

= Interstate 80 in Nevada =

Interstate 80 (I @-@ 80) traverses the northern portion of the U.S. state of Nevada . The freeway serves the Reno ? Sparks metropolitan area and also goes through the towns of Fernley , Lovelock , Winnemucca , Battle Mountain , Elko , Wells and West Wendover on its way through the state .

I @-@ 80 follows the historical routes of the California Trail , First Transcontinental Railroad and Feather River Route throughout portions of Nevada . Throughout the entire state , I @-@ 80 follows the historical routes of the Victory Highway , State Route 1 and U.S. Route 40 (US 40) . The freeway corridor follows the paths of the Truckee and Humboldt Rivers . These rivers have been used as a transportation corridor since the California Gold Rush of the 1840s .

= = Route description = =

= = = Truckee River = = =

I @-@ 80 enters Nevada in the canyon of the Truckee River , paralleling the California Trail and the First Transcontinental Railroad . Upon exiting the canyon , the freeway serves the Truckee Meadows , a name for the urban area consisting of Verdi , Reno and Sparks . The freeway passes north of Downtown Reno in a depressed alignment before intersecting Interstate 580 / U.S. Route 395 . The interchange with US 395 is the busiest portion , averaging 122 @,@ 000 vehicles per day in 2006 . The freeway passes through downtown Sparks via a viaduct over the casino floor of the Nugget Casino Resort . After leaving the Reno ? Sparks metropolitan area the freeway resumes following the Truckee River in a canyon to Fernley . Traffic volumes drop to 26 @,@ 600 vehicles per day by Fernley and continue dropping to 8 @,@ 400 by the time the freeway reaches the center of the state . The freeway exits the Truckee River corridor near Wadsworth .

= = = Lahontan Valley / Forty Mile Desert = = =

Past Wadsworth , the freeway cuts across the Lahontan Valley . The Lahontan Valley is a barren desert , sometimes called the Forty Mile Desert , from the era of the California Trail . The name comes from the California Gold Rush where the emigrants who came into the Lahontan Valley via the Humboldt River . The travelers would have then to endure 40 miles (64 km) without usable water while crossing the valley , regardless of which of the two routes across the valley the travelers followed . I @-@ 80 closely approximates the path of the emigrants between the Humboldt and Truckee Rivers .

A marker stands at a rest area on the eastern edge of the valley , near the junction of I @-@ 80 and US 95 , that honors travelers who suffered crossing the valley , thousands of whom abandoned possessions , animals and even loved ones in the desert . Per the marker , this portion was the most dreaded portion of the California Trail .

= = = Humboldt River = = =

For the next 246 miles (396 km) , I @-@ 80 follows the Humboldt River . Along the way , the freeway passes through the towns of Lovelock , Winnemucca , Battle Mountain , Carlin , Elko and Wells . At Winnemucca , I @-@ 80 is joined by the Feather River Route ; I @-@ 80 runs parallel to this railroad until the Utah state line .

The freeway is within visual distance of the river for most of this run . However , there are portions where the freeway bypasses bends by cutting across or tunneling under mountains along the canyon walls . Between Winnemucca and Battle Mountain , the freeway bypasses bends via side canyons and Golconda Summit , 5 @,@ 159 feet (1 @,@ 572 m) . The highway also bypasses Palisade Canyon (between Beowawe and Carlin) via Emigrant Pass 6 @,@ 114 feet (1 @,@ 864 m) . Just east of Carlin , I @-@ 80 passes through the Carlin Tunnel to bypass curves of the river in

the Carlin Canyon (between the Carlin Tunnel and Elko) .

== Eastern Nevada ==

After Wells , I @-@ 80 departs the Humboldt River , First Transcontinental Railroad and the California Trail . From this point east , the freeway follows the routes of the Hastings Cutoff , Feather River Route , former US 40 and State Route 1 . The freeway cuts across two mountain ranges before arriving at the Great Salt Lake Desert . The first is the Pequop Mountains via Pequop Summit , elevation 6 @,@ 967 feet (2 @,@ 124 m) ? the highest point on Interstate 80 in Nevada ? and the second is the Toano Range via Silver Zone Pass at 5 @,@ 955 feet (1 @,@ 815 m) . After crossing these mountains the freeway arrives at West Wendover where the freeway enters both Utah and the Great Salt Lake Desert at the Bonneville Salt Flats .

== Overlaps ==

Portions of I @-@ 80 run concurrently with three U.S. Highways in Nevada :

US 95 Alt , which runs concurrently with I @-@ 80 between Fernley and Trinity Junction near Lovelock .

US 95 , which runs concurrently with I @-@ 80 between Trinity Junction and Winnemucca .

US 93 Alt , which runs concurrently with I @-@ 80 between the towns of Wells and West Wendover .

== History ==

== California Trail ==

The general route of Interstate 80 was first used by California @-@ bound travelers and was called the California Trail . From the Utah State line west to the Humboldt River , I @-@ 80 follows a modified routing of a lesser used branch of the trail called Hastings Cutoff . The cutoff rejoins the main route of the trail in the Humboldt River canyon . Through this portion of Nevada , the main route of the California Trail ran north of modern State Route 233 .

From Elko west to Lovelock , I @-@ 80 faithfully follows the California Trail . West of Lovelock , in the middle of the Humboldt Sink , the California Trail again splits into two branches . These branches , the Carson River route and the Truckee River route , are named for the waterways that guide each branch up the Sierra Nevada mountains . I @-@ 80 follows the Truckee route , the Carson route is approximated by U.S. Route 95 , U.S. Route 50 , U.S. Route 395 and State Route 88 / California State Route 88 .

== Transcontinental railroads ==

The route of modern I @-@ 80 was also previously used for the construction of two transcontinental railroads . The First Transcontinental Railroad , completed in 1869 , closely followed the main line of the California Trail and I @-@ 80 west of Wells . The Feather River Route was constructed in 1909 and generally follows the Hastings Cutoff through Eastern Nevada . It also runs parallel to I @-@ 80 in Nevada east of Winnemucca .

== Highways ==

The first paved road across this portion of Nevada was the Victory Highway , designated in Nevada as State Route 1 . With the formation of the U.S. Highway system , this route was numbered U.S. Route 40 . From the formation of the Interstate Highway System , the highway was gradually upgraded to Interstate Highway standards and signed as Interstate 80 . In 1974 , officials in Utah

initiated meetings with officials in Nevada and California to truncate the route of U.S. Route 91 . By that time , US 91 was mostly redundant with Interstate 15 . Nevada officials agreed and further suggested that both US 91 and US 40 be truncated . Nevada officials recommended the changes occur in 1975 , when the last Nevada piece of I @-@ 15 was expected to be completed . The 1976 edition of the Official Highway map for Nevada was the first not showing the US 40 designation . Even though the US Highway designation was removed , the freeway was not yet completed . The last piece of I @-@ 80 in Nevada to be finished was the Lovelock bypass which started construction in 1981 . The 1982 Official Nevada Highway Map was the first to note I @-@ 80 as a contiguous freeway across the state . All of the business loops for I @-@ 80 in Nevada use the historical route of US 40 .

Interstate 80 is also known in Nevada as the Dwight D. Eisenhower Highway and Purple Heart Trail .

= = Exit list = =