

THE YOSEMITE SHORT LINE SECTIONAL PORTABLE On30 LAYOUT – by Frank Markovich and Jim Eckman with pictures from members of the group.

About the Prototype:

Our group first started talking about building an On30 layout for showing at the 2004 National Narrow Gauge Convention in December, 2002. We settled on modeling a generic 30" gauge railroad, based on the several 30" gauge railroads in California. Most of the sections are inspired by the Yosemite Short Line. This line was started in 1905 but work stopped in the spring of 1906, immediately following the San Francisco earthquake and fire. The line was never finished, service never started and the 8 miles of completed track was removed by 1915.

The YSL was organized to tap into the lucrative Yosemite tourist trade, the several mines located south of the Sierra Railway in Tuolumne County and the rich timberlands near Crane Flat (owned at the time by the General Manager of the Sierra). A lumber mill was planed for Buck Meadows, near Groveland. When work was stopped, the line had 2 small Porters with two additional Porters on order. All of these were transferred to the Empire City Rwy, a 30" gauge railroad higher in the Sierra in Tuolumne County and owned by the Standard Lumber Co. At the time the same men controlled both the Sierra and Standard. Standard added a 5th Porter and purchased two used 3' gauge Shays, which they re-gauged to 30". The YSL also had 30" gauge flat cars and both passenger and general freight cars on the drawing board. One flat car remains today and is now at Railtown 1897 SHP in Jamestown. This car had worked on the Empire City Rwy. with the Porters following the closure of the YSL. When the Empire City Railway ceased operation in 1913, the 30' gauge equipment then found its way to several other locations: These included the Molino Timber Company in the Loma Prieta area of Santa Cruz, the Johnson & Pollock Lumber Company in Siskiyou County north of Mt. Shasta and the Sloat Lumber Company in the Feather River area of Plumas County

The Layout:

Our layout was designed to be sectional but not modular – every section is needed to operate the layout and sections only mate one way. The basic framework was designed by member Jim Long and is made mostly of door skins and blue insulation foam. Our standard was the Bachmann 2-6-0 had to be able to operate everywhere on the mainline that loops the layout and on the branch line that extends to the logging area. Since we are not modular it was not felt necessary to have other standards. Sizes of the sections are all 24" deep but vary in length from 44" to 72" and group members have either one or two sections. The various lengths were set by members ability to store and transport their sections. Each member selected a theme for their section(s) and a track plan was developed. Track is Micro Engineering set on California Roadbed Co. "Homabed" and turnouts are by Railway Engineering. Basic work on the sections was done as a group but structures and most scenery are the work of individual owners. We attempted to unify the look of the layout by trying to do all track and scenery at the joints between two sections while they were connected together. The group regularly met to join parts of the layout and work on common projects (wiring, lighting, track work, facia, scenery). This was at the Fremont, School for the Deaf that member Jim Long worked at. Without that location the layout may have never been completed. Group member Dave Biondi painted all the backdrops.

We decided a prototype that existed but really never operated offered almost unlimited advantages for us to model. Virtually anything we wanted to build, anything we planned to model, could/would/should be prototypical within the limitations of a small Sierra mountain railroad. In practice, that led to our "Bachmann Mogul" rule for curves, clearances, distance between track center, etc. All we required was that a Mogul would fit, and even that rule was broken on the logging branch and the quarry line.

There in the beginning there were 12 members in the group. Some of us knew each other before this project, but this is the first thing we have done together as a group. We have an agreement every section will be made available whenever the group displays the layout, even if the owner can not make it. We also agreed that if any one leaves the group their sections will stay in the group and a new "owner" will be found. Group members are: Dave Biondi, Richard Brennan, Dave Connery, James Eckman, Isaac Good, Ron Kolodzieczak, Pat LaTorres, Jim Long, Brad Lloyd, Ken Lunders, Scott Maze, Frank Markovich (Joined later) and John Roth. Current members include Dave Gill, Reg Shaffer, and David Kreutzinger. Unfortunately, Jim Long passed away and we dedicate the layout to Jim. Ken Lunders, Dave Biondi, Brad Lloyd and Ron Kolodzieczak are non-active members.

The layout was shown at the 2004 National Narrow Gauge Convention in Santa Clara and won the layout award. Since then the layout has been shown at least 2 times per year and sometimes as many as 5 times in one year. It has won numerous awards.

Below are some pictures of the layout in construction:



Dave Connery and Ron Kolo working on the framing.



Ron Kolo and Dave Connery assembling frame – bottom.



Brad Lloyd, Jim Long and Ron Kolo with completed base of the layout.



Brad Lloyd applying a Skin.



Jim Long working on the wiring.



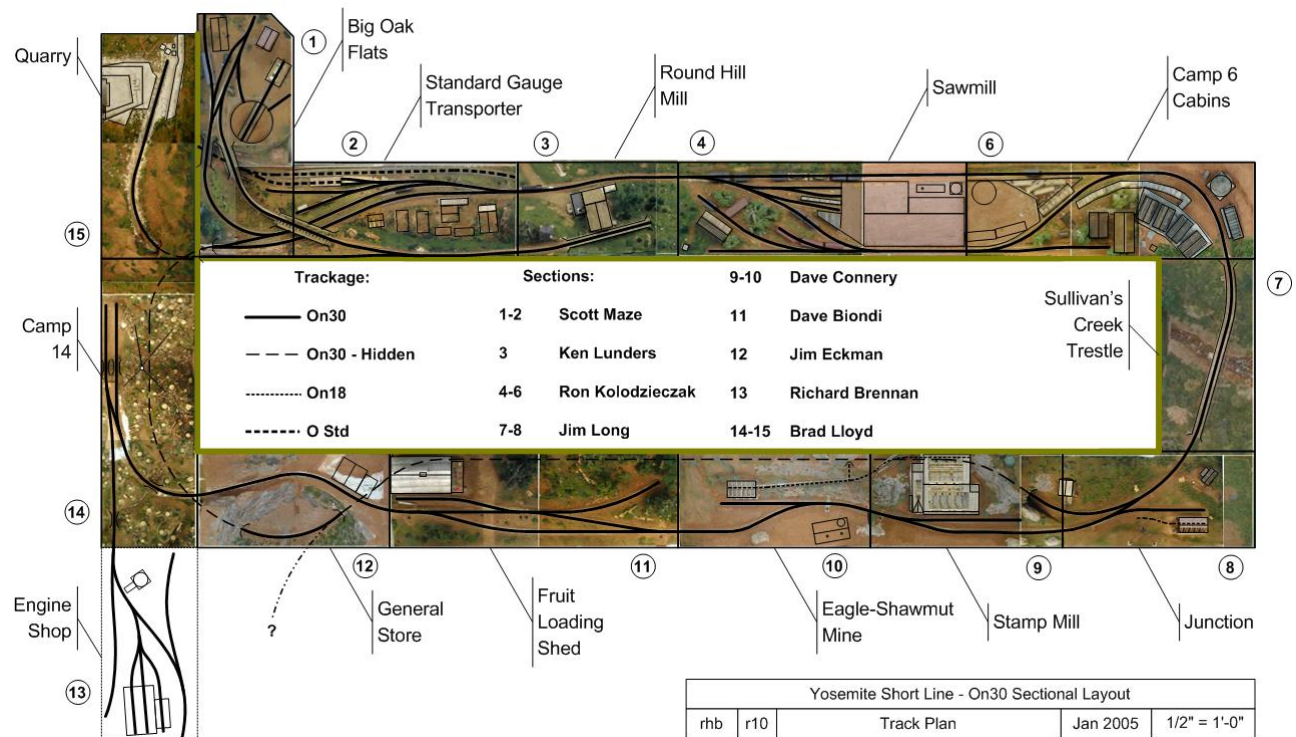
Dave Connery working on the wiring underneath a section.



December 7th 2003 first public showing at Coast Division, PCR, NMRA

Original track plan – while names have changed the track play is the same:

Track plan by Richard Brennan, 2005 version alterations have been made!

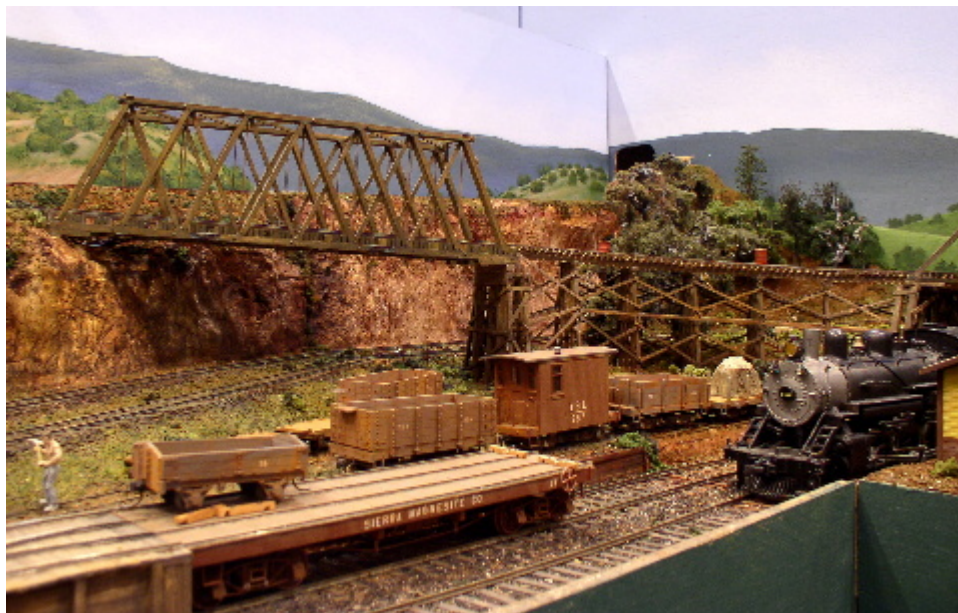


There are currently 12 sections with the 13th section on hold. Here is a brief description of the current sections:

Section 1 and 2 by Scott Maze



Scott Maze's British motive power, pay no attention to the wires behind the man!



Scott Maze's Red Oak Flats, in the foreground is a transfer table and car for the quarry, very different for us Yanks.



Everyone's out on the porch when the weather is so nice.

Section 3 built Ken Lunders



The water tank at Round Hill. Ken's fine modeling work combined with Dave Biondi's backdrops makes a fabulous little scene. Everything behind the water tank is backdrop!



Late evening at the Round Hill Mill, no locomotives on the trestle please!



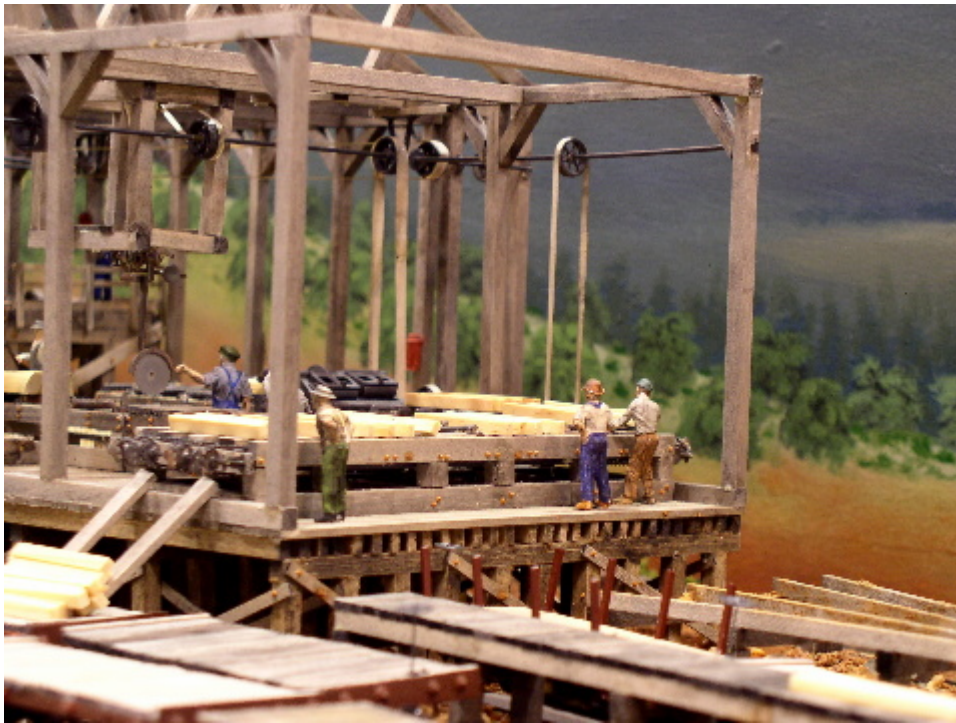
Early morning at the Round Hill Mill, it processes Ubiquisite ore a material found almost anywhere. Prototypes include the Red Stone Mill and the Gentle Annie Mine.

Sections 4 and 6 - Sawmill area by Ron Kolodzieczak now owned by Dave Gill









I don't have any smart aleck comments about the sawmill, these were supplied by show attendees.





I'm not up on ancient history, what are all these little houses with one door and no windows for?



Ron added new trees to his section, they really change the look.



By Jim Long in the possession of Reg Shaffer



Jim Long's trestle, a fantastic job. Also some railfanning before CAL-OSHA.







A more recent shot of the Ironworks area.

Section 9 and 10 built by Dave Connery in the possession of Dave Kreutzinger



Snaking through Dave Connery's Shawmut Mine, rough trackage!



Awesome modeling! Not mine of course.



Running past the tippel, the guy running the mine tram is a real speed demon.

Section 11 by Dave Biondi, currently owned by Dave Gill



Dave Biondi's apple and what have you warehouse.



Dave redid his trackwork and added this neat engine house and work area.

Built By Jim Eckman in possession of David Gill

Carlton, inside Yosemite National Park near the Big Oak Flat entrance.

Carlton was the planned terminus for the Yosemite Short Line, though it was doubtful the Forest Service would have allowed this. The local community is called Carlton after the owner of a popular resort Donna Carlton. Just before you leave the park was the rustic Carl Inn, built in 1916 by the Carlons, it burned down several times. The local attraction, Carlton Falls is a rare year-round waterfall on the South Fork Tuolumne River with somewhat of an unusual shape. Even though the falls lies within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park, the trail starts outside its boundaries near Yosemite's Big Oak Flat Entrance.



New motor coach stops of on logging branch. Frank's new trees improve the background.

We realigned the track on this module since we couldn't get anything up it in a reliable fashion! Note the new

bridge and other construction.



Section 14 by Brad Lloyd and Frank Markovich, in possession of David Gill

New water tank and trees added by Frank. Track has been reworked as well.



This section has already had some serious rework done on it by Frank.



This is Brad Lloyd's logging module, the remains of a successful logging operation, messy weren't they!

Section 15 by Brad Lloyd in possession of Pat and Ronnie LaTorres

This section has already had some serious rework done on it by Pat.



Track has been reworked, hopefully we will have some quarry action next show!



Brad Lloyd's quarry operation with British motive power, don't ask me what the engine is! I can only recognize Stirling singles. I have been told that this is a "Quarry Hunslett" since so many were used in the Welsh slate quarries.