

GREAT **Model Railroads** **2023**


34

54

8 Revisiting the Oregon, California & Eastern HO

The Colorado Model Railroad Museum's HO scale layout is both a display and an operating layout

By Steven Otte

18 Celebrating the CP's centennial HO

The freelanced HO scale Strathcona Division models the Canadian Pacific in British Columbia

By Bill Smienk

26 The last summer of steam on the BC&G S

Modeling a 1964 short line in S scale

By Brooks Stover

34 Modeling C&O's Kanawha Sub HO

Coal is king on this HO scale Appalachian layout

By Brian Kelly

44 Updating a museum layout N

The Bay State Model Railroad Museum's N scale layout is always advancing

By Steve Shaw

54 Time well spent O

An O gauge modeler replaces his three-rail layout with a 1:48 scale granger road

By Michael Schrier

62 New scale, same space LARGE SCALE

This 22 x 36-foot Gn3 layout was built on the benchwork of an HO scale model railroad

By Cody Grivno

70 New England memories HO

A new version of the HO scale East Berkshire Branch builds on the previous layout

By Lou Sassi

78 Marshall Canyon epic HO

Modeling the Spokane, Portland & Seattle's Third Sub in HO scale

By Dave Rickaby

91 Viewpoint

Bringing your layout to life

By Steven Otte



THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RY. STRATHCONA DIVISION is an HO scale model railroad set in a fictional location. But the locomotives, rolling stock, and scenery all resemble those of southeastern British Columbia in 1967, Canada's centennial year.

Work on the model railroad began in the late 1980s and is now virtually complete. It includes a mix of large cities, smaller towns, rural scenes, and rugged mountains. Construction began in the Horseshoe Bay area and then progressed to other sections, but the main line was completed before I moved on to a lot of the scenery.

Scenery was completed in stages and didn't always stay focused in one location. If one part became frustrating or boring, then I would switch to another area to continue progress on the major project. The last unfinished area was completed late in 2020.

My priority for the layout is to represent the real world with as much realistic detail as possible. I've been inspired by the work of a variety of respected modelers, such as John Allen, George Sellios, Chuck Hitchcock, Eric Brooman, and Dave Frary.

LAYOUT DESIGN

The railroad room has a suspended tile ceiling and fluorescent LED lighting. There are also LED track lights to spotlight specific scenes.

The overall track plan is a continuous loop with an option for point-to-loop or point-to-point operation. It's a walk-in style with no duckunders. This provides a comfortable space for four to six operators or two operators and six spectators.

Another priority was to have as much of the main line to be in arm's reach, which for me is about 30". Most of this was accomplished, although there are two small access openings.

The design also includes a staging yard which is accessed via a wye at one end of the plan. This yard is stub-ended and shares space with my small workshop. In retrospect, I should have included a staging yard at the Horseshoe Bay end, as well, but the layout nonetheless works well for operations.

The passing sidings only allow for fairly short train lengths of about four-teen 40-foot cars. The main yard has limited capacity but includes a substantial yard lead, which I see as a must-have for an effective yard.

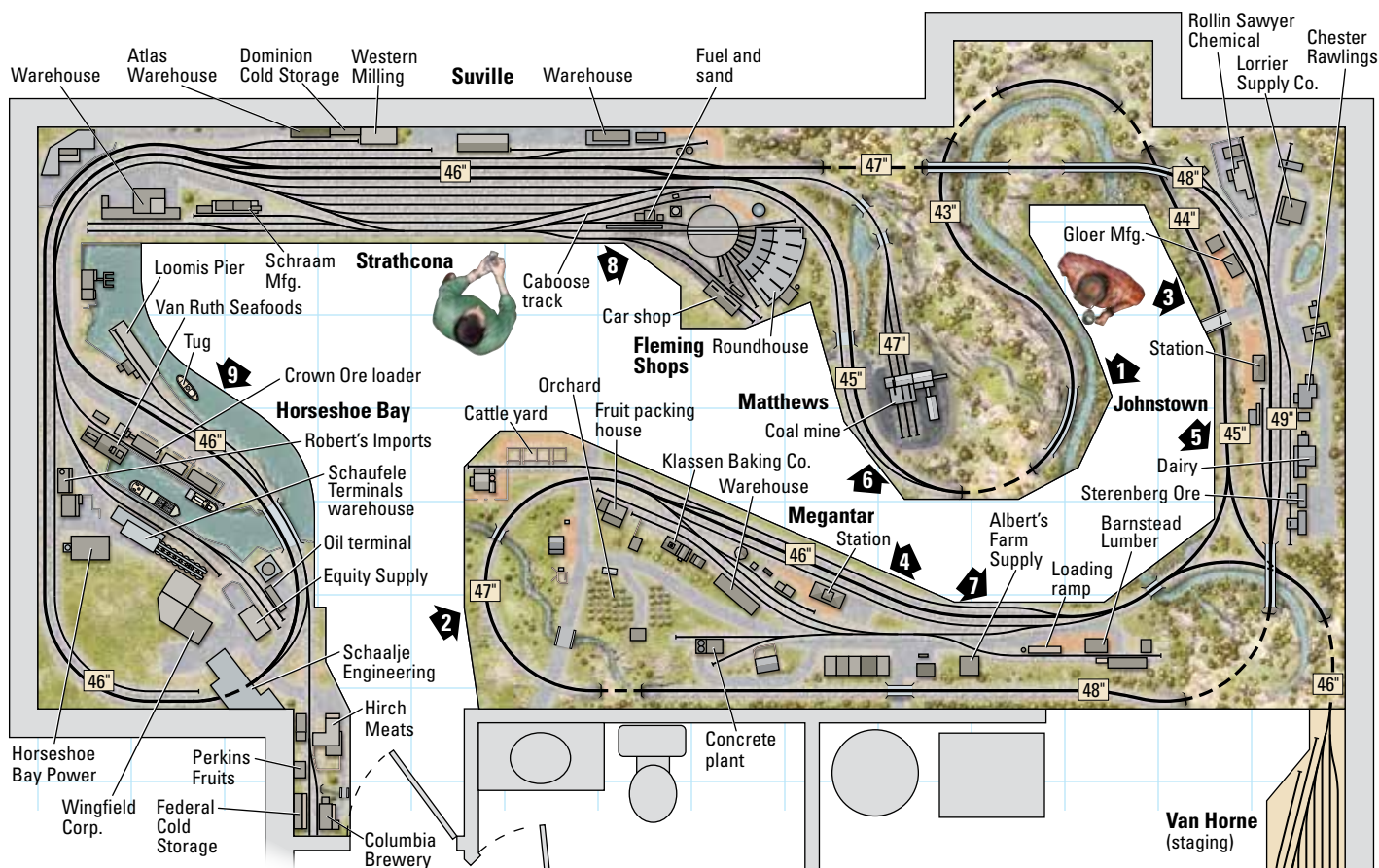
2 This view from near the entrance of the train room shows most of Bill Smienk's HO scale Canadian Pacific Ry., Strathcona Division. The town of Megantar is in the foreground. The coal mine at Matthews is in the top center of the photo, and Johnstown is in the distance. The roundhouse at Strathcona is at left.

Strathcona and Suville visually appear to be one single location, but are two separate destinations for trains in operating sessions.

The benchwork consists of an open grid of 1 x 4 lumber with 1 x 4 risers for the roadbed. The roadbed is 1/2" plywood, and cork or poster board is installed on top before the track is installed. The elevation changes are minor, with a maximum grade of 2.5 percent.

LOCOMOTIVES AND CARS

The locomotives include manufacturers such as Kato, Atlas, Rapido, Bowser, Proto by Life-Like, and a few brass models. All are equipped with Digital Command Control decoders and almost all of them include sound. They all have Kadee-compatible knuckle couplers and



Canadian Pacific Strathcona Div.

HO scale (1:87.1)

Room size: 14 x 28 feet, plus staging

Scale of plan: 1/4" = 1'-0", 24" grid

Numbered arrows indicate photo locations

Illustration by Kellie Jaeger

➔ Find more plans online in the Trains.com Track Plan Database.

many have additional details for enhanced realism to match the prototype.

Since I consider this to be an operating layout, I have little tolerance for poor running equipment. Locomotives that have running issues are removed until they can be fixed.

The rolling stock is a mix from manufacturers including InterMountain Railway Co., Kadee, ExactRail, Rapido, Atlas, Accurail, Athearn, Tichy Train Group, Proto by Life-Like, and Walthers, plus a few brass models for unique cars. Only a few of my original Athearn cars remain, as most have been replaced with more detailed models.

The roster has cars with a high level of detail, such as see-through running boards and individually applied grab irons. Some have been weathered, but there are a number yet to be done.

All the cars have been fitted with non-magnetic metal wheels. In order to

provide reliable operation, the cars are all weighted correctly and have the couplers adjusted to match the recommended Kadee height specifications.

SCENERY

Many of the scenic elements are highly detailed and were inspired by George Sellios' amazing Franklin & South Manchester model railroad.

The base for the scenery is poultry wire overlaid with paper towels soaked in Hydrocal or plaster cloth. The rocks are a combination of real rock, small stones, and rock molds (commercial and my own).

Much of the scenery material is from Woodland Scenics, such as the ground foam, bushes, and Realistic Water. Other materials are natural, such as real sifted dirt, coal, twigs, and small stones.

Virtually all of the trees have been custom-made, and I've recruited many

THE LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

NAME: Canadian Pacific, Strathcona Div.

SCALE: HO (1:87.1)

SIZE: 14 x 28 feet, plus staging

PROTOTYPE: Canadian Pacific

LOCALE: Southeastern British Columbia

ERA: 1967

MAINLINE RUN: 160 feet

MINIMUM RADIUS: 30"

MINIMUM TURNOUT: no. 4

MAXIMUM GRADE: 2.5 percent

BENCHWORK: open grid

HEIGHT: 46" to 51"

ROADBED: cork on plywood

TRACK: Peco code 100

SCENERY: Hydrocal over wire mesh

BACKDROP: photo prints and painted clouds on tempered hardboard

CONTROL: Digitrax DCC



NEW SCALE, SAME SPACE



This 22 x 36-foot Gn3 layout was built on the benchwork of an HO scale model railroad

By **Cody Grivno** ■ Photos by the author

1 It's a full house at the Gunnison engine terminal on Ken Rodig's large scale Gunnison City model railroad. Peeking out of the engine shed is Forney No. 23, an LGB model that Ken modified. To the left is another modified Forney, and in the background is a Mogul. Ken built the engine shed from a Pola kit.



2 This overall view from near the train room's entrance shows the curve leading to Cabot Falls at right and the Windsor Junction roundhouse to the left. Both sections were salvaged from John's previous layout.



model railroad. However, with the help of some model railroading friends, he was able to save most of it and incorporate those sections into a new one, more than half again larger than the original East Berkshire Branch. The result is the layout you see here.

It's no surprise that John would stick with modeling New England. He grew up in Massachusetts, not far from the Boston & Maine's Connecticut River Line and its branch through Chicopee, Mass., which served the large Fisk Tire Co. plant there. As a young man, John often took long walks in the evening to watch the B&M freights heading north out of Springfield, Mass.

These experiences influenced his choice to model the B&M and Rutland in the 1950s, a time period when he could realistically run both steam and diesel power.

THE NEW LAYOUT

The railroad is between 44" and 47" high and occupies a 16 x 35-foot area of his basement. John prepared the room by covering the concrete walls with wall-board that he painted sky blue. Fluorescent lighting was installed prior to layout construction beginning.

3 Boston & Maine No. 4227, an Electro-Motive Division F3, leads its passenger train north toward Cabot Falls after leaving Dorset Mills. salvaged from John's previous layout.

JOHN CALLAHAN'S INTRODUCTION to model railroading began in 1951, when he received a Lionel toy train set for Christmas. He eventually outgrew toy trains and built a succession of HO scale layouts, including one with handlaid track that unfortunately had to be abandoned when he moved. When he purchased his first home years later, he built another HO scale layout based on the Boston & Maine and the Rutland RR in New England. That railroad, named the East Berkshire Branch, was featured in the March 2013 *Model Railroader*.

John moved again in 2010, necessitating the dismantling of the previous

THE LAYOUT AT A GLANCE

NAME: East Berkshire Branch
SCALE: HO (1:87.1)
SIZE: 16 x 35 feet
PROTOTYPE: freelanced, based on Boston & Maine and Rutland
LOCALE: Massachusetts
ERA: 1950s
STYLE: walk-in
MAINLINE RUN: 204 feet
MINIMUM RADIUS: 30"
MINIMUM TURNOUT: no. 4
MAXIMUM GRADE: 1½ percent
BENCHWORK: L-girder
HEIGHT: 44" to 47"
ROADBED: Homabed
TRACK: Shinohara code 70 and 55 flextrack
SCENERY: hardshell and extruded-foam insulation board
BACKDROP: Berkshire Junction commercial photo backdrops on wallboard
CONTROL: NCE Digital Command Control

The areas of Cabot Falls, Windsor Junction, and Dorset Mills, salvaged from the previous layout, were installed and affixed to the walls. John then linked those sections with L-girder benchwork that would support the new areas of Manhan and Forge Pond, among others. Once the benchwork was up, John applied commercial self-adhesive backdrops from Berkshire Junction to the painted walls.

On most of the layout, window screening covered with plaster gauze formed the basic ground contours. As construction progressed, John switched to extruded-foam insulation board, also covered in gauze, as his scenery base.

In both cases, the gauze was painted earth brown and covered with real dirt, followed by a mixture of ground foam in a variety of colors and textures. He also used an assortment of natural ground covers. Many larger trees were hand made using peppergrass.

All the water effects on the layout were created using two-part Enviro-Tex resin, with gloss medium waves on the larger lakes and ponds.

The tracks are laid on sheet Homasote or Homabed over ¾" plywood subroadbed. The track is a combination of code

