

# The **N-TRAK** Newsletter

January – February 2015

**The NTRAK Modular Railroading Society, Inc.** Incorporated 1996 by Jim FitzGerald.

*NTRAK Modular Railroad Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization with the goal of promoting the hobby of model railroading and in particular, N Scale modular model railroading.*



## The N-Trak Switchback: Text and photos by Bonnie & Wayne Lette,

The concept of this 6' x 30" N-Trak module came from the lumber railroads in the mountains. The switchback is similar to the Cass Railroad in West Virginia which is famous for the Shay Locomotives that worked the wooded area for the lumber mill. However, it is our own concept to be able to run in the space allowed behind

the three rails in the front that is part of the NTRAK standards and the group runs on.

My husband, Wayne and I started to build the module in the fall of 2008. This module had its debut run with the LENS (Lake Erie N-Scale Society) group at the March 2009 NMRA MCR Division 5 Railfest Show at Lakeland College in Kirtland, OH, as seen in the picture below.



[http://www.lensohio.org/NTrak/articals/Lette\\_SwitchbackModule.htm](http://www.lensohio.org/NTrak/articals/Lette_SwitchbackModule.htm)

The link below the above picture will take you to the LENSOhio.org website where it will show you pictures of the construction of the module. We enjoyed working on this module. Wayne designed and built the electronics to have the switch automated. I helped with going over the design to double check with Wayne's guidance. We use the Tortoise Switch Machines to move the switches when a sensor has been tripped. There are 14 sensors on the module to work with the electronics to tell the train and switches what to do. There are two at each end of the tails – the first one slows the train, the second one stops the train. At which time the switch now moves to the other direction and the train will start out again. We tell the children that there is a person that runs out of the train, switches the switch and goes back on the train – Did you see him? The sensor in the center of each layer makes sure that the switch the train is heading towards its set properly.

To see some action on the module you can go to [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0x23IWwmc8&list=WL&feature=player\\_detailpage](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0x23IWwmc8&list=WL&feature=player_detailpage).

The roadbed is made of spline; this gives us the more

natural curve and elevation wanted for the look of the railroad line to go up the mountain. We use cardboard strips to help form the mountain and terrain. Newspaper is stuffed under the strips and covered with Sculptamold®. This is a very light plaster type material. Some of the rocks were casted and others were carved by us. Adding some realism we put in drill marks on the rock front ledges, like we see in Pennsylvania where they put the dynamite to blast the rock away to make the rock wall along the rails.

We used ground foam for the grass, purchased and made trees. There is one area if you look close that the railroad that had been washed away and had to be moved up the mountain further, not to mention there's an outhouse at the top of the run. In 2013 we spruced up of the scenery a little – putting more grass, more trees and defining the drill marks on the rocks ledges. Not much of a change but enough that we could tell the difference.

We hope you enjoyed viewing our module and hope to have you visit our group's website at [www.LENSohio.org](http://www.LENSohio.org).

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**The end of the line on the Lette's Switchback!**



***"Thank You", to those that submitted items to this newsletter, and enjoy reading.***



*The End*