Evolution of the Port Orford Railroad:
An Experiment in Raised Platform Garden Railroading

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The Reasoning For a Raised Platform:

Since your question pertained to convenient height and not aesthetics I'll address primarily the height issue, which I have been thinking about a lot since, I'm rebuilding my railroad. I prefer about waist high to give a combination of easy access to work on the railroad as well as to give good viewing. I feel the "eye level" approach used widely on indoor railroads is too high for large-scale since the distance for required reach is much different than in the mostly smaller scales used indoors. Too, there is the "landscaping" issue or "looks".

I think I've come up with a workable and economical (relatively) way to raise the railroad and account for cost, practicality, ease of operation and looks.

Many live steamers have for years used elevated bench work to run their trains. They apparently hold up pretty well but are a little "Spartan" for my liking. One important thing to be derived from their efforts however is the need to keep the right of way fairly narrow for practical access.

A couple of years ago I built and installed a ballasted deck girder bridge using landscape fabric covered with ballast to span the gap between two 2x4 girders thus allowing water to drain through and not collect on top. To date this method has been a resounding success even up here in the very rainy northwest with no sign of dry rot or deterioration to date. I propose to use a similar idea with my entire raised bench work outdoors.

I mentioned this method once before and the response was one of intense boredom and non-response so I'll take this opportunity to bore you also. He he! Hopefully though I can help you and maybe get some feedback from others as well.

I am at present working on the first four 8 foot sections of bench work, which will comprise my Coos Bay terminal. The widest section is 58" wide and subsequent sections will taper down to about 32" at the yard throat. This terminal area can be accessed easily from both sides. Each 8-foot section will be bolted together as completed to form a 32' long terminal & yard. All sections will be supported on 4x4 PT posts.

Open framework is used upon which roadbed and building foundations are installed on top. We have considerable wind up here so the buildings are being screwed to the foundations as they are placed. Roofs are all to be removable for lights, etc. and are also screwed down. Once roadbed and buildings are in place 6" to 12" plastic drainpipe will be cut and stood upright to form "wells" in which dirt and soil will be placed to allow planting live plants. These wells will be secured to the bench work and, if needed, irrigation tubing will be run from beneath the bench work up to the plants.

To cover the remaining open areas and disguise the well tops wire fencing is attached across the top braced where necessary from beneath. This will provide support for a layer of landscape fabric. Lastly a thin layer of dirt and/or ballast will go on top to blend everything together. Our dirt up here is clay and sand and holds up pretty well to heavy rains unlike light topsoil would. The dirt provides a solid top while the fabric and wire fencing allows for drainage. The amount of bracing required will depend upon not only area but on whether you get snow or not. The more snow, the more bracing.

This leaves us with a solid "tabletop" which is hollow inside where wiring and irrigation can be run. To enclose the sides I'm using 1x6 cedar fence boards cut to length for a finished look. Other options would be a rock or cement block wall or even a hedge. Of course small plantings can be used here and there along the fence or wall to help blend into the landscape.

I envision the completed railroad as a series of "islands" interconnected with bridges and trestles as needed. Of course any of the bridges could be made removable to allow passage. I'll only need this at one place, as my railroad will be point to point. There is no reason though that a loop type of railroad couldn't be built this way around a yard's fence line with a removable bridge or with peninsulas at each end to allow track to come back on itself.

The key is access. Not to make the railroad too wide so reach is impeded or provides access from two sides. Also the bench work could readily be combined with more conventional earth fill planter beds or even cement mountain-scapes. The railroad will be fairly easy to change or modify, just remove unwanted sections and move or replace. I am able to do much initial work in my shop indoors fabricating the various sections and bridges before installation outdoors which is a plus and provides for rainy day construction.

After using over 20 truckloads of fill and 114 RR ties just to raise my initial RR 16" above grade I am ready to use a quicker, easier and more economical method. Also I need a raised railroad to better combat my deer problem as well as to appease my aging back. One thing about this method...no moles!!! Probably this style of railroad will appeal more to the "operators" among us than to the sit back and watch'em run guys. Now...what do you think? Anything I've missed? If I haven't put you all asleep I'd appreciate your comments.

A large raised railroad using fill takes a LOT of dirt and expense. I invested in 114 railroad ties and 22 truckloads of earth in a 240' long raised bed and its average height was still only a little over 18". The deer we have up here loved it and preferred walking along it devastating my track work in the process.

I am in the initial stages of rebuilding to a much higher level (40-48" height). This time I am using outdoor bench work which will be enclosed and look like a double row of fence with the center enclosed and hollow. I wish I'd thought of this sooner...would have saved a lot of time and money.

I haven't used this approach before but based on my experiences with a large train shed and bridge construction I've found the key to success with wood outdoors is 1) paint it or treat it thoroughly 2) good drainage and 3) ventilation to allow it to dry out. I live on the southern Oregon coast and we have an extensive rainy season.

A hollow raised bed will be a lot cheaper than using fill material and can be faced with fencing, masonry, rock or any combination according to taste and budget. Instead of a solid top the track will be accommodated on wooden roadbed similar to laminate roadbed used on indoor RR's except with good drainage provided and all well painted. Foundations for outdoor buildings will be built into the framework where needed and open areas will be supported with heavy wire fencing atop of which will be landscape fabric. A thin layer of dirt with a few rocks for scenic effect will go over the fabric.

Plants will be applied sparingly planted into "wells" in the framework. These wells will be made mostly from large plastic pipe cut to size and stood on end. The edges will be hidden by the scenic top on the framework. Irrigation tubes as well as wiring for building lights, etc. can be strung beneath the bench work.

To some degree I'm blazing new trails here but then I've never been known to just follow the tried and true methods. He he! Just sharing my thoughts with you to maybe give you some more options. Also...be sure and check out Jim Francis's new railroad as mentioned by Stan. If you have the budget to go his route they don't come any prettier than what he's done.

The Beginnings of an Empire:

As you can see the Port Orford Coast earthmoving crew has begun work. (Due to cutbacks there's only one on the crew)

Garvin moves hurriedly as there is a lot of dirt to move around before nightfall.

No challenge is too great for the erstwhile Garvin. Of course having fine modern equipment helps too.

Once again the critics that said we should have invested in bigger equipment have been proven wrong! Too, the company is insured by that "lil' Lizard Fella"!

The Bench Work & Roadbed

Construction Commences at Coos Bay Terminal:

The initial construction begins with the section that supports the POC's Roundhouse.

The POC R.R. grading crews have been putting in long hours to prepare the new right of way.

This first 56-foot section will hold the Coos Bay terminal yards and engine servicing areas. It represents the POC's only outside rail connection. All lower bench work is pressure treated.

These are the inbound and outbound engine servicing tracks. A sand house and oil-fueling tank will be located to the right and a water plug between the tracks. There will also be a water tank down by the depot at the other end of the terminal area.

The roadbed is all no.2 cedar. The sideboards are just a tad over 1/4" thick by 1-1/2" deep. Overall width is 3-1/2" as I am using all of my old PHS Rail track in this terminal area. Subsequent roadbed will be 4" in width to accommodate Llagas Creek's longer ties on the rest of the railroad.

There will be a four-track stub yard to the right about 16 feet long and ending about 8 feet this side of the engine terminal. I had originally intended to use a more laminated type of track bed utilizing five "laths" like the sideboards inserted in comb-like uprights but then someone posted a method of ladder type construction similar to what is pictured. I thought their idea was better than mine so in true entrepreneurial capitalistic fashion I did the honorable thing.....I stole the idea! He he!

Switches can be inserted anywhere along straight track there's room by laying the straight portion of the switch on the roadbed and simply filling beneath the overhanging part. The cedar bends easily and with a little care can be laid out into a pleasing and graceful configuration. The unpainted sideboard on the far right not only is curved but is forced gently downwards 1/8" to accommodate a smooth transition to a downgrade.

Looking from the point end you can see the block that was added to accommodate the switch stand. A nice feature of this ladder type construction is that one 8 foot cedar 2x6 when ripped on a table saw yields enough material for 24 feet of roadbed. At a little under $10 a 2x6 that makes it about $3.30 for eight feet plus the screws. Not too bad! And....it's **very** strong!

Here's the same scene with a Llagas Creek #6 switch set on top for size comparison. The switch is about 27" long.

Some basic data:
The bench work is made up of eight-foot long modules framed from pressure treated 2x4's and all screwed together with coated 2-1/2" and 3" deck screws. The ones I use are quite expensive when bought by the pound, $7.95 even to contractors. They're cheaper if you can use a whole box (2,000). Pricey but they're self-tapping and self-counter sinking, coated and will last forever. I've even salvaged some in the past and used them over again.

Each eight-foot section varies from 58" to 51" in width. Most future bench work will be a maximum of 3 feet wide where it is readily accessible from only one side. As already stated the roadbed is No.2 Cedar 2x6 stock I have selected myself. It is ripped into six 9/32" slats leaving a center section about 3" wide that is cut into center blocks to make the roadbed yielding 3 eight foot sections or 24 feet of roadbed per 2x6. The slats are secured with 3/4" #6 screws I had left from some rain gutter. You can also use #6 deck screws but it's difficult to find them any shorter than about 1-1/4". They will suffice however. Just be sure the screws are for outdoors and have a coarse thread. Drywall screws won't make it.

Those who have followed my oft-times incoherent ramblings already know that there will be real dirt on top of this bench work, and ballast. I'll save the details on that until later when I arrive at that point. It'll be easier to show with pictures when I'm doing it than to try and describe it now.

Will Lil' Richard's bench work stand up to Mother Natures onslaughts? Will his ideas really work? Beats me!! All I can say is I'm using accepted practices for general construction for this area (mostly) and I figure if they work for porches, decks and structures then they should work for this.

So, stay tuned avid readers and see if Ol' Rich falls flat on his face in utter humiliation and disgrace. Heck, that alone oughta be worth reading this diatribe!

The bench work being fairly narrow will take most of its vegetation from the surrounding landscape. I do however plan on a limited number of mostly small plants on the railroad itself. Most will be planted inside the ends of plastic pipe that will be installed vertically within the bench work. The pipe will hold dirt all the way to the ground with a small bit of good soil on top. The local dirt holds moisture very well here and this practice is expected to reduce watering needs. The pipe/planter ends will be hidden on top by the dirt surface and of course the sides of the bench work will be enclosed with cedar fence boards. If a larger "tree" is needed I might then simply use a drop in pot or planter. Should any plant require regular watering it'll be easy to install rubber tubing inside the enclosed bench work attached to mini-sprinklers where needed.

I love outdoor railroads and I love gardens but.... with all due respect to the avid gardeners out there, **I hate gardening!** So this type of thing will be kept to a minimum. Of course with 1" to 2" s dirt on top weeds will pop up but their roots won't have far to grow and should be easy to just yank out and **without bending over**. He he! Too, with a bare minimum of plants actually on the railroad itself it'll be easy to give regular applications of Roundup without hurting surrounding vegetation. A happy situation from my perspective.

If anyone were considering utilizing 8 foot unsupported spans you definitely would need thicker sideboards. This would of course reduce the "economy" of the ladder roadbed although it could still be useful to make long graceful curves. You will have to experiment a bit with those long spans but I would think you'd need a minimum of 3/4" thickness with 1-1/2" depth for the sideboards and they'd have to be joined together every 12" or so to keep them parallel. This is just a "guesstimate" of course. You can't really have them too big but you can have them too small. I would suggest a bit of redundancy too. Remember that while the spans may seem strong by themselves that with a 20lb. locomotive and several cars on the span you may get a bad case of the "sags"!

For curves you could use three 1/4" strips on each side sistered together to make up the required thickness. By initially using a single 1/4" strip on each side you'd have a flexible piece that could easily be bent to quite a sharp curve then clamp subsequent pieces over the first one and screw the whole lot together to form one 3/4" (or whatever you find appropriate) sideboard.

This is a work in progress and not every detail is worked out yet. I have considered a couple of ways to attach the track. The roadbed will be covered with landscape fabric stretched tight and secured below with staples and/or possibly beneath screwed down wood strips. I don't think I'll need wire screen beneath the fabric where it's beneath the track with the short span across, protection from the ties and minimal depth of ballast there.

I am considering coating the fabric with adhesive caulk and merely laying the track on top followed immediately by ballast. I would in this case "pin" the track down about every 12" or so by drilling 2 holes in a tie between the rails and pushing brass brads in with pliers. I would need also to insert small wood fillers into the hollow plastic ties wherever the track was being thus secured. The caulk would probably seal the pores of the fabric losing its ability to pass water through but if the right of way is a bit higher than surrounding terrain water could then just drain off to where it would pass through. I think this would secure the track sufficiently while still allowing it to be pulled up without serious damage later.

Screws in the center of ties every 12" would also be an option. The problem is to find small unobtrusive screws that wouldn't rust or corrode so bad that they couldn't be gotten out. I haven't even found anything in stainless that I like the looks of yet.

The third way would be to use brass wire "ties" inserted into holes drilled into the sides of the RR ties and down into the roadbed someplace and twisted tight. The biggest trick here is to find a location where they are hidden and yet accessible should the need arise.

I would be interested in your thoughts on these methods as well as any others you may come up with. In any event I think there is no doubt that the track would have to be secured in some way with this roadbed.

The roadbed as is shouldn't be prone to sagging. Supported every 24" and connected every 12" it makes for quite a strong structure so i don't think you need worry there. Of course an especially wide roadbed with several inches of snow on top might be another thing. But if your heaviest locos can cross without sagging the roadbed then it'll probably be okay. In any event I don't need a thick sideboard to attach the track to since i will do so at the center blocks instead.

If you feel a need for wider roadbed and thicker sideboards then consider buying 2x8's instead of 2x6's. You will then have 7-1/2" of width to cut sideboards from while leaving the remainder to be segmented into center blocks. You could get six 1/2" side strips and one 3-3/4" solid piece for center blocks assuming loss of 1/8" x 6 cuts for saw kerfs.

As to scenicking, I'm not quite ready to get into that yet. I do have some thoughts on it.

I hope it'll be strong enough! I'm using code 250 aluminum track so strength beneath is a necessity.

The spacers with the holes in them are for another type of track system I may use farther on down the line to elevate a track. They were pressed into duty when I ran out of regular spacers. The holes are 1-5/16" if I remember right and provide a force fit for 1" schedule 40 electrical conduit. The idea is to fasten one of them to a bench work cross member, insert an appropriately cut length of conduit and then secure a second holed spacer at the top secured with a screw so it won't slide down. The sideboards for the roadbed would then be secured to the spacer as for the roadbed I've already done. Allows for a quick & easy adjustment for grades. Not my original idea but an adaptation of an idea from others.

I don't anticipate any big problem with warpage. We have a lot of decks & porches up here and unless something isn't secured properly almost no problem with pulling out when screws are used. Too, I selected each piece of wood myself to obtain the best quality I could.

Here's the progress as of this evening; Another 40 plus feet down. Next I need to extend the middle run around track down a bit and join it at both ends to the inbound track at the right.

The Devil's in the Details:

Thought some of you that are following the POC's "misadventures" might like an update. I have about 30 feet of roadbed and accommodation for three turnouts left to go.

Here's the basic layout for the point end of the terminal area. The right hand track has become the mainline now and the track on the left ends as a stub siding/escape track. The crossover has been changed accordingly from RH to LH. The next turnout veering right will run along parallel to the mainline and then veer over to connect with the distant track on the right (where the yellow drill is sitting in the background) to provide a runaround track for working the freight yard and the passenger depot, which will be located on the right just past the turnout.

This shows the beginning of placement of the spacer blocks for the stub yard at the opposite end from the last picture. Unlike constructing ladder roadbed for ground installation for on top pre-built bench work it is better to construct the roadbed on site so the screw blocks are in the right place. The track location is marked on the framework and a clamped straight edge is used to locate individual blocks. They are secured with a single #8 2-1/2" deck screw in their centers. This allows them to swivel if needed to better accommodate varying track configurations.

The blocks are secured to risers that are in turn secured to the framework for gradient or elevated track

The start of placing sideboards for a turnout location; the turnout is placed on a straight section and the siding is lined up for a smooth transition.

A clamp holds the sideboard in position so as to follow the line of the turnout.

With the sideboard clamped in proper position the turnout is removed and a spacer block set on top to mark the diverging angle.

The block is cut and screwed in between the diverging sideboards. There usually isn't a framing member so convenient to screw down into. I just got lucky on this one. It is sufficient to simply screw the block(s) in from either side. You don't need to screw it down directly to a framing member, as this is a spacer not a tie down block.

The spacer is secured to both sideboards. I'm using #6 1-1/2" deck screws for this. A shorter screw would suffice but this is the smallest #6 I could find locally suitable for outdoors. I prefer a coarse thread that goes all the way up the screw. I also pre-drill a pilot hole to better keep the screw going where I want it and to prevent splitting the sideboards.

Still have a loose tail to secure.

A second spacer is installed inside secured from both sides. It is positioned to provide a block to screw into both for the tail and the switch stand block. The small-unpainted piece is used because the sideboard was just that much too short. Rather than cut off and waste almost two feet of good stock I merely added a filler block.

The turnout set on top. Doesn't fit too badly! It will not be secured yet. That comes later! The other, inside sideboard is fitted as for the outside one.

The little filler will be painted. Three more turnouts and a bit over thirty feet of roadbed and we'll be ready for the next phase. Stay tuned!

The spacers and sideboards are painted cedar, as I needed load-bearing material, especially for the sideboards. Most composite materials are not capable of bearing much weight without sagging. The framework's 2x4 cross members are 24" or so apart so the roadbed must be able to span that distance. Too, spacer blocks are installed between to tie the sideboards together every 12" approx giving a stronger and more rigid structure.

My intention isn't to promote this way of doing things at all but rather to develop a different way of doing things that may be applicable to the needs of some and to at least give another option. While I have tried to follow general construction practices for my area please understand that much of it is experimental and not yet proven. Additionally, even if successful the techniques will have to be adjusted for your own geographical area. There is no danger of frost heave in my area for example. Best guide would be to use accepted practices for building decks and such in your area for the basic framework.

A thought just came to mind; this should work great for someone whose wheelchair bound, as it can be built to any height and adjacent to a walkway, etc. It probably should be kept narrow though or the track kept within 2 feet or so of the edge for easy access to the trains. It might have possibilities for a retirement home or hospital too.

It's Not Heavy It's My Railroad:

Doesn't look like I've accomplished much, still no track down, but quite a bit of work has been done even though most doesn't show.

I've decided it would be prudent to add a few more legs to the bench work to support all the dirt. I was afraid of everything getting bowlegged as one section with dirt on top looked like it was developing a sag. The extra legs are just PT 2x4's set on PT footings on top of the ground to support the side rails and keep them from sagging under the weight of dirt, ballast and moisture. They're secured with screws using wood gussets on top and screwed directly into the bottom rail. This gives support roughly every four feet.

Here I've installed a small retaining wall and some "rip rap" along the sides of the incline to the engine terminal. At least no one can say my earthworks don't look realistic because that's real dirt and rocks there. He he!

A view of one of several retaining walls I'm doing to contain the earth topping on the railroad. Heavy duty here; the posts are 1/2" square and preassembled and painted before installation with the usual siliconised acrylic adhesive caulk and 5/8" brads from an air gun. The entire structure(s) is attached to bench work with screws. Most of this particular wall will be hidden eventually by a large lumber warehouse that'll span three of the tracks here to provide almost 12 feet of 3 track outdoor storage for freight cars. The far right hand track will remain uncovered and be the siding to serve the building. About 5 or 6 dummy freight doors will line the side of the building. I'll use some of my old LGB track inside for storage since it won't show and I have no other use for it.

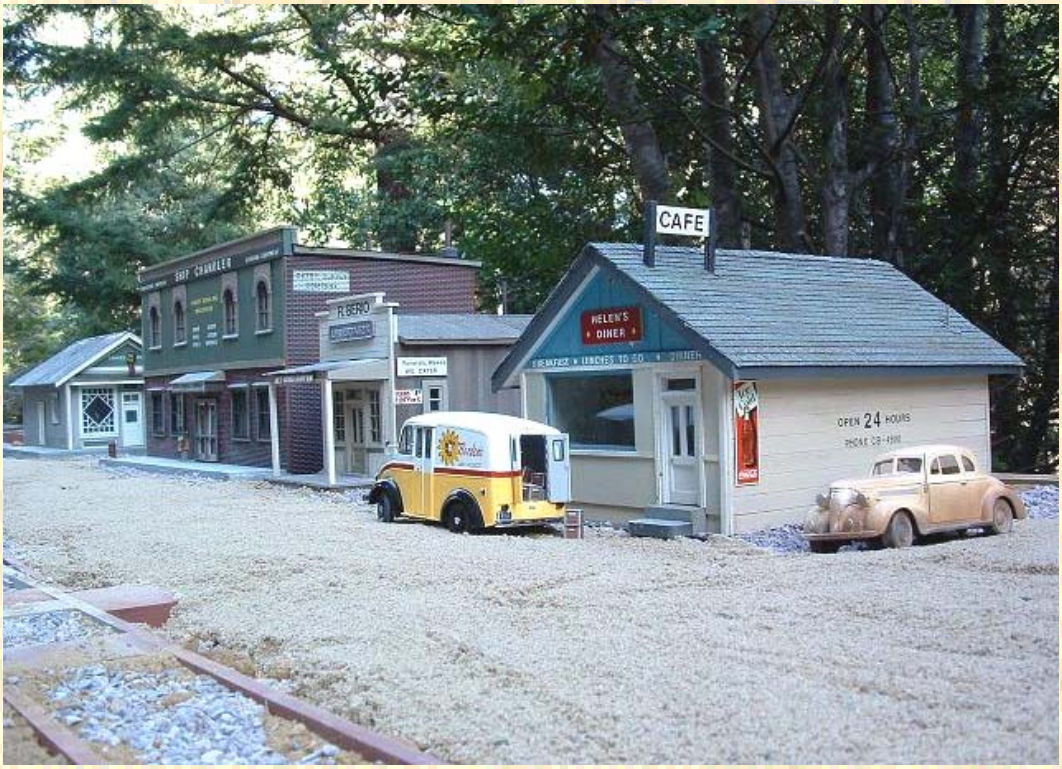
Besides the above I've also run a 7-conductor wire from the end of the bench work by the roundhouse up to about the Ship Chandler building beneath the bench work. It terminates on both ends at a terminal strip mounted on the backside of the bench work. Power is then connected to one end while individual buildings on the other end are connected to that terminal strip.

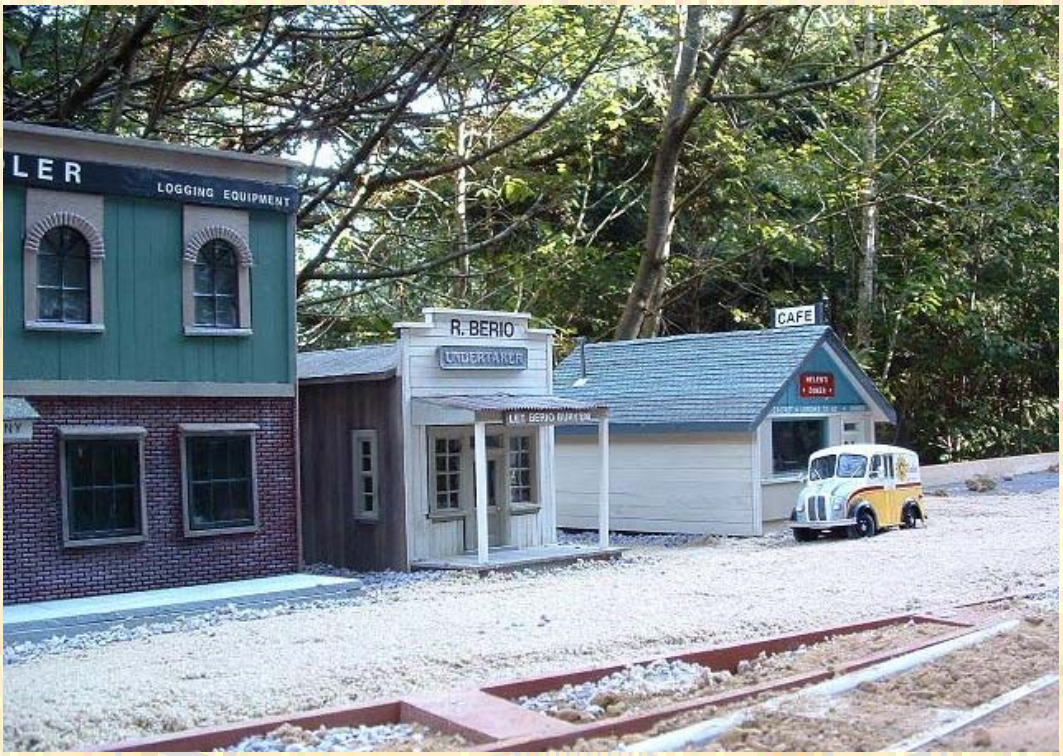
While I'm antsy to get earth and track down it will be much easier to do these incidentals before doing the finish work. Hopefully next time I'll be able to show some track down. I'm in the process now of deciding exactly what colors I'm going to paint the rails and ties. I have a couple of promising options.

Well the retaining walls are in, and the initial general rudimentary scenery is completed for sections completed thus far. Barring inclement weather track laying is only days away.

A view down Railroad Avenue from the depot.

Things are quiet in town on this workday but Helen's Diner is getting a milk delivery.





A view down the street towards the depot. Dirt street is sandbox sand. I don't know how well it'll hold up in heavy rain but it's cheap and easily refaced. It'll do until I decide exactly how I want to handle the street here. Since it's not a main street and the year is a nominal 1940 it doesn't need to be paved.

The back alley gets sand too. The area close to the buildings and beneath the sand edges are covered with ballast to hopefully limit mud splashing on the buildings during rain.

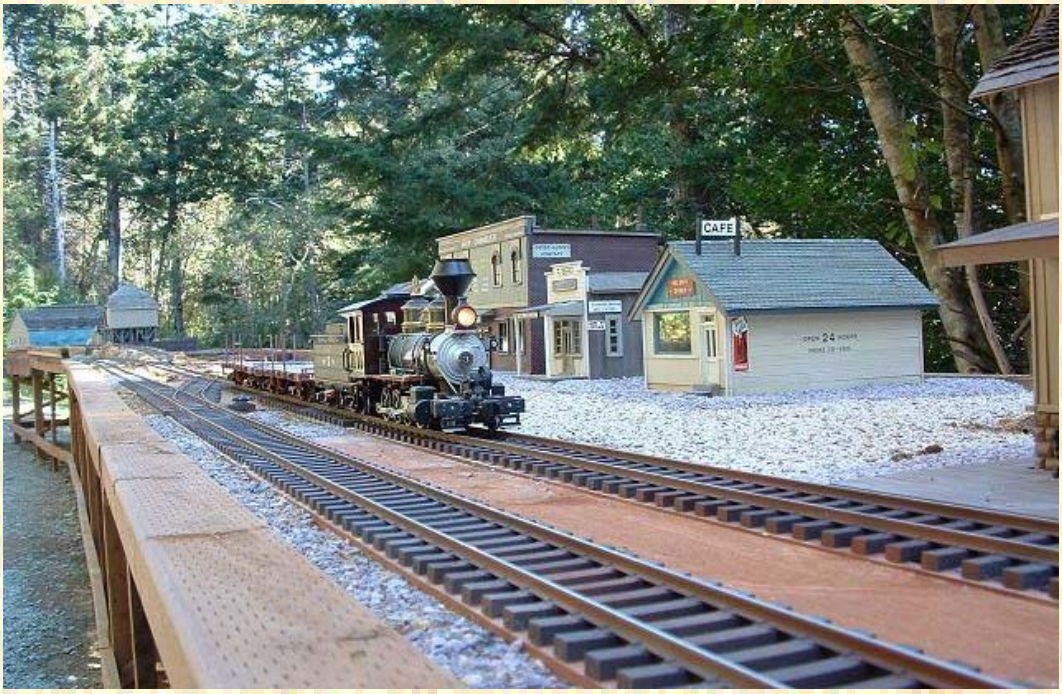
This is the area behind the water and oil tanks where there is a difference in track elevation. The platform is 47" long. The bare 2x4 (painted black) will be hidden by a ladder or stairs, and a track bumper will cover the screw in the back retaining wall after the track is laid. The house in the background will stay. Helen won't allow it to be moved.

The platform from above showing relation to rest of engine terminal, it is intended to have facilities here to unload fuel tank cars into the oil storage tank. Originally I was planning on hookups for two tank cars by the platform but if I make this a "supply" track I could perhaps add a small derrick on one end to unload shop equipment from flatcars and just provide for one tank car at a time. A small pump house will be needed too.

Final scenery dressing will be done after track is laid. The other areas in back will probably be left without "scenicking" until next year. I have several buildings to complete and install in those spaces.

The Laying of "Iron" Has Begun:

Track laying in the terminal area is about 70% completed not counting some hidden storage tracks. A test (work train) was dispatched pulled by ol' number 3 to test the un-ballasted trackage. Everything worked well. Three more turnouts and a small bit of trackage and ballasting can begin.

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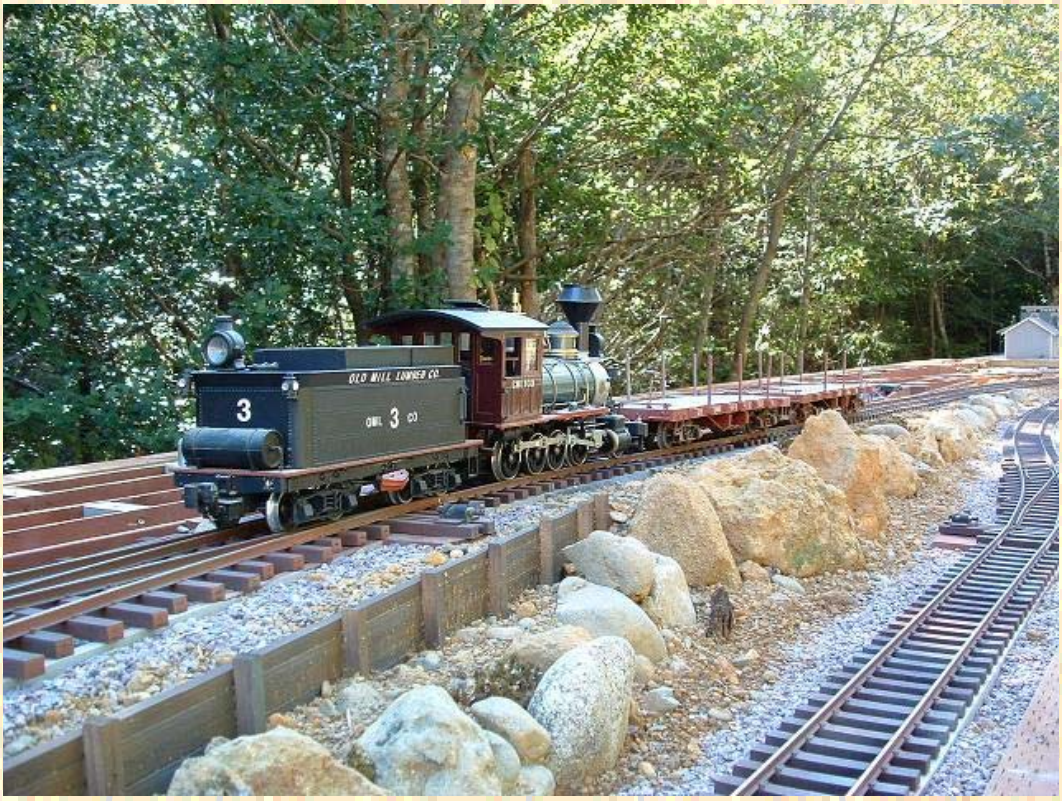


Track was painted while assembled, colors came from rattle cans, a custom mix of four different colors. The sides of rail were hit first with Bondo primer red (rusty color), then with a flat medium brown (Krylon Camouflage}. Track then painted from above to minimize discoloring rail sides with flat dark brown (Krylon Camouflage Brown) and lastly a light dusting with Krylon Camouflage Khaki.

The tops of the rails were cleaned off with an LGB track cleaning abrasive block after 2nd and 4th paints were applied. There was no waiting between coats and except for first color there was no concern with even coverage.

The rail is aluminum code 250. Turnouts in the terminal area are all Llagas Creek except for a couple of old 1600 LGB's that will be hidden inside of a building for outside car storage.

The track is PHS Rail which is very good quality and that I got a buy on a few years back. The only problem with it is that it is of mainline configuration lacking the longer and wider spaced ties of Llagas' narrow gauge track. It was made in Canada and I would highly recommend it for the 1:32/1:29 guys although I don't know if it is still available. At any rate since I only paid $2 a foot for it and because it is such good quality it's being used on the railroad. The PHS turnouts however weren't as good as Llagas Creek in my opinion and were a little more expensive as well. I anticipate using Llagas Creek track when I need to purchase more for the rest of the line.

Ballast is number 2 chicken grit specially ordered for me by a local farm supply. All the local grit was white so what I use comes from Minnesota and is called "Cherry Stone". I believe it's a pink granite. It comes in 50# bags and while much pricier than bulk granite fines it is much easier to store until needed.

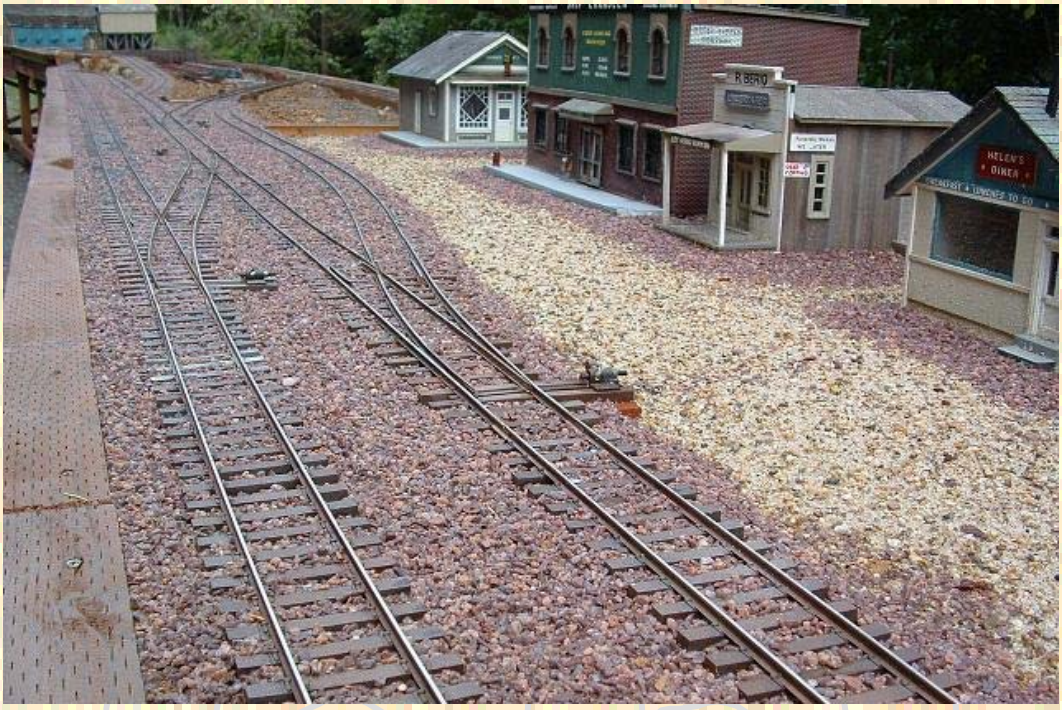
Speaking of Prototype Weathering:

A brief break in the weather after 30 hours of continuous rain allowed an inspection of roadbed and track. I thought you might be interested in a report. Herein follows **a very Scientific Treatise**

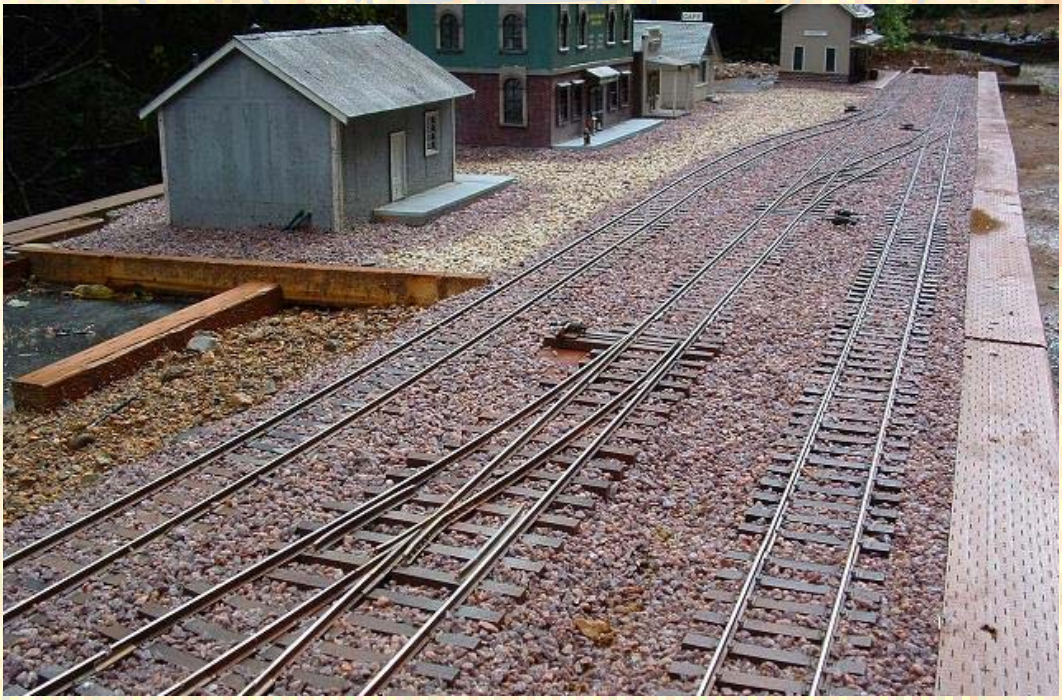
The puddles underneath the bench work can't begin to describe the amount of water falling from the sky but maybe will give an idea.

This is the area just above the puddles in the previous photo. Everything is draining well and although the dirt and ballast are soaked there are no areas of water puddling. This area was not "scenicked" because a building is going in along the right side of this view. The dirt that's on there was placed to protect the landscape fabric from wind a bit.

This shows the ballasted track. The #2 chicken grit is holding up beautifully and is settled in quite snug from the rain.

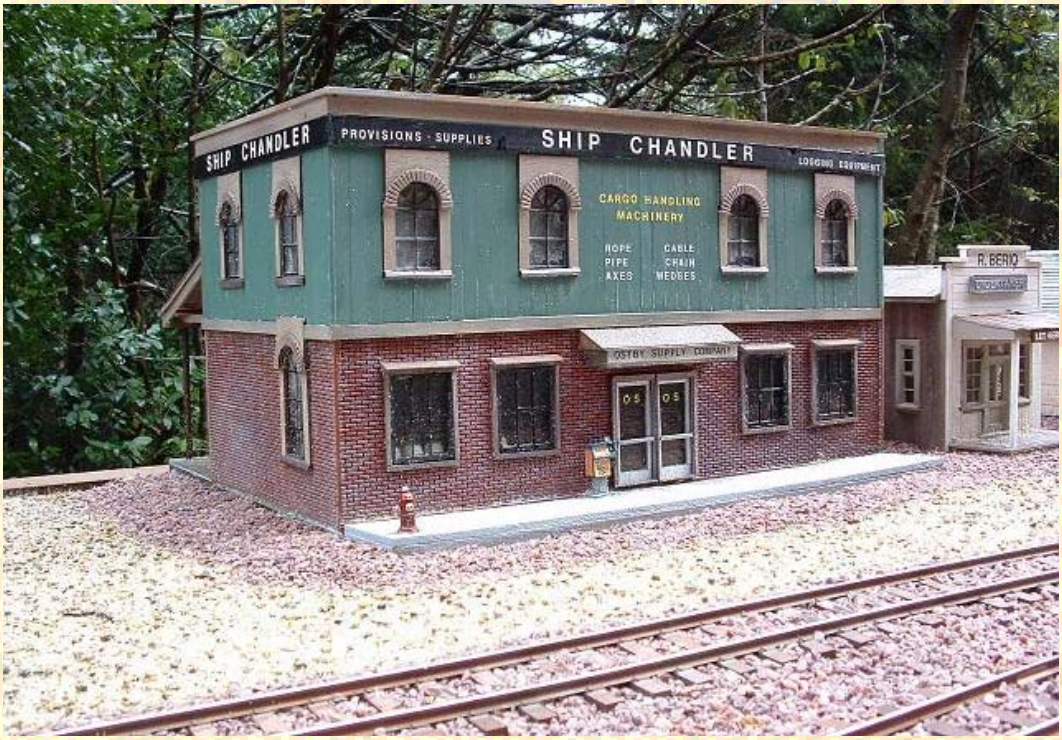


Same general area from other end, notice there is very little debris. I removed about a dozen small leaves from the top, that's all. Of course the area was selected to minimize leaves but still a LOT less than I got in this area with the raised planter bed. Obviously if it were built directly beneath a tree there would be a lot more mess.

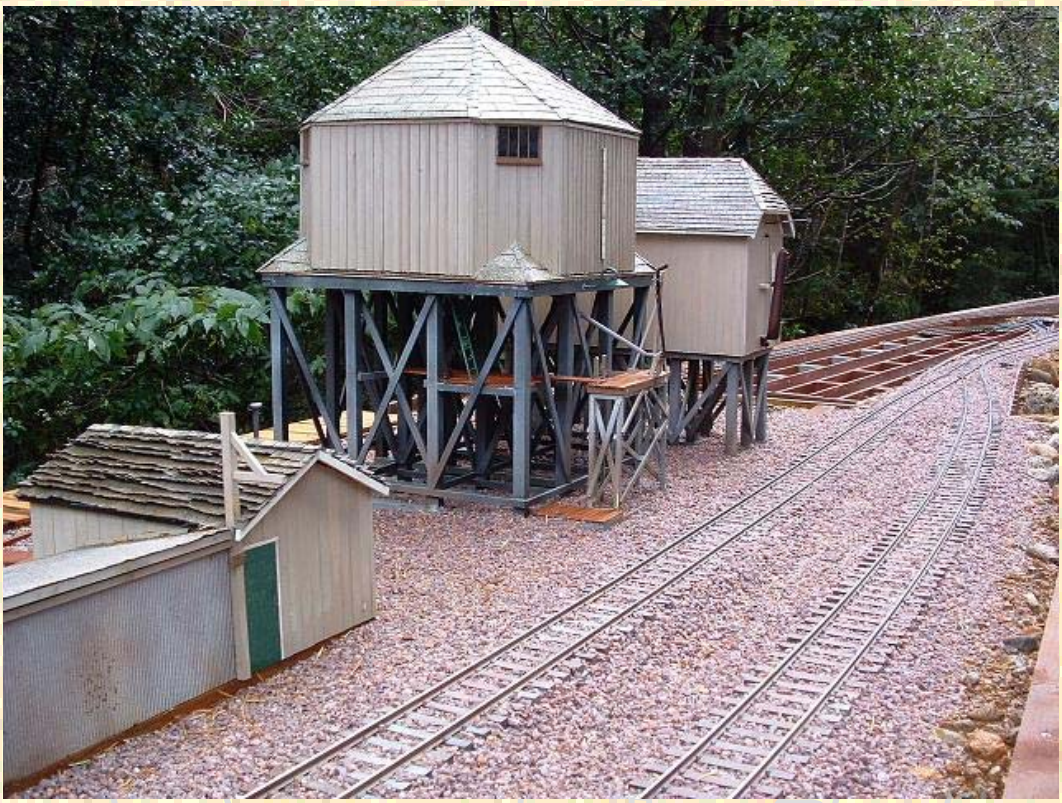


The area around the rock and wood retaining wall is holding up quite nicely too.

The sand roadway is holding up well also but even with the grit apron around the buildings a great deal of sand is spattered onto them. It's a lot better than soil spattering though as when it dries it at least is easy to brush off and doesn't discolor the buildings. Ostby Supply seems no worse for wear but of course it's much too early to determine how well it and the other buildings will hold up long term.



With the area totally ballasted there is really no noticeable spatter at all on the structures in engine servicing. For the most part 1" of regular dirt is topped by 1/2" of grit ballast. This varies from place to place as the dirt beneath wasn't spread exactly even but it seems to be working well.



Issues that won't be covered are snow loads and frost heave as we have no concern for either here on the Oregon coast.

Lessons learned so far:

The only negative thus far from my viewpoint is the excessive curling of my roofing felt shingles and this is caused by the sun and not the moisture. I have quit slotting the shingles and am now installing them (pre-painted and textured as before) as solid strips. Then I scribe the individual shingles vertically after installation on the building. Helen's Diner has been done this way and is holding up well thus far. I also "colored" the shingles somewhat to simulate a blue asphalt type shingle; another experiment.

"Davis Slough" Part-1; The Crossing:

That ol' cuss Smith has been building bench work again...

Only problem is he made the legs too short...

What can you do about such incompetence?

Guess we'll have to bridge the gap! Hope I've got something to fit.

What luck! Perfect fit. Guess we won't have to fire the ol' coot after all.

Good opportunity to use one of those swell Garden Metal Girder bridges too. This one's 35" long.

Entire trestle/bridge is just under 15 feet. Lowered bench work sections 16 feet. A further "normal height" 8 foot section is yet to be installed to anchor the other end of the trestle.

The trestle was too long to handle as one piece so it was built in two sections. You can see where they join together in this view. You won't see the joint once the trestles are installed.

The trestle sections were brought out for a trial fit and aren't completed yet. Guard timbers and walkways still need to be installed. I may also install guardrails. The hardware cloth and landscape fabric will be added once the third raised 8 foot section of bench work is in place, hopefully this weekend.

The intention is to model a slough, or a suggestion of one, to imply a water environment without actually having water. There is an actual Davis Slough just before you enter Coos Bay from the south. It usually has water in it but sometimes a lot of mud and sand show. My rationale is that the POC skirts the edge of it and it's always low tide.

Just thought some of you might be interested in what's happening on the POC. Been slow going because of late rains this year.

The Basics of Scenic Creation

The Scenic Beginnings:

The first of many yards of screening has been placed and the method of foundation construction and building tie down has been worked out.

This is the area in which the sand house, oil tank and water tank will go.

The screen is quite strong but needs to be secured around its periphery to avoid excessive sagging. The frame members you see through the screen are expressly to support the screen and the dirt. This area is raised a few inches above the basic bench work height otherwise the screening would be fastened directly to the main framework top. Landscape fabric will be laid on top to hold in the dirt and/or ballast.

It was deemed wise to layout the building foundations before the fabric is down while the underlying framework is still easily visible. The water tank goes on the small rectangular area and the oil tank goes on the squareish area just behind it. Just dirt will occupy the foreground area at least for the present. The foundation will be picked up so the fabric can be laid on top of the screening and then permanently screwed down to the framework through the fabric and screen.

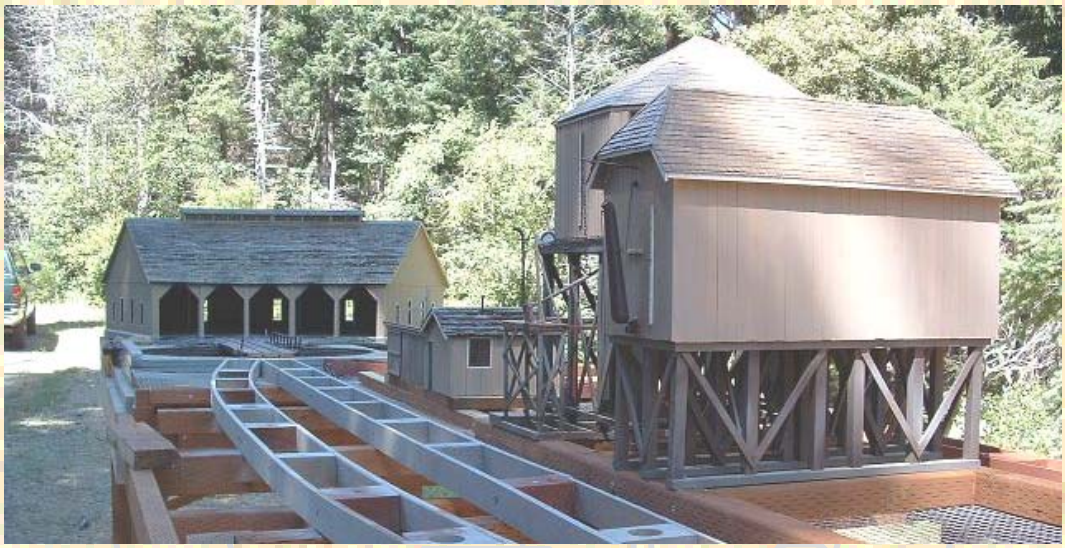
From the other end you can see the foundation strips for the sand house. These will be screwed down like the previous section. All the foundations are cut from pressure treated stock and the cut sides will be painted.

The sand house has a "top section" of foundation screwed on its bottom. The ends overhang to allow a screw surface for securing to the bottom half of the foundation. If you look close you can make out the predrilled holes for the screws in the lip overhang beneath the structure.

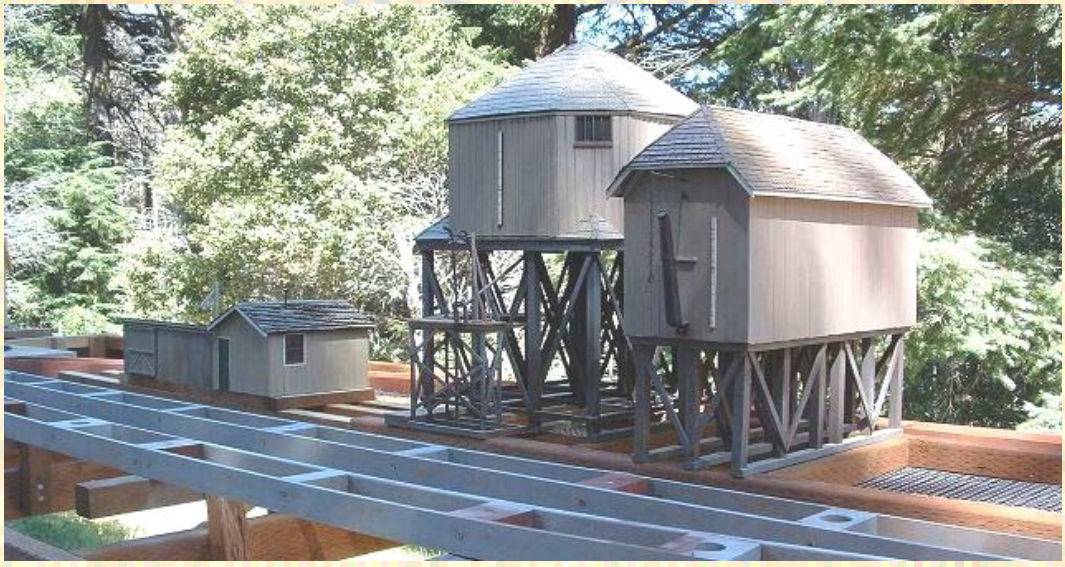
The total of the two foundation halves equal the depth of the other foundation for the oil tank and water tank. They will sit directly on their foundation and be secured with "Z" clips.

The tops of the foundations are 1-1/2" deep, the same as the roadbed, making them equal height. The average mean depth for the dirt and/or ballast will therefore be 1-1/2" although some areas may be mounded a bit for variety to 2" or 3" in open areas. Where a bit of rock is desired additional framework will be put down to accommodate the weight. All the areas immediately around any buildings will be rock ballast to prevent most of the dirt splatter on the buildings from heavy rains while the rest will be raw dirt.

Temporarily placed, this will give you an idea what the finished engine terminal will look like. The structures were moved around until I was satisfied with the "look" and then the foundations were laid out to accommodate the placement and to span the gaps between the framing cross members.



All structures will be secured to the bench work via their foundations with screws. This will keep them from being toppled in heavy winds while still allowing removal for maintenance as well as making them very time consuming to steal!



From left to right: the **sand house,** the **oil tank** and the **water tank.** There will also be several small sheds, a fire shed and a railcar shed is planned for placement adjacent to the roundhouse. Additionally there will be 3 or so outside radial stall tracks for additional locomotives.

There's a lot of screening to cut and fit yet and further building foundations to make before track laying can begin but we're gettin' there!

As stated before this is blazing some new trails and while I have tried to cover all the bases the proof of success or failure will be determined by how well this whole thing holds up. It will take awhile to find the "flaws" but I will report the failures right along with the successes as they happen. To do otherwise would be to try and "sell" a possibly false premise and that is not the purpose of what I'm doing.

Even if successful this procedure won't be for everybody. There is no question that there is nothing more beautiful than a railroad actually built through and integrated with the natural landscape. Other issues however dictate a departure for some of us from the "norm".

For me it revolves around a few simple needs.

1. To have a fairly large outdoor railroad without a lot of gardening.
2. To construct a railroad in an area with lots of wildlife and the potential destruction they can cause. The height will keep **most** animals off the tracks including the deer and also I should have little problem with moles or gophers unless they can thrive in 1-1/2" of soil!
3. Easy access, meaning no tiptoeing between plants and buildings for maintenance or operation. All tracks within easy reach and wide spaces in which to walk and follow the train action.

4. A railroad that can be operated by someone with an aging back or even a wheelchair as the height and location can be adjusted to suit individual needs.
5. A railroad that emphasizes "operation" with much switching without going through physical contortions to use.
6. A railroad that provides relatively safe haven for structures whether scratch built or commercial products.
7. An easy railroad to photograph and enjoy; no need to lie on my belly to get a low angle shot. Rather more akin to tabletop photography.

One thing learned thus far, I was concerned that putting down the hardware-cloth screening before the attaching the ladder roadbed would make it difficult to level the roadbed properly. That has since proven to be unfounded. Now I find myself unscrewing parts of the roadbed and trying to push the screening beneath, quite an unnecessarily cumbersome process.

I'll still put down the fabric afterwards though since it is much easier to put down piecemeal than the screen and will allow me to see the framework beneath for any additional support I need to put down for the screening. My wife thought I should have put the screening down first too. I guess I was just too close to my work to see clearly. He he he!

Adding in Some Dirt & Rocks:

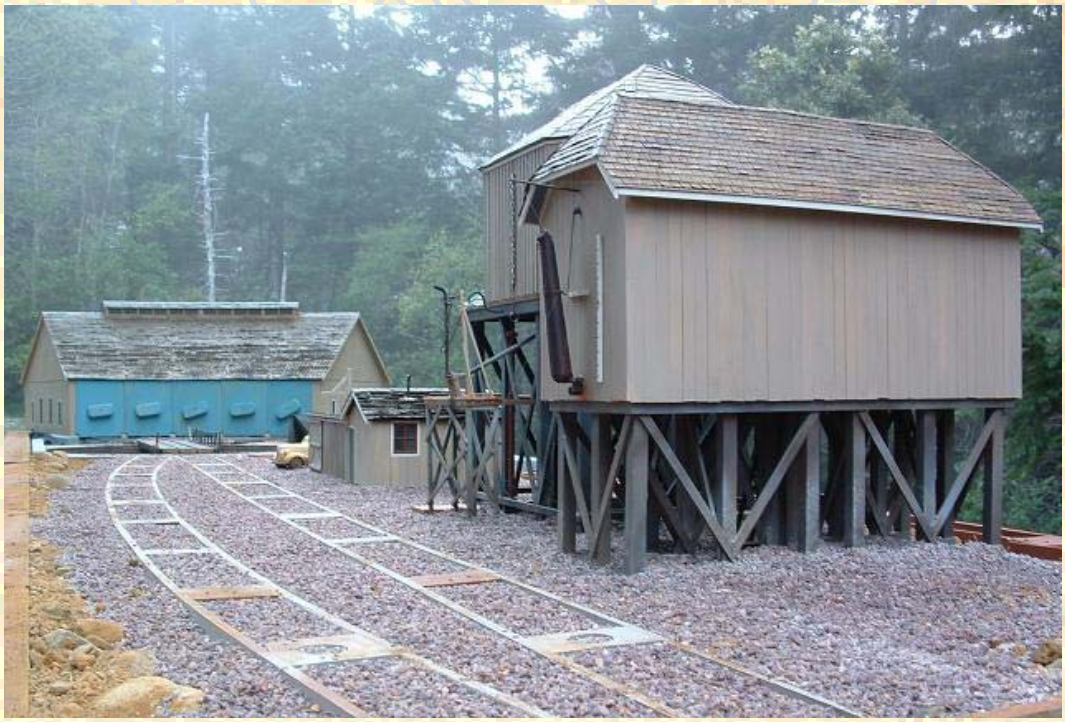
Some earth/ballast is down in the engine terminal and the principal structures are secured outdoors. There's still screening and fabric to put down on other parts of the terminal but I like to work on a smaller area at a time. Thought some of you might like to see the results so far...

These are clips used for securing glass and mirrors. They will probably deteriorate over time but should last a couple years. Just don't use the screws that are supplied with them. I substituted #6 1" screws originally for a gutter project that will hold up outdoors. This will allow me to remove the clips when they need replacing.

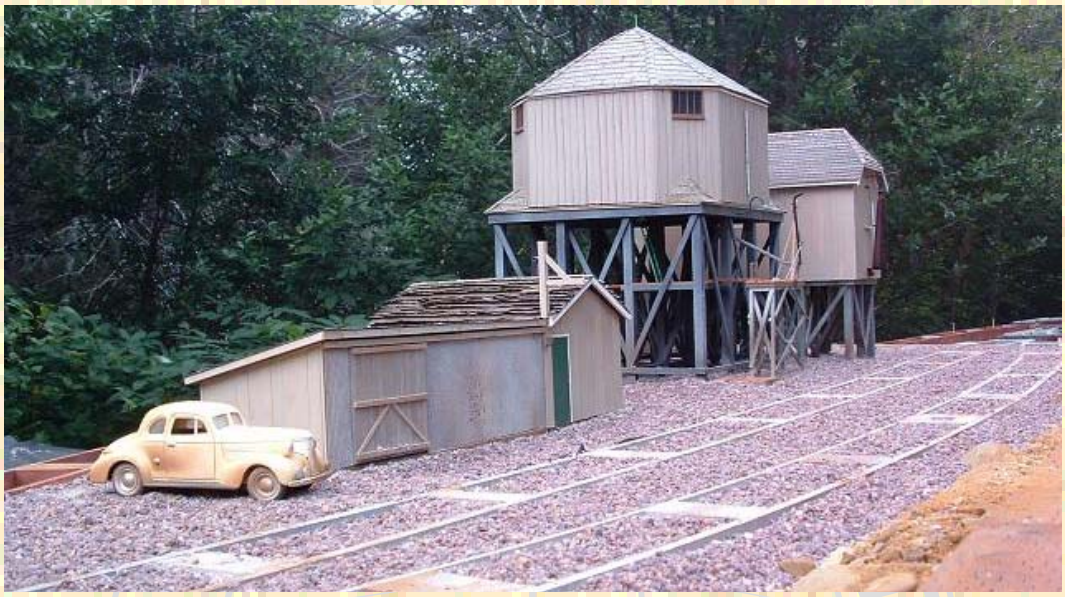
Here's a longer shot showing the oil tank being installed. The area inside the foundation was filled with rock and ballast and the foundation tops wiped clean so the structure could sit on top.

This shows it all. Open screening, fabric and fill material. For the track sections mostly gravel was placed between the roadbed slats and then topped with ballast. I think that will better facilitate drainage than using dirt beneath the ballast.

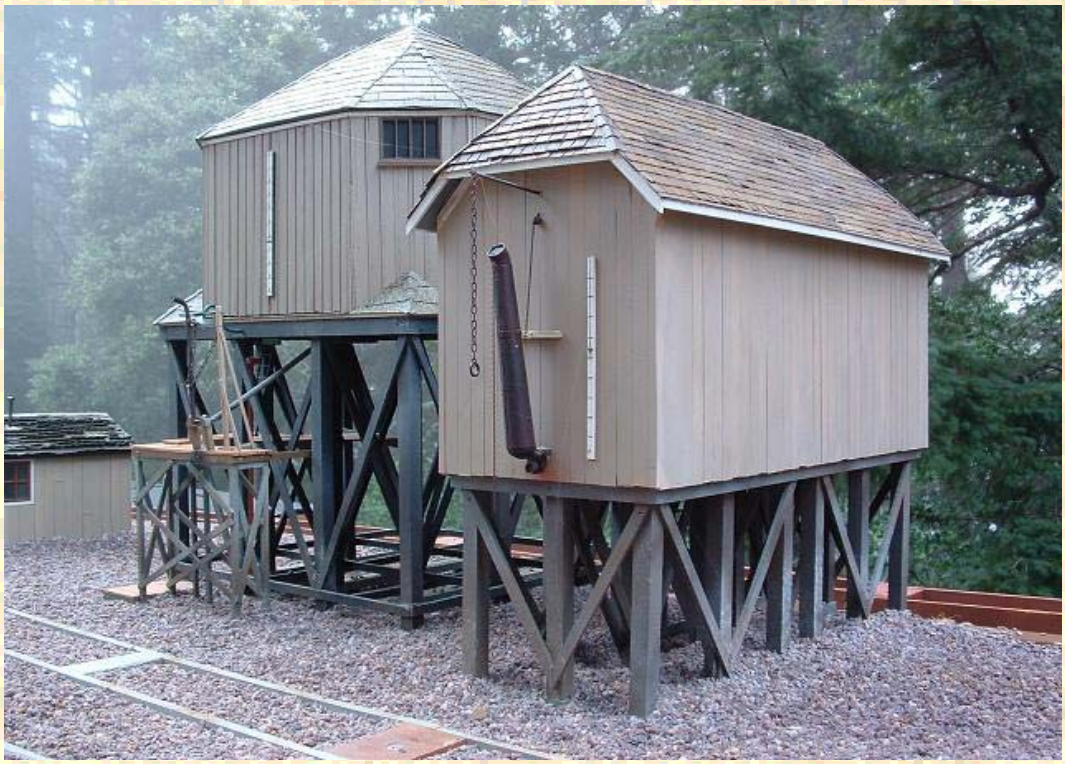
I like this shot because it looks so "Northwesty". An early morning high fog rolled in to create "atmosphere" but the temperature was a comfortable 54F. Once the track is down an additional dressing of ballast will be placed and hide the roadbed completely.



Looks rather barren yet but besides the track there'll be some wooden walkways, a couple of light poles for night ops and several small sheds. If this were indoors I would already be accumulating much "clutter" to place around the area but being outdoors it is best to keep such things to a minimum and just add them for photo sessions.



Water tank and oil tank respectively with that "Northwesty" feel again.



This is especially for those of you who may have concerns about not having enough support for the track with the thin slats I used on the roadbed sides. Here you can see I think that the ballast between will supply plenty of support. I thought it was easier to wait and show you my intentions in a photo rather than try and explain it earlier. Instead of securing the track on the tie ends you could secure between on two points adjacent to each rail. That would accomplish the same end to prevent the ties from twisting as securing on the very ends does.

The Building of "Coos Bay":

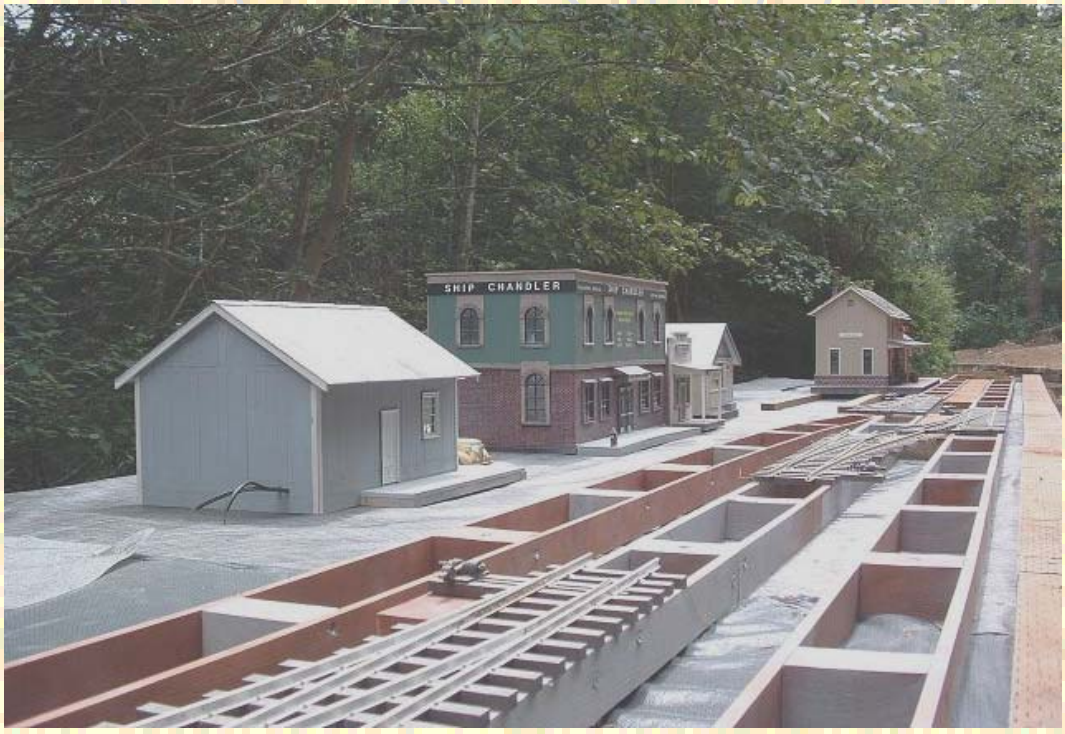
It's time to set out some of the principal buildings to help in laying out the town. With constricted space it's important to take the time to get as pleasing an arrangement as possible while still allowing for convenient viewing of interiors where available and to allow for planned buildings not yet constructed. Also the "foundations" need to be placed prior to putting down the "earth" landscaping. Much easier to do it now than later.

A view looking south; the grey building on the left is the Smoke House, next is Ostby Supply, then Berio Undertakers, and then Helen's Diner. The Coos Bay Depot is in distance. An access road will exist alongside the Smoke House coming towards the viewer leading to a large lumber warehouse yet to be built.

I have an image in my mind. The structure isn't meant to be a lumberyard in the conventional sense but rather a large wholesale-export warehouse that is owned by the Old Mill Lumber Co. (POC's parent company) to receive, sort and facilitate large shipments of lumber to buyers all over the world. It will be a major destination for much of the cut lumber from the mill on the other end of the line at Port Orford.

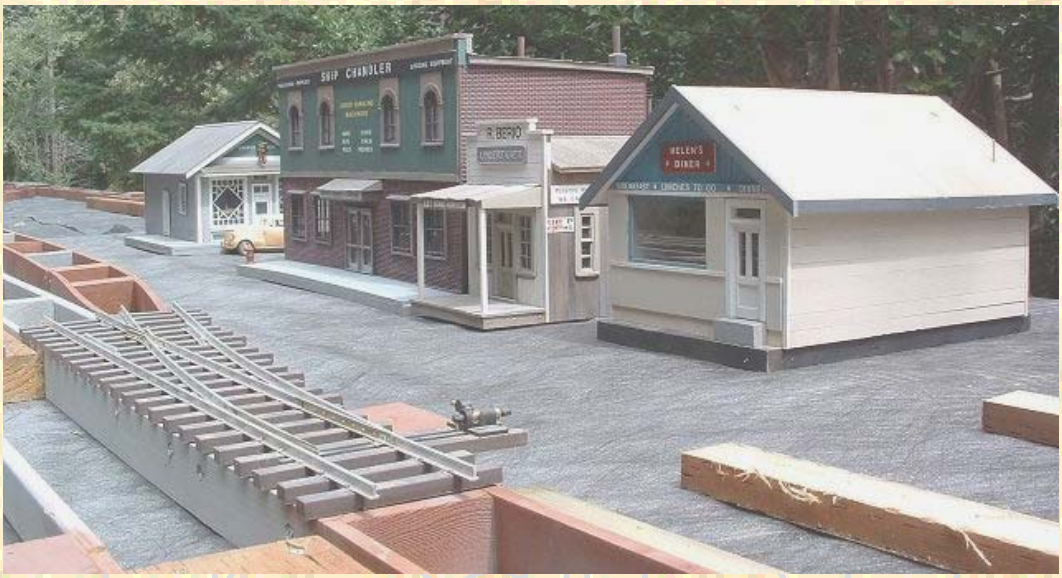
The siding should accommodate about 5 cars. The building I envision will be about 48" x 15" wide (not firm yet) with a platform and loading doors along one side to unload/load boxcars. In the rear will be a yard area that will accommodate lumber storage and unload/load flatcars. At the front of the building will be a large door (false door) for truck entry and a sales office.

The building (subject to change) will have a high pitched roof, about 12/12, without a false front in keeping with the company's strictly business attitude and quite a bit of signage.



A northerly view; the street will go towards the grey Smoke House and turn right. The access road mentioned in the previous photo will continue straight ahead and the proposed lumber warehouse will occupy the empty space behind the Smoke House.

Helen's Diner still has some completion needed. Originally it was to be set back to allow a parking area in front so it wasn't intended to have a sidewalk. The constricted space has changed that so the front will get a minor facelift to accommodate a new placing. Also it's never been "roofed".



Here you can see the relationship between Main St. and the Depot. An uncompleted house/office for the livestock company sits behind the depot and a dirt road leads to the yet to be built stockyards. Two tracks are in front of the depot. The farthest is the mainline into town. The nearest to the depot is a siding and will eventually extend another 8 feet towards the viewer to serve the stockyards on the next 8 foot section of bench work to be built next year.

It's surprising how long it took to decide on final placement of the buildings even when I had a general idea where they were to go. I spent several hours out there moving just those few buildings back and forth to get an arrangement I liked. Problem is, sometimes we get too close to our own work to be objective. No attempt is made to model the full town but rather just the portion adjacent to the tracks. The rest is intimated.

Here's a picture of the "unfinished" house behind the depot I referred to above. No siding or roofing yet, and the porch and chimney are yet to be completed. It will represent a residence converted over to use as a business office for a livestock company and will be appropriately signed as such and a bit rundown looking. The dirt access road to the stockyards will run alongside the house.

"Davis Slough" Part-2; The Scenery:

Scenicking the slough has begun. This part will describe the rearmost scenery and rockwork behind the trestle. For the original part one post on the trestle itself see

Basic screen and fabric is in place. The wood laid on top defines the limit of the bluffs and raised area at the rear.

Wooden boxes are installed and secured to the main frame joists beneath the fabric. These will lift much of the background scenery leaving a hollow space inside them to lighten the load as well as to use less material.

1/2" hardware cloth provides the screen backing for the landscape fabric.

After the fabric is in place wood is placed across the frame joists to provide extra support for especially heavy items such as large rocks. Rocks are set in low to better "plant" them in the terrain.

Here the rocks are landscaped with dirt poured around the rock bases and then over the top of them to fill every crevice and allow a natural slope. The large rocks at the bottom are about an inch into the dirt at this stage and will be nearer to 1-1/2" when the section is completed.

For higher parts the scenery is tiered by filling in behind the first layer of rocks, setting a second course on top and then repeating the process. It is important to bury the bottoms of the rocks so they look natural. You don't want to just set the rocks on top of the ground in an unnatural way. Also it is more realistic to have most of the rocks the same or at least similar color except where you are modeling soil or rock layers.

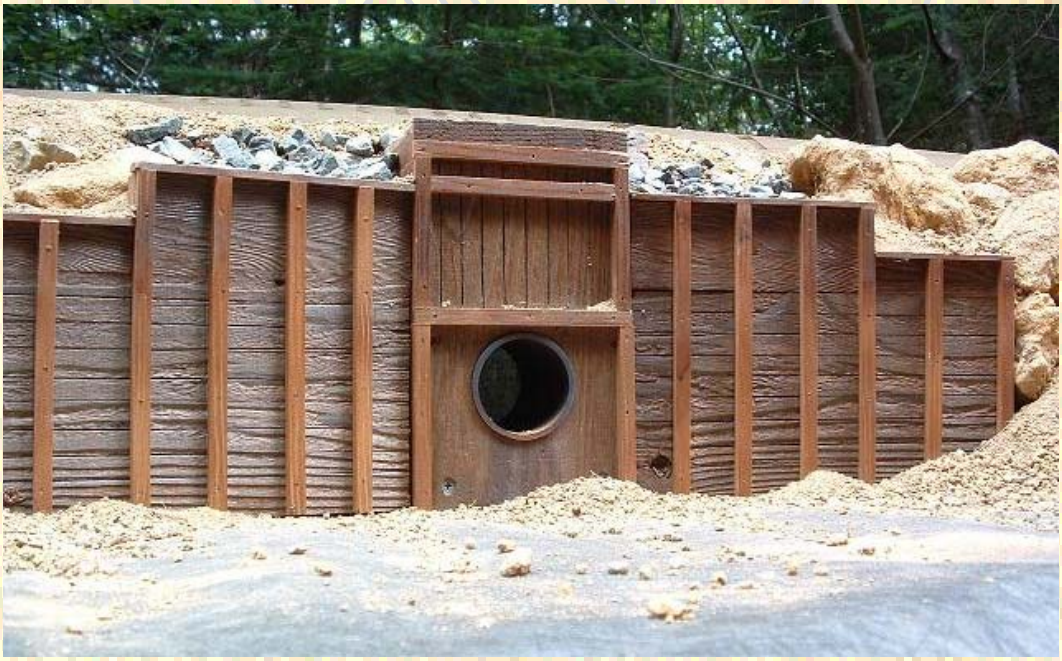
This is a particularly vertical area. It will contain a culvert and its attending retaining walls.

The culvert is here in place. The walls are solid pieces of cedar with posts attached and the whole thing stained. The culvert pipe itself is a piece of PVC pipe painted black and weathered.

A back view shows the rear bracing. Everything is attached to the bench work frame with screws where they won't show and 18 ga. brads in other places.

The culvert assembly installed and scenicked. The different color rocks at the top represent rip-rap placed by the builder to contain the slope above the culvert. The bottom sand will come up almost to the bottom of the pipe. That will be shown in Part 3.

A closer view; Note that the culvert retaining walls are not the same color as the RR trestle as it doesn't belong to the railroad and was built at a different time. This also provides a subtle contrast to separate two different scenic features.



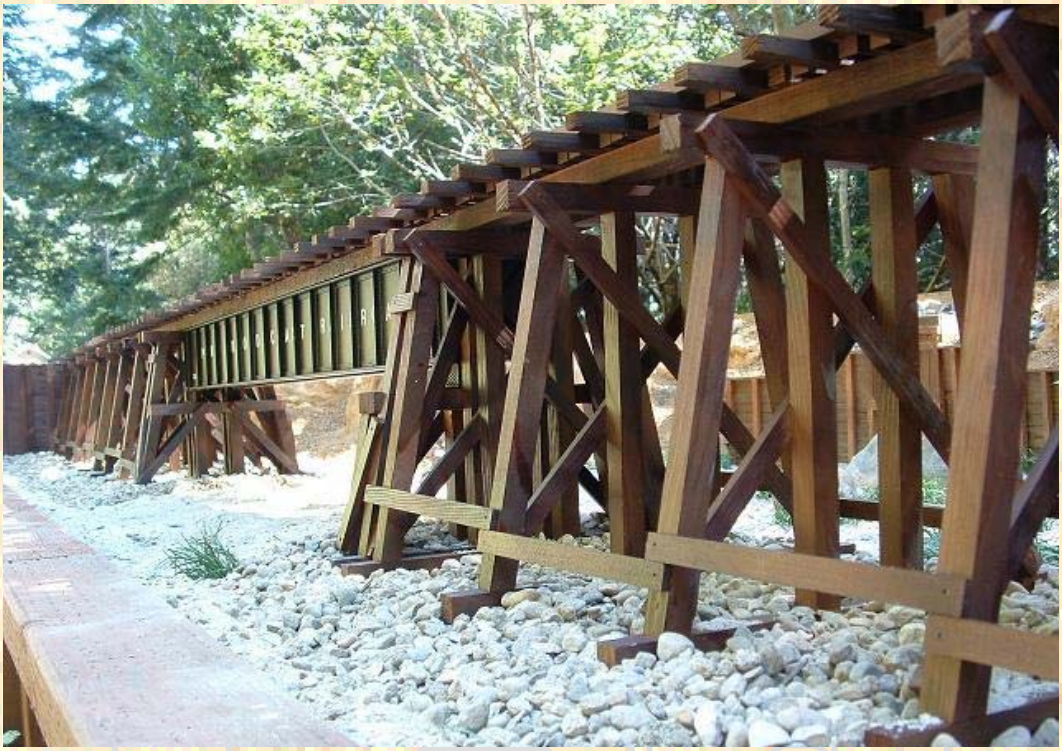
Still to be done is the foreground scenery and under the trestle. It will be a combination of sand and fill rock/ballast around the trestle base. Some light vegetation is also planned but we'll keep that for Part 3.

(Additional unpublished pictures)

"Davis Slough" Part-3; The Scenery Finis:

Finally pretty much done except for some incidentals.

Everything looks better once it's planted and the trestle is no exception.



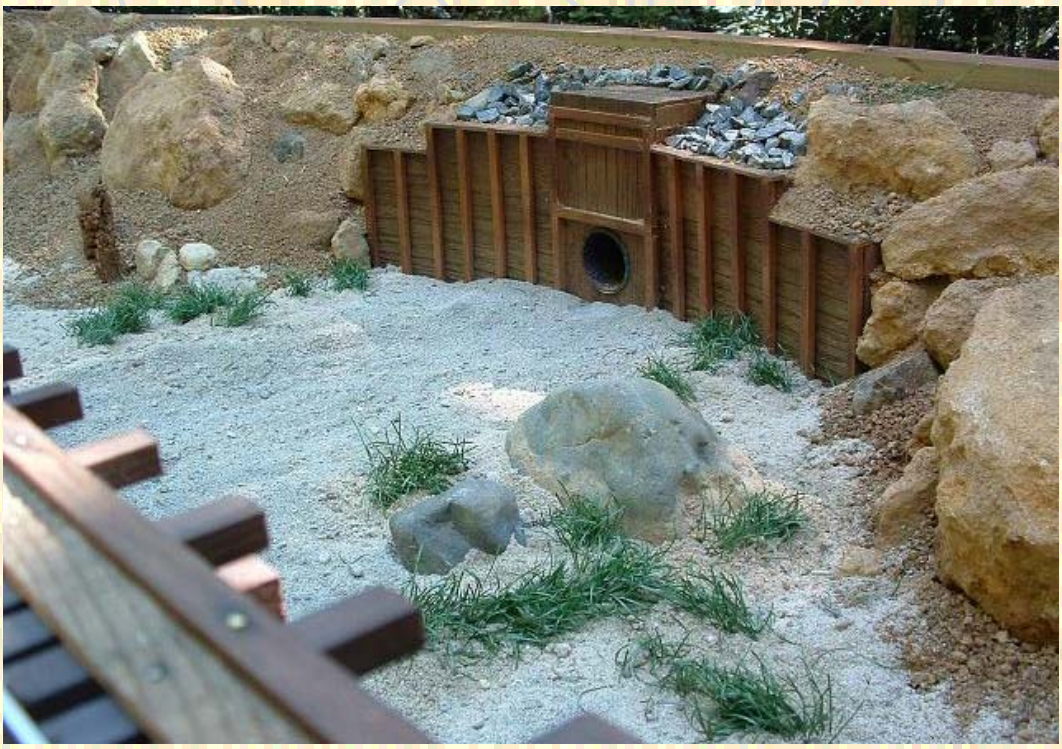
The sand has been added. The slight color variation is due to the central area having mortar mix in it to suggest the more watery part and also to form a crust for holding everything in place.

THE PLANTINGS

Contrary to what some believe I do engage in occasional gardening.

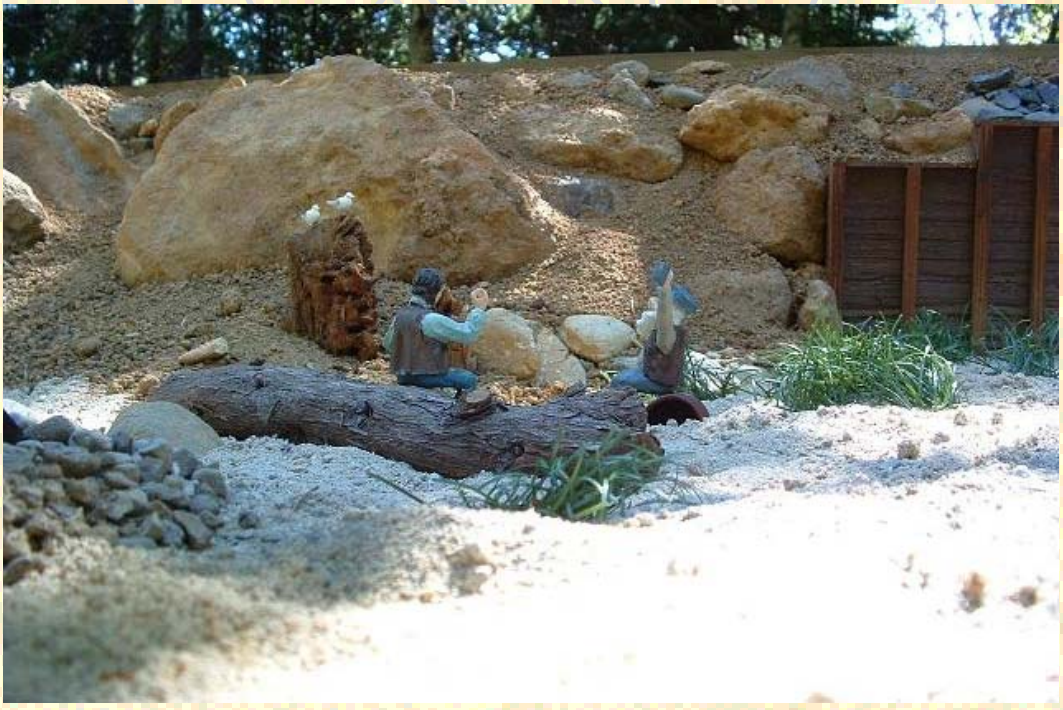
Here are the flats ready for planting. Perhaps I should have put this part in the gardening forum? Known as Turfitus Artificialum (artificial turf for those of you without my Latin expertise). The samples were a gift from Tom Smith. He lives in Las Vegas and the color green is alien to anyone there.

The turf is cut into smaller pieces with a scissors. It cuts quite easily as long as you don't cut on the seams.



Each piece is set into the sand, covered almost completely and then brushed off to desired level. Maybe I should have tried and painted the grass swatches a little lighter greyish green color. What do you think? I can do it later if needed I guess.

I figure since it is made to represent full size lawns outdoors that it will hold up well. Time will tell...



Some small details are added but in keeping with a Spartan approach not too much. Even this will attract some debris to be cleaned off.

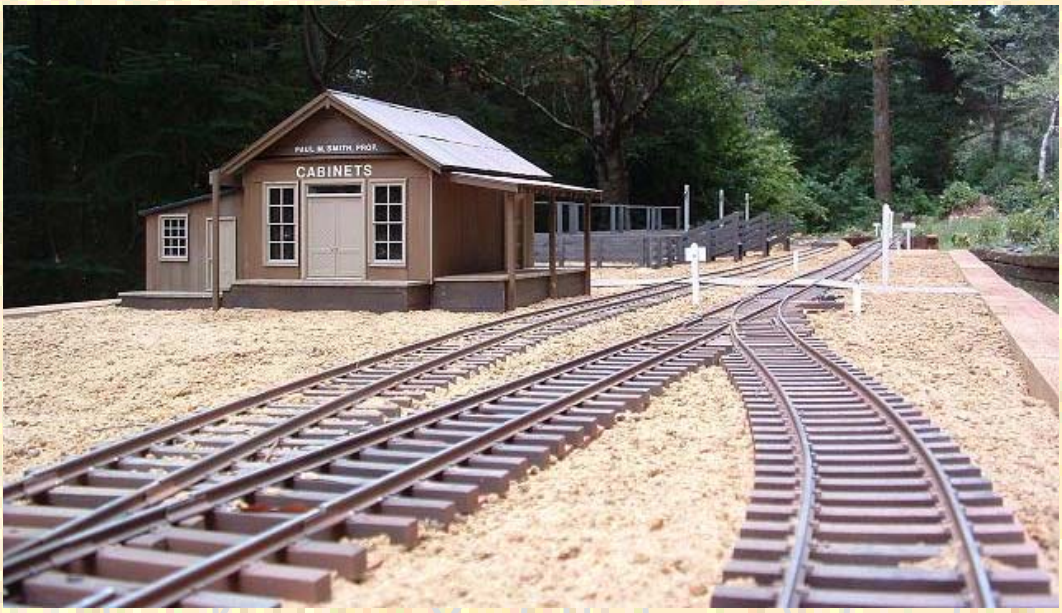
Now I'll be able to backtrack and fill in the scenery around the stock pens and cabinet shop that I couldn't do earlier because of the height differences between the sections.

I still have to add the guardrails on the trestle. Otherwise the immediate area is pretty much done. Hope you enjoyed the trip. It was an adventure for me. He he!

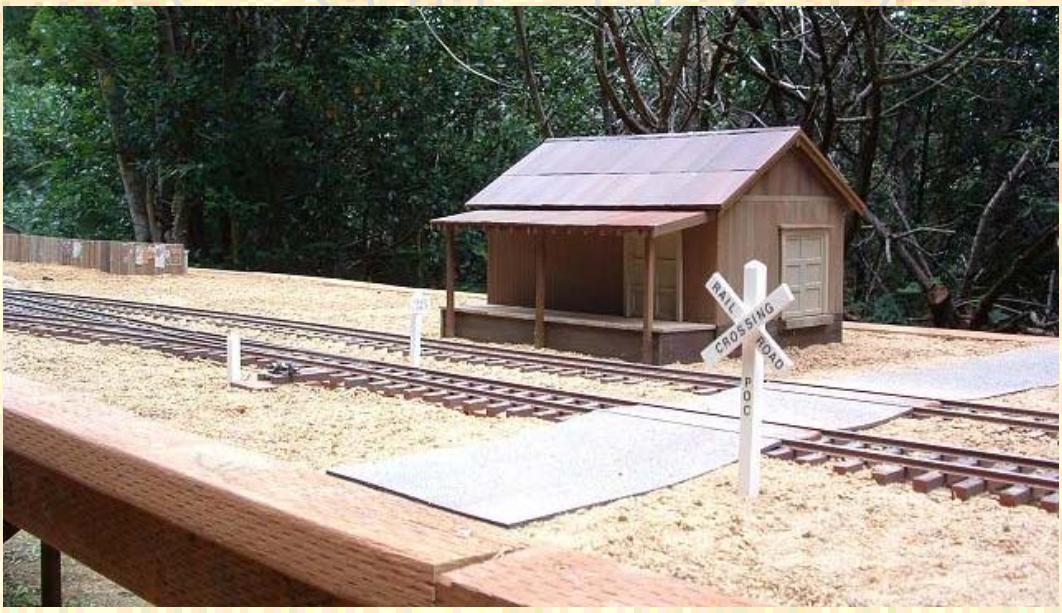
"Davis Slough" Part-4; Additional Detai After the Crossing:

I put this here because it is somewhat related to the Davis Slough trestle. The scenicking here was bypassed because of the difference in bench work height. It was necessary that the retaining walls of the slough section be installed first in order to retain the "ground".

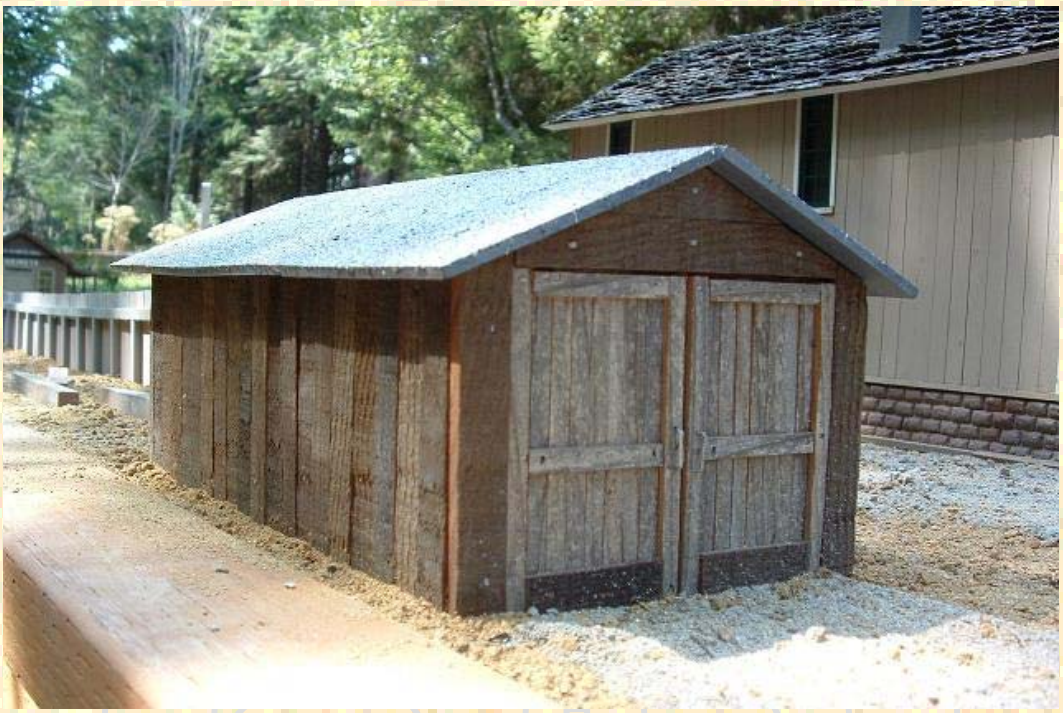
Everything looks different with the structures and track actually planted.



The signs are a simple detail that adds a lot of realism to the scene. Most are made from expanded PVC from TAP including the post and signboards on the RR crossing sign. The material is naturally white but was also painted and then lettered with black 1/4" vinyl lettering. I think it will hold up well but like everything it's an experiment. The road surface is also the same material painted and textured.

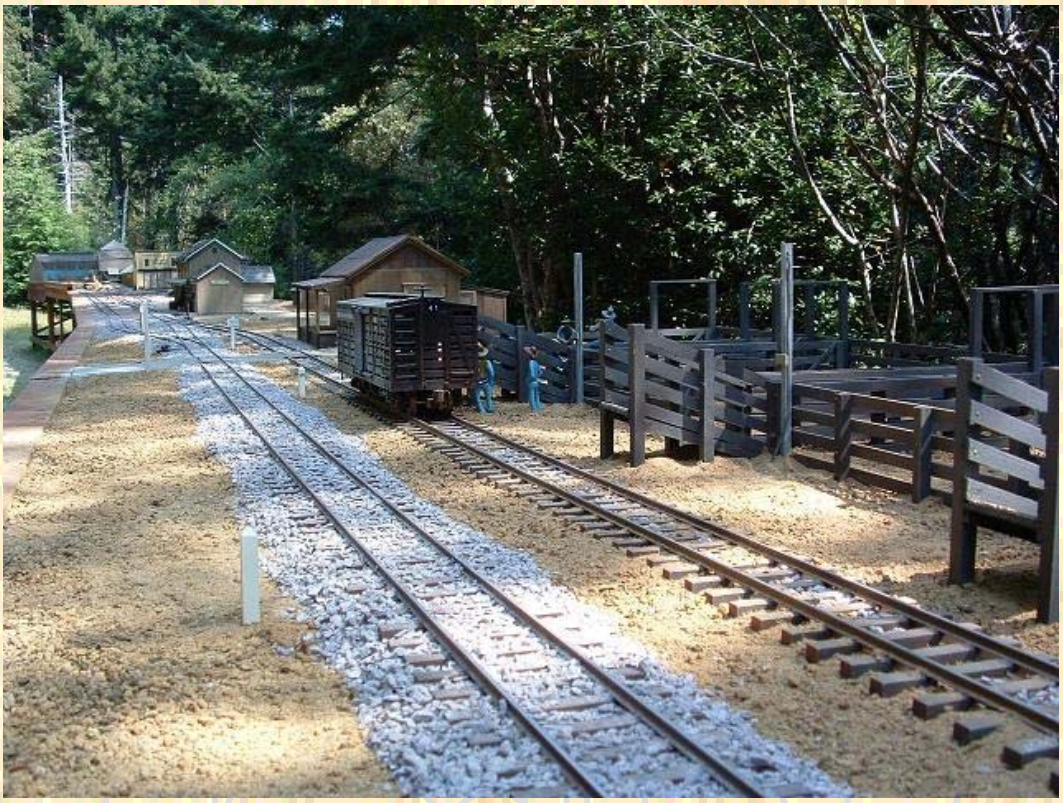


A simple garage/shed was constructed to go behind the depot adjoining a long board fence. The shed is a 4x4 and a 2x4 PT screwed together as a core and faced with cedar boards. The roof is PVC again painted and textured.



A view along the right of way prior to ballasting the track...

And after ballasting.



It's nice to actually have a working siding for the stock pens at last. Calls for a scene such as you could do on your own railroad.

It's early Sunday morning and Sabbath or not the cattle need to be unloaded.

Just a half dozen head being moved to greener pastures where they'll be fattened up for a few weeks and then sold off.

The small herd makes an interesting and almost melancholy sight as it meanders along the back road.

Small simple details can add a lot of interest to a scene. A plain old board fence, weathered, makes an excellent and colorful display when covered with various posters. It's a good fill-in for a restricted space. The posters will fade and maybe peel over time and new ones will be glued right over the top of the remnants just as in real life.

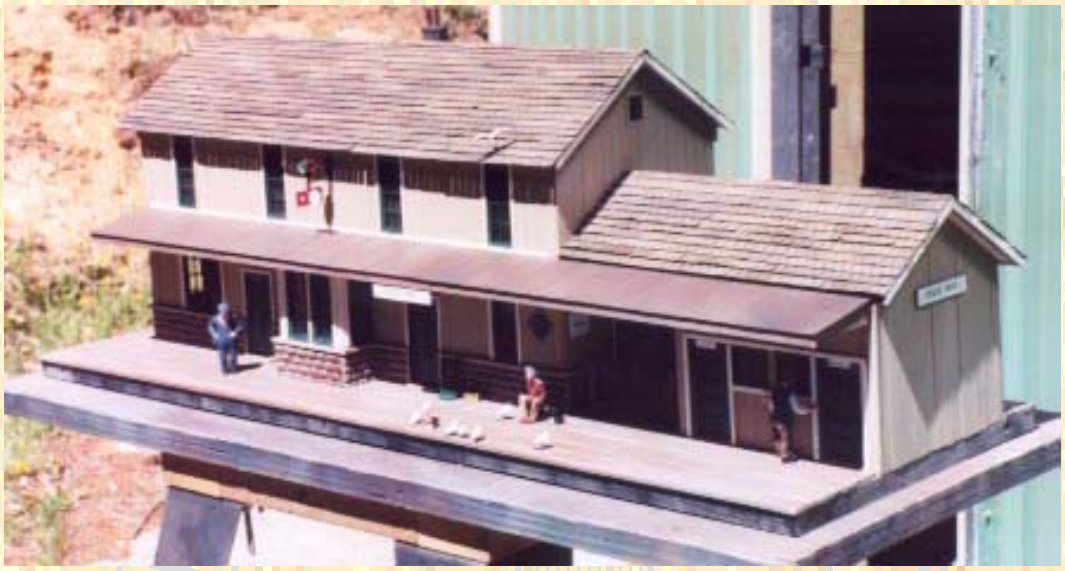
My version of "Lake Wobegon"!

The cattle came in a package of multi-scaled livestock I found in the local grocery store, about $3.95 I believe. They were a bright orange with white spots if you can believe it but they have pretty good form and look good when repainted. Only two suitable sized cattle per package but still cheap provided you don't mind repainting them. There were also some useable sheep and pigs in the package as well as a crude dog. Most of the rest was either too small in scale or unsuitable and was merely discarded.

Look at the hanging packages in toy departments, etc. There are usually mostly wild jungle animals but sometimes domesticated animals. The cattle are slightly small for 1:20 but if placed carefully look pretty good I think. I pushed the legs of the figures attending the herd a bit into the soil so they wouldn't appear so tall in comparison.

Section II
Structures Along the Port Orford Coast Railroad:
The "Coos Bay" Depot:

Here's the Port Orford Coast's new depot to be installed next spring in the RR's Coos Bay terminal.



It has lighted interior and train order board and partial interior detail.

Ol' Ned doesn't have much to do these days but sit around the depot. He still has a flock of admirers however.

The depot is built to remain outdoors all the time.

The depot has no prototype. It is a freelance design based on ideas clanking around in my head that were derived from pictures and visits to many prototype depots. The idea was to make it at once "typical" but at the same time "unique" to the Port Orford Coast R.R. There are no plans other than a couple brief notes on a 4x6 pad to keep measurements straight in my head.

While a freelance design it is influenced not only by Orbisonia but also by Santa Fe and SP influences as well all stirred together to make a northwest flavored stew. I think it came out appropriate for the look I want, a Northwest Shortline owned by a lumber company. Even the color was chosen to make it look typical yet different from the usual ochre and brown color of the bigger western roads. Mint green (much lighter than the green on my shop in the background) was runner up for color choice.

I didn't take in progress pictures, as many of the materials used are still experimental. I am documenting other structures currently being built however. Interior detail is rudimentary and mostly home built from wood and whatever is lying around except for certain key parts. I didn't want several hundred dollars worth of interior details inside buildings left outdoors all the time. An example from a cafe not quite finished yet...

He heeee! Get your attention? That's Helen, hard working and popular proprietor of "Helen's Diner".

I get most of my Plexiglas the at the glass shop. I buy his smaller bits and pieces except when I need really big pieces and he gives me a break on the price since I help clean out his leftovers. Also, if you have a TAP Plastics store near by they handle it and often a building supply dealer will have a limited supply. I know TAP down in California will even cut it for you.

The main building shell is built from 1/4" (nominal) Plexiglas to which is affixed pre-painted Simpson windows and wooden frames. The entire window areas are masked off and the entire wall painted black outside and either black or a wall color inside (depending on whether that portion is to be detailed or not). This prevents light leaks showing through from inside at night. The annex is all wood as it lacks interior details or lights.

Individual cedar boards are applied to the outside of the building. The building is braced inside where applicable with large cedar blocks carefully squared on the table saw. This gives the structure great strength needed for permanent installation outdoors. You can almost sit on it. There are a number of other materials and techniques involved too numerous to detail here.

After pre-painting the Plexiglas and both sides of the cedar siding I apply beads of Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk and set the planks into it. The brand I use is Red Devil clear and it presently costs $3.29 a tube at the local hardware store (probably cheaper yet at Home Depot, etc.). Very economical, it goes on white and dries clear. Be sure to get clear unless you don't mind it staying white.

I always insert a disclaimer here. This caulk has held up very well up here on the Oregon coast where, while damp much of the year, temperatures are moderate. Seldom does the temperature go below freezing even at night during winter and 80F+ is a rarity during summer. I don't know how well it will hold up in temperature extremes but it is labeled a "lifetime" caulk and should do well most places. If in doubt I would suggest building a small shed or something first before beginning a large project to see if this product will do the job in your setting.

The progression is as follows. I locate and cement the styrene windows to the clear Plexiglas with medium CA. Then apply pre-painted wooden window trim with the caulk. The caulk pushes against the styrene windows during the trim installation and provides a second adhesive to help hold the windows. It usually isn't necessary to frame the inside of the windows unless they are very visible.

Next windows are masked with masking tape inside and out (the window applied to the outside just shows through to the inside). Paint is applied to the Plexiglas. Siding planks are mostly precut except for some final fitting and both sides are painted. Siding is then applied. I mostly remove the masking tape when applying the siding to expose the window trim and allow a better fit. If some caulk oozes up through the planks you will have to re-mask the windows and apply a light additional coat of paint to eliminate any shine.

I apply all the siding except for the corners and final fascia, which I do after the walls, are assembled together. The Plexiglas walls are glued to each other with medium CA and braced with solid wood blocks where the interior won't show and wooden corner posts in other places all secured with the caulk. It's good to clamp if possible but not always required if held together tightly until the CA takes hold. It will hold things together while the caulk cures. An hour or so to dry and 24 hours to cure, the caulk needs to be dry to set up properly. Otherwise it could take several days.

I use the very thick 1/4" Plexiglas. Even though much costlier than thinner sizes it is thick enough to provide pretty rigid walls and gives more thickness surface for gluing the corners. Surprisingly it is very difficult to see how thick it is through the windows. To cut, I use a fine tooth planer blade with a thin kerf in my table saw. Some people install the blade backwards but I have not had to do that as long as the blade is sharp. Just be sure the Plexiglas is held down firmly and not allowed to move up & down during cutting or chipping will occur. Cut some samples first until you get the hang of it.

You may already be familiar with what I've said but perhaps others might need the additional info if you don't. I really like the results with the Plexiglas thus far. It provides a weather tight seal at the windows and doors since no holes are cut and its smooth surface when painted provides a nice interior wall finish by itself.

Give it a try and if you're in a temperature extreme I'd appreciate hearing how the various adhesives hold up.

The "Roundhouse" at Coos Bay Terminal:

The Port Orford Coast RR's B&B gang has been busy this winter trying to complete the new roundhouse by spring. Might make it (maybe). He he! Thought some of you might be interested.

Just had to get an idea how it would look in operation!

The basic roundhouse construction follows generally that of the depot, which was posted here a few weeks ago. Bob (Martin): the turntable is "Armstrong" and is manually powered (poor Manuel)

Here's an early shot of the overall layout of the structure. Actually this is the "floor plan"! I first constructed a turntable the required size, built a pit to accommodate it and then laid out the radial tracks from there. The roundhouse was simply built around the radial tracks in such a way as to provide for needed clearance at the front and desired stall length. I used to draw up plans for everything but now I usually use just a few notes on scratch paper and go from there...very technical!

The whole shebang was laid out from the turntable. I temporarily mounted a long stick on the turntable that protruded out several feet. The first stall track was laid out as to direction but without length yet. The second stall track was laid out adjacent to the first. I measured between the two tracks until I found a point that gave me 8" between centers (my own arbitrary clearance requirement). I placed a mark on the stick at that point. This was the distance from turntable to stall opening that would allow sufficient clearance for any of my locomotives once the front walls were made. Then I measured along the track line another 32" to indicate the end of the stall. Subsequent stall tracks were laid out in similar fashion using the marks on the stick to indicate doorways and stall ends. If done carefully the stalls will come out almost all the same. Mine were within 1/16". So the only relevant measurements up to that point were doorway locations and stall length. The other measurements just fall into place. A wooden "foundation" was laid out around the perimeter of the stalls upon which the walls were placed.

The roundhouse is intended strictly for permanent outdoor use, as are all of my buildings. The trick is to put together a durable robust building that is still a reasonable representation.

You will notice for example that the roof truss members are grossly oversize while the lower components are more delicate. That is to provide as much strength as possible as well as to allow more surface area to connect the roof. This is possible because the upper members won't show once everything is in place. I sometimes even enclose large cedar 2x6 blocks within a portion of a building that lacks interior detail for strength.

The roundhouse and turntable are mounted on a 2x4 framework 8 feet long and 58" wide. The turntable is 28" with 1/8" rail overhang on each end. It should accommodate the wheelbase of a Bachmann "Connie" barely. The stalls are 32".

Well, we're getting there. The lights, all 16 of them, are installed and working. The sub-roof has been installed, roof vents are being fabricated and the smoke jacks are started. All that will be left then is the actual roofing and final trim and touchup.

There are a lot of unique issues involved with trying to build reasonably realistic buildings that are durable enough to remain outdoors all year long. I have tried to stay away from delicate gingerbread details that are easily damaged by birds, varmints and weather. Fortunately typical lumber company construction was usually fairly Spartan and utilitarian.

After installing the smoke jacks I must decide on roofing type. Most types of metal roofing would be inappropriate for this style of building within my time frame and considering the fact that the Port Orford Coast R.R. is supposedly the lackey of a lumber company. My lazy side says tarpaper or tar & gravel but I think I really should shingle it. A LOT of shingling! The prototype Pacific Coast's roundhouse at San Luis Obispo, from which this roundhouse is loosely based, was built around 1886 with shingles, which it retained for its lifetime (until approx. 1940).

On the rear view you can see the two access hatches which I felt were crucial to allow working on the lighting and cleaning debris from the interior. I originally had hatches with a much lower profile that were almost unnoticeable but these proved impossible to weatherize against our wind driven rains, thus, the compromise. Once roofed over the hatches shouldn't stand out much unless you deliberately look for them.

The black objects on top of the roof in the last two shots are the inner cores for the rooftop vents. These will be sheathed over and "roofed".

Here's a close-up shot showing those roundhouse lights they are very simple. The lampshades are plastic suction cups (an idea from someone here on this site...Mike Cardillo, I think but I don't remember for sure) that are painted and drilled out in the center to accommodate a length of brass tubing which is force fit and glued into the shade. Leads from 12-volt grain-of-wheat bulbs are fed through the tubing and the whole gizmo is in turn glued into holes drilled into the lower beams of the roof trusses hanging downwards. There are four fixtures along each beam and four beams between the five stalls. Ends of wires are soldered to two bus bars that parallel each beam on either side (made from 12 gauge bare copper wire, eight total). Bus bars are wired together four and four and to the outside connecting wire to which power is connected.

10,000 Shingles (plus), but who's counting!
Shingle Counters welcome 😁😁😁

Shingles are 20# roofing felt cut into 1" strips and slotted for shingles every 3/8". Strips are pre-painted and weathered with various earth tones prior to use. Adhesive is my usual ubiquitous Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk. The brand I use is Red Devil Lifetime clear. I will overspray the entire roof with a flat clear spray after it's outdoors.

The 20# felt is of a good thickness to represent either a regular wood shingle or a heavy asphalt shingle. Other weights are available to represent whatever is appropriate for the model being built. It comes in rolls (a lifetime supply for you and friends 😁) and is available at any roofing or builder's supply.

When securing the shingles to the sub-roof be sure and glue the entire shingle tab(s) down. I left the ends unglued on my sand house to give a more irregular look and the ends curled up in the rain more than I would have wanted although they remained secured firmly in place and weathered the dampness well otherwise.

I use Krylon sprays in the camouflage series. The oil in the felt bleeds through and you don't get a "solid" finish but this improves the look I think.

Start out with a light color, like a light grey or even white, for a base. The finish will be splotchy and not at all white but don't worry. Add various earth colors and greys going from light to dark then back to light to obtain the final look you want. You don't have to wait for each coat to dry. After a couple of direct sprays start to fog the subsequent colors a bit to give a more speckled appearance.

If you want a brownish appearance use more of the "Desert Sand", "Medium Brown" and "Brown"(dark) colors and less grey. For a more grayish appearance top off with more grey.

The Krylon Camouflage colors are all flat. Black, White, Olive (drab), Light Grey, Dark Grey, Khaki, Desert Sand, Medium Brown, Brown (dark). Most stores don't seem to stock all of the colors for some strange reason. If you can't obtain any of them then you should be able to substitute any flat earth type colors or use gloss and spray over with a flat clear. Just test paint compatibility beforehand, usually not a problem these days but just in case.

A colored roof is also possible. I painted a few shingles with regular spray paints in blue and in green after first applying a white base for the oil to bleed into. The result was a blotchy colored shingle that was quite pleasing to me. I haven't used any on a structure yet but I plan on it after I start on the town dwellings.

One other thing I'm going to do from now on is to apply some paint to the underside of the shingles to see if it prevents unglued ends from curling so much in the rain. There's no problem if the tabs are glued down but I left the ends unglued on my sand house for a more "rustic" look and they curled more than I would have wanted. I'm referring here to a large portion of the shingle tabs not being glued. I've had no problem with very small unglued portions. There was no failure of the adhesive and the roof remained secure in spite of the curling nor was the roof ruined, just a bit too "rustic" for my taste.

Just an add-on: It sounds like what you obtained is felt for exterior use. What I use goes beneath the shingles on a real roof and doesn't have any rock or pebbles on its surface. It has lines drawn on one side for even application of real size shingles on top. I haven't used exactly what you described but it should still work fine as long as you're happy with the texture. I "texture" my shingles with the paint itself.

The smoke jack bases are good 'ol cedar cut into blocks, drilled out for a round wooden dowel (metal stack), beveled to fit the roof and painted and weathered. The tops of the jacks are each two lock nuts glued face to face (open slots facing one another to make six open holes around), mounted on a round washer (at bottom), painted & weathered with a square piece of aluminum flashing glued on top.

The ventilator windows are an idea from our very own "master of metal-craft", Yogi Wallace. He posted factory windows made from wire screen. Mine are from hardware cloth (wire fencing, etc.) with 1/2" squares, cut to size, painted and glued in place. Thanks Yogi!

Just some minor touchup and plugs to make for the doorways to keep lil' varmints out when not operating and....Finito! Still have to install outdoors. Will take at least 3 people to move the little beastie into place. Got the depot. Got the sand house. Need the water tank and column and the oil-fueling tank.

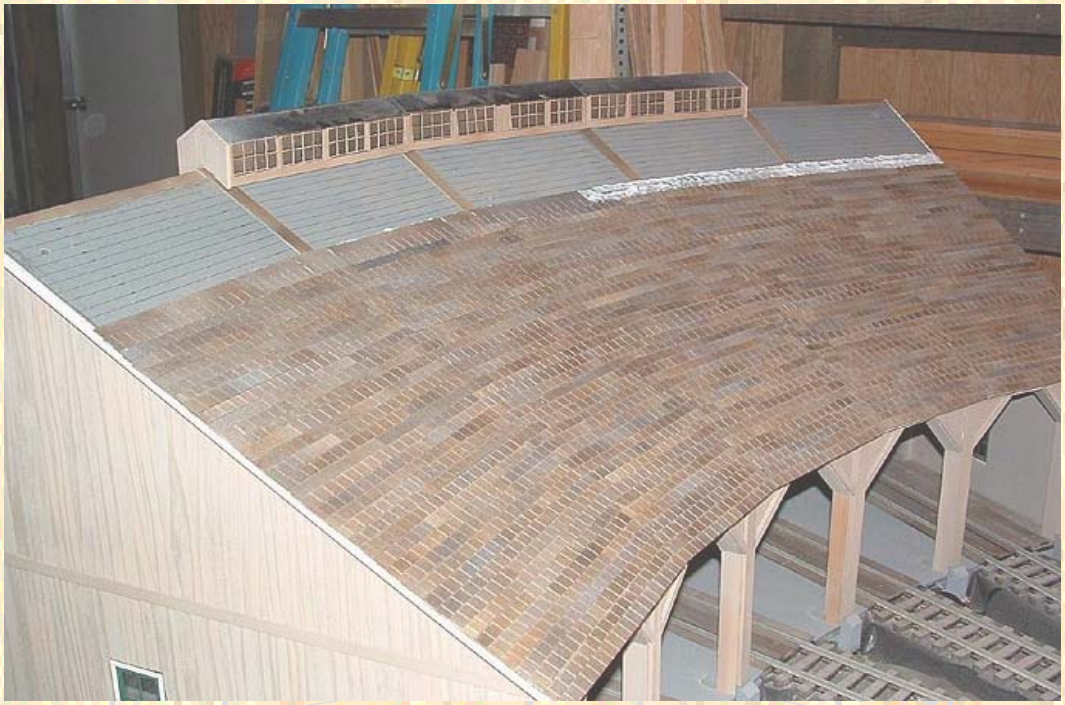
I may install fire barrels on the roof when I get some. What do you think?

You can see one of the shingle strips on the roof ready for installation. I draw lines every 3/8" on the sub-roof, which leaves a scale size 3/8" square shingle showing.

The caulk with two beads applied; one on the roof above the previous strips and the other on the shingles below just above the slotted part.

The beads are smoothed with a small putty knife (a stick will do) to cover the area where the next course will go.

Courses are applied from one end to the next. Some trimming is required and I use tin snips for that. Scissors will work fine too.



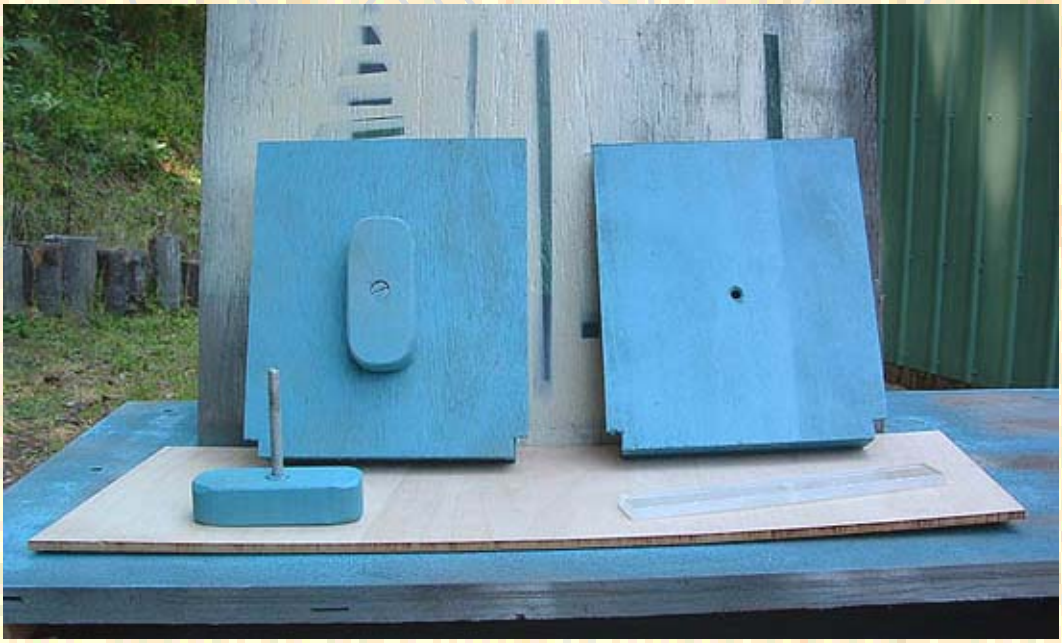
I cut the slots for the shingles by taping 25 strips together and cutting them on the band saw. Use the good blue masking tape for this so you can get it off after cutting. This isn't as easy as it sounds but is a lot easier than cutting thousands individually. The felt has a glue backing as well as being oily and full of tar. This gums up the blade quickly and is quite difficult to get off so if you do it this way use a blade you are willing to write off for other uses. I have to "clean" the blade periodically while sawing by carefully holding the blade of an old chisel against the side of the saw blade as it's turning. If anybody comes up with a better, fast method of slotting the felt strips that doesn't cost a fortune please let me know.

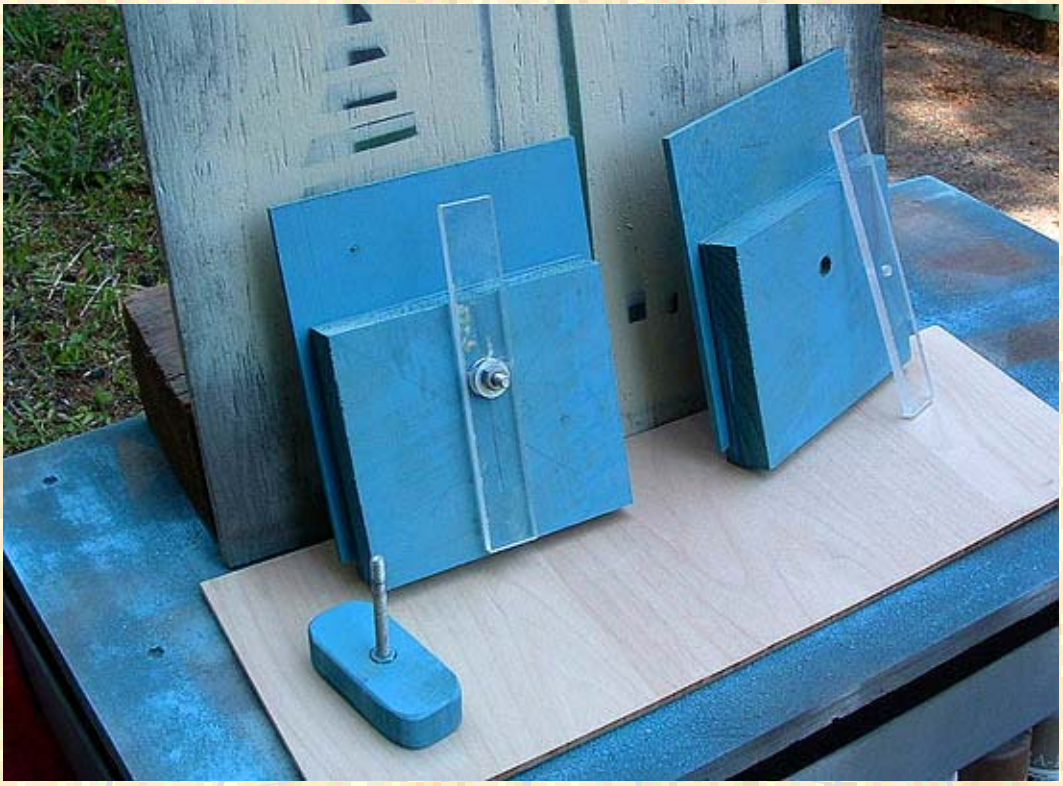
The glue heats up and sticks the strips together somewhat but a little twisting of the stack loosens it enough to peel off the individual strips. I cut strips about two feet long and then cut them shorter after putting in the slots. I've found about 6" is a good working length for the strips. The strips themselves, before slotting are cut with a steel straight edge and a utility knife. Make more than you need because there is some waste when fitting.

Most of the flashing I installed is from smaller strips of the same felt. You don't have to go this far if you don't want. It probably won't be noticed anyway except by a roofer or contractor anyway.

Since there are no doors on the front of the POC's roundhouse a solution to little varmints and the prevailing winter winds, which blow directly against where the roundhouse doorways will be, had to be found for when the railroad isn't being operated. I didn't want doors because besides the fact that many western roundhouses didn't have them I didn't want any more breakable things outdoors than I absolutely needed. Too, access for cleaning is much easier.

The plugs are really quite simple consisting of a faceplate that covers the door and a plug that goes into the doorway just far enough for a lever to close inside. The wooden handle is held on with a 1/4" bolt and nut with washer going through the whole works. On the inside is another washer; a Plexiglas lever oriented the same way as the handle, another washer and a nut. The lever is threaded onto the bolt and secured with both CA and adhesive caulk so it turns in unison with the handle.



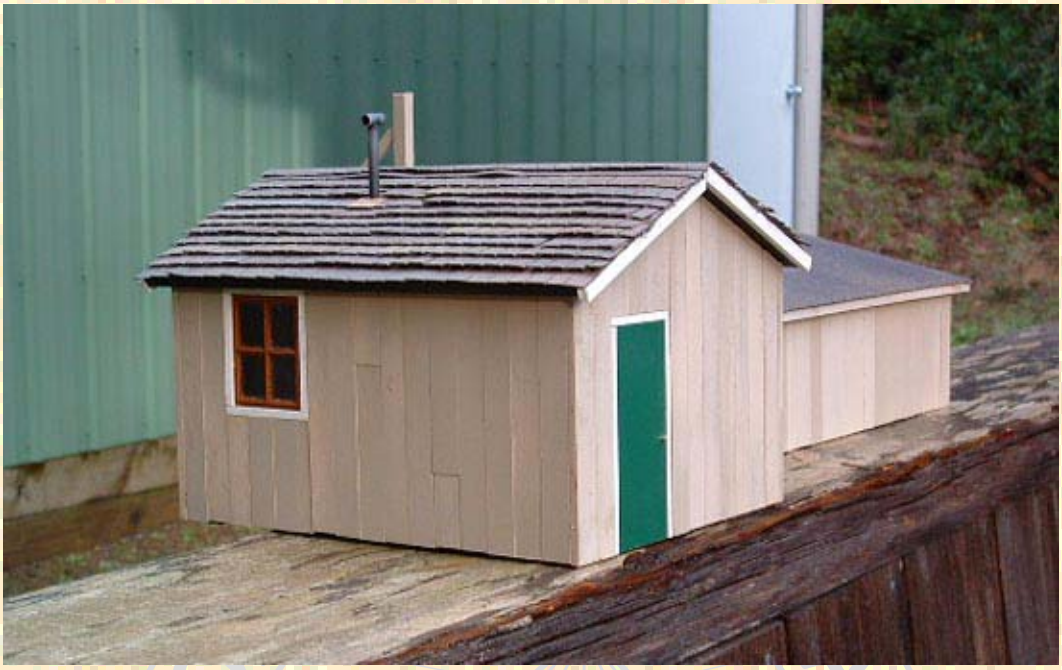


To close in place simply insert the plug with handle pointed straight and turn to about a 30-degree angle. I can't go horizontal because the doors are too close together and the levers would interfere with each other. I will glue stops on the inside surface of the plugs to inhibit movement beyond the desired angle. I'm still looking for some "soft" springs that are long enough to keep the levers in the closed position requiring gentle pressure to turn the handle to remove the plug. Until then perhaps I'll glue a couple of small pieces of weather-stripping to the inside surfaces of the levers and let friction and gravity do the job.

While not fully weather tight the plugs do close the openings enough to prevent animals and wind blown debris from entering. I used a similar method of merely setting a plug door on the tracks and latching it on my train shed. It has proven very successful even at keeping moisture out. Considering that 50mph winds are a small breeze here during winter storms speaks of that success.

The "Sand House" at Coos Bay Terminal:

Here's a very simple building that might inspire those of you that hesitate attempting to scratch-build your own structures. It is presented more as an overall technique for various types of buildings rather than specifically a sand house and is specifically intended for outdoor use.



The sand house is based loosely on the Pacific Coast Railway's at San Luis Obispo. Dimensions were derived from pictures and modified for my own needs.

The model size extrapolated to full size would measure out (approximately) as follows:

Main Building:
Width 12'-6"
Depth 16'-0"
Wall Height 8'-3"
Height at Roof Peak 11'-10"

Addition (green sand storage):
Width 25'-6"
Depth 10'-6"
Height At Front 8'-3"
Height at Rear 5'-5"

Total Width:
Both Sections: 38'-0"

The green sand storage section could be cut back to about half width and still retain pretty good proportions if 38 feet is too much building for you giving a total overall width of approx. 25'-0" Too, the walls could be reduced to 7 feet or so in height and other dimensions reduced proportionally. If you build a full size replica of the sand house I would be most interested in seeing photos of it.

Might look complicated but the entire building is nothing more than two cedar boxes secured together and sheathed with cedar siding, corrugated metal, a window from an old plastic building and a couple of homemade doors.

Seven Easy Steps:

1) Cut out the cedar walls. The eave ends don't need to be integral, they can be separate pieces cut on a miter saw and screwed and glued into place. 2x material is excellent for the walls as it is durable and gives lots of surface to glue and screw to. No need to cut out for any doors or windows...just solid thick walls that are glued thoroughly and screwed together with deck screws. Counter sink the screw heads so they won't interfere with the facade that's to be placed on the outside. The only thing really critical here aside from proper size is to make everything as square as possible. I also usually include a cedar floor as well because besides giving additional strength it helps keep bugs and moisture out. For glue I have had excellent results using a clear Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk by Red Devil. It goes on white so you can see it and dries clear. There are other brands as well such as GE, etc. Experiment and use what's best for you.
2) Paint entire structure flat black with a spray can. Choose paint that will protect outdoors. I often use automotive primers as well as paint specifically for wood. I've found Krylon spray paints to have the best nozzles and their paints are very good quality.

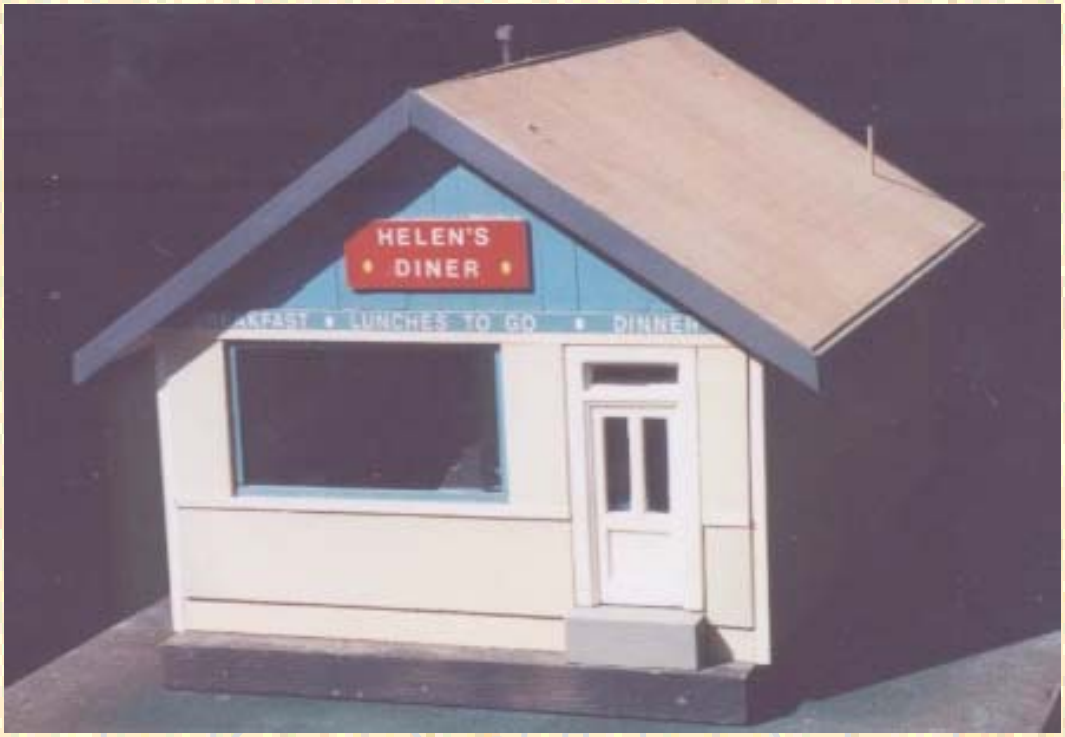
3) Pre-paint any doors and windows you wish to install and glue them in the desired locations. The doors on the sand house are simple cedar slabs sliced off to 1/8" thickness on my table saw. The window is a plastic one with clear plastic behind (I usually use thin Plexiglas here) that came from my scrap box. Measure, fit and pre-paint the window and door trim before installing. My trim is only 1/8" wide and cut to protrude ever so slightly above the siding that will be applied next.
4) Cut your siding from cedar or redwood boards by first slicing off a sufficient number of 1/8" pieces from a 2x4 or 2x6. The 1/8" slabs are then ripped to desired width for individual boards. I prefer between 3/8" and 1/2" boards for most applications. For those of you without a table saw, popsicle sticks available in bags from most craft stores and squared off on their ends make excellent siding boards although they are not cedar. Cut and fit (don't glue yet) the siding boards to each exterior wall surface. Remove boards in order and place on separate plywood or other flat surfaces and paint all the siding boards the desired color on both sides and ends to thoroughly protect the wood.
5) After the paint is dry lay building on its side and lay beads of caulk on the bare wall. Use a small putty knife, or even a stick will do, to spread the caulk into an even coat covering the entire wall except for where you already have doors, windows or trim. If you've kept your cut siding in order as you painted it you can now simply apply one board at a time in proper order onto the wall. Lay each board carefully in its place and avoid sliding them around. Press firmly to set them in place. If they move a bit when pressing down then adjust them back into place. Wipe off any excess caulk squeezed up between the boards. Give a couple hours to dry before proceeding to the next wall surface.
6) Measure and cut your sub-roof(s) next. Allow sufficient overhang and make as thick as the scale of the building will allow. You can use plywood, Plexiglas or any material you wish. Just be sure that it has a reasonable chance of holding up in the great outdoors whatever you choose. I use either an exterior plywood or 1/4" Plexiglas usually. Once again paint everything on both sides and edges THOROUGHLY and screw and glue to structure. For Plexiglas pre-drill clearance holes for screws...it cracks easily if you try and drive a screw through larger than the hole. Countersink the screw heads. Measure, pre-paint and apply any fascia trim, etc. at this time.
7) Apply roofing of your choice on top of sub roof with the glue (caulk). The shingles I used are strips of 20# roofing felt slotted to represent individual shingles and pre-painted & weathered. I spread caulk as for the walls and apply strips about 4" to 6" long along lines I have scribed on the roof surface to keep them straight. I cut the strips 1" wide and slot them every 3/8" to represent individual shingles. I apply strips every 3/8" along the roof, which makes a nice size shingle. For the annex section I used a solid piece of roofing felt that was over sprayed with a texturing spray and then painted.

That's all there is to it! Aside from any last minute details you have a building that should hold up pretty well outdoors. Remember that even a real building does deteriorate over time. There's no reason to expect your model not to do likewise but maintenance should be minimal and the building will hold up a lot better than the typical plastic structure if constructed with reasonable care.

Hope this helps to get some of you procrastinators out there busy...he he! Good luck and let us know how you do!

Helen's Diner at Coos Bay:

Here's a quickie, just in case you want to "push the envelope" a bit:



This building is built just like the sand house except the front wall is 1/4" Plexiglas to allow for see through windows. Shingles have not yet been applied to roof.

Rear wall is solid wood, as backroom has neither lights nor detail

Rear and sidewalls are wood. Front wall is Plexiglas. Pre-painted door and pre-painted wood trim was glued in place on clear Plexiglas front wall. Door and area for large picture window were masked over on both sides and wall was painted on both sides. Masking tape removed and window frame cut and fit for large window and pre-painted & glued in place. Front pre-painted facade glued as for sand house. The roof is held in place by two screws, one on each end of eaves for access to inside.

This building has interior and lights but same procedure would be used for building without interior but just lights. Only difference is interior walls would be painted black and clear window areas fogged over to allow light to show but to obscure viewing of interior.

A Water Column for the POC:

Well, one more little item out of the way....

MTH makes this little beauty. It's listed as "O" scale but seems a little large for "O". I haven't scaled it out however. Fred Mills put me on to this product a couple month ago so I ordered one.

It's a little short for large-scale so I lengthened the column about an inch with brass tubing. The top and bottom of the column pull apart quite easily so adding the length was fairly easy. The whole water column is die cast. Very nice quality.

After repainting and weathering it took on an "air of respectability".

Size wise it looks quite good except it definitely has too short of a spout for 1:20.3. Not bad at all for 1:24/1:22.5 though. For you lucky steam guys in 1:32/1:29 this column would look superb in your engine terminal or between the tracks at a depot in route. It fits very nicely between tracks about 7" on center.

This is my first MTH acquisition and it's excellent! Maybe they can be persuaded to produce this at least with a longer column for their 1:32 line.

The Water & Fuel-oil Tanks at the POC's Terminal:
(The Water Tank)

The material is almost all cedar including the siding. MDS plywood was used for the sub-roof as it will be completely covered and well protected by the roofing & trim.

The plans come from Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette and were drawn by Gary Caviglia.

Figuring the various roof & wall angles were somewhat hit and miss, as geometry was never my best subject. I tackled it because of the challenge and not because of any expertise on my part.

The structures are very solid for outside use as are all the structures I build now. It's quite a change from scale interior walls and fragile details to learning to fool the eye by suggesting what isn't there. Never win any modeling contests but they should last awhile.

Okay you ask yourself. What's the building...a mailbox???

Actually there is a prototype...the V&T's double enclosed water tank at Carson City, Nevada. I've changed the color however to conform to POC RR practices. The photo shows the first of the siding being applied.

Hopefully it'll resemble a rectangular water tank when done. I will not tempt fate however and leave it out front lest it be stuffed with junk mail!

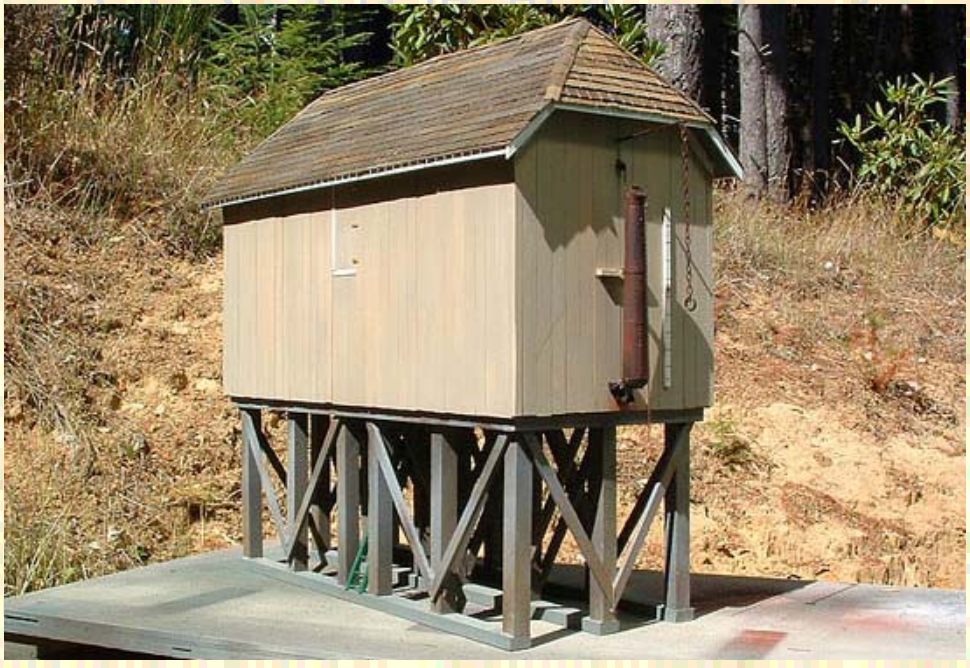
Update on the water tank, since the above photos were taken I've completed the siding on the water tank. I'm in the process of fitting two Hartford waterspouts to the water tank. More pictures later as a "reply" to this post.

Just need the roof and minor touchup and all done.

Looking like a patient undergoing acupuncture the water tank's sub-roof is temporarily attached for final fitting. Then it will be removed, painted thoroughly on both sides and attached permanently. Just fascia trim and roofing material to go, haven't decided if I'll shingle it or not. What do you think?

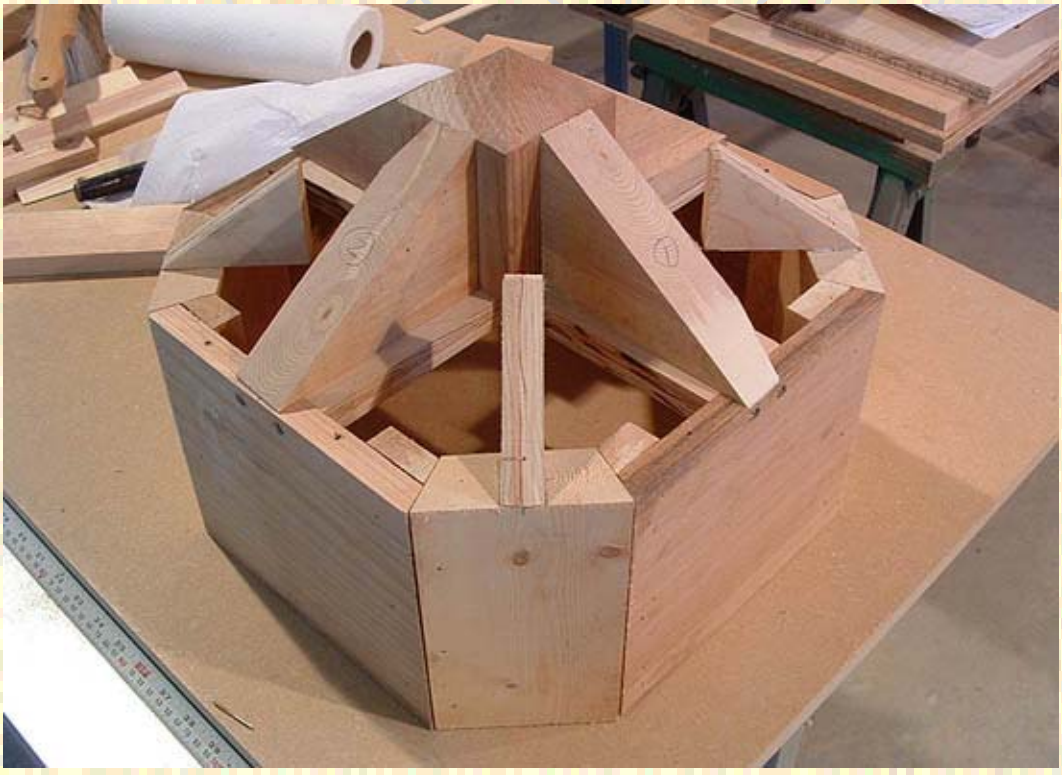
Well, I'm halfway there. One down one to go!

As you can see, seemingly I didn't suffer enough roofing the roundhouse, I decided to go that route with the water tank as well. It just seemed to cry out for shingles. The oil tank will definitely not get shingles even though the V&T's original did.



(The Fuel-oil Tank)

The second structure is also from the V&T at Carson City...an unusual wood enclosed oil fueling tank. See? A prototype for everything. He he!



There was a 20' steel tank on a raised platform enclosed within an octagonal wooden structure. This is the beginning of the tank enclosure showing all the internal bracing to get the shape right.

Wow! First this guy builds a mailbox and now he's workin' on an ugly grey box! Actually the trickiest part is getting all the angles right, especially that roof.

The tank had four windows, one on each small wall of the octagon. These windows are actually a little larger than the prototype but I had them on hand and they just looked like they belonged there. They are blanked out with black as there is no interior detail or lights.

The next two images show the tank structure atop its platform.

Last photo shows the oil structure beside the sand house for a size comparison. The prototype platform was about 19 feet tall.

Since these photos were taken I've installed board & batten on the oil tank. More pictures later as a "reply" to this post. The structures are both quite heavy already and would make a quite formidable weapon. So...don't mess with me eh?? 😂😂😂

Here's the oil tank with board & batten applied.

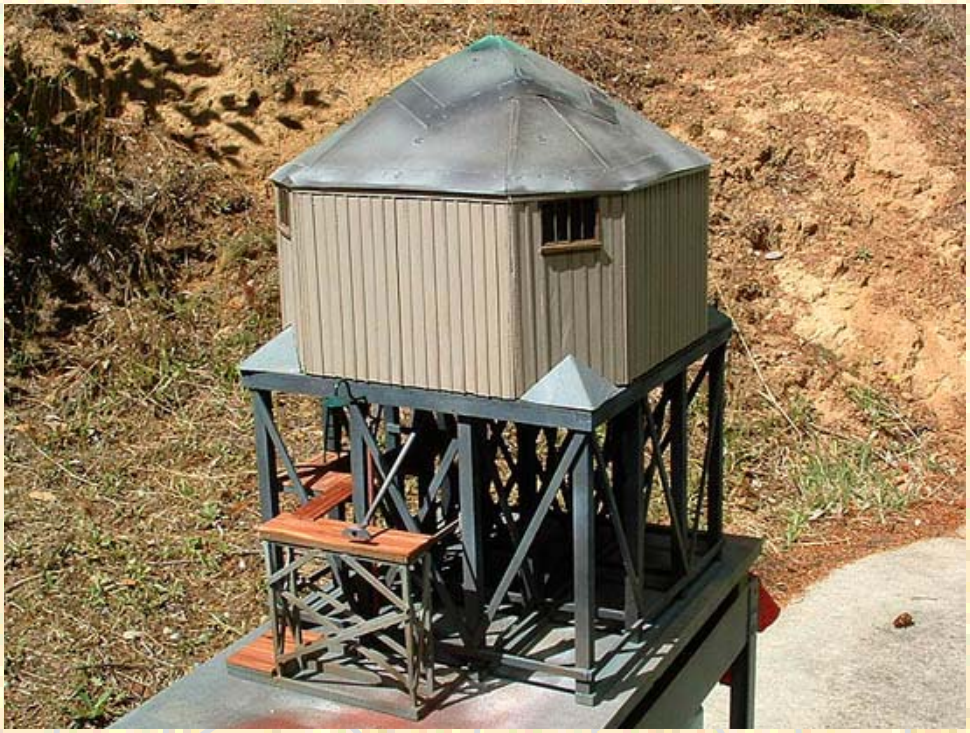
I included my "stumpy" figure for size comparison, as most everybody knows what size he is. You will note the small grey protuberances on each corner. They are rough in for small roof structures that were on the prototype. You might ask why the platform wasn't made octagonal to match the tank or why if there already was a square platform they didn't simply make the enclosure square as well. Be that as it may they apparently had a moisture problem on the exposed platform floor corners, probably mostly from melting snow or frozen water leaching under the walls. Answer...more work for the carpenters to make little roofs. Very impractical but fodder for the modeler.

Well like the tortoise, I'm slow but I'm steady! "Yup!"

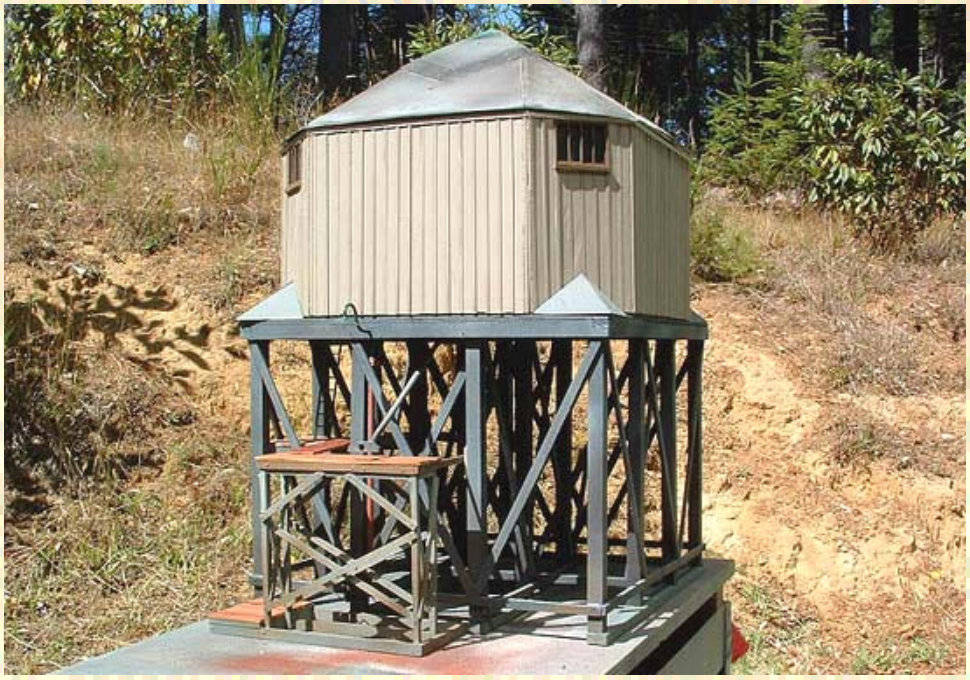
More work here than it looks like. Made new oil delivery pipe (didn't like the old one), installed light and conduit and built the oil fueling platform. I left the decking unpainted except for a flat clear coat. That cedar just came out too pretty to cover with paint. Hopefully it'll weather up okay.

The prototype didn't have all the lower decking, just a stand-alone platform close to the one I replicated. I needed to secure the platform to the oil tank for greater strength to survive the rigors of outdoor life. The lowest grey timbers won't show once everything's installed outside. The light is my own addition for night ops and pix.

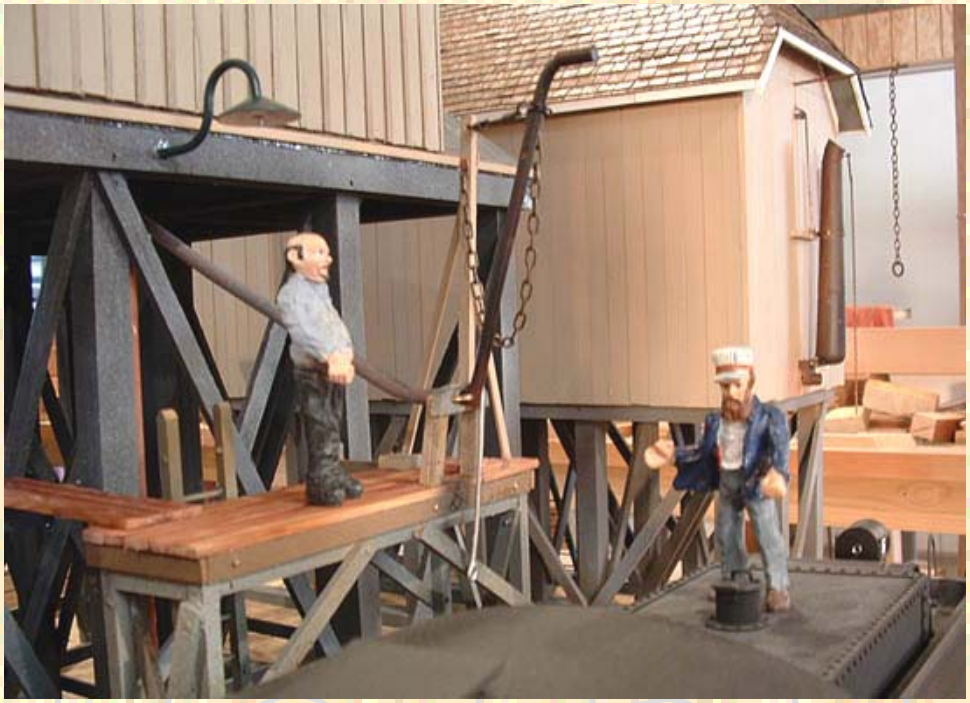
Here everything's set in place, not glued yet. Still have the fuel-filling spout to fabricate, a ladder for the platform, a fuel level gauge and the roofing to do.

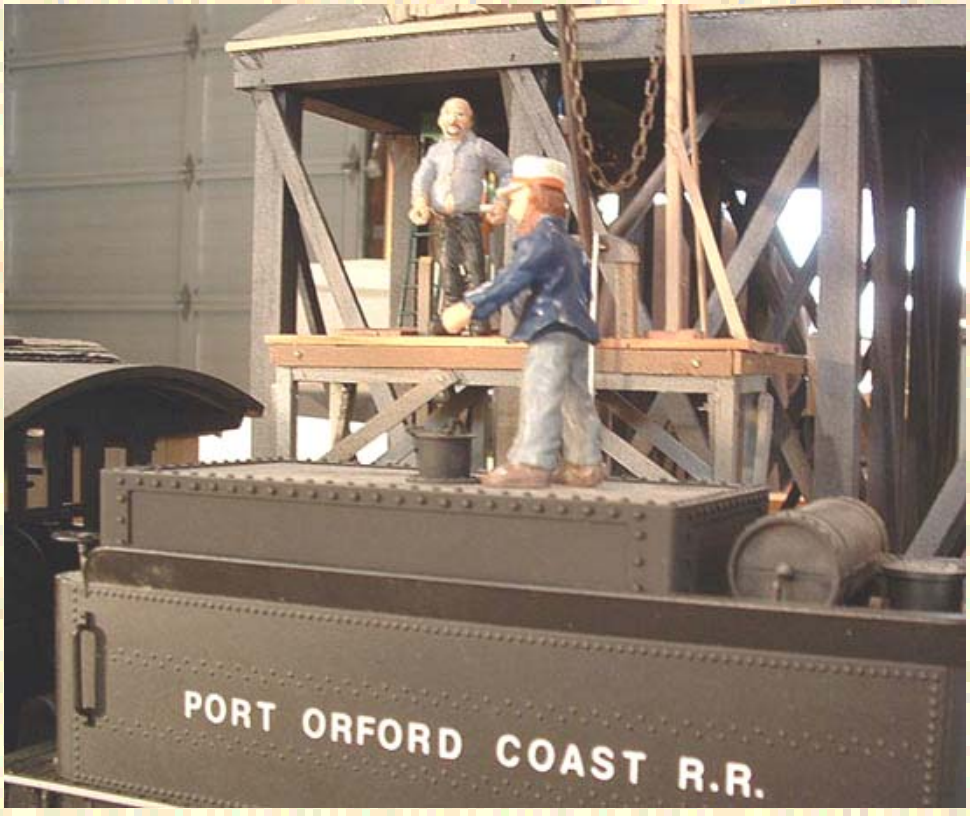


Here's an eye level view. One thing's for sure...there won't be many of these babies on people's railroads.

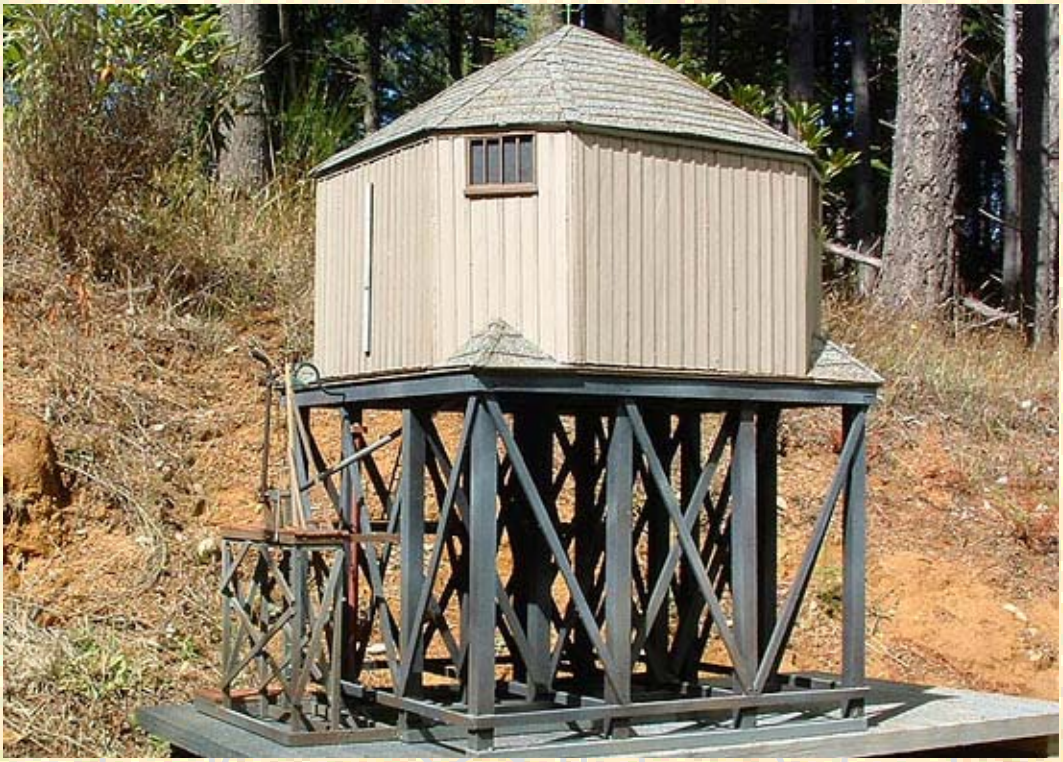


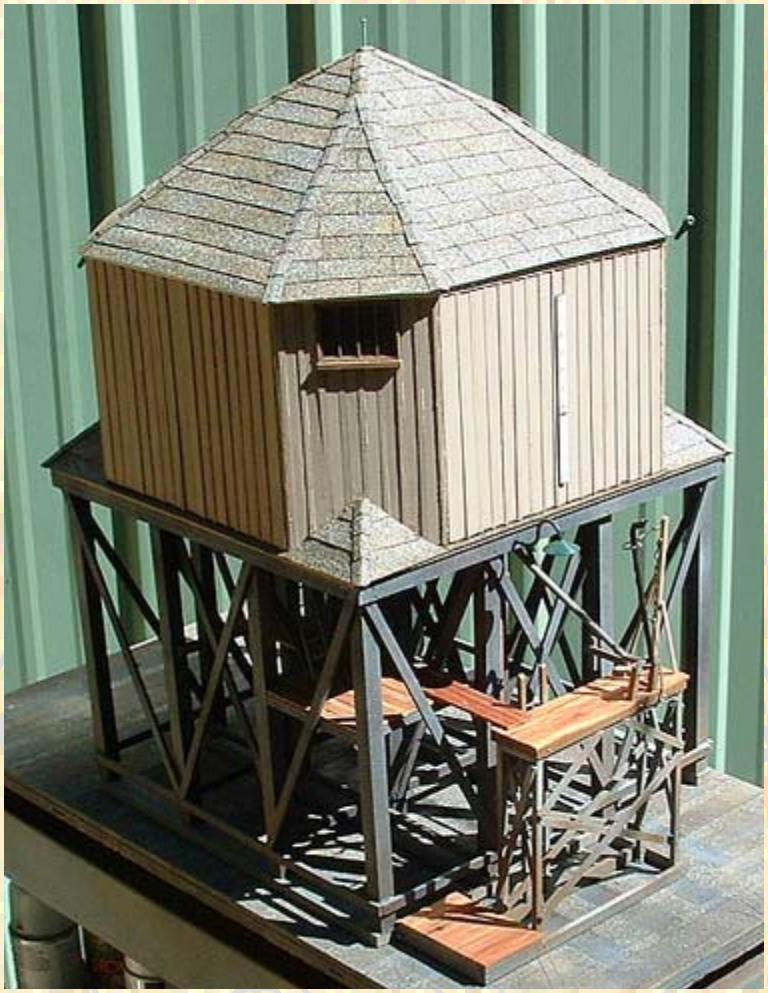
The deck and spout still need a little refinement and the chain is a little on the heavy side (all I had) but Harry Hopper the "Happy Hostler" can handle it.





That's it. Both finished except for final installation, next spring? Got a few more structures to go between now & then. Not quite sure what's next. Anyway it's been fun!!





The buildings will be screwed down to wooden foundations that are in turn secured to the bench work. The foundations themselves will be largely covered with dirt and/or ballast material and won't show.

The buildings are mostly quite heavy and ordinarily wouldn't be much affected by wind but the only way they'll move after installation is if the whole works goes. Also cuts the likelihood of theft way down as it'd take a long while for someone to find and uncover the screws holding the buildings and time is the enemy of any thief. These same screws will allow me to remove them if necessary for repairs. Of course vandalism can still occur but at least theft is highly unlikely.

The roofing is of the very same material as the shingles on the other structures. Just done up different.

This time instead of slotting for shingles solid strips were used and exposed approx. 3/4" instead of the 3/8" I used with the regular shingles on the other buildings. Painted with brown & grey tones mostly at first and then over-sprayed with a granite texturing paint that gives an asphalt look. The strips were all painted before installation, which not only gives complete coverage but slight variations in color and tone as well. The granite is available in several colors but none totally suited me so I opted for the black. It has whitish flecks in it. The undercoating of brown and grey shows through to give the color you see.

After drying for 24 hours, it's still soft to the touch, I scored vertical marks with a utility knife and widened with an ice pick to represent separate pieces. I believe this technique should work quite well to represent smaller asphalt shingles I intend to use on houses for the town as well as for solid tar & gravel for flat store building roofs. Just require some color manipulation. The instructions on the spray can warn to spray a clear protective spray on top to prevent rain from washing off the texturing if used outdoors. I am spraying a clear flat over the entire roof after installation.

The texturing can also be sprayed directly on to a wooden roof but the question arises as to how watertight this would be. I prefer the protection of the 20# felt but for indoor use it wouldn't be necessary.

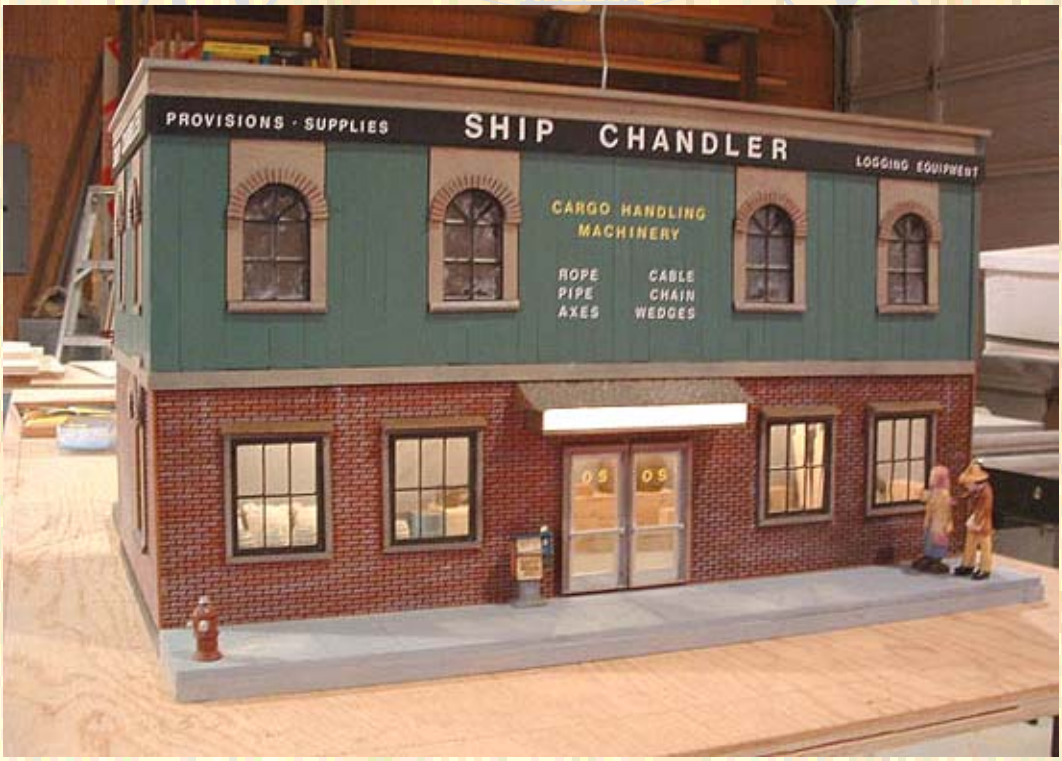
The Ostby Supply Company:

There's a new business in town...!

The design is freelance but was inspired by a Drugstore painting on a Christmas card. Originally the structure was going to be a small town department store but as it developed it took on a life of its own. I remembered seeing a Chandler's building in San Francisco among others of similar ilk and the "bulbs lit up". After that it just sort of flowed together.

The building took about 4 weeks to think about and 4 weeks (part time) to build. I'm a "deep" thinker! He he he! I put notes and sketches on a pad as ideas and potential problems come to mind. I seldom do a formal drawing unless there's a real need or unless I'm trying to follow a specific prototype.

The intention was to create a building that was at once unique but also typical. It's my memory of such buildings both in old photos and in the flesh that are the inspiration for the Ostby Supply Co. I've always had a fondness for the general looks as well as the signage style used many years ago. I think something was definitely lost when common sense signage was replaced with weird logos that look more like indefinable contorted shapes than commercial identification.



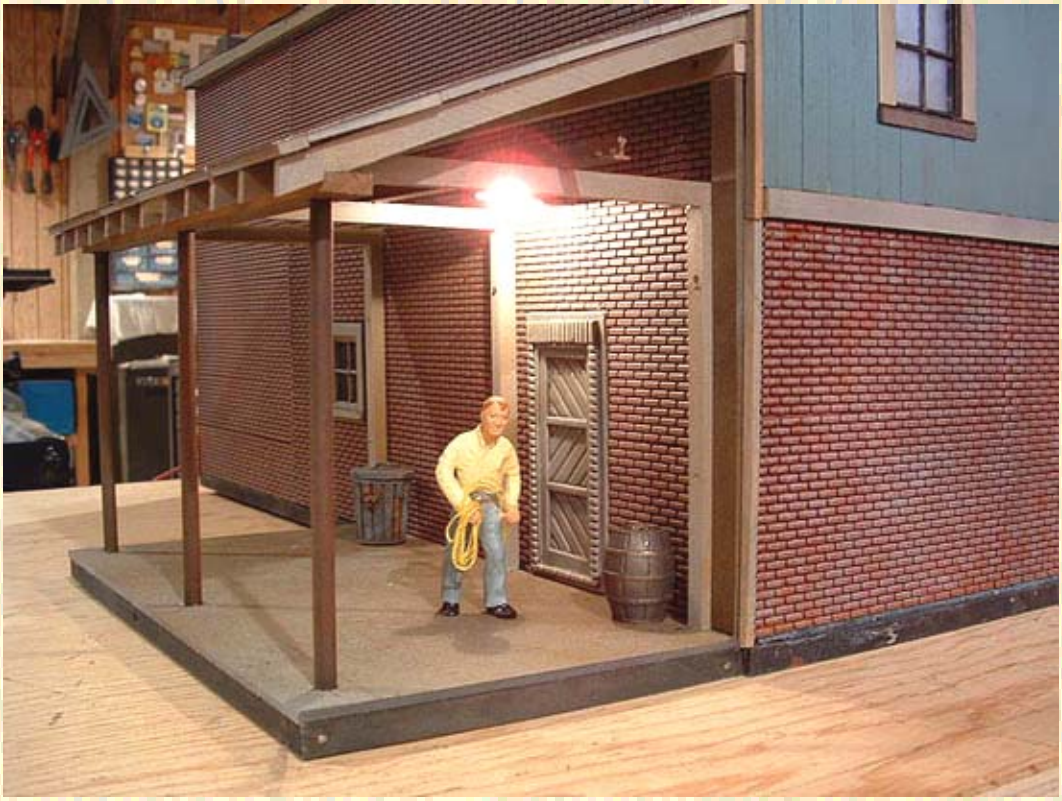
There are several makers of peel off vinyl lettering. Chart-pak is one and US Stamp & Sign makes "Headline" brand. I have used a third also the name of which escapes me. You won't find any size smaller than 1/4" and all are supposedly the same type of letters although there are minor differences between them. Use colors gold, silver and red with caution. They fade in the sun. White is the best with black and yellow being next I think. The white lettering on the bridge shown has no damage or noticeable discoloration at all, now going into its fourth winter outdoors.

I presently get my lettering at Staples. The best bet is stationary/office supply stores for the best selection. You can find some types at craft stores and even Wal-Mart but usually they only handle 1 inch and up and often, in wild colors. Worth checking out though just in case. FYI the signs on Ostby Supply were all 1/4" in height except for "Ship Chandler" which was 1/2".


SHIP CHANDLER


SHIP CHANDLER


SHIP CHANDLER



This is my first large-scale use of Precision Products veneer siding (the brickwork). We'll see how well it holds up outdoors when I install the building outdoors next Spring. Also the upper floor windows are modified Precision Products.

Two of the main walls are 1/4" Plexiglas and two are Cedar. The lower windows are Simpson and the front door is scratch built inside Simpson doorframes. Sidewalk and rear cement platform is Plexiglas framed with cedar strips and painted. Signs are made from vinyl peel off lettering with the Ostby Supply sign lit from behind. The "Ostby" lettering doesn't show on most of the photos because to compensate for low light when the photos were taken the sign became very bright obliterating the lettering.

Except for windows, fireplug, paper rack and misc. barrels, etc. the building is entirely scratch built.

The lettering isn't all that hard to do with practice. I use masking tape, the good blue stuff, to identify the bottom(s) of the line of lettering I'm doing. I write the full name out on a piece of paper and count all letters and spaces to find the middle letter or space. Measuring the tape line to find the middle I place a mark. Then I begin lettering from the middle outwards to both ends, remove the tape and go to the next line. If you goof and get a letter crooked don't try and save it once it's pressed down. Just rip it off with tweezers and start over with a new letter.

The Plexiglas can be obtained at most any glass shop. Sometimes if they have an excess of smaller odd pieces they will give you a break on the price. I use 1/4" thick almost exclusively for structure walls to give greater strength and rigidity. I feel it's well worth the extra price. Also **TAP Plastics** has Plexiglas at reasonable prices. They sell up to full approx. 4' x 8' sheets down to whatever size you need. They will also cut it to size for you for, I presume, a small additional charge. They ship UPS up to 2' x 4' size and a friend of mine was told that if a full 4x8' sheet was ordered they'd cut it into 2x4' pieces to ship for free. I understand one of the people at TAP in San Leandro, California is also a garden railroader.

There are two seams in the brickwork. One is in the middle of the front wall just above the door; the "Ostby" sign hides it. The other is along the back wall. I originally thought about hiding it with a drain pipe or something but after considering that solution I realized that many buildings have disparate colors and texturing along their back facades where lean-to's etc. were taken down or where repairs were made so I left it as is. I kind of like the different color shade, etc. along an otherwise boring blank wall.

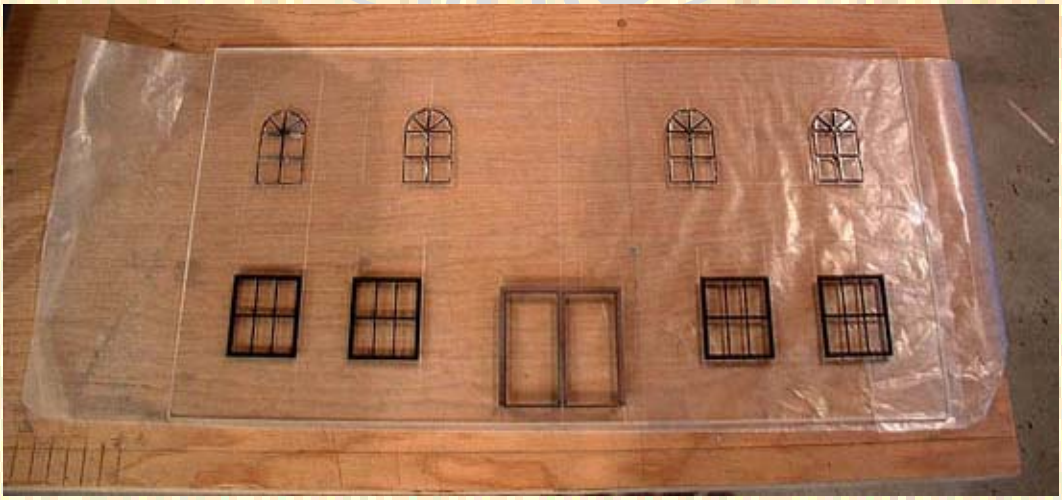
The adhesive I use is what I use for almost everything up here; Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk. The Red Devil brand I use goes on white and dries clear. It is also paintable and retains its elastic qualities while holding almost everything.

The flat roof isn't really flat. It is pitched ever so slightly to the rear. Should be no problem at all for rain although I don't know about being buried in snow for long periods.

While I can't attest to the durability of the siding/adhesive because this is the first time I've used them together on a large surface I can attest as to the durability of both the vinyl lettering and the adhesive as used for other materials including wood to Plexiglas.

I'm sorry to bore everyone with the preceding picture again but it illustrates a proven use of both the vinyl lettering and the adhesive. This bridge was installed outdoors in July 2000 and is beginning its 4th winter outdoors (it's currently Nov. 2003). Aside from the RR herald, which was only paper and expendable, not one part or one letter has come off so far. The track is abandoned now pending rebuilding but the bridge is still installed in place. It has never been brought indoors since it was placed and has had absolutely no repairs done to it. The paint is a little worn but still good. It will be used on the new RR but will remain in place here until it's needed.

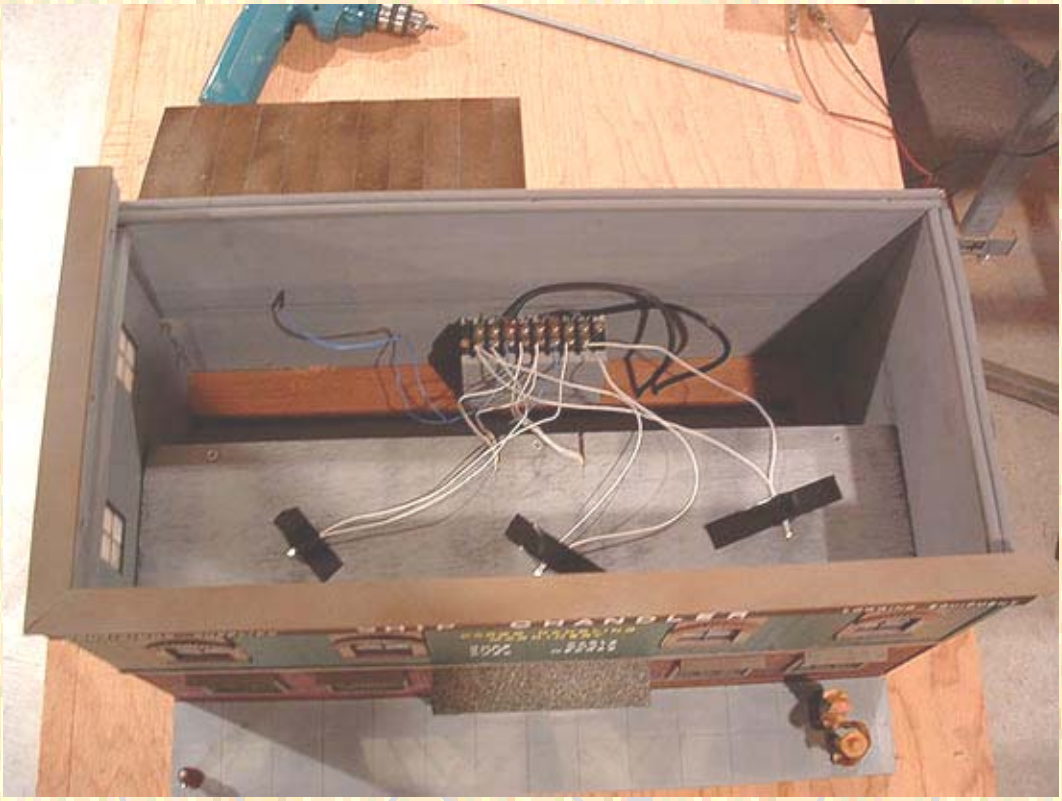
The windows are attached to the clear Plexiglas with CA. They will be further secured with the Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk when the wooden frames and siding is attached adjacent. The upper windows are the Precision engine house windows cut down from their original 10 or 12 panes. The lower windows are a Simpson product (Grandtline would do as well here depending on style you wanted). They are pre-painted before attaching.



Here the masking tape has been removed from both sides of the windows after the Plexiglas has been painted on both sides and the first wooden parts of the upper window facade has been glued in place. I prefer black for the outside color as it stops light leaks well and if a board separates a bit from its neighbor only black will show.

The interior was painted a light grey. It came out blue in this photo for some reason. The building was divided longitudinally providing two "rooms". One to light and the other as a "well" in which to bring in the electrical wiring.

An inner ceiling was made to enclose the detailed part of the interior. It slides into a slot made from two strips of cedar in the front and is screwed to the inner wall in three places with phillps head screws. Holes were drilled into the ceiling allowing a gentle force fit for the bulbs to show through. A more detailed description of the wiring is under "Lights" in this forum.



The wooden facade is Krylon 3512 **Sage Satin** that I "discovered" several months ago and put aside for the right time to use it. The wooden trim is Krylon's **Desert Sand** from their "Camouflage" series. The brick was done with a base coat of Bondo **Red Primer** for the main color, over-sprayed with some black and brown then dry brushed with white for highlights. Just one way of doing it. I have seen some better treatments for brick colorization by others here on this site. Everything was then clear coated except for the see through windows on the first floor, which were masked a second time.

I've just become aware of the Ozark windows but I haven't seen them yet. I will be trying them in the future, as I love Ozark's products. Any window that can be glued to the Plexiglas should work fine John although of course they will have to be glued shut and won't operate. Part of the "philosophy" behind the solid clear Plexiglas walls is to avoid any openings or window joints that invite insect or dirt intrusion. My buildings are not intended to be "contest quality" but rather a compromise that makes them as durable as possible for outdoor use while including whatever detail is possible consistent with their use. Because of this I try and stay away from overly "gingerbready" structures and operating features even though I love the Victorian era of architecture. Outdoors every lump of clutter, every overhanging feature and every access inside will quickly fill with cobwebs, nests and cocoons, etc.

The Smoke House:

Finally used up the swell interior details I bought at the last Garden Railways' Convention in Sacramento. Most are from **Just Plain Folks** except for the customer (LGB) and the scratch built items. All done except for some touchup work.

The roofing is the usual 20# felt cut into strips and painted black on both sides. The top surface was over-painted with a "granite" paint for texturing and then toned down a bit with a light spray of Bondo flat black primer. Everything except clear window areas was sprayed over with a flat clear.

Three of the walls are 1/4" clear Plexiglas and the back wall and floor are 1x (3/4" finished) #2 cedar. I usually use cedar for walls that lack see through or light emitting windows. The cedar being thick gives a good solid surface to secure the Plexiglas to and helps hold everything square. I glue (Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk) and pin the Plexiglas to the cedar wall(s) and floor.

One reason I scratch-build the buildings instead of using kits or pre-built buildings. It gives me a uniformity of construction

The front windows and door are by Grandtline; the windows on both sides and door on the left side are all made by Simpson.

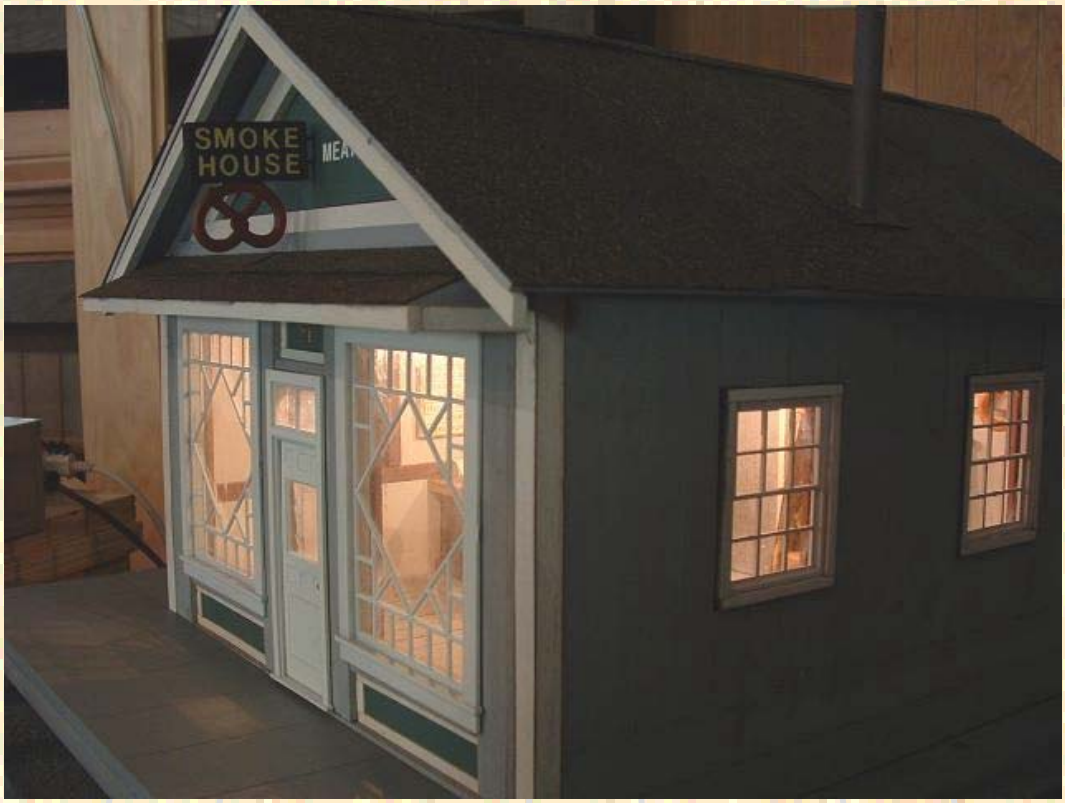
I thought about more signage but opted for simplicity. I may add more signage later after I've had a chance to think about it more.

I have to opt for interior detail when a building will be in a high visibility area. So I'm putting more interiors in the buildings than I would recommend to most others because they will be on a narrow raised right of way and easily viewed at eye level. Since the buildings will be outdoors I try and keep exterior clutter and detail to a minimum as it catches debris and quickly becomes full of cobwebs and other insect "goodies". The paper roll is a wooden dowel painted white with a small amount of plain white computer paper wrapped & glued around it.


QUALITY SMOKED MEATS & CHEESES
Smoked
Meat
SPECIAL
of the
MONTH


LINK SAUSAGE
BACON


QUALITY SMOKED MEATS & CHEESES
25 LB.
Smoked

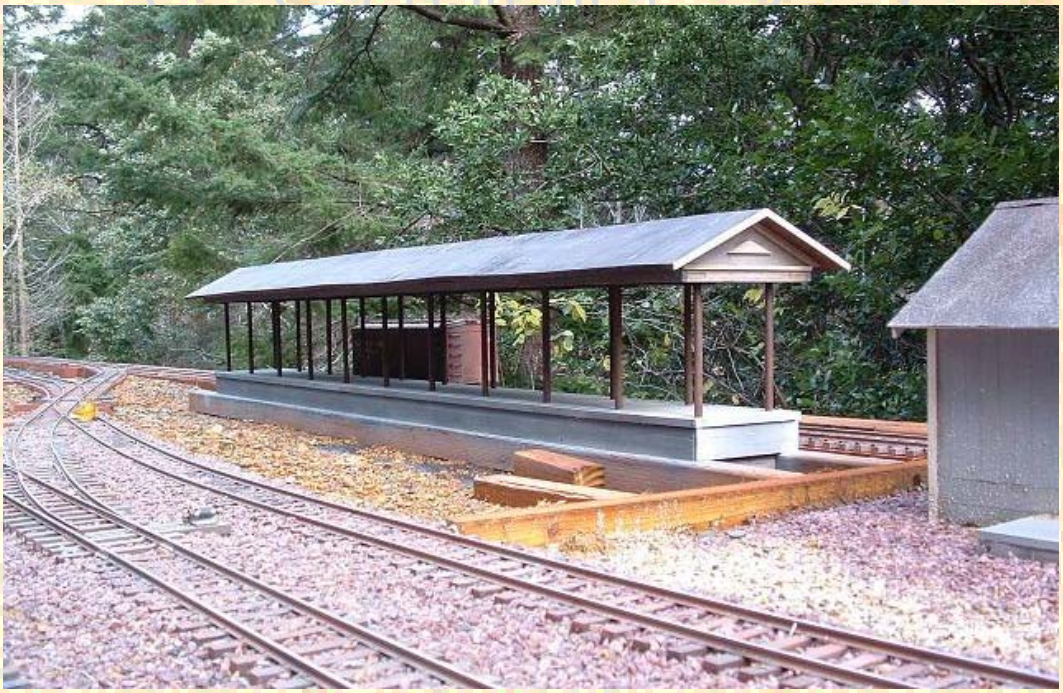

SMOKE
HOUSE

What About Multi-scale Structures:

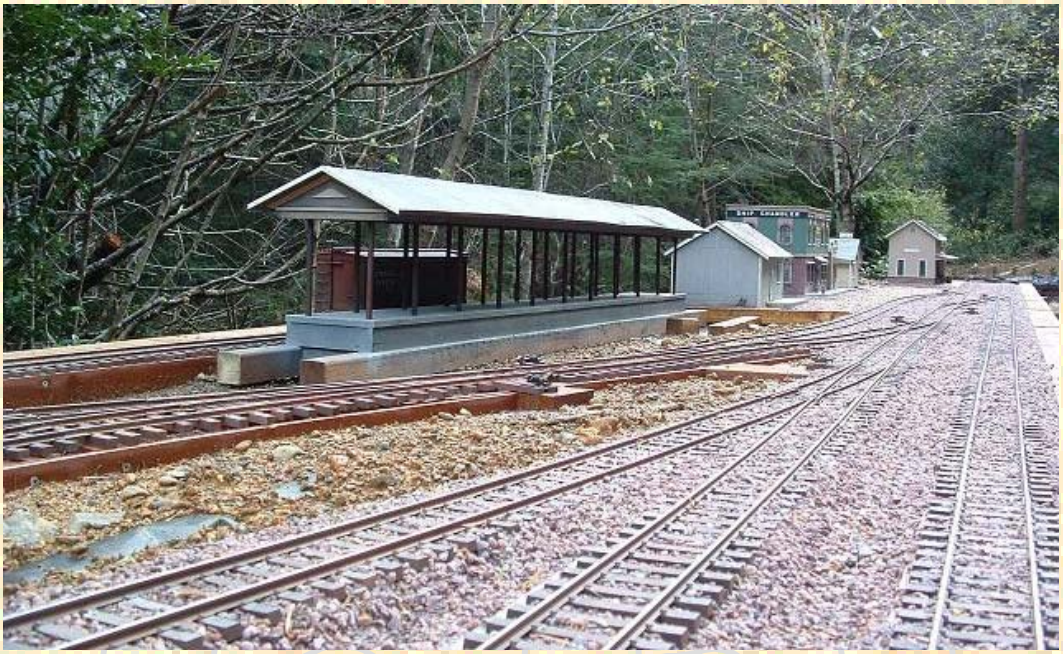
One way to have buildings suitable for more than one scale is to carefully choose the type and design of structures located at trackside....

This is a structure I'm currently working on. It is intended as a rail/truck transfer shed for a team track. The boxcar is a regular sized 1:22.5 Bachmann model.

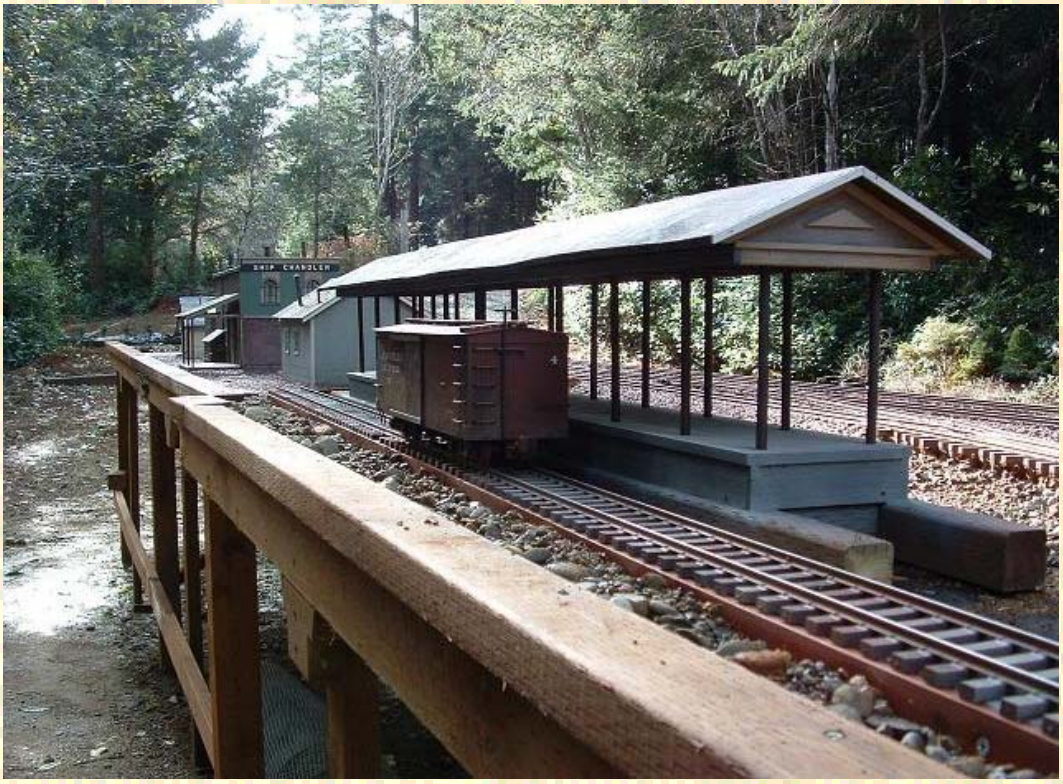
Shed is 5 feet long by 6" wide and the roof spans 10" in width and 63" length.



Vertical clearance for roof overhang is sufficient to clear 1:20.3 boxcars and the structure will be placed adjacent to a track siding that will allow for up to 1:20.3 width cars. Cars were loaded/unloaded using metal plates to span the gap from the dock to the car floor so even a 1:24 car would look fine alongside.



There is a bit of latitude too for the dock height so it could feasibly serve even 1:29 or 1:32 cars. Some difference in heights between cars and dock wasn't all that uncommon.



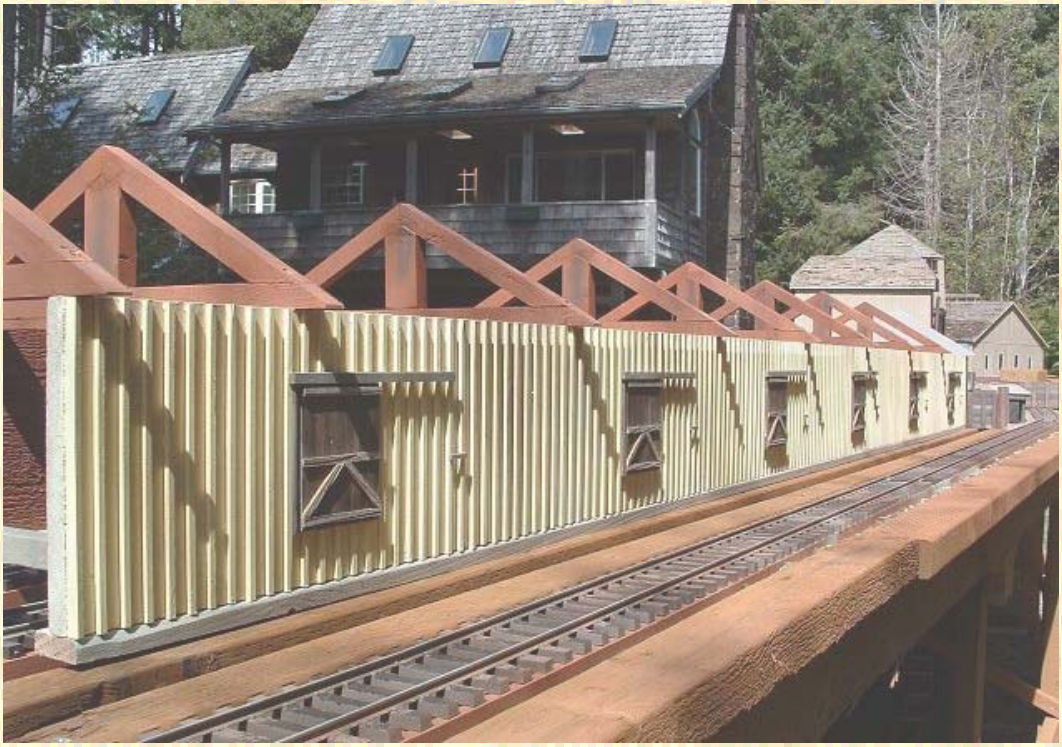
A simple structure like this can provide good "industry" for your railroad while accommodating several scales. Similar structures with or without a roof could hold a small crane or conveyor without being scale-specific.

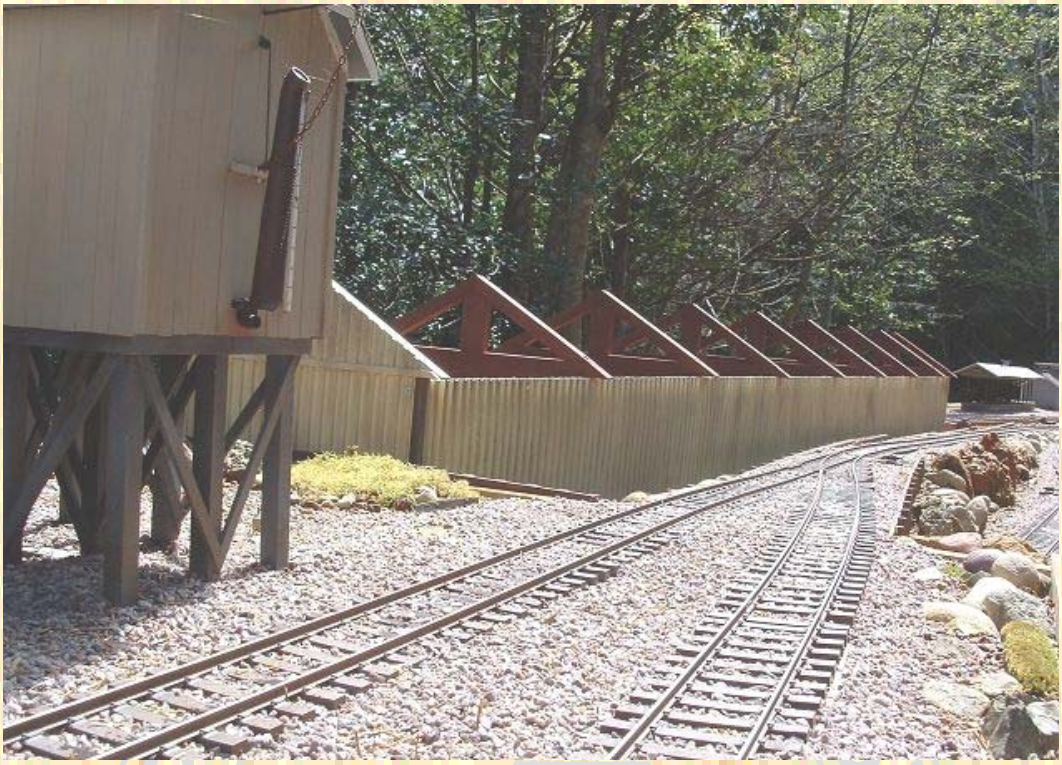
Too, mine tipples or log loading facilities are good candidates for a multi-scale railroad. As long as you use mostly structures without regular doors or place objects that are clearly one scale or another in the scene it'll be difficult for anyone to nail down the scale.

Hope this gets the ol' brain juices flowing for you.

The Lo-o-o-ong Lumber Warehouse:

Took the 10-foot back section of the warehouse outside today to check fit and color outdoors. Since the basic color is yellow I wanted to be sure it fit in with the rest of the railroad.





There's a lot to do yet. Besides the roof with some removable hatches for access there'll be a wooden dock extending the whole 10 feet length of the back section. A two story front section with a false front will add another 19" to the front for a total of a little over 11'-6".

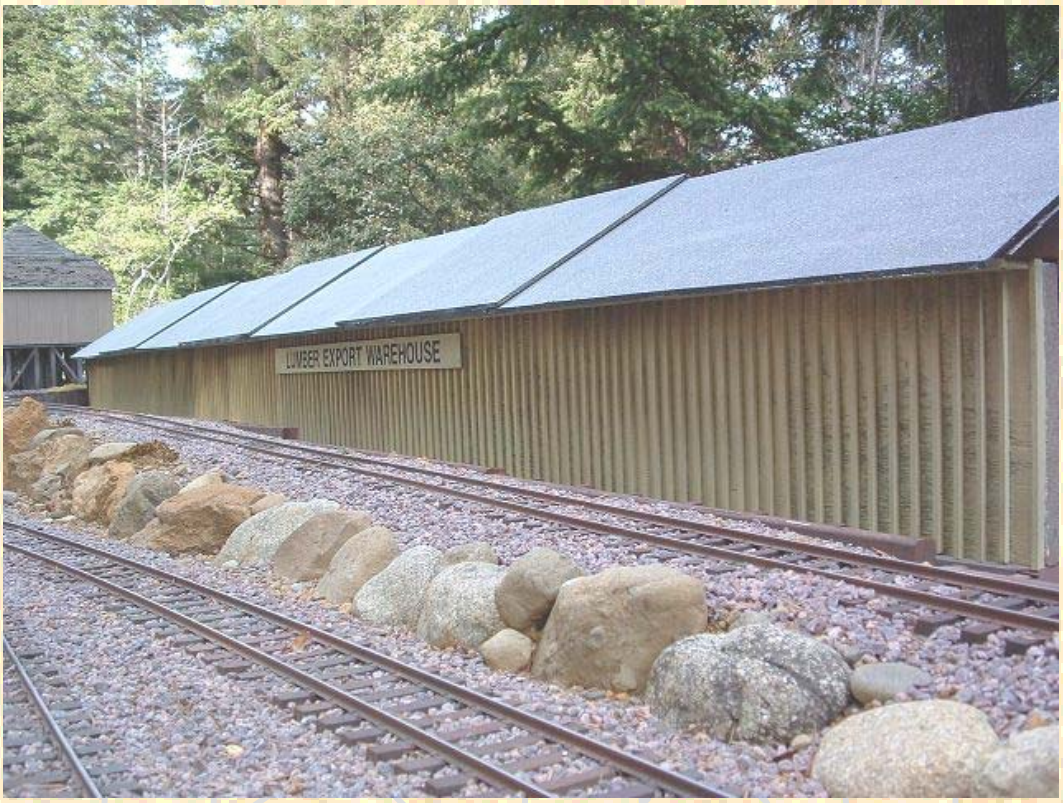
A singlewide door on the front end where the tracks are diverging will provide egress for hidden car storage. About 14 to 16 full size Bachmann freight cars can be accommodated inside. That many fewer cars to carry outside. The structure will do double duty, as it can be a destination on the outside siding for operations as well as protective storage inside. The siding can accommodate six 30' AMS 1:20 freight cars as the door centers are 20" apart.

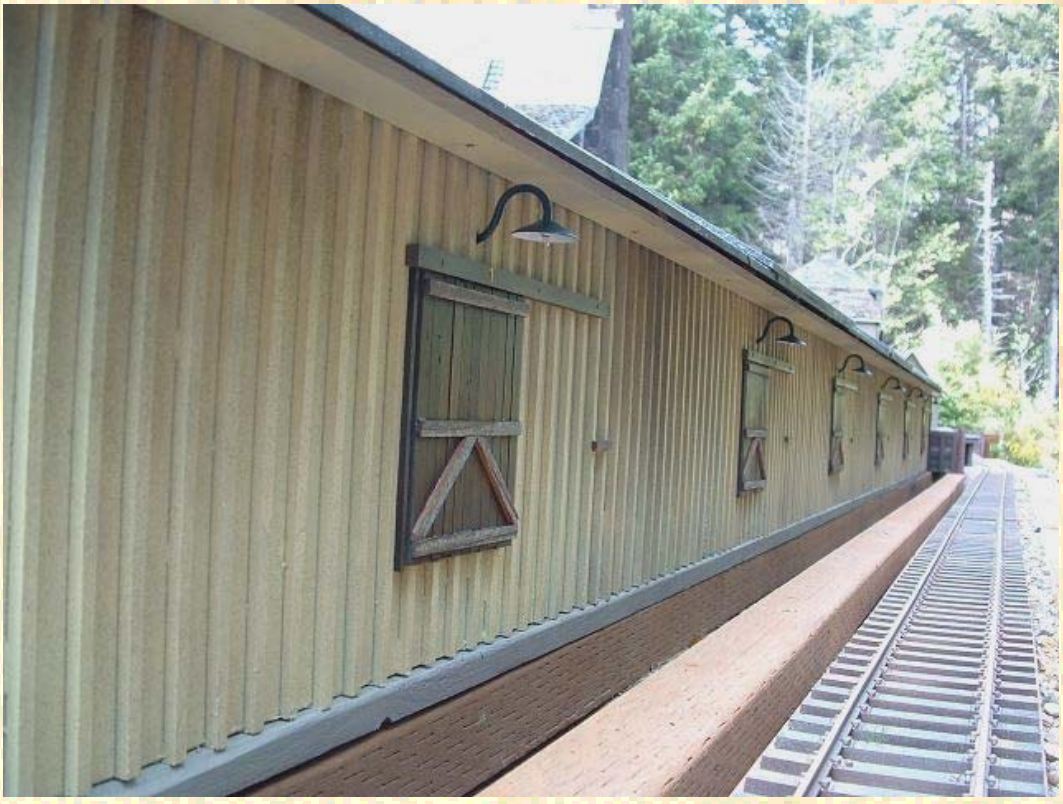
Construction is rugged for outdoor endurance. The long sidewalls are 1x8 cedar boards, which will be screwed down at the bottom and to the trusses on top. This along with heavy painting will keep the walls aligned and hopefully warp free. The roof trusses are made up of grossly oversized timbers for strength, as they won't show once the roof is on except when the building is accessed to store or remove cars. The dock will be a solid PT 2x4 sheathed over with pre-painted & weathered cedar planking. It will also be screwed down to the bench work beneath.

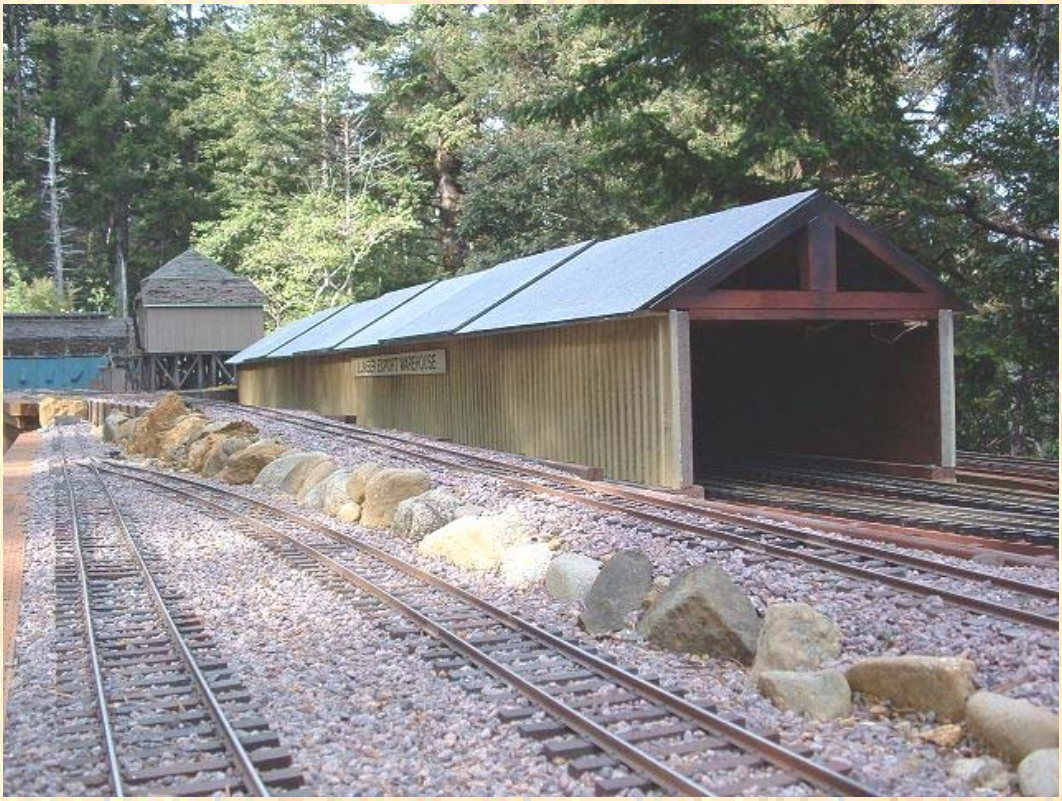
The warehouse is back in the shop now where the roof sections will be fitted, light fixtures installed over the freight doors and signs applied before it is partially disassembled and installed permanently outdoors.

I plan on a large enclosed type lumber mill at the other end of the line that will also open up to provide more storage there. A single large car storage shed works well (probably best) for a Roundy-round railroad but a point to point is better served with 2 or more smaller storage structures to provide protection for rolling stock left after an operating session. That way the cars will be at the right town location for the next session and need only be spotted at the appropriate locations to start.

Warehouse Back Section Installed Outdoors







Next comes the dock at trackside then the front two-story section.

As to the references to a produce warehouse or cannery, the design is a very basic and typical one that could be reminiscent of any number of uses and such a building may have been used for several different purposes over the years as it changed hands. Mine will be a Lumber Export Warehouse that'll handle wholesale cut lumber, timbers and poles. In an age before the wide use of forklifts most loading/unloading and storage of goods was done by hand. The primary method of moving heavy items was by means of hand trucks or carts pulled by hand and push carts on narrow gauge tracks.

Most model lumber lines that I have seen focus on the log trains and getting the logs to the mill. Just as important was the delivery of cut lumber by rail. It is this aspect I want to include as a major source of revenue for the POC. The SP brought solid trains of lumber off of the old NWP even into diesel days.

The battens are cut from cedar and are glued with the usual Siliconised Acrylic Adhesive Caulk into grooves I cut across the boards with two 10" blades on my 12" radial arm saw. The battens are a snug fit as they were ripped to size after the grooves were cut to assure an accurate fit. I won't ever win a ribbon at a model contest but I think it'll all stay together for a while. He he!

You could groove out the wide spots with a dado blade on a table saw to get the basic look. The problem with this is first off you will be cutting across the grain and this will probably cause a lot of chipping out on the narrow batten portions. Second the boards are much too long and cumbersome to be safely and accurately done using a miter gauge for support on a table saw.

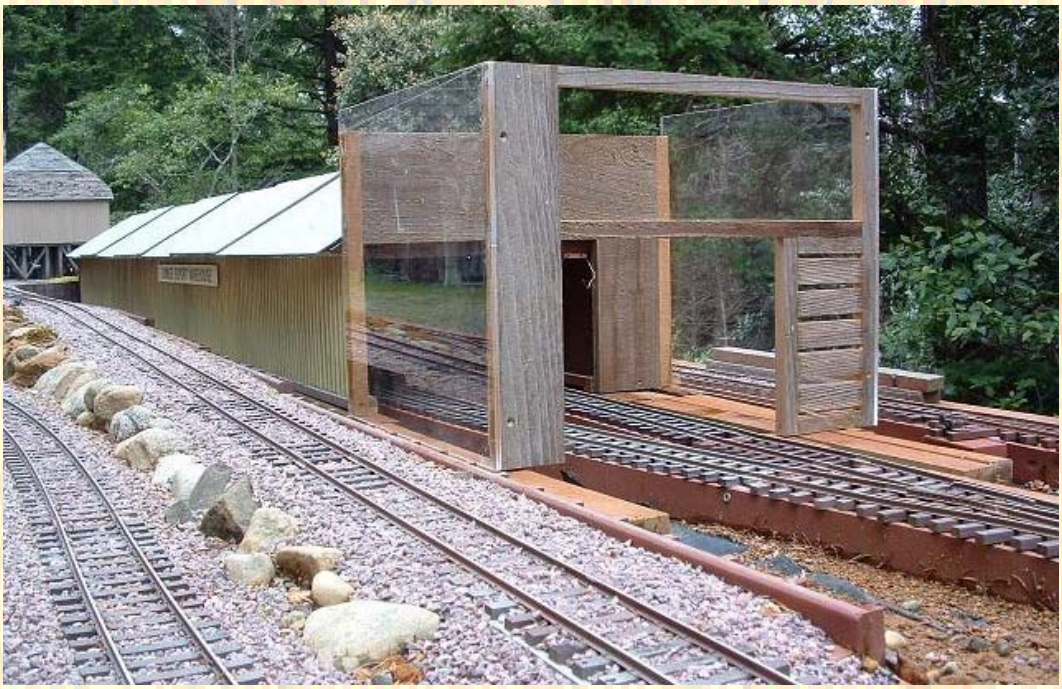
For a short wall or one pieced together with several pieces you could dado out the long way to avoid this but you'd have to use a clamp down on your miter gauge to keep everything straight and to be safe. Time consuming to have to clamp between every cut too. Alternately you could use the rip fence to dado out the wider "board" portion on a long 2x8 thus keeping the grain in the right direction and then cut separate wall sections to height after dadoing. You would still have to join several individual sections together to form one long wall.

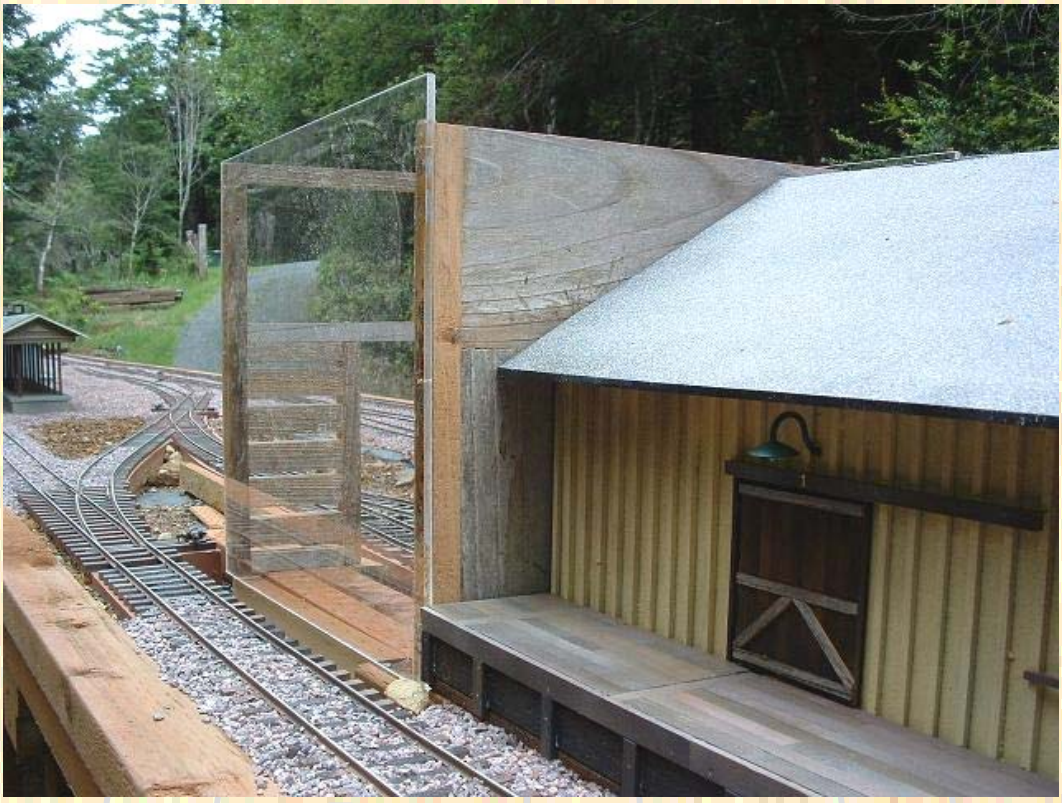
By grooving the 10-foot long boards on the radial arm saw I had a very safe and stable operation. The fact of the grain going the wrong way on the board portion of the board and batten isn't so noticeable since the battens inserted into the grooves stand out and the grain runs the right way on them.

To keep the grooves evenly spaced I first made a short sample to determine the spacing that looked good to me and to adjust proper depth so the battens would project out the right amount. Then I placed a mark on the radial arm fence to which I could slide the edge of the previous groove to cut the next. Repeating this for each subsequent cut I got a fairly even grooving all along the boards although I did make a couple of goof ups but they're not noticeable unless you really look for them.

If you have a router you can use a 1/8" straight cutting bit to cut the batten grooves. Make a straight edge jig that has a 1/8" rail on the bottom that can be inserted into the previous cut to guide the router along for the next cut and moving the straight edge along for subsequent grooves. I think this would be much better than using the table saw for this purpose.

The warehouse isn't officially open yet. It's still under construction. Just for you guys since you seem interested here's an in-progress photo of the front section sitting in place to check fit. I call it the ugly box! Hopefully it'll look a bit better when finished and attached to the existing portion of the building.





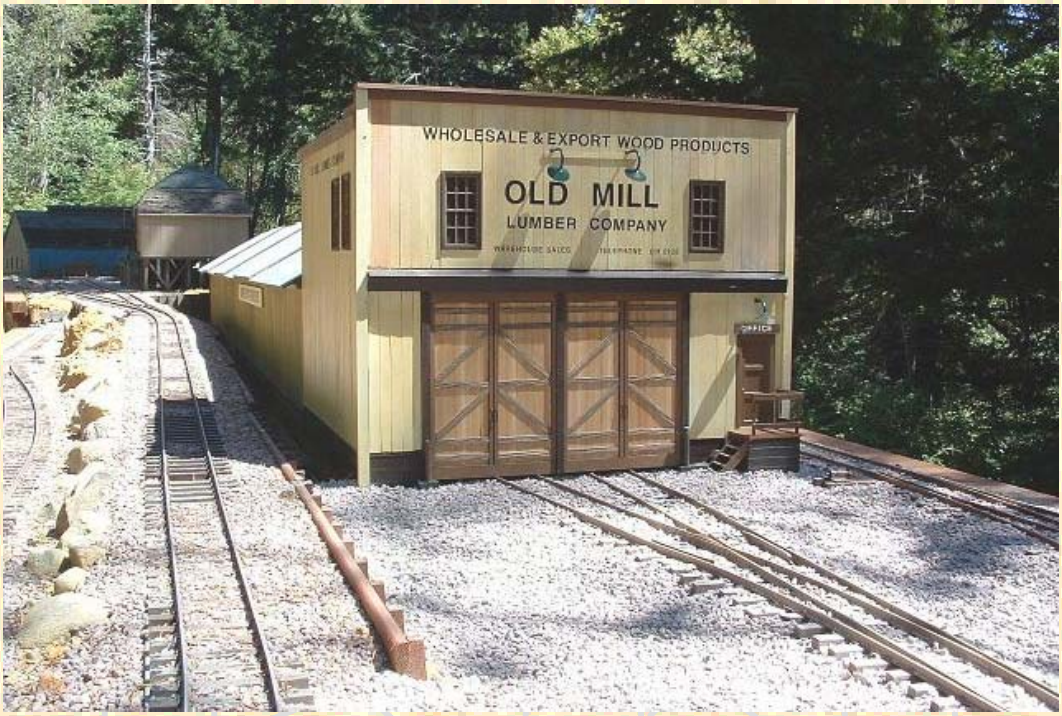
The offices will be upstairs. While I intend to provide lighting up there I am fighting my urges to put any interior there hoping instead to merely have a diffused light coming through obscured windows.

The lower floor will consist of a wide doorway for the tracks and a smaller people door on the right side suggesting access to a stairway to the upstairs offices. There will be no attempt to hide or disguise the track door. I'm hoping to suggest a doorway through which a truck can back into for loading that just happens to also have rails inside. As it stands now I plan on a pair of hinged doors that will normally remain closed during ops and only be opened to retrieve or store cars at the beginning and end of operating.

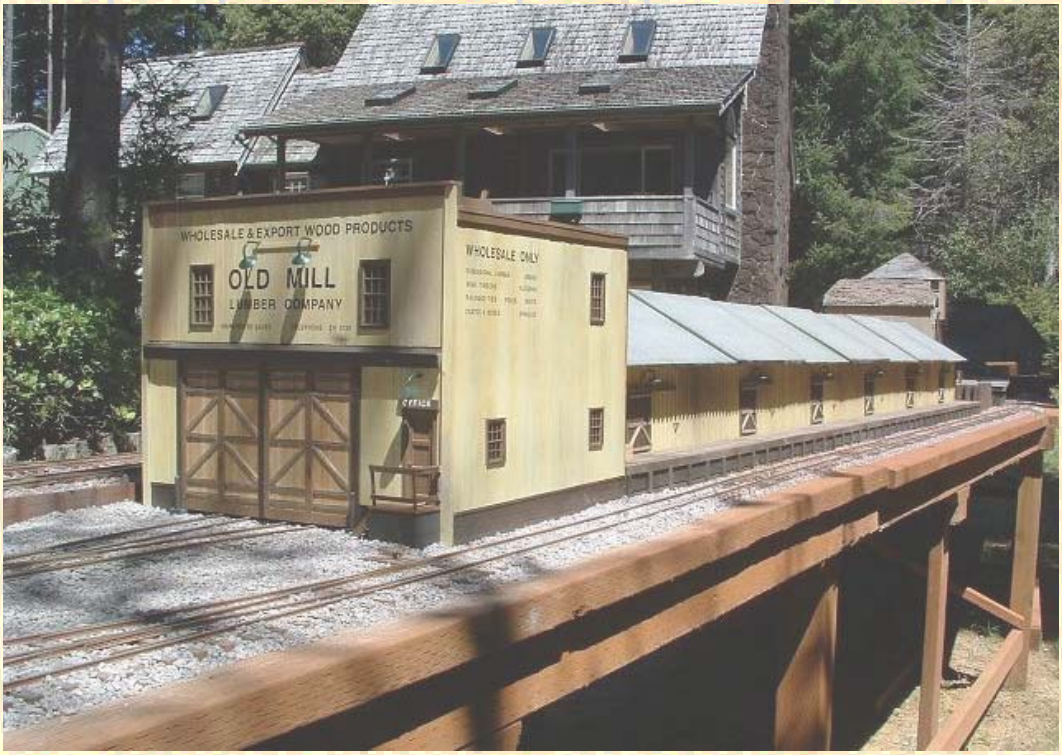
You know a storage/warehouse doesn't need to be big. It's all a function of the size of your railroad. If your trains are short and few cars are used a dual use building such as this need provide no more hidden storage than 5 or 6 cars, anything to avoid carrying rolling stock outside every time you want to run. It is also an excellent candidate to split in half and install along a wall or fence you'd like to conceal- a triple use!

Got the front portion of the warehouse planted at last. As you know this structure was built as much for hidden car storage outdoors as to be used as a switching industry for the railroad.

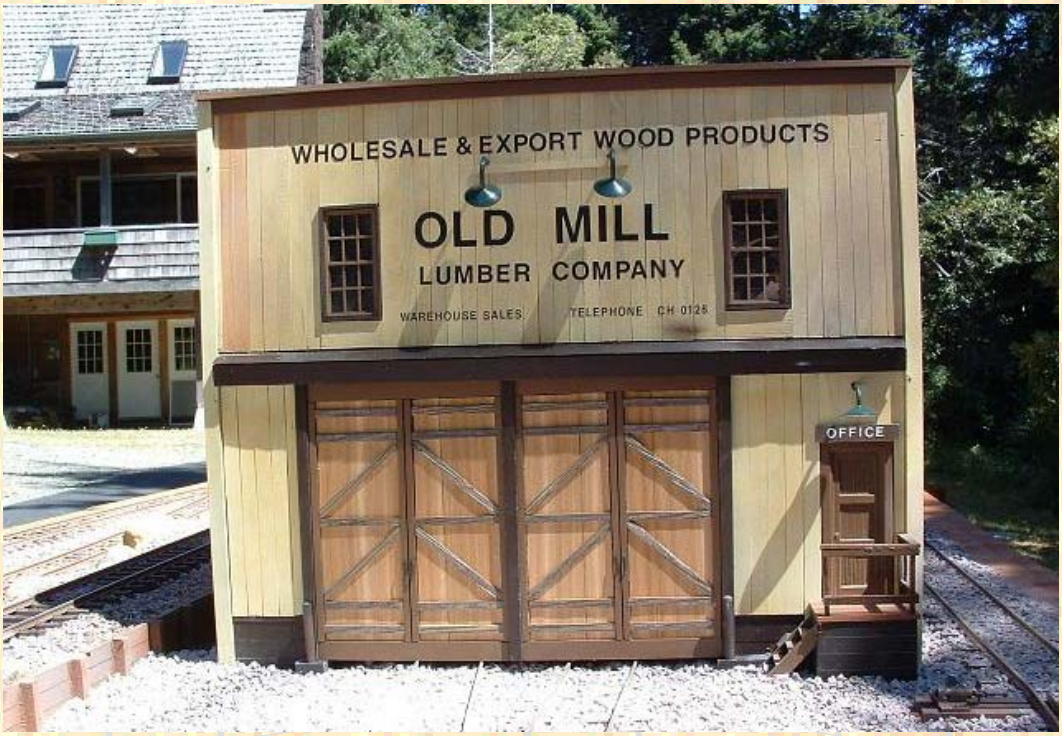
Operationally the warehouse was built to de-emphasize its dual purpose. During operations the front door will remain on as you see it here. It will be removed only twice, first to pull cars out to operate and second to return cars to storage afterwards.



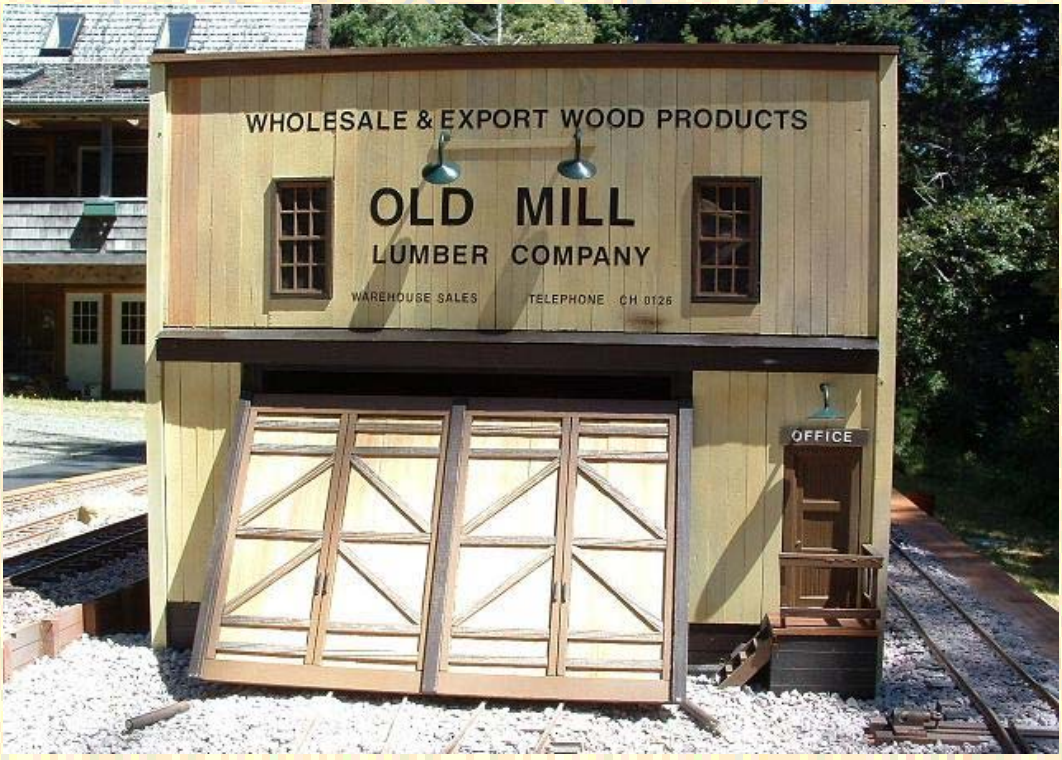
The doors along the side provide for spotting six cars at the dock.



The front doors in spite of the tracks are meant to represent access for trucks to load lumber for delivery to wholesale customers.



For access to stored cars the entire two-door section comes out as one piece. The two posts at either extreme side of the doors are removed and the unit moved upwards and outwards at the bottom as shown.



This overview shows the front door completely off as well as the three roof hatches.

Roof hatches from the rear.

The roof hatches are not hinged but lift out as separate units. They are held on by a combination of weight, gravity and close fit. Their purpose is to allow access for any mishap inside the building as well as to change/repair lights. I had expected some small water leakage at these hatches but surprisingly they have proved to be quite good at keeping the rain out. Each time I've checked the cars have been dry as a bone.

The structure's 11'-6"" length accommodates 16 cars. Plenty for a solo operating session.

It may seem strange to hear from a person that's just completed a building that's over eleven feet long but "less is more". Originally I had three tracks laid out for this space but after studying the requirements for a building to cover this space with three tracks it was decided that two tracks would result in a better looking and more realistic structure.

While storage for an additional 6 to 8 cars would have been nice it would have required one wall to be up tight against the ramp track to the engine terminal and the elimination of the dock on the other. The siding doors would have had to be flush with the back wall which while prototypical wouldn't have been nearly as effective scenery wise in the narrow space back there.

I think I made the right decision there. I plan on another slightly larger "hidden storage" building at the other end of the line when I reach there and possibly a warehouse in between long enough to hold a few cars. This will allow cars left at sidings after an operating session to be stored near their staging areas for the next session.

My rolling stock will remain outdoors under cover all year long. Sure beats carrying everything out before every session. Even for those in severe weather areas the rolling stock could be brought outside once at the start of the operating season and returned to indoor storage once at the end of the season. Still a great labor saver.

Anyway I hope this is of some value to at least a few people. Any questions not answered by the photos that you have please feel free to ask.

For our European friends in particular, in case you might not be familiar with the era in the US, the time frame for the building and the railroad is c.1940. The building itself is a very common and typical design especially at rail side in smaller communities.

The Old Mill warehouse is freelance and represents a building that was built around 1900 and still in use in 1940. Many of this type were still in use through the 60's and 70's and I'm sure there are still a number of similar structures still standing around the country albeit mostly just used for storage, etc. There was until recently when it burned down a similar type building used for a retail lumberyard close to Coos Bay, Oregon.

The structure generally could span the era 1880-1960 and be used for everything from lumber, as mine is, to farm products, produce, freight shed, rail-truck terminal (with truck doors on the opposite side), and general storage and small manufacturing in its later days.

I conducted a test of the lights on the warehouse tonight. First time that all of the lights were hooked up together. I've put up a couple of shots because Bongo Boy (Kirk) asked for them. The photos aren't all that great but they do show that night ops are possible for the future and the lights do work.

It is anticipated that once street lights and yard lights are installed on the railroad that they'll provide a gentle wash of light on the warehouse to illuminate a bit of detail and lessen the contrast between the building and its lights.

All lamps are 12 volts and powered by an old 4-1/2 amp Marnold power supply. I also have a garden light transformer for additional light power.

By the way: We had a substantial rain last night and upon checking the rolling stock this morning everything was dry and snug inside.

The Stock Yards:

Here's the completed stockyard ready to install...

The posts are for small lights to illuminate the ramps in case loading must be finished after dark. The lights are homemade from plastic tubing painted black and mounted on the wood posts. No attempt was made to hide the wiring as they are supposed to represent rather crude and rough homemade lights (I managed that quite well).

The reddish looking wood beneath the pen perimeter is the sub-foundation, which I am now putting on all structures. It is 1/2" thick and will be screwed to the 1" deep main foundation to keep things square and prevent warping. It also allows for removal of the structure should that ever be necessary. The foundation(s) will of course be hidden once the terrain is in place. The obtrusive looking wood bracing inside with the screws partially out are there to stiffen the whole structure to move it outside and will be removed after installation.

OUTSIDE....

The additional siding space will accommodate a feed & grain store (a suggestion from the previous string). Further along will come some additional buildings to flesh out the town a bit also using a couple of your suggestions along with my own ideas.

I definitely "overkill" on painting. All the individual boards were pre-painted before assembly with Krylon spray paint plus a couple of weathering coats. After assembly a little additional weathering and finally a flat clear coat both top and bottom before installation outdoors. Additionally I clear coat at least once a year any especially vulnerable parts and am going to clear coat the entire structures about every other year (requires some masking of window areas to prevent fogging them).

The rails are first glued with adhesive caulk (some more delicate parts such as gate braces with CA). After dry they are brad nailed with a brad gun. Thus everything is double fastened. Very little splitting except a couple of small places where I missed with the gun. The posts themselves are attached to the sub foundation initially with caulk after which holes are drilled up through from the bottom and into the posts. 18 gauge brass brads (escutcheon pins) are pushed through the holes and into the posts almost all the way in, the heads cut off and then pounded flush with a nail set.

The Cabinet Shop Primer:

I recently completed a new structure for the POC and thought perhaps some of you new to scratch building might be interested in what's beneath the outer facade of the building. A disclaimer: This is **"A"** way not **"THE"** way to construct a model building. Remember too that many times various techniques and materials can be combined. This building is very robust and quite heavy when completed as it is intended for permanent outdoor use.

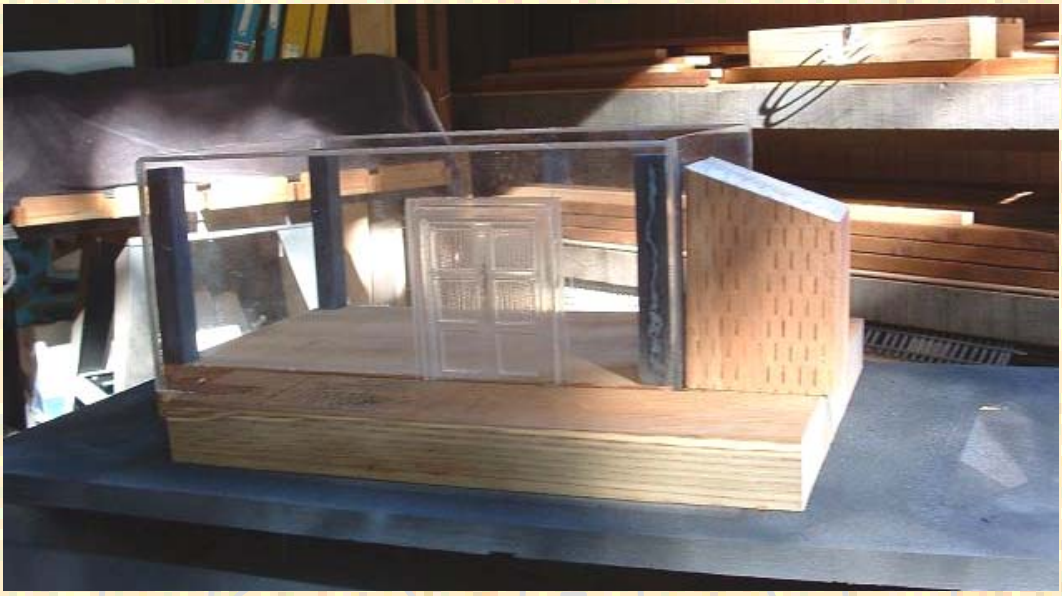
Paul M. Smith Cabinets ... named after my dad who had several cabinet shops in the 1940's.

The basic structure is simply a box of 1/4" clear Plexiglas secured to a solid cedar floor. The siliconised acrylic adhesive caulk is used for all wood-to-wood and wood to Plexiglas connections and the #16 plastic cement for plexi-to-plexi. The #16 should work for most all locations but you should test a couple of adhesives for the wood connections to find out what holds up best in your area and climate.

The cedar floor helps keep the walls nice and square so care taken in squaring it up will make the job much easier. The walls are glued with the adhesive caulk and then pinned with #18 brads. No brad gun here as it may crack the plexi. Drill pilot holes for a very tight fit for the brads and tap in place leaving the head a bit proud of the surface. Snip off the head with cutters or Dremel cutoff disk and drive in flush with a nail set.

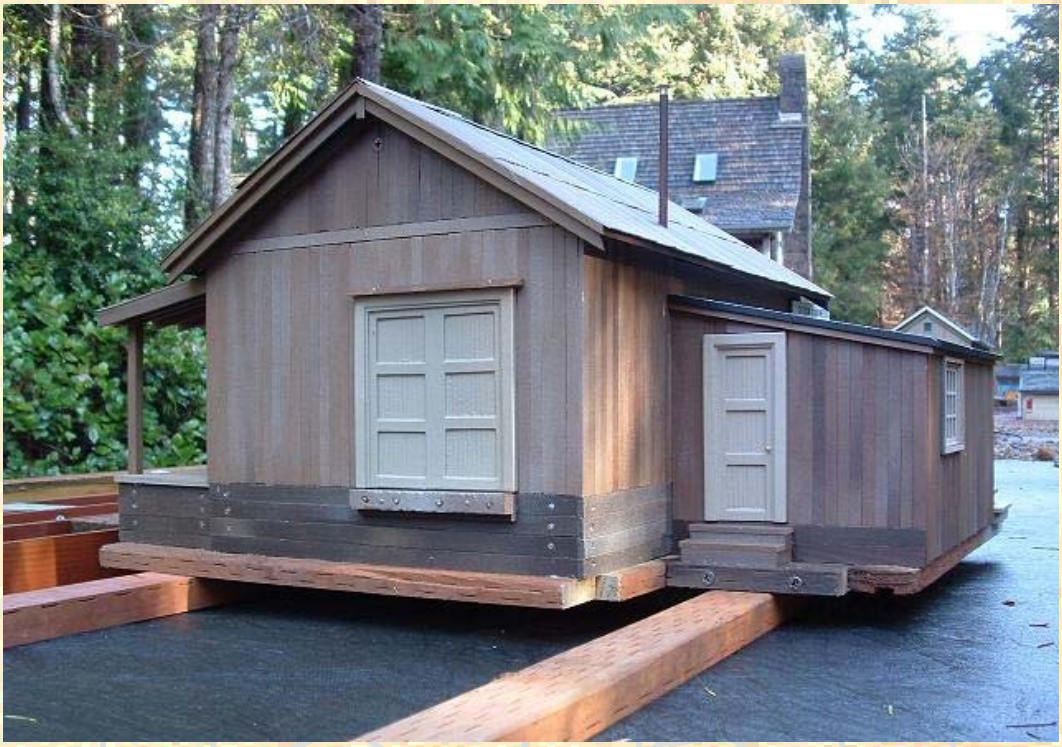
Here you can see extra corner posts glued in place. They are also pinned as the floor was. Always use more than one connector everywhere possible for outdoors. The PT 2x is the "frame" for one of the decks/docks. After gluing and securing to the structure it is covered with cedar planks on the sides to represent an enclosed dock and then planked on top, once again glued and pinned. A brad gun was used for most of this since it was wood to wood.

Doors and windows here are test fitted only. They will be pre-painted before gluing in place with the #16 plastic glue. All windows are glued to the walls and masked to protect the clear areas and the paint on the windows. Then the plexi walls were painted black on both sides to prevent light leaks and to obscure the interior since while the building is lit it lacks interior detail. Doors are then glued in place. After building is completed it will be given several coats of Behlen's Dead Flat spray. This is repeated annually especially on roofs and exposed flat surfaces.



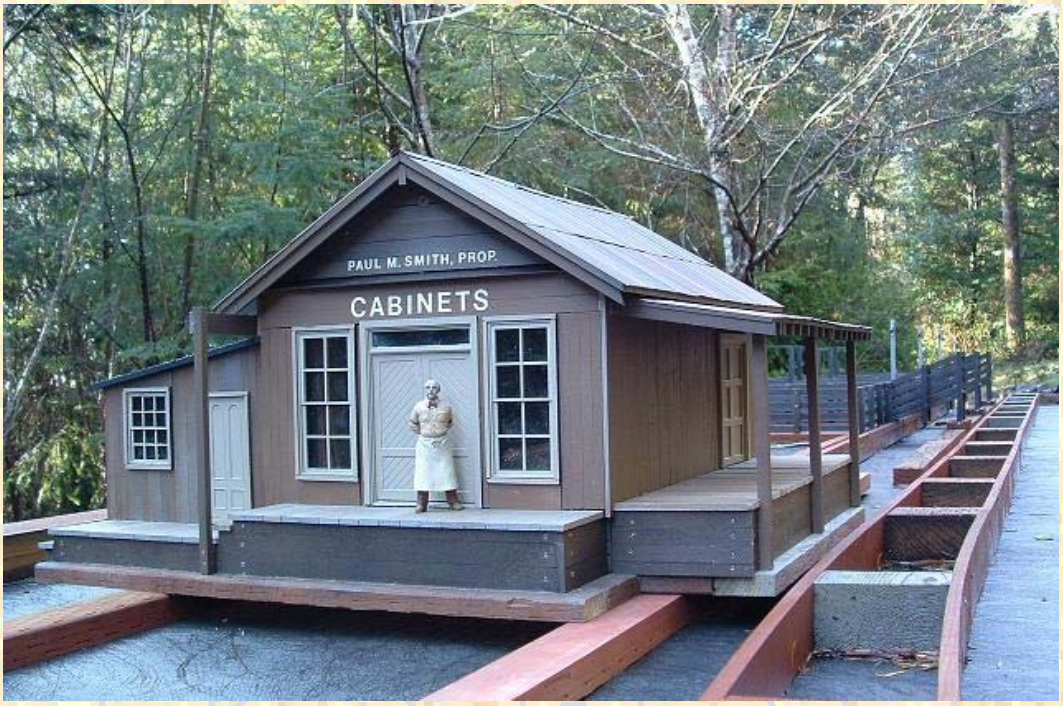
The lean to was added to the side by securing its floor to the main floor and proceeding as for the main building. You can see where the siding was pinned or braded in addition to being glued. The adhesive holds things on while the brads provide sheer strength.

The very lowest layer of wood will not show once the building is secured in the landscape.

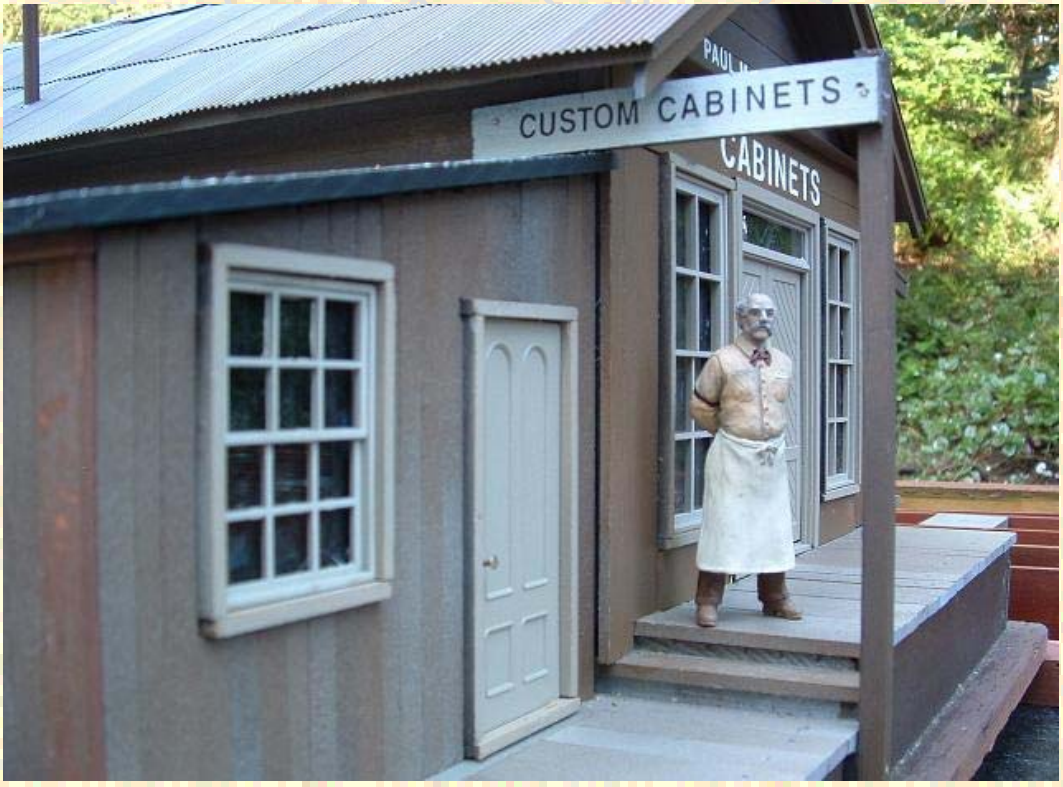


Sub-roofs are 3/16" plexi clad with Sodder's corrugated aluminum. The lean to roof was just over sprayed with first flat black primer and then textured granite spray. Signage is vinyl lettering.

The exterior is left spartan without the clutter, etc. we're used to in modeling indoors. Every detail obstruction outdoors becomes a collection point for dirt, debris and cobwebs so it is better I feel to make all such details removable.



Not a contest model but very useable for outdoors with a minimum of fuss.



I refer to this not being a contest model to differentiate its construction from that of truly finer models. If you have ever seen models in person the likes of that produced by Bob Poli in 1:20.3 or the fine workmanship of Rick Marty's rolling stock just as two examples I've seen in person, you'll see a wealth of detail and true to prototype modeling. The walls are constructed with scale size studs and the roof with scale rafters. Windows and doors delicately modeled and that may even open and close as the real thing. Also lots of clutter and detail outside as well as inside. You could easily have several hundred dollars in castings alone in the model, particularly if its a shop with all its machinery and drive belts, etc. Added to this are countless hours of construction.

While beautiful the fact remains that for the most part you would never want to leave them outdoors. Too by their very nature the structures are quite fragile at least so far as the details and gingerbread go.

For outdoors I've come up with a formula that hopefully provides a fairly realistic and believable structure that can stand up to the vagaries of nature.

For glue joints the emphasis is on strength and durability as opposed to keeping the glue out of sight. While I don't advocate sloppiness if it can be avoided still I'd rather have a bit of glue seeping out every here and there than not have sufficient to hold everything together.

Materials used are for durability and not for strict adherence to scale. Anything that doesn't show is a candidate for over sizing such as roof rafters or corner posts. I selectively eliminate unneeded details that are fragile or obvious gathering points for debris and insects. Sometimes its necessary to bite the bullet and include a needed detail like a spout on a water tank with its pull chain for example, as this would be missed. Within these parameters I attempt to keep the overall scale appearance.

Interiors I've found are mostly wasted outdoors even on an elevated RR like mine. They are really only viewable at night with interior lights and even then only in a limited way in most cases. I really had a time resigning myself to the idea that interiors probably should be minimized and still have too much in most of the buildings I've done. It really isn't worth the effort or expense to include something that can't be readily viewed. I've tended towards partial interiors and even then am trying to reserve them for easily viewed locations. The cabinet shop has black walls and ceiling inside to obscure the interior and the only detail is a group of boards leaning against one wall to give some depth through the windows when up close.

I do like to light the buildings and just about all have 12-volt lights in them for night ops, which I haven't been able to do yet due to the RR's incomplete state.

This results in buildings that resemble more or less a movie or stage set and provides a useful and realistic backdrop for the trains. That is what I mean when I say these are not contest models although I am extremely grateful and flattered that some of you may rate them such. It does show that perhaps the "illusion" I've attempted to create is working.

I like to call these "structures for the common man" because really anyone can make them with a bit of patience; even me! He he!

Section III

Scenes Along the Right-of-Way

Senator Clatterhorn Visits the Port Orford Coast R.R.:

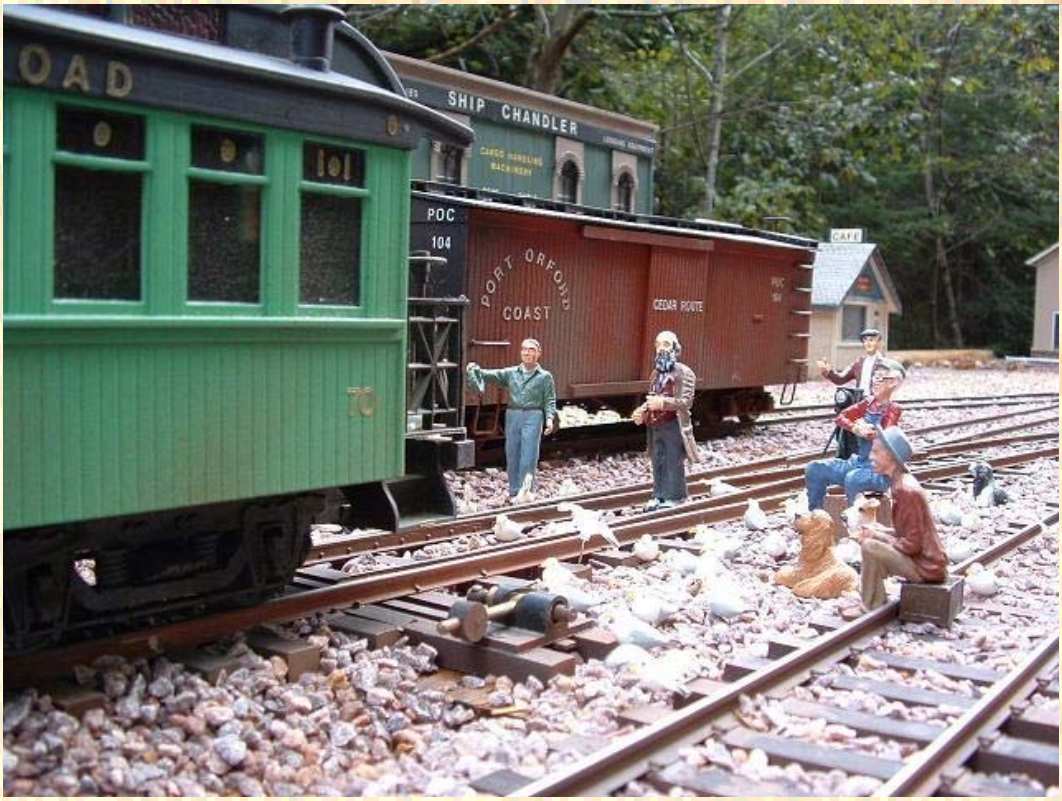
A big day on the Port Orford Coast Railroad, even before the official opening of the POC's yard facilities at Coos Bay the erstwhile Senator Clatterhorn's train is heard entering the yard limits.

POC's Prexy Al Falderall and his faithful sidekick and Yardmaster Cuthburt Yesman watch anxiously as the Senator's special campaign train approaches.

The tension builds as the train clatters over the crossover.

Finally the train eases to a stop pulled by the POC's finest, ol' number 7. All ready a crowd gathers to hear the great debate between Senator Clatterhorn and his worthy opponent Senator Drivyl.

The throng waits with restless anticipation for the great Senator Clatterhorn to appear. Where's Senator Drivyl everyone wonders? Alas Senator Drivyl's stage has been held up. There will be no debate today.



Fortunately Senator Clatterhorn, well-known master of the mundane and expounder of superfluousity has consented to speak to the waiting crowd. Where's the free eats? Shouts someone from the crowd. No free eats smiles the Senator, just mighty words of wisdom! Gad! If this had been known not even the seagulls would have showed up. The great "rail event photographer", Stan Seaterlif was the only one making a buck out of this.

The good Senator's speech lasted 3 hours and the only ones that heard it were those that kept their distance. Those close by all promptly fell asleep. Self-absorbed as he was the Senator didn't notice. His campaign manager reported to the press a crowd of almost 100 heard the speech. Of course of those hundred 93 were seagulls and 3 were dogs. All in all a most successful campaign stop and sure to increase his standing in the polls thought the Senator. Too he was $13 richer from his share of the loot from Senator Drivyl's stage holdup.

A Stock Extra on the POC R.R.:

A ***"Crew Call"*** has gone out for a special run with empty stockcars to be spotted at the stock pens in Port Orford.

The Coos Bay switcher has assembled the train for the stock extra, 4 stock cars and caboose 03.

The engine crew reports to the roundhouse where the hostler already has the venerable number 6 fueled and watered and ready to go. Master Mechanic Fenwick has the number 7 out for minor adjustments after making some repairs Friday night.

After a brief inspection the crew boards number 6 and drifts down to the depot to receive their orders. They are now officially "Stock Extra 6″. *(The idiot that left the Dodge parked down there oughta be shot! Oh...that was me..!)*

The head brakeman waves the engine back to couple up to their train. "***Easy now!***"

After hooking up and checking the air Stock Extra 6 begins to move slowly out. They own the railroad, as there are no other trains to be dispatched today.... Saturday.

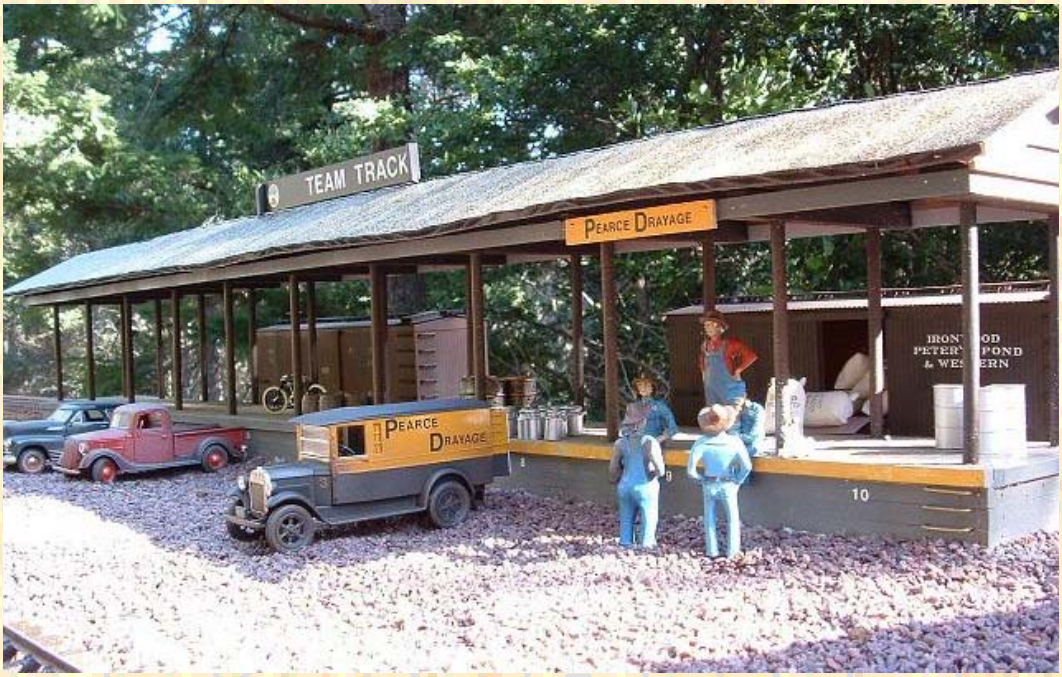
The switchman has aligned the switches and waves them on through the cross over to the main line.

Sounding the whistle to protect the upcoming grade crossing Stock Extra 6 accelerates slowly out of the yard limits. The 52-mile trip will take under 2 hours and after picking up a couple of flatcars of lumber left over from Friday they'll come home. They'll get a full day's pay for their six-hour stint. Not a bad way to spend a quiet weekend day.

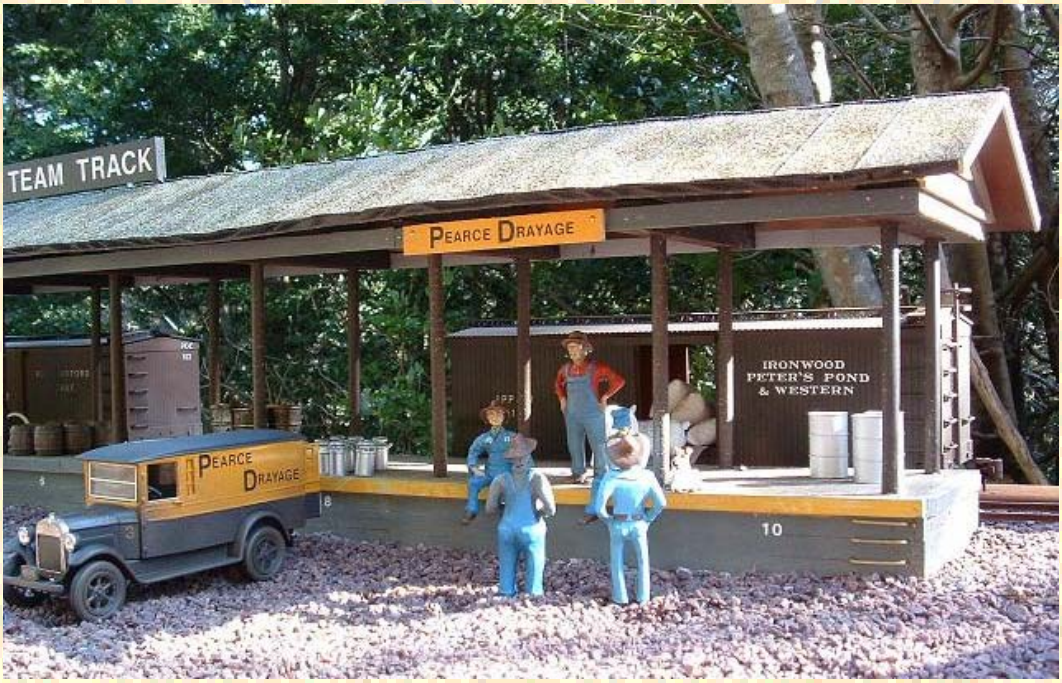
Of course in actuality the track barely extends to the yard limits yet. But, one day soon...! Gives me something to work towards.

Pearce Drayage & Team Track:
Did a photo session this morning at the new "facility".

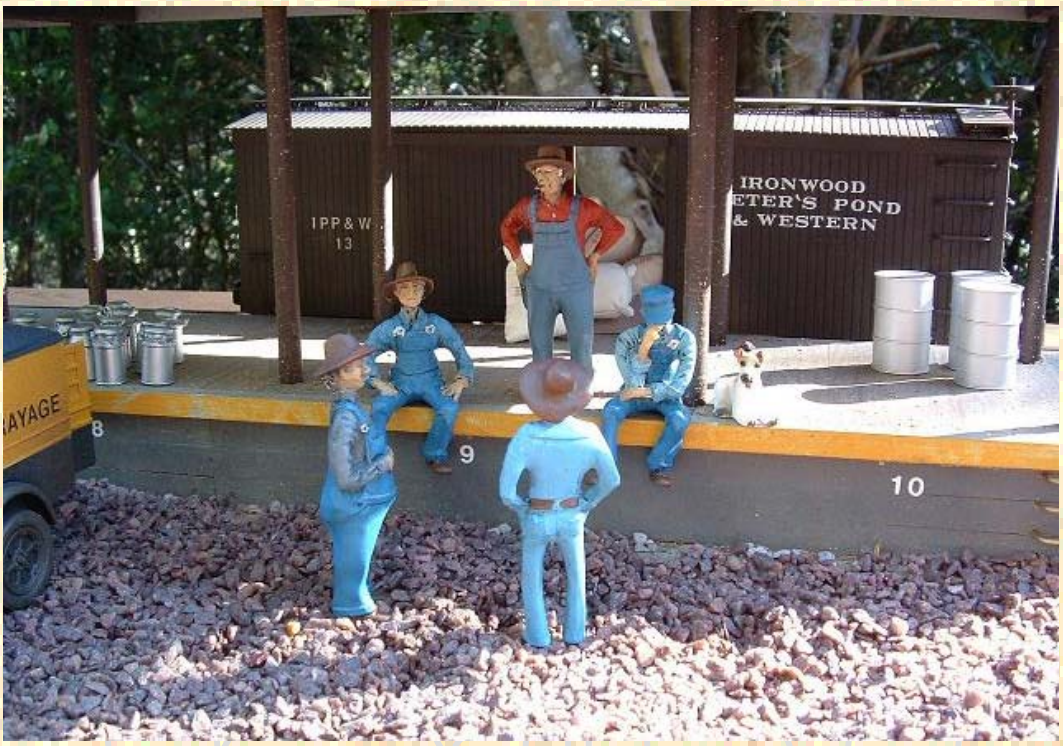
Pearce Drayage leases a small portion of the POC R.R.'s team freight platform.



The boys are ready for a days work unloading the boxcar. It's cargo originated all the way up in the wilds of Canada! One of the company's local delivery trucks waits to be loaded for the morning run.

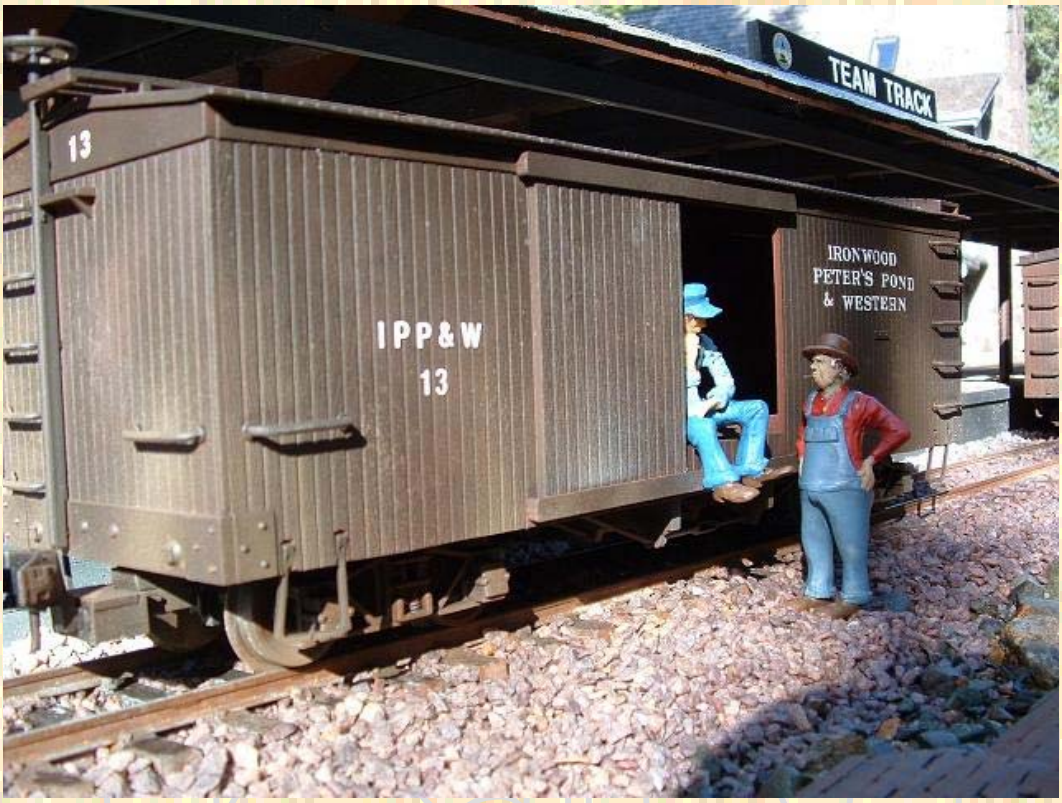


These are 5 of the 8 figures currently offered by Railroad Avenue. They also have an engineer, fireman and sleeping cowboy. I hope they sell well. I'd like to see more figures added to this line. They are 1:20.3 scale.



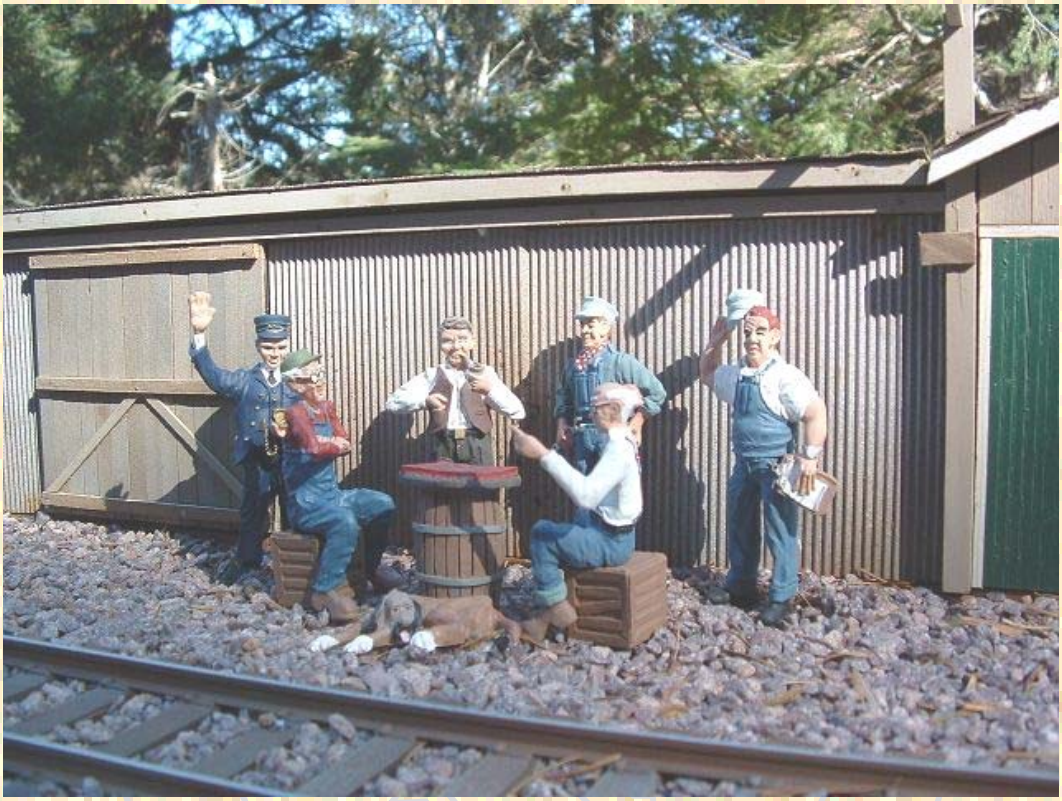
Must be break time!

More talk than work going on at the moment.



The Checker Match:

Serious stuff here as all work stops to witness the terminal checker championships. At stake is a fine bottle of Ripple for the winner. Milburn Boardump carefully considers his move as the shop crew watches.

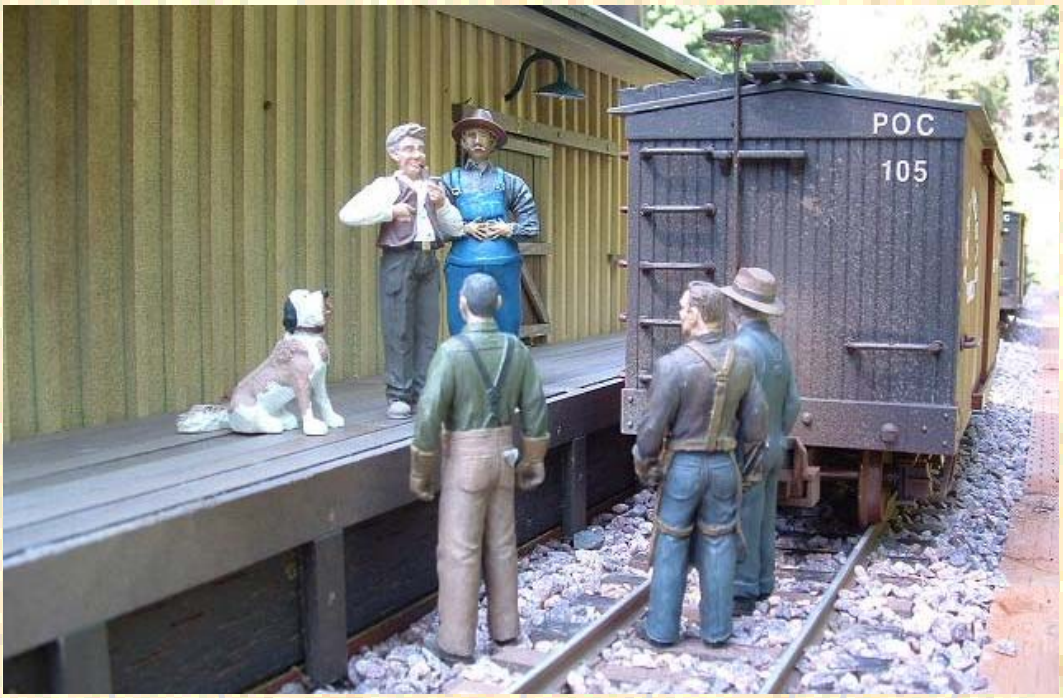


These are some of the new Woodland Scenics figures. For a size comparison with other brands see Figure Size Comparisons in this forum.

Lumper's Local 159...:

The warehouse isn't even finished yet and already there's work for the members of Local 159....

Ledpencil MacTavish, Company Accountant, is in temporary charge today. "Shur me byes thers a wee speck o' work teday unlerdin' ther cars ther'. Lets be a'gittin' ter it!"

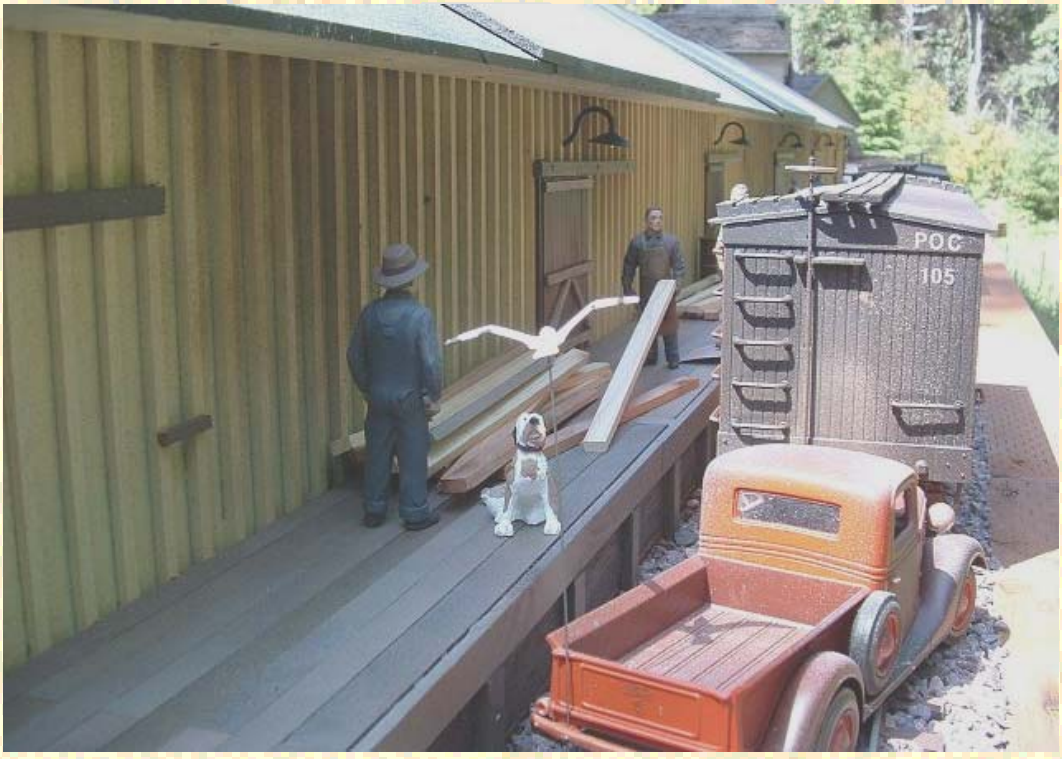


The lads get right to work. The flatcar is quickly unloaded

The seals are broken and the two boxcars are opened up..

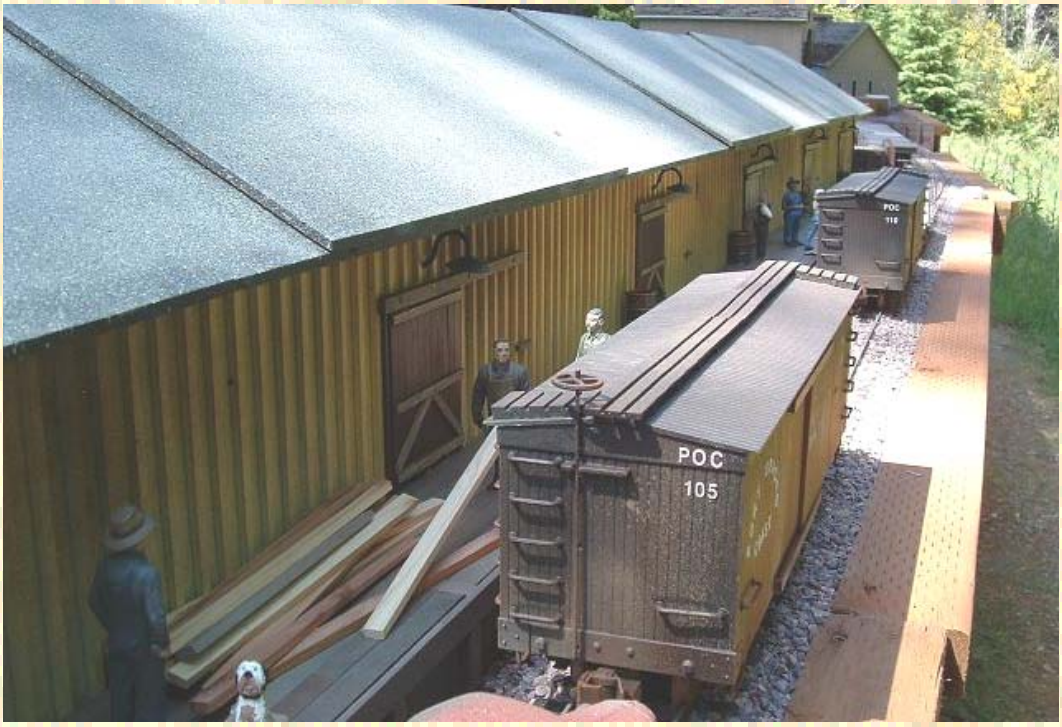
The work is apportioned out..

Ever alert Shep, the Lumper's Hall official mascot, watches quietly hoping not to be directly beneath an airborne visitor.



Work progresses.

A busy day today. Good day for the lumpers.



Security on the Port Orford R.R.:

The BIG dudes back east aren't the only ones with a modern and efficient security dept. As an example of western efficiency we do with one officer what it takes Suleski Transportation seven to do.

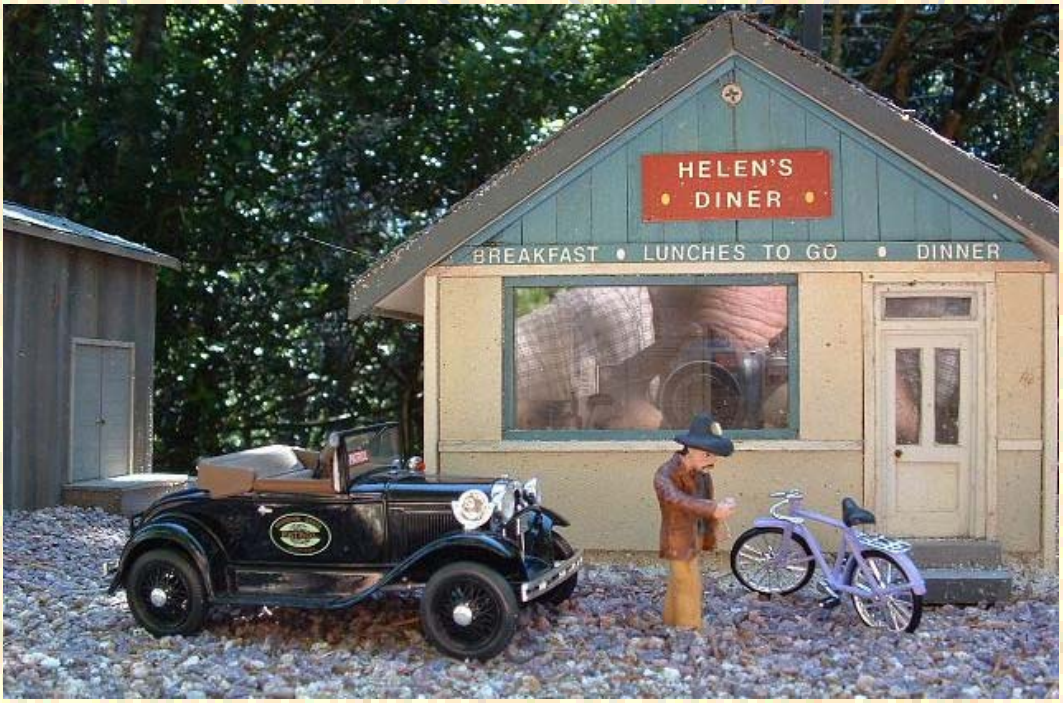
Professional and competent? You be the judge....

Part time Reserve Officer Busby Bisby on the job stops the widow Sally Redundant for speeding.

"But officer I was only going 15 mph!" complains Sally. Hmmm! another obvious ploy of the criminal mind to get out of a ticket thinks Officer Bisby as he continues writing.

Next Officer Bisby stops at Berio's to interview a hapless transient that was hit by a train the night before. He was genuinely surprised to learn that "deceased" meant dead. Oh well, "no statement taken, victim unresponsive" he writes in his book.

Ever diligent Officer Bisby writes a ticket for an illegally parked bicycle. "Must nip crime in the bud" he says to himself. There goes Little jimmy's allowance for the next six months! *(Be careful Busby, you're being watched and photographed)*



An emergency call "trespassers at the Old Mill Warehouse" brings the officer face to face with the dangers of the job.

Officer Bisby stands eyeball to eyeball with the trespassers his 1870 Winchester cocked and ready. "Tell 'em you'll shoot 'em if they don't move Bus!" shouts one of the onlookers.

The stare down lasted several hours, the courageous Officer Bisby refusing to back down. The impasse ended when little Susie Smithers, willow switch in hand came to retrieve the interlopers. "Naughty cows" she cried and with one whack of the whip sent them scurrying for home. "Good thing she showed up thought the good officer. I was about to get angry."

Another full day for Officer Bisby. At least I'll have tomorrow off he thought. Have to report to my parole officer. Exhausted, he got in his patrol car and headed for the doughnut shop.

Officer Bisby is available every Thursday after his parole officer appointment to instruct security personnel in proper law enforcement procedures in case Suleski Transportation would like to upgrade their department.

The First Snow on the Port Orford R.R.:

First snow on the POC in three years! Well, actually more of a soft hail but....what the hail!!

The morning Commuter Express arrives from Port Orford amidst a light dusting of snow.

Passengers quickly disembark.

Most make a beeline for Helen's Diner where hot coffee awaits them.

The local volunteer fire department is giving away free puppies today as the ever-diligent Reserve Officer Bisby rushes by to secure Helen's last donut.

Where moments ago there was much noise and hustle the train now sits silent.

The empty passenger cars are switched onto a siding where they are dropped for the yard crew to tend to later.

Things have calmed down at the depot for now.

Only a handful of passengers remain waiting for a connecting bus, which is always late.

Car Inspector "Jigs" Matheson casts his critical eye on the cars and readies them for their next run.

Meanwhile Engineer "Hot Wheels" Golding pilots old number 6 slowly up the ramp to the engine terminal.

Here she'll be turned and serviced and minor repairs made.

Engineer Golding's day is completed as he turns over number 6 to the charge of the capable shop crew.

Altogether a fine morning on the Port Orford Coast R.R.

The First Train Across "Davis Slough":

Well it didn't fall down! Still needs the guardrails and scenicking, etc.

Number 6 does the honors with a short 3-car freight.

Some other operations happenings on this day...

Numbers 7 and 3 simmer in the sun awaiting assignment...

...as number 2 begins its departure.

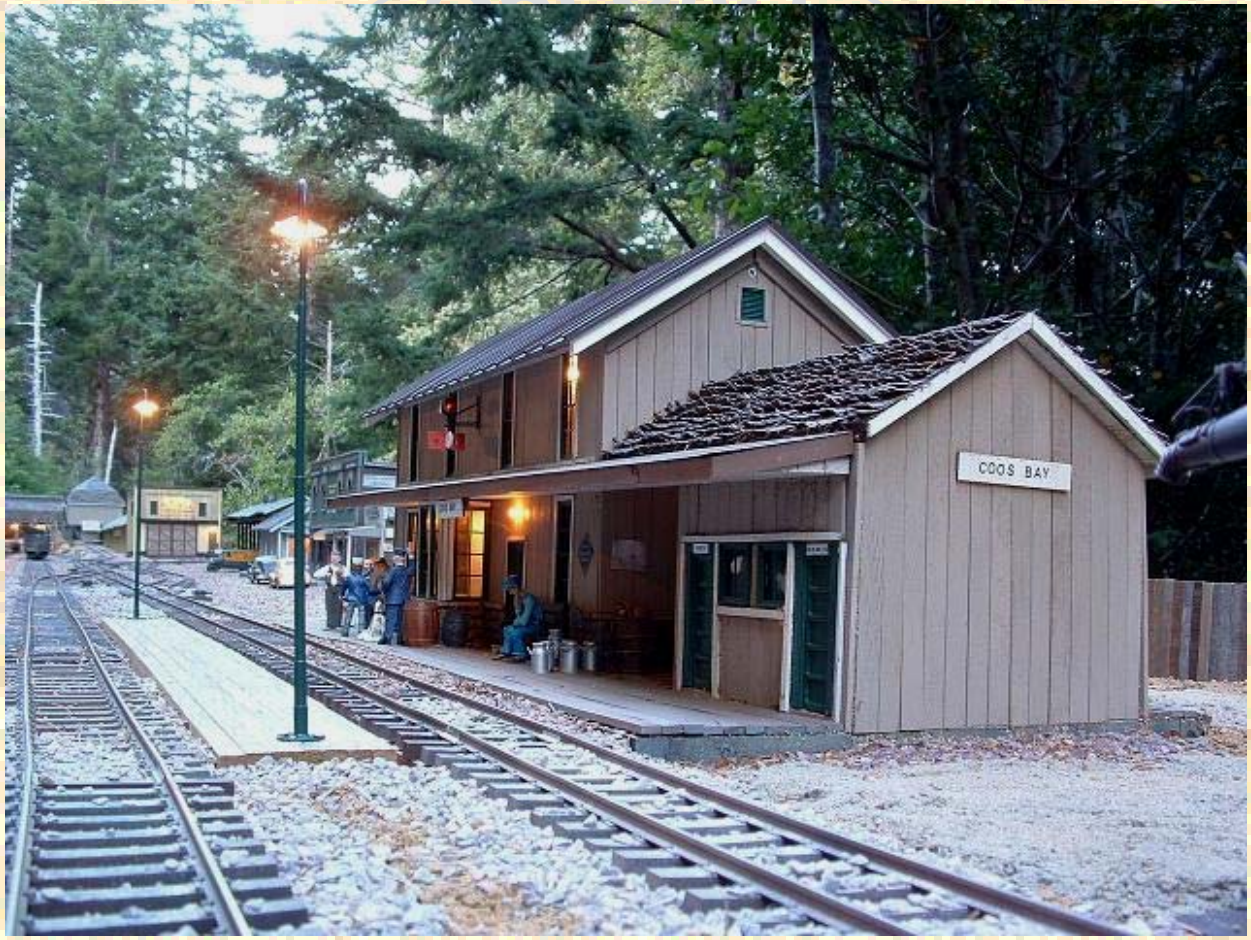
A beautiful day in the neighborhood. Mr. Rogers would be pleased.

The "Night Train" to Coos Bay

I decided it was time to hook up and test all the town lights to see how they worked. Only one glitch where I had hooked a wire to a dead post, quickly fixed. Anyway since I was out there I did a little impromptu train op to experiment with a night time photo shoot. I have a lot to learn in that department for sure but here's the result of a tiring but fun evening.....

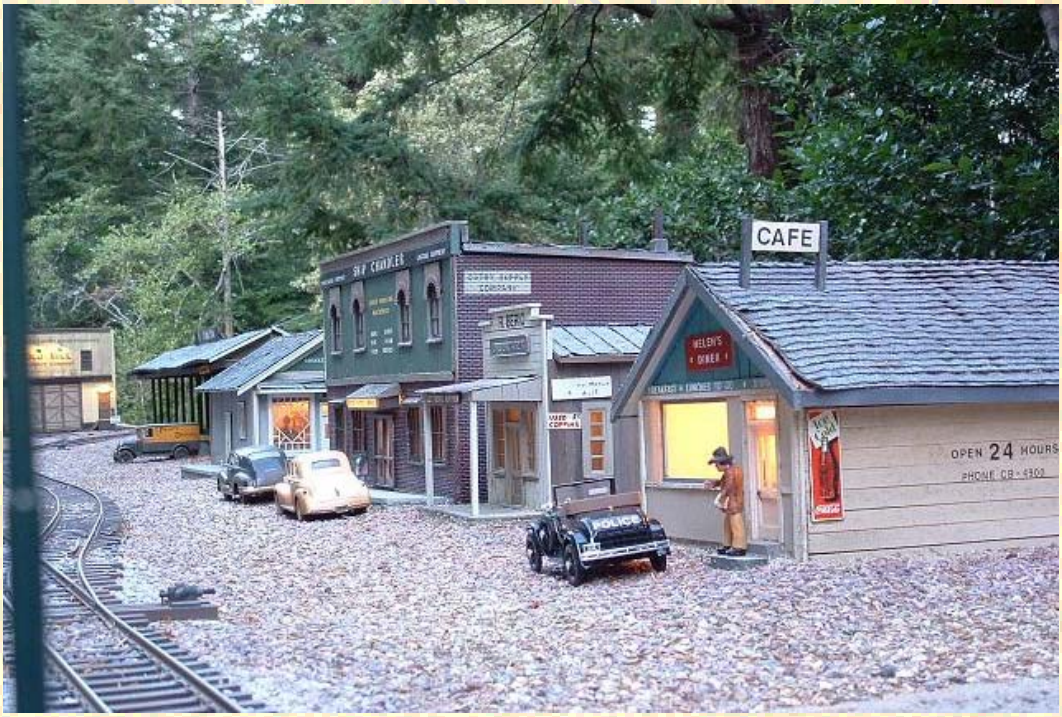
The first few shots look as though they were done in daylight but actually it was somewhat darker than it looks, as you'll be able to tell from the darkness in the other shots taken minutes later.

Another day is ending on the POC.



A late evening gathering at the depot awaiting the excitement of the arrival of one last train expected shortly.

Lights are already coming on in town.



Reserve Officer Busby Bisby leaves Helen's Diner contented with a full belly. A busy day, he's ticketed two unlicensed bicycles, arrested a stray cat and gave the Widow Redundant another ticket for speeding in her Model T. Law enforcement at its finest surely!

Things are winding down at the roundhouse also. Soon there'll be no one around but the night watchman.

Number 4, the local switcher, is all fueled, lubed and ready for tomorrow's early morning call.

The distant wail of a whistle hails the imminent arrival Extra 6.

Already it's getting dark as the caboose clatters across the Davis Slough trestle.

Extra 6 is running late having waited for two high priority cars of lumber to be loaded. They are destined for the Old Mill Lumber Company's wholesale warehouse where a crew is waiting to unload them.

Number 6's whistle blasts its warning at the crossing; two longs, one short and one long, but there are no cars to heed the warning at this late hour.

Extra 6's arrival at the depot creates a short-lived flurry of activity as its crew receives final instructions.

Number 6's crew has been instructed to spot its lumber cars at the warehouse before tying up but first an empty flatcar must be moved out of the way.

Caboose put away, work done, number 6 joins its brethren in the roundhouse for a well-deserved rest. Lights dim. Day's end!

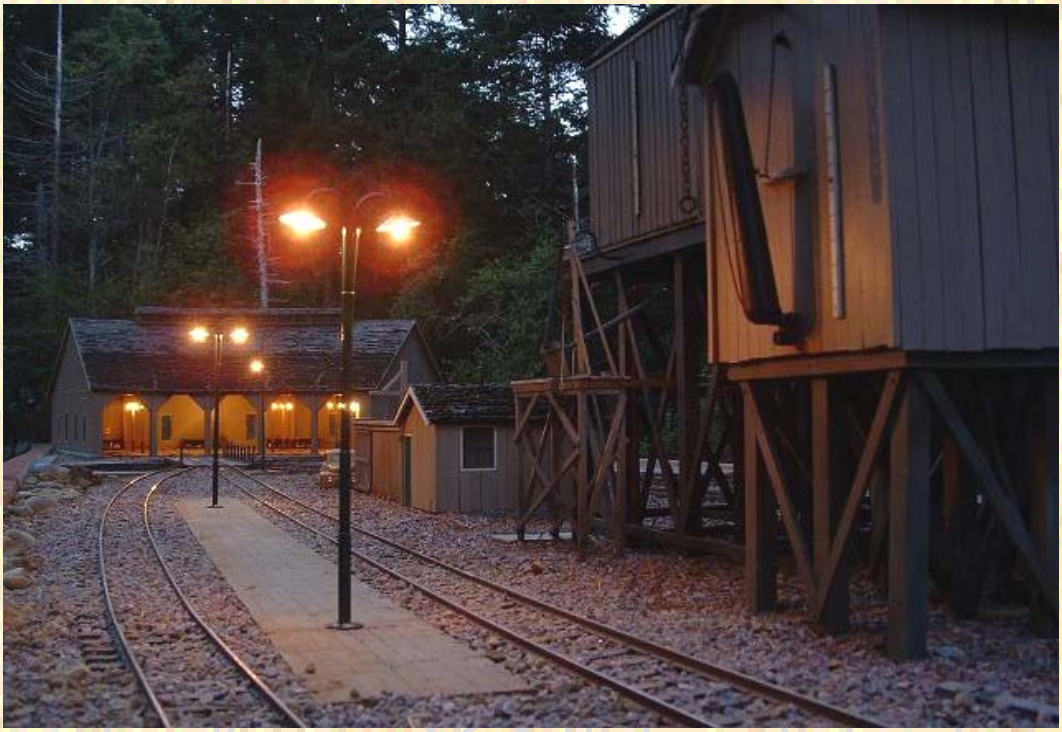
The shots were taken with natural light only. I've never liked the look of flash or floods and wanted to portray the scene as it actually appeared. I definitely need more lights at the engine terminal and that's on the agenda. Otherwise all the intended lighting is installed and working on the railroad as it is so far.

I would like to install some subtle blue lights on poles beyond the railroad to gently bathe the layout in dim blue light but that's a long ways in the future. In the meantime I have a lot to learn.

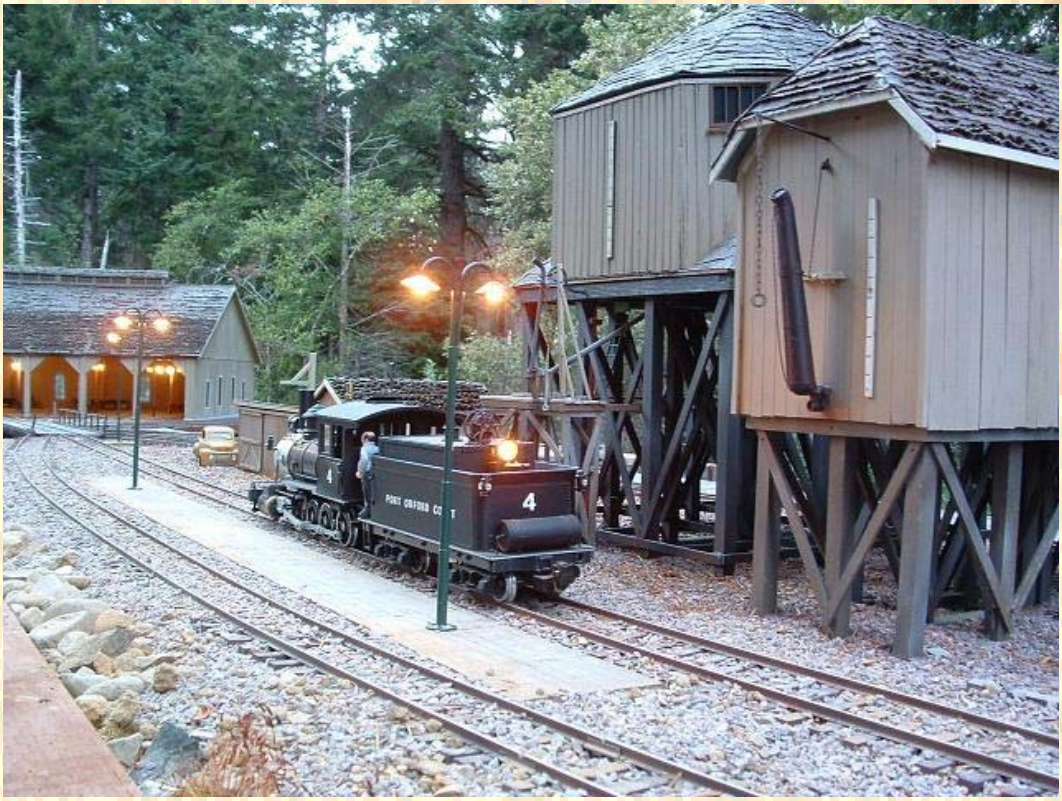
Hope this wasn't too hard on my fellow dial ups and that you enjoyed the trip.

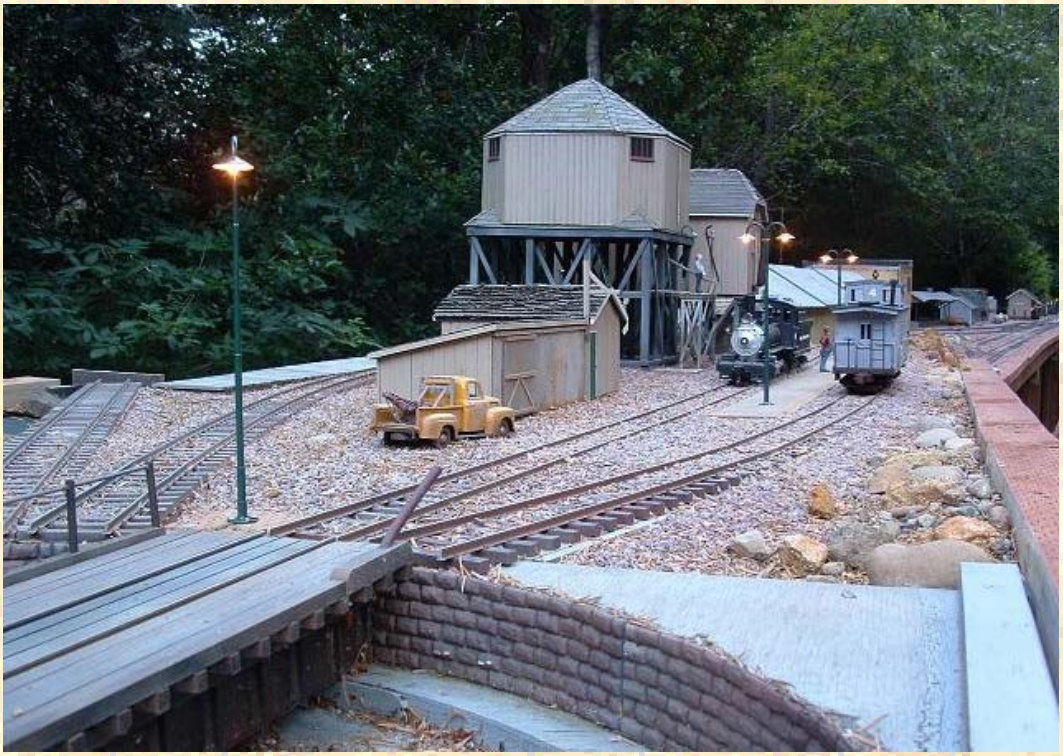
Got Lights?? Engine Terminal Gets'em

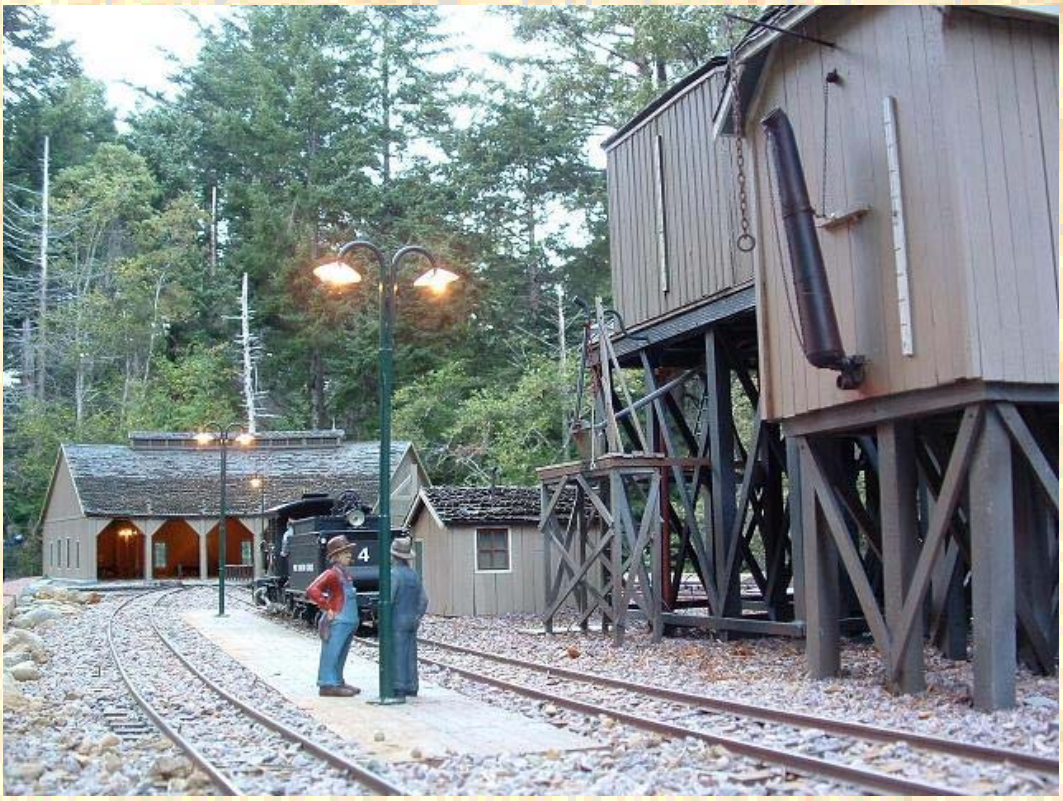
Finishing up the "I see the lights!" segment of the latest POC construction here's a few photos of the results...



Here's what it looks like before dark...!







The lights are from Bridge-Masters. Great product! All the lighting for the Coos Bay terminal area are now in except for what will be used in and around the machine/wheel shop which will be installed adjacent to the roundhouse.

This will probably be the last progress report on the POC for a while unless I get the machine shop finished. I do have a hill to construct and then I'll be stopped until I get more bench work up. When will depend on the weather, which has been quite nice thus far.

Raised Layout (waist high)
Posted - 31 Jul 2002 : 11:58:51
(Page-1, 6th message down)
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=9051

How high to build the track in the garden
Posted - 06 Oct 2002 : 18:05:00
(Page-1, 13th message down)
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=10367

Port Orford Coast R.R. "Coos Bay" Depot
Posted - 24 Oct 2002 : 20:20:54
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=10700

For Flatracker & all POC RR Pass
Posted - 04 Dec 2002 : 14:45:40
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=11407
Missing image file(s):
http://gold.mylargescale.com/RichardSmith/2003WebPass.jpg

POC Roundhouse Progress Report
Posted - 05 Jan 2003 : 21:51:42
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=12172

POC R.R. Roundhouse Update No. 2
Posted - 21 Feb 2003 : 12:11:12
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=13230

The Sandhouse...a Simple Building Technique...Long
Posted - 27 Feb 2003 : 10:37:17
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=13381

Turntable
Posted - 13 Apr 2003 : 17:29:34
(Page-1, 2nd & 8th messages down)
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=14248

10,000 Shingles(plus) But Who's Counting?
Posted - 01 Jun 2003 : 23:39:51
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=15076

Varmint & Weather Exclusion Device(s)
Posted - 17 Jun 2003 : 02:28:51
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=15387

Water Column for the POC R.R.
Posted - 17 Jun 2003 : 11:06:33
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=15397

Dick's Mini-Log..9-10-03 See pg.2 Oil Tank Done
Posted - 12 Aug 2003 : 00:13:29
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=16571

Latest photos 9-10-03 POC's Oil Fuel Tank pg.2
Posted - 26 Aug 2003 : 18:21:09
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=16885

POC RR's Water Tank...Finished at last!
Posted - 29 Aug 2003 : 18:11:38
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=16954

POC Visit from John Wilcox
Posted - 27 Sep 2003 : 14:20:13
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=17544
Missing image files:
http://1stclass.mylargescale.com/RichardSmith/PTL02JWilcox-12-w.jpg
http://1stclass.mylargescale.com/RichardSmith/PTL01JWilcox-w.jpg
http://1stclass.mylargescale.com/RichardSmith/PTL02JWilcox-13-w.jpg

Ostby Supply Company
Posted - 10 Nov 2003 : 18:19:13
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=18409

Smile Purty!
Posted - 16 Jan 2004 : 16:00:49
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=19813

The Smoke House
Posted - 09 Apr 2004 : 14:12:05
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=21771

The Proof is in the Puttin'
Posted - 06 May 2004 : 20:47:01
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=22356

Earthmoving Time on POC
Posted - 14 May 2004 : 10:24:19
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=22495

POC Roundhouse Outside...a Couple Pix
Posted - 27 Jun 2004 : 19:37:53
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=23517

Acceptance Day
Posted - 01 Jul 2004 : 15:20:05
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=23621
Missing Image File(s)
http://1stclass.mylargescale.com/RichardSmith/QuailRoundhsWeb.JPG

Roadbed is Being Laid
Posted - 18 Jul 2004 : 00:27:31
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=23997

Getting Close to End of Roadbed Work 12 images
Posted - 27 Jul 2004 : 23:18:37
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=24241

Scenic Beginnings, 9 Images
Posted - 07 Aug 2004 : 23:01:15
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=24482

Scenic Update Aug15-Seven Images
Posted - 15 Aug 2004 : 09:58:40
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=24652

Town Layout Aug 21 - 3 Images
Posted - 21 Aug 2004 : 16:48:11
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=24783

Short Update for Oct. 1
Posted - 01 Oct 2004 : 19:26:07
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=25620

POC Progress Report Oct.6...Seven images.
Posted - 05 Oct 2004 : 22:51:26
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=25710

Track Laying on POC Oct14 5 images
Posted - 14 Oct 2004 : 13:22:15
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=25865

Track & Rain Report Oct 26...7 images
Posted - 26 Oct 2004 : 17:37:42
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=26076

Big Political Event on the POC
Posted - 28 Oct 2004 : 22:43:16
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=26113

Stock Extra on POC - 7 images
Posted - 30 Oct 2004 : 20:11:17
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=26142

For Harvey Campbell..Multiscale Bldgs.
Posted - 28 Nov 2004 : 14:56:34
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=26668

Pearce Drayage & Team Track-5 photos
Posted - 30 Jan 2005 : 14:29:39
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=28038

Checker Match
Posted - 10 Mar 2005 : 16:21:18
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=28842

Lo-o-o-ong Warehouse 12 photos Update May 3
Posted - 05 Apr 2005 : 17:55:12
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=29371

Some visitors to the POC (*Not included in document*)
Posted - 10 Apr 2005 : 16:57:01
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=29474

Lumper's Local 159...8 photos
Posted - 22 May 2005 : 19:14:27
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=30423

Attn. Don Howard...Grit
Posted - 24 May 2005 : 10:02:50
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=30463

Visitors on the Noon Train-10 Photos (*Not included in document*)
Posted - 30 May 2005 : 10:04:48
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=30589

Long Whse-Car Storage-8 Photos
Posted - 20 Jul 2005 : 16:21:03
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=32061

A Light Test - 2 Photos
Posted - 23 Jul 2005 : 00:21:36
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=32118

POC Security 7 photos...Attn. S. Suleski
Posted - 23 Jul 2005 : 13:50:46
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=32129

Update 10/30 A Clean Slate-Stockyard see 1st Pa
Posted - 09 Oct 2005 : 18:21:58
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=33885

Stockyard-Clean Slate Continued...4 Photos
Posted - 20 Nov 2005 : 13:06:29
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=34840

I Don't Need No Stinkin' Track
Posted - 13 Dec 2005 : 17:22:41
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=35418

Snow Snippet on the POC...12 Photos
Posted - 11 Mar 2006: 11:26:32
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=37476

Cabinet Shop Primer - 10 photos
Posted - 26 Mar 2006 : 14:03:51
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=37808

Type of LS Railroading: Which are you?
Posted - 12 Apr 2006 : 09:30:04
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=38197
*(**Comment:** Richard Smith, Page 1, 2nd message down)*

Xing At Davis Slough-1 - 6 Photos
Posted - 23 Jun 2006 : 17:37:52
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=39718

First Train Across Davis Slough - 3 Photos
Posted: 14 Jul 2006: 23:31:37
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=40172

POC Caboose 04 gets bashed-5 photos
Posted: 31 Jul 2006 : 23:22:47
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=40518

Davis Slough Pt 2 Scenery 10 Photos
Posted: 07 Aug 2006 : 20:20:34
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=40675

Davis Slough Pt 3 - finis - 8 Photos
Posted: 12 Aug 2006 : 15:06:32
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=40764

AfterTheSlough-Scenery&Scenes-9 Photos
Posted: 20 Aug 2006 : 22:03:30
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=40929

Night Train - 13 Photos
Posted: 31 Aug 2006 : 11:09:23
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=41155

Got Lights?? Engine Term Gets 'em...6 Photos
Posted: 05 Sep 2006 : 08:22:54
http://mylargescale.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=41257

Oil Fuel Tank
Posted 2003-08-26 19:38:48 MST
http://www.largescalecentral.com/LSCForums/viewtopic.php?id=5193

POC RR's Water Tank
Posted 2003-08-29 19:07:16 MST
http://www.largescalecentral.com/LSCForums/viewtopic.php?id=5192

The Mixed arrives in town
Posted: 2004-11-03 21:26:51 MST
http://www.largescalecentral.com/LSCForums/viewtopic.php?id=5138

Two reefers from DS&RG delivered
Posted: 2005-04-29 12:01:23 MST
http://www.largescalecentral.com/LSCForums/viewtopic.php?id=5372

First Train Across Davis Slough
Posted: 2006-07-14 23:11:45 MST
http://www.largescalecentral.com/LSCForums/viewtopic.php?id=6334

Cabinet Shop
Posted: 2006-03-26 11:54:49 MST
http://www.largescalecentral.com/LSCForums/viewtopic.php?id=6018

Large Scale Central - How To Article
Building a Train Shed
http://www.largescalecentral.com/articles/view.php?id=6

Large Scale Central - How To Article
Scratch Build a Rectangular Wooden Water Tank for Outdoors
http://www.largescalecentral.com/articles/view.php?id=41