

The
June 9, 2008



Trainmaster

The Official Publication of the
Pacific Northwest Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
Portland, Oregon



50 Years of the Portland Zoo Railway

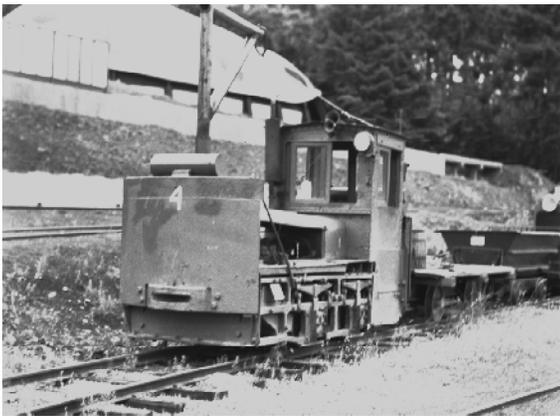
Our thanks to Jeff Honeyman, the late John Labbe, and the late Lloyd Graham for providing these historical images of the Zoo Railway, and to Glen Comstock and Bill Hyde for digging many of them out of the PNWC-NRHS archives.



Above and right: The Zoo Railway was rapidly taking shape when these photos were taken in 1958.



Below and left: Rolling stock came from many sources during the construction and the early years of operation. Much of it was selected for its utility, not its good looks.





The Zooliner was designed by Northwest Marine Iron Works and built by the H. Hirschberger Company, both of Portland. Outshopped in 1958 as the passenger workhorse, the Zooliner was, and is, a popular attraction on the railroad. The train was modeled after the General Motors Aerotrain, which at the time was projected to be the passenger train of the future. It was not successful, but the Zooliner was, and is. Above, right and below: Construction photos at the H. Hirschberger Company.



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June 9, 1958 - June 9, 2008
Golden Anniversary
Zoo Railway



A Brief History of the Washington Park and Zoo Railway

The zoo railway grew out of a planned kiddie train that was to be part of Portland's new zoo. The zoo, which was being relocated to its current site, was slated to open in the summer of 1959 during the festivities of Oregon's Centennial celebration.

When plans were unveiled for the 30-inch gauge line, train fans from around the region pitched in with suggestions, fundraising efforts and manual labor. The initial planning group included members of the Pacific Northwest Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club, and the Pacific Northwest Live Steamers.

Schoolchildren sold "stock" at \$1.00 per share and a children's book called *Clickety Clack and the Bandits* was also marketed to help pay for the zoo line. The Portland Zoo Railway began operation during the summer of 1958 with the *Zooliner*, our first train. The *Zooliner* is still in use as the primary train.



The following year found three passenger trains in the zoo railway's stable. The *Zooliner* was transplanted to North Portland, site of the Oregon Centennial Exhibition and International Trade Fair. It was joined by a brand new steam locomotive, which was named the *Oregon* in honor of the Oregon centennial. A circus train was built to operate at the zoo during this time. Some of the *Circus Train* equipment is still being used on the train called the *Oregon Express*. All the trains were built in Portland, by local firms, at cost; several parts were donated.

In 1960, the 1.5 mile extension to Washington Park opened. The line was surveyed by the Southern Pacific Railroad and was constructed with the help of the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway (now part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway) and the Northern Pacific (now Portland) Terminal Railroad Company. The Union Pacific hauled 40 rail cars of ballast donated by the school children in Prineville, Oregon at no charge.

In 1978, the railroad was renamed Washington Park and Zoo Railway when the City of Portland turned over operation of the zoo to the Metropolitan Service District (METRO). This name better reflects the service provided by the zoo railway.

Today all three trains, the *Zooliner*, the *Oregon* steam locomotive and centennial train, and the *Oregon Express*, operate simultaneously on busy days. The steam train is the primary train on special occasions. Additional rolling stock also includes a Fire Train built in 1959 by Weyerhaeuser Corporation, and a work train. They are all cared for by both professional staff and volunteers.



TRAINS OF THE WASHINGTON PARK & ZOO RAILWAY

The *Zooliner*: This diesel-powered streamliner was built in 1958. A replica of General Motors' "Aerotrains," the engine's 210 horsepower is transmitted to eight driving wheels through a hydraulic-type torque converter transmission and spiral gears. Safety features include a "dead man control" to ease the train to a halt in an emergency. A governor holds the train to a 12-mile-per-hour maximum. A conventional automatic air brake system provides safe train handling.

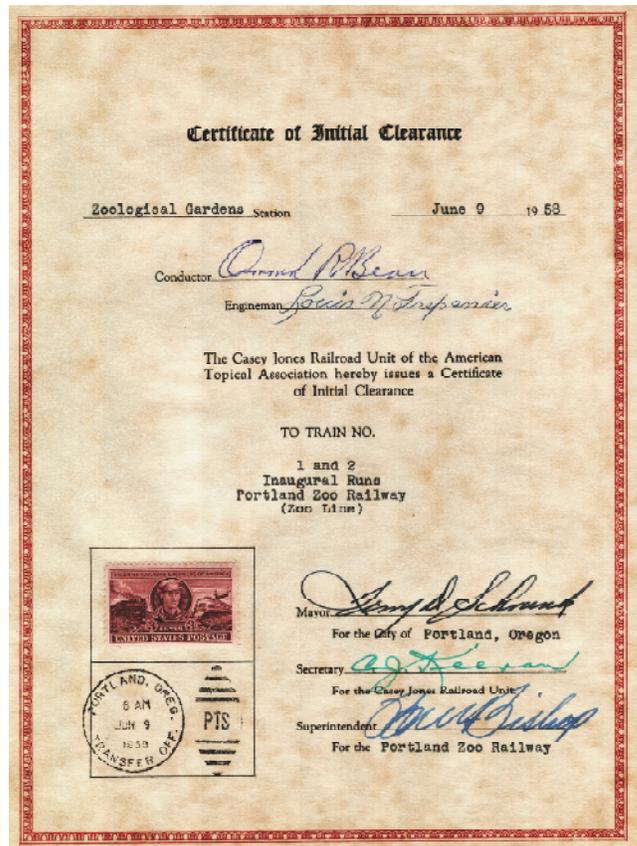
The *Oregon Steam Locomotive*: Built in 1959 for the Oregon Centennial, the *Oregon* offers a trip back to yesteryear. Reminiscent of the 1800s, the locomotive is painted in bright colors with polished brass trim. A glistening brass bell is mounted on the gleaming boiler jacket between the sand dome and stack. The locomotive is patterned after the Virginia & Truckee Railroad's "Reno." It is an oil-burning, American 4-4-0 type with a diamond stack and big headlight featuring hand-painted pictures of Crater Lake on one side and Mount Hood on the other. For 2008, the *Oregon* is scheduled as the primary train on the following dates: May 24-28, June 14-15, August 30-September 1, and November 29– December during Zoolights.

The *Oregon Express*: Rebuilt in 2007, the *Oregon Express* is powered with the same diesel engine and transmission combination as the *Zooliner* but power is generated to the four driving wheels through a right-angle gear box and chain drive. It features a four-wheel pilot truck and has the same safety features as the other trains..



Railway Postal Cancellation: Until the late 1970s, most mail in the United States was carried on trains. While in transit, mail was canceled on these trains using rubber stamps denoting the railroad. In 1961, the Washington Park and Zoo Railway became one of the first recreational railroads to have its own cancellation stamp. With the demise of the Railway Post Office, the zoo railway is the last operating United States railroad to continuously offer mail service with its own authorized railway postal cancellation. Mail deposited in mail boxes on the zoo grounds or on the locomotives is hand-canceled with the Washington Park and Zoo Railway stamp. It has become quite a collector's item. Mail comes in from and goes out to all parts of the world.

Text from Oregon Zoo website with additions by Jeff Honeyman.





This advertising poster illustrates General Motors' Aerotrains. Two trainsets were constructed in 1956 and were touted to be the future of passenger train design. Unfortunately, the public didn't agree and production ceased after the first two demonstrators. The *Zooliner*, patterned after these trains, has far outlived the service life of its prototype and continues to be a highly successful transportation vehicle.

HAPPY 50th!

Congratulations to the Oregon Zoo and METRO for providing this wonderful, now fifty-year-old, attraction.

In many ways, the Pacific Northwest Chapter, National Railway Historical Society (PNWC-NRHS), grew up with the zoo railway. The Chapter was formed in 1955 and shortly thereafter began work helping to develop the zoo railway. We are very pleased to be a part of this golden anniversary celebration and fully intend to be a part of the 100th anniversary, as well.

Please join us in thanking the Oregon Zoo management and the METRO Council for their continued support of this important Oregon asset.

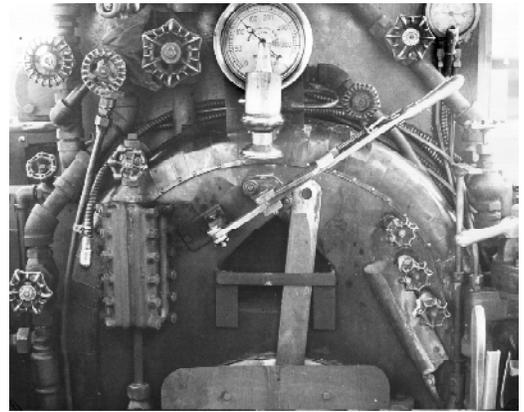
For more information about PNWC-NRHS: 503.226.6747 or www.pnwc-nrhs.org.

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This special *Trainmaster* issue was developed by Editor Steve Hauff with contributions from Jeff Honeyman, Glen Comstock and Bill Hyde.

PNWC-NRHS MISSION

To preserve and interpret Pacific Northwest railroad history and historical artifacts for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations.



Built in 1959 for the Oregon Centennial, with the assistance of several PNWC-NRHS members, 4-4-0 #1, is shown above in one of her first steamings. Although a very small locomotive, the backhead has all the controls found on many "real" locomotives.



Above: The #1 hauls a train between Washington Park and the zoo.

Left, and back page: The little 4-4-0 operated the summer of 1959 at the Oregon Centennial, along with the Zooliner, strutting their stuff as a representatives of Oregon Railroads



The *TRAINMASTER*
Pacific Northwest Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
Union Station
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Portland OR 97209-3794

Special WP&Z Railway
50th Anniversary
Commemorative Issue
