

Introduction

Collections of track plans are great for inspiration as you develop ideas for building a model railroad. The original *101 Track Plans for Model Railroaders*, first published in 1956, is still going strong and is one of Kalmbach's all-time best-sellers. This new collection takes up where the original left off, with 101 additional plans originally published in *Model Railroader* magazine from the early 1960s through the 1980s. (See the index on page 86.)

As you look through these designs, don't necessarily examine them with the idea of copying a plan foot-by-foot and turnout-by-turnout. Instead, look at each plan in depth for innovative ideas, creative use of space, interesting towns and industrial areas, and scenes that can be incorporated into your final model railroad design.

The plans fall into four categories. Most were published as track plans only, and were never actually built by their designers. Some reflect home layouts, and were published in conjunction with stories on those layouts. A few were the basis of project layouts in MR, where layout construction was presented in a series of articles. Yet others were designed following specific prototype (real) railroads, and presented along with articles on these railroads as part of MR's popular "Railroad You Can Model" series. The type of plan is listed with each design.

If you decide to track down back issues of MR for any of these plans, be aware that designs published as track plans only (especially those published into the early 1970s) have very little additional supporting information. You're generally on your own for figuring out benchwork, scenery, wiring, and other details. The articles with plans featuring home layouts include photos of the model railroad, and for some, the owner discusses methods used for various aspects of

construction. Project layouts often stretch over multiple issues, with detailed information on building benchwork, laying track, wiring, and scenery. "Railroad You Can Model" articles generally provide extensive prototype information and photos but little information on actually building a layout based on the plan.

Other information with each plan includes the designer's intended era and region and the overall space required. The era and region are, in most cases, merely suggestions.

This book also includes track plans of some of the hobby's more famous model railroads throughout the years, including Frank Ellison's Delta Lines, Paul Larsen's Mineral Point & Northern, John Armstrong's Canandaigua Southern, and John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid.

Track planning

The art of layout design has evolved significantly over the past couple of decades. The trend has been toward around-the-walls "walkaround" plans that allow operators to follow their trains. This has become especially true—and made much easier—with the advent of Digital Command Control (DCC) and wireless throttles.

Many of the plans in this book were designed before extensive staging tracks and staging yards became popular for holding extra trains. Staging tracks can be added to many of these plans in the existing space; others may require an extension, expansion, or modification of the original track layout.

Fiddle yards are another option you'll find on some plans. These are similar to staging yards and tracks, but fiddle tracks are designed to have cars and locomotives exchanged by hand during operating sessions. Long popular in Europe, fiddle yards haven't been as

popular on U.S. model railroads, but they can expand operational possibilities without taking up a great deal of space. Look for opportunities to add fiddle and staging tracks as a way of updating these older plans.

The modeling scale listed with each plan is what was intended by the original designer. Most of the plans listed as HO can be built in N scale with few problems, using narrower shelves and peninsulas if desired. When reducing plans, keep in mind that each dimension in N scale takes up 54 percent of the equivalent dimension in HO scale. In planning, try to keep shelves narrow enough that the entire scene can be reached comfortably (generally 24" to 30" at most). Corners can be a bit deeper, but avoid turnouts or complex trackwork that's out of reach.

The plans are shown as they were originally presented in the magazine. The amount of detail and information provided varies widely from plan to plan. Some include center points of curves and details on turnout sizes, curve radii, and track elevation. Other plans are simply track routes with basic scenery and structure outlines. Space precludes offering tips on track, benchwork, and wiring. Check out books such as *Basic Model Railroad Benchwork*, by Jeff Wilson, and *Easy Model Railroad Wiring*, by Andy Sperandeo, to assist you when you get to the construction phase. You can often mock up scenes on a piece of plain plywood or foam board by tacking turnouts, sectional track, and flextrack in place to get an idea of how a scene will really look or whether the trackwork will actually fit in a given space.

Enjoy studying and perusing the plans. Do your best to find and develop a design that works for your railroad and era interests and your available space.

— Jeff Wilson

15 Gold Hill Central



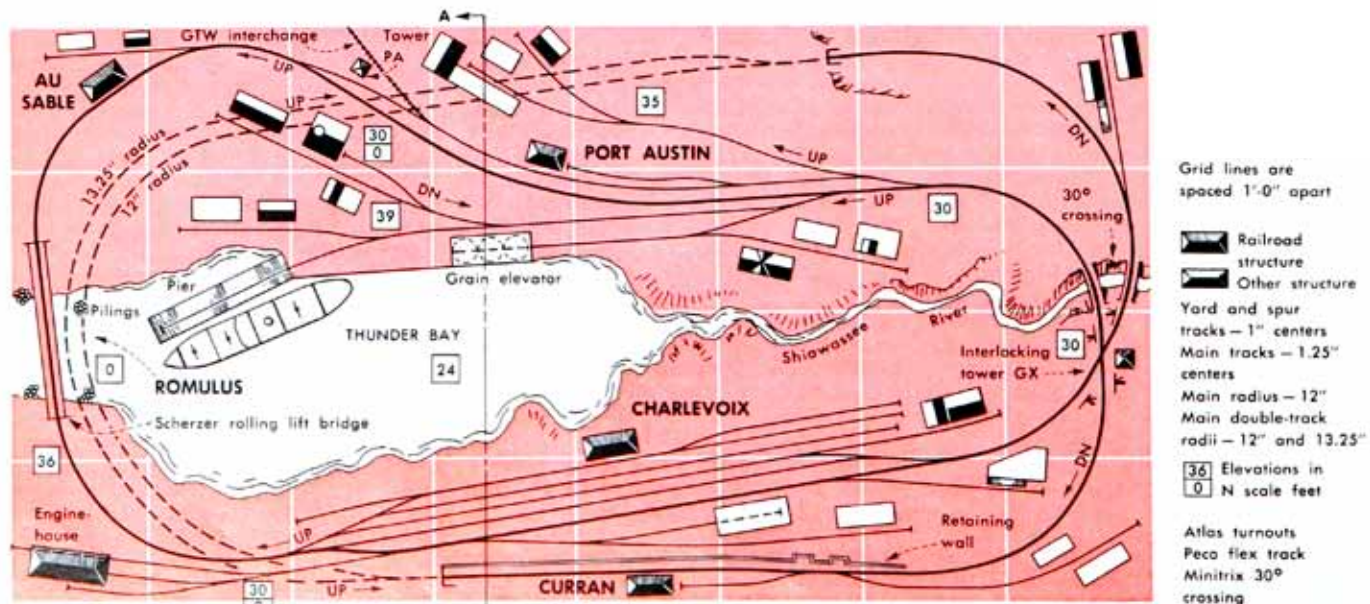
HO
4 x 6 feet
Era: Steam
Region: West
Date published: March 1984 (project layout)
Jim Kelly

The key to this layout is a 24"-tall backdrop that divides the railroad into two distinct scenes. It goes a long way toward making the layout seem a lot larger than 4 x 6 feet. Structures dominate one side of the layout, with a building and overhead walkway disguising the track opening. Rural scenery and a gold stamp mill make up the other side, with a tunnel entrance covering the track opening to the other side. Tight (18"-radius) curves and No. 4 turnouts are needed to get the trackwork into this tight space. The structures could easily be changed to reflect a different era or region.

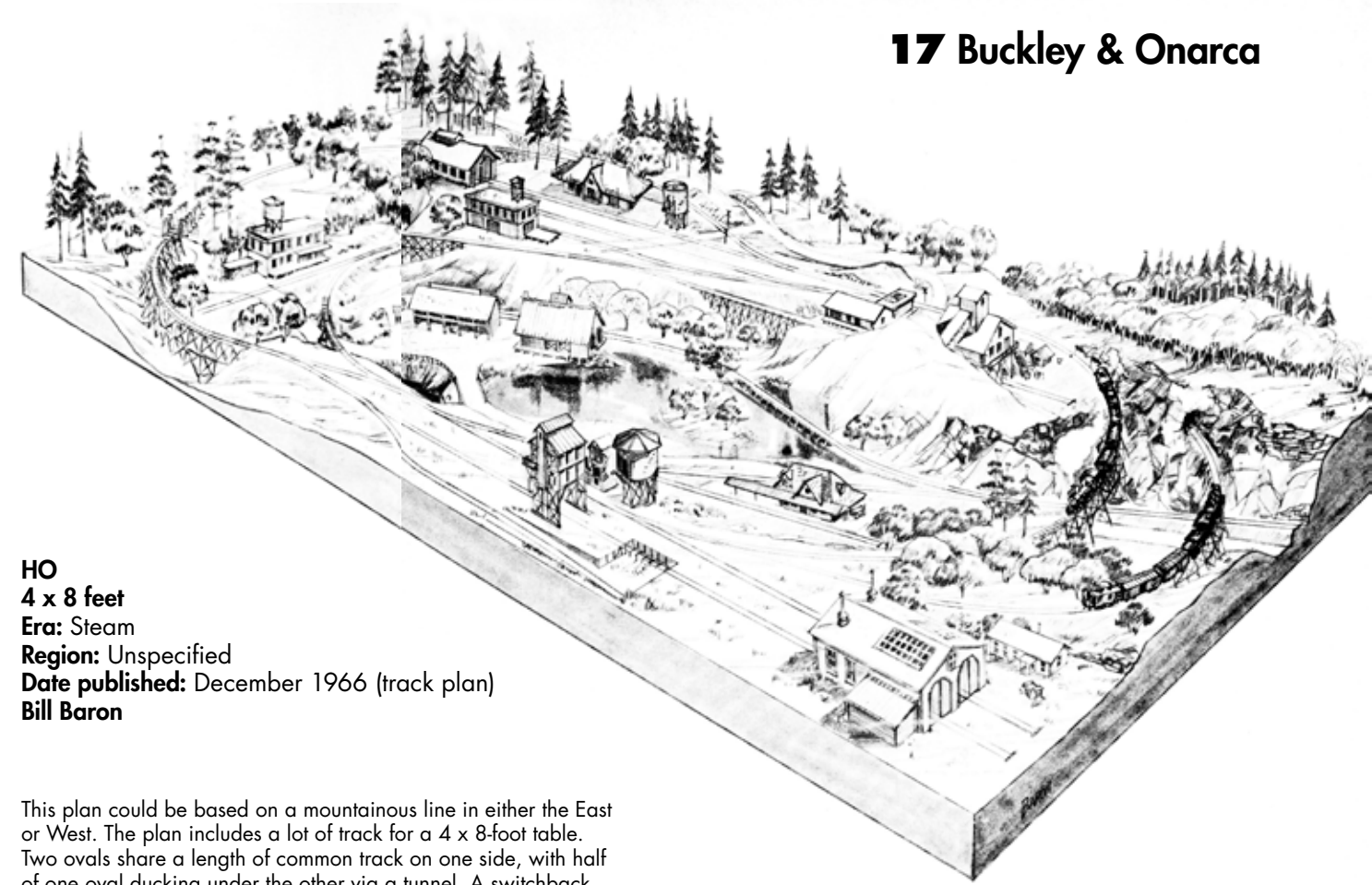
16 Central Michigan

N
4 x 8 feet
Era: Unspecified
Region: Midwest
Date published: November 1972 (track plan)
Gordon Odegard

This folded-figure-8 plan crosses itself at grade, then uses tunnels to hide half of one loop of track. The main line includes a couple of passing sidings (although for ease of access it might be wise to consider eliminating the hidden passing track inside the tunnel), several industrial spurs, and an interchange track, as well as a compact yard. The bay and river effectively divide the layout into separate scenes. The main line has a 12" minimum radius, and I'd suggest No. 4 turnouts.

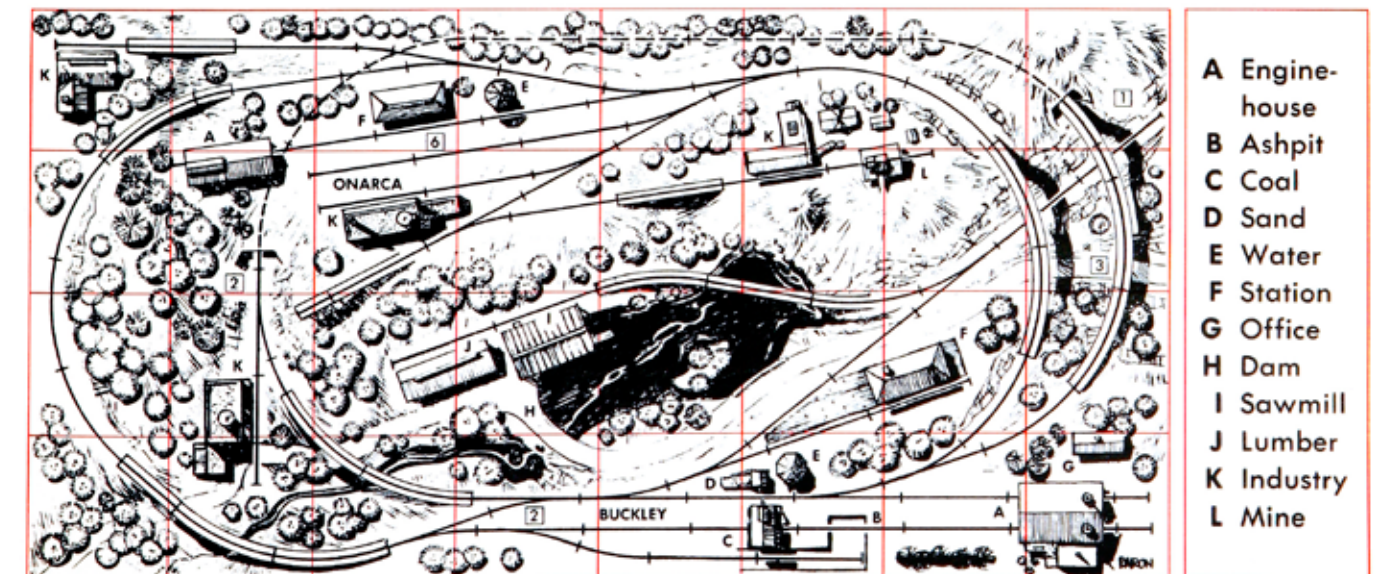


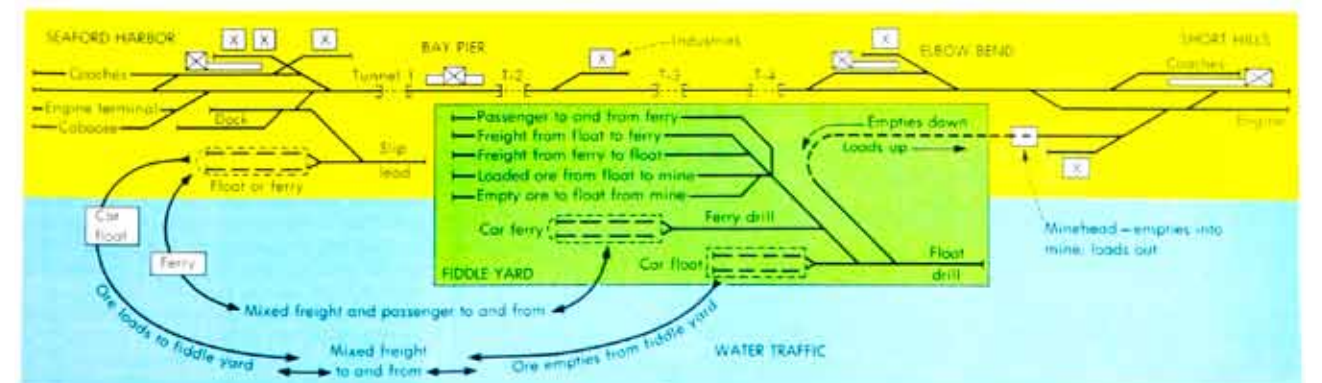
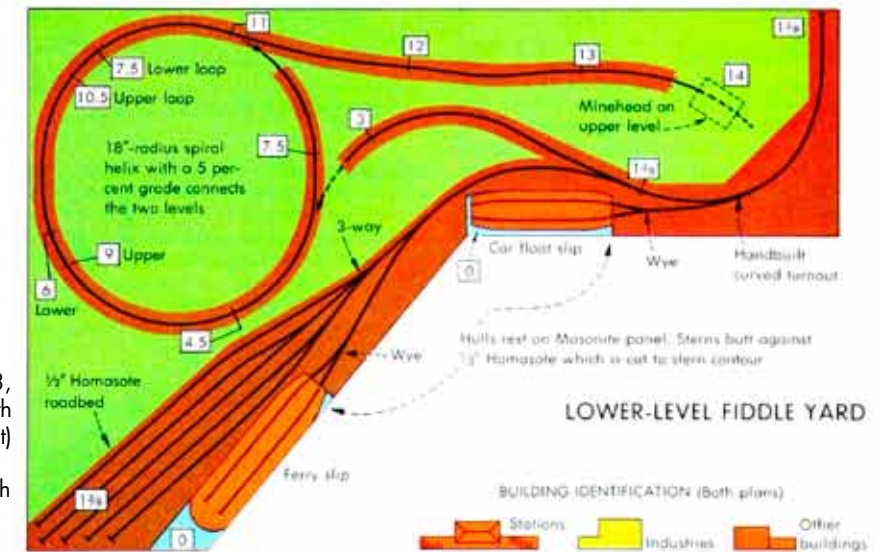
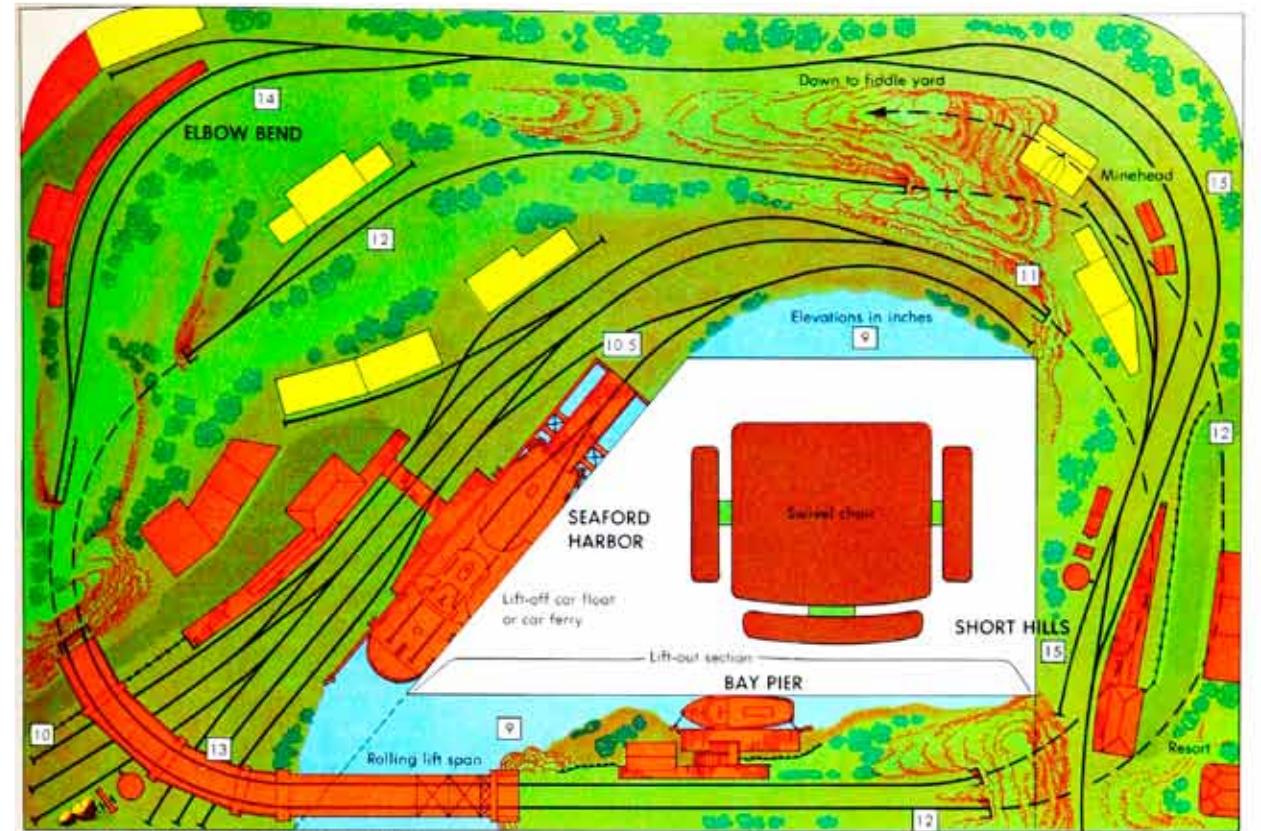
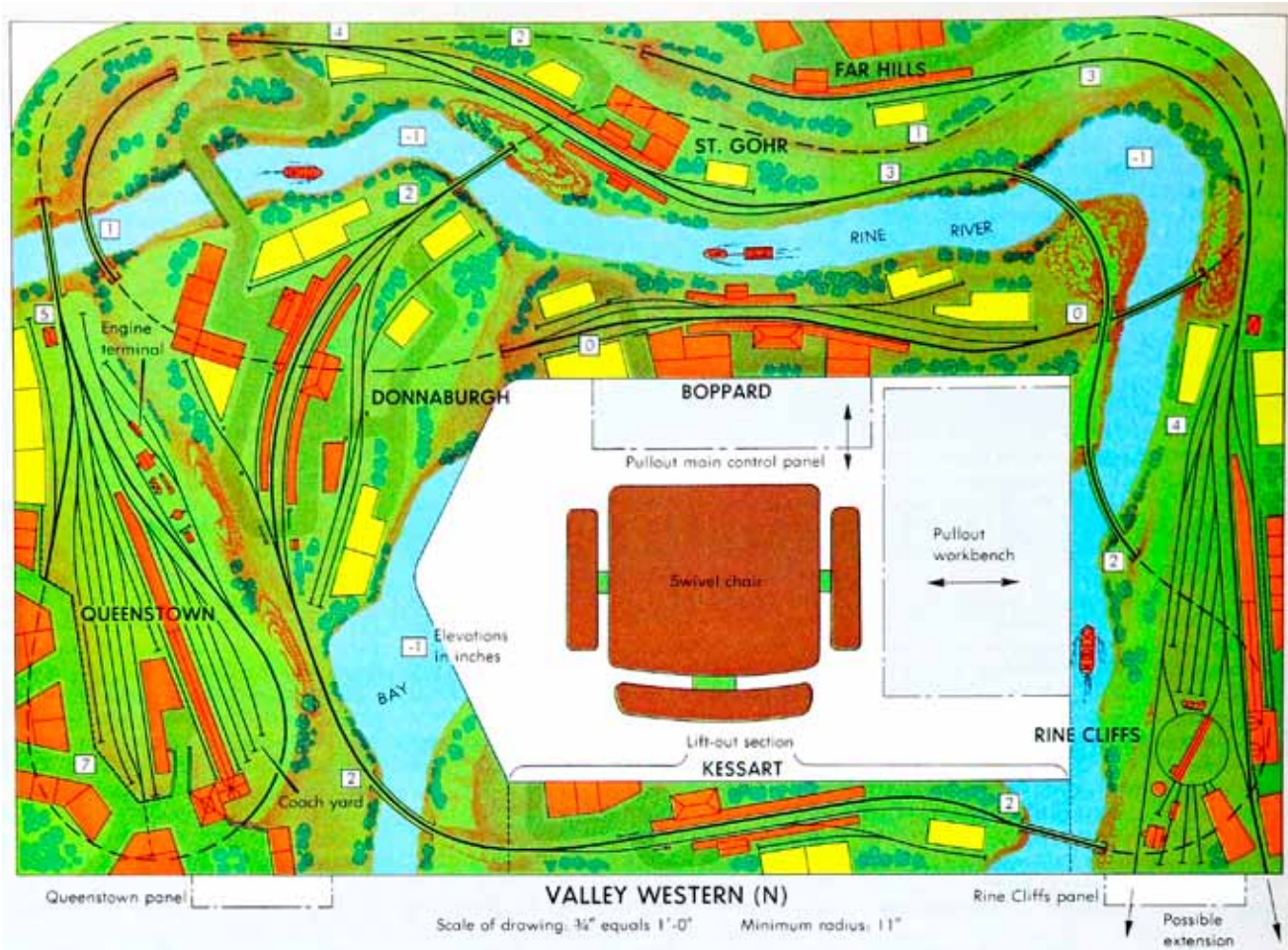
17 Buckley & Onarca



HO
4 x 8 feet
Era: Steam
Region: Unspecified
Date published: December 1966 (track plan)
Bill Baron

This plan could be based on a mountainous line in either the East or West. The plan includes a lot of track for a 4 x 8-foot table. Two ovals share a length of common track on one side, with half of one oval ducking under the other via a tunnel. A switchback reaches an industry (a sawmill) in the middle of the layout. The plan is designed for sectional track with 18"-radius curves and tight turnouts (No. 4 or Atlas Snap-Switches).

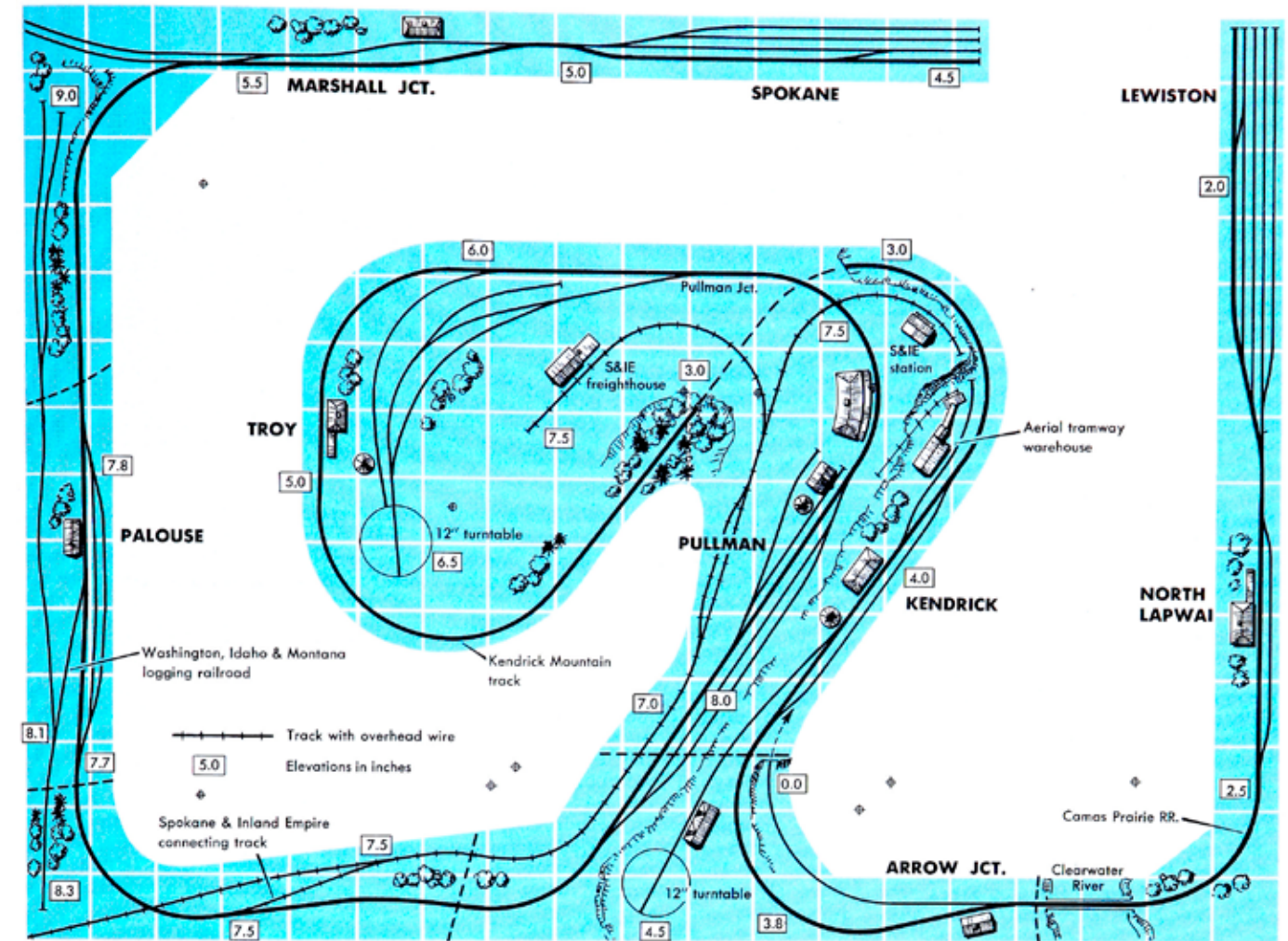
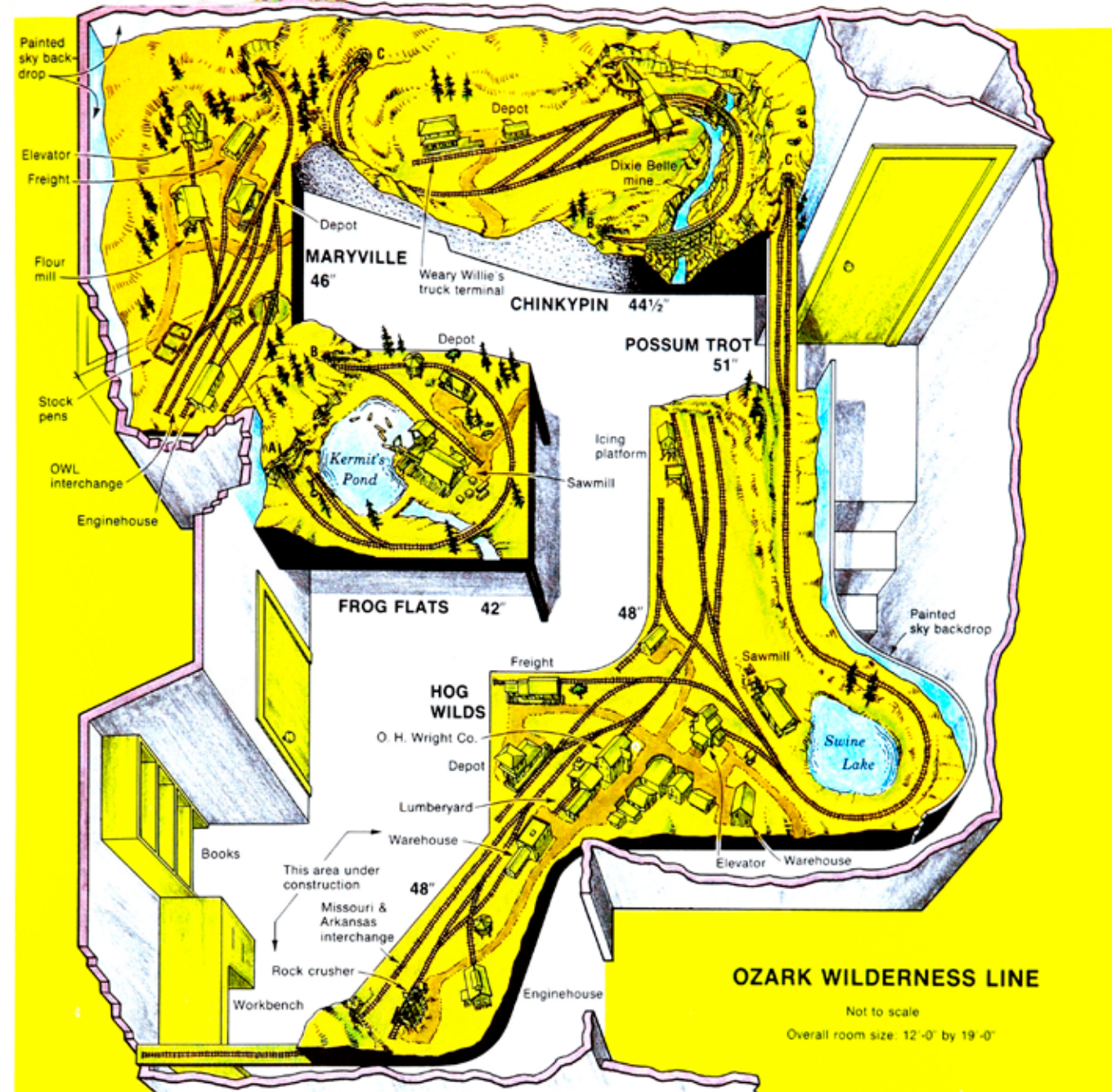




79 Ozark Wilderness Line

HO
 12 x 19 feet
 Era: Steam
 Region: Ozark Mountains
 Date published: January 1981 (home layout)
 Vernon Hart

Most large layouts don't fit a specific grid or shape. Instead, they're designed to fit into the nooks, crannies, and other unique features of a basement or specific room or space. The Ozark Wilderness Line is a good example of such a plan. The freelanced shortline railroad has a point-to-point main line with lots of switching action and plenty of room for mountain and small-town scenery.



80 Northern Pacific's Palouse & Lewiston Air Line

HO, N
 14 x 19 feet (HO)
 9 x 12 feet (N)
 Era: Steam to diesel
 Region: Pacific Northwest
 Date published: January 1974 (railroad you can model)
 Ray Poindexter

Based on the Northern Pacific's branch between Spokane and Kendrick, Wash., this point-to-point plan also includes connections with the Washington, Idaho & Montana and the Spokane & Inland Empire (a former electric line) and a continuation on the Camas Prairie Railroad. If space allows, the yards at Spokane and Lewiston can be widened to better serve as staging; they can also be used as fiddle yards, with cars and trains removed and replaced between runs.