

The Railfan's Guide to Cajon Pass

By Al Bowen

Part One: Devore & Keenbrook Crossovers

Devore is a small community that sits at the southern entrance to Cajon Pass. Interstate Highway's 15 and 215 merge here to begin their climb "up the hill". There are several good railfan locations in or near this community and access to them is reasonably safe and easy. San Bernardino County operates the Glen Helen Regional Park with picnicking and camping available for those who wish to use these services. The Blockbuster Pavilion is also located here with a summer concert seasons that causes major traffic disruption in the area on some summer evenings. Approaching the pass on I-15, follow the exit signs for "I-215 South-Devore", then take the Devore ramp instead of joining back up with the 215 freeway going south. The ramp is short and the corner sharp, so take it very easy as you exit. Turn left on Cajon Blvd. then at the first stop sign turn right onto Devore Road. Coming north on the 215 follow the exit signs for Devore. At the end of the ramp turn left onto Devore Road and proceed across Cajon Blvd. It is just a short distance west on Devore rd. to the BNSF mainline at Milepost 71. A short way beyond is the SP's (UP) Palmdale Cutoff line at the 480 mile post.

There is a convenience store/BBQ restaurant at the rail crossing with plenty of parking all around the place. It makes a nice place to sit at one of the available picnic tables, right beside the tracks and watch the action on the BNSF. For those shooting video the sounds of the whistles and grade crossing make a nice addition to your efforts. If you want another vantage point, follow the tracks north a couple of hundred yards to the point where they cross Cajon Creek This is a good place for photography until late in the afternoon.

To get to the Keenbrook Crossovers, go west on Devore Rd. about 1/2 mile to the intersection with the Glen Helen Rd. (across from the entrance to Blockbuster Pavilion) turn right on Glen Helen Rd and proceed north ,under the freeway. About 1/2 mile from the freeway crossing the pavement ends and the road is marked "Private Road" (see note below), continue on the unpaved road beside the SP line until you reach a grade crossing. Carefully cross over the SP line and you will see the Keenbrook Crossovers on the BNSF line (milepost 69.4) in front of you. There is ample parking here at a safe distance from either track. Photography here is excellent in either direction except in the early morning. Retrace your steps to the freeway (I-15 north) to go to other places in the Pass.

** Note 1: Where the Glen Helen Rd. Paving stops is the location of the "noteworthy" Buff Creek Nudist Resort (enough said).

** Note 2: While the sign indicates that the road turns "Private", all manner of traffic uses it. It is safe for cars as well as trucks to go as far as the crossovers on it. It is possible to follow this road all the way up the pass to Hesperia. However, I would not advise someone unfamiliar with the area to do so. Plus in many places further up the Pass High Clearance Vehicles are needed. We will mention this road at several other locations as we move up the Pass.