



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

Redwoods | Trains | Railbikes | Hikes | Glen Blair Bar

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Mendocino Railway

03/20/2026

### **SKUNK TRAIN RAILBIKE GUIDES ASSIST IN RESCUE OF MISSING WOMAN NEAR CAMP NOYO**

**FORT BRAGG** — (March 20, 2026) — Following an incident on March 18, what began as just the second Railbikes on the Noyo departure this season quickly turned into a successful emergency response when Skunk Train Railbike guides encountered a woman who had been lost in the redwood forest for several days.

During a scheduled Railbike excursion departing from the railroads Sherwood Road property, Railbike guides Xochitl Villa and Trevor Schieder were stopped at Camp Noyo for a lunch break with guests when they were approached by a woman in visible distress. The remote site, which remains closed to the public for the season, is typically unstaffed in the spring. It sits at mile post 16.4 on the California Western / Skunk Train's track.

According to the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, the woman was reported missing after becoming disoriented while hiking the Chamberlain Creek Waterfall Trail in Jackson State Forest several days prior. Railbike guides on site also confirmed she had gone without food or water during that time.

Railbike guides immediately provided assistance and initiated an emergency response using a Garmin satellite-based SOS communication device. Due to limited satellite visibility within the dense redwood canopy, communication required coordination between on-site guides and railroad personnel off-site to relay critical information to first responders. Through that coordination, local authorities were able to reach the location and safely assist the individual.

Authorities confirmed she was safely reunited with her vehicle following the response. Out of respect for her privacy, no identifying information is being released.

"This is exactly the kind of situation our team is trained for," said Efstathios Pappas, Skunk Train General Manager. "Our guides are prepared, equipped, and ready to respond when something unexpected happens out on the line. We take seriously the

responsibility of being good stewards to the land and the forest community. We're incredibly grateful we were there when we were and that she is now safe."

The [Railbikes on the Noyo](#) route travels through a remote stretch of Mendocino County, crossing multiple trestle bridges and passing historic stops along the Noyo River before arriving at Camp Noyo, where guests pause for a scheduled break. With limited access points and challenging terrain, areas like this can be difficult to navigate without support.

"As soon as she came up to us, we could tell she needed help right away," said Xochitl Villa, Skunk Train Railbike guide. "It's a remote stretch out there, and not somewhere you'd expect to run into help during this time of the season. We focused on keeping her calm, staying with her, and getting in touch with first responders as quickly as we could. We're just really thankful we were there when we were."

With Railbikes on the Noyo currently operating on a set schedule of Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, the timing of the encounter was especially fortunate.

"Across the board our staff are second to none; they're highly skilled in railroad safety operations as well as First Aid, CPR, and possess other critical wilderness lifesaving skills. This isn't the first instance that the railroad staff and corridor have been called upon, and I am pleased that Xochitl, Trevor, and our depot operations staff were able to coordinate all of this so that the missing individual could be safely assisted." said Robert Jason Pinoli, President and CEO of Mendocino Railway.

**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](http://www.skunktrain.com) or call (707) 964-6371.

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**Media Contacts:**

Kimberly Preciado

Public Relations Manager, Mendocino Railway

[kpreciado@sierrarailroad.com](mailto:kpreciado@sierrarailroad.com)