience: the Noyo

Early summer marks the arrival of the Noyo, a newly introduced railcar experience delivering Presidential Class service, the Skunk Train’s premier onboard offering. Designed as an intimate cocktail lounge, the Noyo embraces a bold mid-century modern aesthetic, offering a striking contrast to the Redwood, the Skunk Train’s 1920s-inspired Presidential Class car based in Fort Bragg.

Why mid-century modern design? The mid-1940s to mid-1950s represented the height of elevated rail travel. The Noyo captures that era’s elegance with a menu featuring classic cocktails and an aesthetic inspired by famed industrial designers Otto Kuhler and Henry Dreyfuss. Guests aboard the Noyo enjoy premium service, curated cocktails and food offerings, and a commemorative glass keepsake.

The railcar once served as a U.S. Army car under the Department of Transportation before being transformed into the Noyo. Like the Redwood, the Noyo Presidential Class experience was entirely envisioned, designed, and rebuilt by the Skunk Train team members in the historic Roundhouse in Fort Bragg.

Restoration of the Noyo Presidential Class car is being completed this spring, with a launch anticipated early summer. Once relocated to Willits, the Noyo will appear on the public schedule several days per week and will also be available for private buyouts, offering a distinctive setting for celebrations and group events.

For the First Time, Skunk Train Welcomes Flynn Creek Circus to the Redwoods

Beyond spring and summer, the Skunk Train is preparing for a historic first. From September 11 through September 27, 2026, the Flynn Creek Circus (<http://flynncreekcircus.com/>) and the Skunk Train have teamed up to create a truly unusual experience: Guests will have the opportunity to attend the circus deep in Noyo River Canyon’s redwood forest, only accessible by a ride aboard the Skunk Train.

Bringing world-class acrobats and aerialists to a secluded redwood forest setting, Flynn Creek Circus performances blend daring physical movement, storytelling, and artistry. Guests will ride the train to a hidden performance site where the forest itself becomes part of the show—creating an intimate, immersive, and surreal experience.

Concessions, beverages, and exclusive merchandise will be available for purchase on site.

“The Flynn Creek Circus artists are thrilled to be part of this collaboration. It brings back the spirit of the golden era of circus travel by rail in the best possible way,” said Blaze Birge, owner of Flynn Creek Circus. “I can think of nothing more charming than riding the iconic Skunk Train through towering redwoods that open to reveal a vintage big top tent. It is a fairytale pairing of Mendocino County’s best, promising a storybook-level magical experience.”

The event will run primarily on weekends with select weekday evenings, transforming the redwoods into a stage and the train ride into part of the performance itself. Final performance schedules will be announced soon. Tickets are expected to go on sale to the public April 1 at SkunkTrain.com.

More Information and Tickets Available at SkunkTrain.com

With a full lineup of new experiences debuting from Willits, there is something for every kind of traveler this season. Throughout 2026, the Skunk Train will also continue to offer redwood excursions from Fort Bragg, including three Railbike experiences, Glen Blair Bar trains, the Redwood Presidential Class experience, naturalist-guided redwood hikes, and more. Guests are invited to explore what is ahead and plan their Northern California getaway at skunktrain.com.

California Western Railroad / Skunk Train is a Class III common carrier public utility railroad located in the redwood forests of Northern California’s Mendocino County. This heritage freight railroad, which has been operating since 1885, added passenger service after its founding, initially moved redwood logs from the rugged back country to Mendocino Coast sawmills, later transporting finished lumber out to the national railroad network. In 1925, the railroad became known as the “Skunk Train” and, since that time, has become a beloved institution touted as one of the “10 Best Rail Tours in the Country” (USA Today) and a “Top 10 Family Activity in California” (National Geographic Traveler). The Skunk Train’s journey covers the same 40-mile route that its freight trains use, crossing over some 30 bridges, all while retaining its original charm—minus the historic pungent aroma that once preceded the train’s arrival. Freight, passenger, and excursion trains operate year-round. For tickets and more information, visit www.skunktrain.com or call (707) 964-6371.

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Media Assets:

High-resolution images are available for download here:

[Skunk Train 2026 Willits Media Photos](#)

Media Contacts:

Kimberly Preciado

Public Relations Manager, Mendocino Railway

kpreciado@sierrarailroad.com

David Morrissey

Chief Marketing Officer, Mendocino Railway

Dmorrissey@sierrarailroad.com