



Model Rail Radio Shelf Layout Contest 2014

The End of "the Chocolate", CSX, Mansfield MA by Prof Klyzlr

The following plan is an interpretation of the end of "the Chocolate" CSX branch, in Mansfield, MA. This CSX branch was made famous by Jim Lincoln in previous Model Rail Radio podcasts. Designed for N scale, the plan requires 72"x15". Track is intended to be Code 55 or 70, using #5 turnouts and minimum radii of 20". Handlaying the dummy-crossing, (one leg is un-used on the 2000s-era prototype) will be a good starter exercise from the tracklaying-interested modeller.

"the Chocolate" is a small switching location hanging off the eastern side of the North East Corridor. Handled by CSX "B7xx" locals out of Framingham yard, "the Chocolate" serves "National Lumber" Hardware Distributor, Smurfit-Stone Container Co cardboard box factory, and Advanced Warehousing. As designed, the plan shown depicts the very end of "the Chocolate", including an entirely model-size loco+3-car switchback.

Prototype information is available from:

- <https://goo.gl/maps/MVq8y> (Googlemaps image of "the Chocolate")
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-BgTH_LmNc (Switching National Lumber Pt1)

"the Chocolate" is commonly switched in the contemporary 1990-2000s era by MU'd CSX GP40-2s in the 62xx series. These GP40-2s are equipped with cabn-signals specifically to allow operation along and across the High-speed North East Corridor. However, rewind to earlier eras and Conrail and predecessor RR locos are entirely plausible. 62xx-series GP40-2 roadswitchers are available from Atlas in CSX paint and numbers.

Typical rollingstock seen on "the Chocolate" include 60+' centrebeam flatcars of lumber for National Lumber, and 50' boxcars for National Lumber, Advanced Warehousing, and Stone Container Co. Suitable boxcars have been produced by various manufacturers, and are readily available. Micro-Trains has offered 60' centerbeam flatcars which are a perfect fit for the design, and are readily available on the 2nd-hand market.

The various industry structures on "the Chocolate" can be adapted from readily-available commercial industrial kit components, or scratchbuilt from basic materials. As they are relatively "faceless" and generic, they would make a relatively soft entry into basic structure scratchbuilding in what is often considered a "fiddly" scale..

Operations on this layout assume the local has arrived from it's run up the NEC, backed up "the Chocolate", and gotten the loco consist on "the right end of the train" to get switching. Think of it as just coming upon the train as the crew hesitates for a moment, to plan their first switching moves.

Given the size restrictions of the contest, the plan shown only physically includes National Lumber and Advanced Warehousing. However, the staged train may well have cars waybilled for Stone-Container Co, which the operations crew will need to deal with. The switchback leading to National Lumber can accommodate the typical 2-loco consist plus three 60' centerbeams _just_, which matches the prototype. This track-capacity wrinkle is key to emulating the real switching headspace required from the prototype crews.

"The End of the Chocolate" is a near-scale-size slice of modern era CSX switching. It makes for an engaging N scale switcher for the space-challenged modeller, and can be a "first module" LDE launchpad for a very-accurate rendition of "the Chocolate" in it's entirety.

XTrkCAD Track plan on next page



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Scale : N
Size : 72" X 15"
Track : Code 70/55
Turnout : #5
Min Radii : 24"

(Red arrows indicate prototype image viewing angle, Thanks to Jim L for the pics!)

