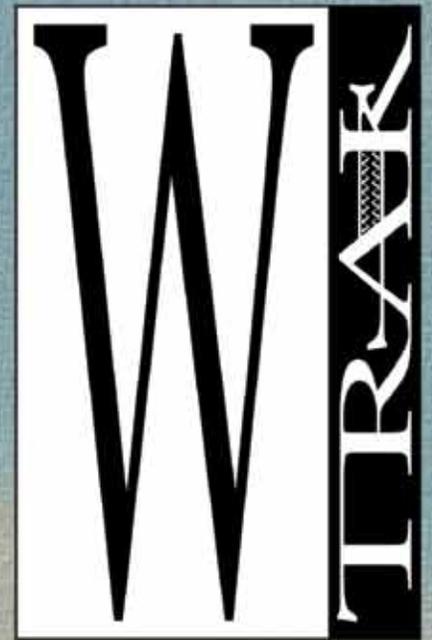


2021
UPDATE

13th Anniversary Edition



Modular Wooden Railways

a Standard for Narrow Wood Railway Tables and Shelves



2014

With durable trees, custom trains, scale buildings and landscape features in place, focus shifted to supporting an expanded range of train shows and other venues. Makers' Faires, creative playspaces and children's museums were among these. Invitations from well-beyond Seattle were accepted too – including Chilliwack (BC), Victoria (BC), Burnaby (BC), Spokane (WA) and Pleasanton (CA).

Hands-on projects for children were also developed. Workshops to assemble, paint and weather wooden locomotives and rolling stock built on recycled train car bases were conducted several times. A class to make upholstery trees and another to make custom buildings were also offered.

A compact modular railway for Seattle ReCreative was constructed. Consistent with the mission of the group, tables were constructed using reforested Poplar, reclaimed Southern Yellow Pine, salvaged and resawn American Chestnut, custom wooden locomotives, recycled train cars, upholstery remnants,

and natural fiber carpet scraps. The tables were completed in time for the 41st Annual Model Railroad Show at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle with volunteers from Seattle ReCreative.

Several local train shows from previous years were scaled back or not held, and a couple of Model railroad retailers locally either closed their doors or stopped carrying wooden trains – one store owner explained that several of his customers had objected to wooden trains and he no longer stocked them. While a couple of the train shows include an operational electric layout that children and their parents can operate, most continue to be entirely geared towards adults. Modular railway standards put layouts above eye-level for many children!

Bill Virgin, editor of Pacific Northwest Rail News, featured our wooden railway in Volume 5, Issue 12, in 2013. We also received a couple of emails from model railroaders planning to construct a wooden railway for their grandchildren.



大きな鉄道模型テーブルの欠点の一つの解決法として提案します。残念ながらほとんどの鉄道模型テーブルは規格が大きいため運びにくく、またテーブルを挟んで作業しにくいという欠点があります。いくつかの型はテーブル同士をつなげることでさらに大きくできますが、テーブルに縁が張り巡らされているので、テーブルの真ん中に壁ができてしまいます。でもこの細長いテーブルは縁がないので、テーブルを好きなようにつなぎ合わせることができます。さらに小さな家やアパートで、大きな鉄道模型が部屋の大部分を占領してしまう不便さも解決しました。

鉄道模型クラブではモジュールのセグメントを含む木製鉄道の改良にあたってきました。このテーブルは大型模型テーブルの搬送を容易にするとともに組み立ても簡単にしました。また同じ規格のテーブルを持っている他の家族とつなげ合わせたりすることも容易にできます。また限られたスペースでも片側から作業できるので、壁に沿って置くことができますし、部屋の真ん中におく必要もありません。

今までどこにも細長い型の木製鉄道テーブルを見つけないことができなかったため、この新しい規格を提案しました。一携帯用としても棚用としても便利です。



2015

We returned to most of the shows and events from previous years while adding support for a train show in Tacoma and Sedro-Wooley's Woodfest

Hands-on workshops were held at Seattle ReCreative and a monthly Kid's Club at Steilacoom's Historical Museum where my parent's leaned in to assist.

This was the first year a Neighborhood Trains! event was held in Kirkland's Finn Hill. Over 175 of our neighbors

2016

A March 9th gas explosion in Seattle's Greenwood neighborhood leveled part of the business district and damaged Seattle ReCreative's space, requiring their modular railway to be picked up to prevent water damage. Priorities for the year also changed substantially when

2017

This year was an incremental return to normal supporting a handful of mostly local shows and events with the strongest family and community ties and engagement. It included our

dropped in for this free 4-hour hands-on train event that included our modular wooden railway, a dozen bins of loose wooden track, a Lego® railway and other train-themed activities and videos.

Our layout traveled to the National Train Show in Portland and we met many visitors from across the US and Canada. Exercising our odometer, we also drove our modular wooden railway to Canada's largest model railroad show – Supertrain – in Calgary, Alberta.

my mother passed away unexpectedly. While we weren't able to participate in many of the shows and events planned, we did hold a 2nd Annual Neighborhood Trains! event in Kirkland with attendance doubling from the previous year to more than 350.

3rd Annual Neighborhood Trains! event where attendance exceeded 750. We were very fortunate to have volunteers from several households assist which was tremendously helpful.

2014

- Great Train Expo:
Puyallup, WA
- 23rd UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA
- Modular Railway Project:
Seattle ReCreative
Seattle, WA
- Great Train Expo:
Pleasanton, CA
- 40th Pacific Science Center Show:
Seattle ReCreative
Seattle, WA
- Spring Model Train Show:
Spokane, WA
- 17th Mount Cheam Train Show:
Chilliwack, BC
- STEAM Railway Clinics:
Seattle ReCreative
Seattle, WA
- Trains 2014:
Burnaby, BC
- Neighborhood Christmas Party:
Seattle, WA

2015

- Great Train Expo:
Portland, OR
- 24th UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA
- Spring Model Train Show:
Spokane, WA
- Supertrain 2015:
Calgary, AB
- Victoria Model Railway Show:
Victoria, BC
- Woodfest 2015:
Sedro-Woolley, WA
- 4th Freighthouse Square Train Show:
Tacoma, WA
- STEAM Railway Clinic:
Kids Club at the Museum
Steilacoom, WA
- NMRA National Train Show:
Portland, OR
- Spokane Fall Train Show:
Spokane, WA
- 1st Annual Neighborhood Trains!:
Kirkland, WA
- Vancouver Train Expo:
Vancouver, BC

2016

- 25th UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA
- Spokane Train Show:
Spokane, WA
- 2nd Annual Neighborhood Trains!
Kirkland: WA



2018

Both the Spring and Fall events in Spokane were supported this year. With these two Eastern Washington shows representing a combined travel time of 24 hours, 4 trips through mountain passes with changing weather and several nights lodging, consistent participation in this event would continue to be challenging. Working with Shirley from River City Modelers, the train club sponsoring this event, a modular railway was constructed and donated as a resource for weekend shows, open house events and other community engagement.

Their finished layout was boxed and traveled to Spokane with my youngest son who dropped it off on his way back to college. Shirley partnered with a local Scout troop to both set the tables up at events and to engage with participating families. Several of the Scouts leveraged their engagement with the railway event to complete their Model Railroading badge requirements.

A 4th Annual Neighborhood Trains! event was held in Kirkland and doubled again in attendance to 1400 – which far outpaced expectations and was on

a scale that we were ill-prepared for. There were cars parked everywhere... for blocks in every direction. The Puget Sound Lego Club joined us and the 4H model railroad group set up a table too.

A manageable and more personal Trains! event was held at the Anderson Island Historical Society's Johnson Farm. It took place nearly twenty years after a similar event at the island's Community Club where difficulties with a large, loose floor layout competing with toddler's feet were recognized. This was a full-circle moment because the layout was built in my father's workshop on the island during the preceding decade and the event was held in the new archival building which had a personal connection also...

AIHS 2017 Newsletter

June 17, 2017 marked the dedication of the new Archival Building. One part of the building dedication was the naming of the great hall, now called Stephenson Hall, in honor of Ed and Lucy Stephenson who dedicated so many hours and consistent support of the building throughout the entire time of construction. Lucy passed away before the building was completed, but we are sure she would enjoy the new facility.

2019

In March of 2016, an emerging children's play museum in Wilton (ME) reached out asking for project details with a train room in mind. A local family sponsored the space, a local Rotary group underwrote material and labor costs and a local furniture maker agreed to take on the project. It was exciting to catch glimpses of this community partnership taking form over the next two years.

Dimensions, plans, cost estimates and a source for individual standard track pieces (*Choo Choo Track & Toy Co.*) were passed along with a commitment to provide any assistance needed to ensure success with their undertaking. Other than providing a parcel with some specialty track pieces to simplify final assembly, they completed their project in 2018 entirely on their own and ahead of their formal community grand opening!

Their layout was incorporated into the museum as a fixed exhibit, so a complementary portable layout that could be leveraged regionally was

constructed and given to the museum in 2019. The portable railway traveled from Seattle to Boston as overweight and oversize luggage and traveled first to Atlantic Canada for a community event in Quebec City (QC) and a train show in Truro (NS). It returned to the U.S. and arrived at WMPM on a chilly, overcast, pre-Winter morning.

When we returned home, our family's modular wooden layout was invited as an addition to the Model Train Show at Seattle's Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) which opened the door for an invite as their Maker's Day activity a couple of months later.

Promotion and publicity for the 5th Annual Neighborhood Trains! in Kirkland was scaled back in line with volunteer support and we managed to keep attendance under 1000 for the 4-hour event.

A small but emerging local train show in Port Angeles was added in addition to a 9th consecutive appearance at the far larger Monroe Train Show.



2017

- 26th UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA
- Fall Spokane Train Show:
Spokane, WA
- Victoria Model Railway Show:
Victoria, BC
- 3rd Annual Neighborhood Trains!
Kirkland: WA
- Vancouver Train Expo:
Vancouver, BC

2018

- 27th UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA
- Spring Spokane Train Show:
Spokane, WA
- Modular Railway Project
River City Modelers
Spokane, WA
- Fall Spokane Train Show:
River City Modelers
Spokane, WA
- Vancouver Model Railroad Show:
Vancouver, BC
- 4th Annual Neighborhood Trains!:
Kirkland, WA
- Johnson Farm Neighborhood Trains!:
Anderson Island, WA

2019

- 28th UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA
- Modular Railway Project:
Western Maine Play Museum,
Wilton, ME
- Truro Fall Train Show:
Western Maine Play Museum
Truro, NS
- Trains!
Western Maine Play Museum
Quebec City, QC
- North Olympic Peninsula:
Port Angeles, WA
- 5th Annual Neighborhood Trains!
Kirkland, WA
- Victoria Model Railway Show:
Victoria, BC
- MOHAI Model Train Show:
Seattle, WA

Draft standard formalized
December 22, 2008

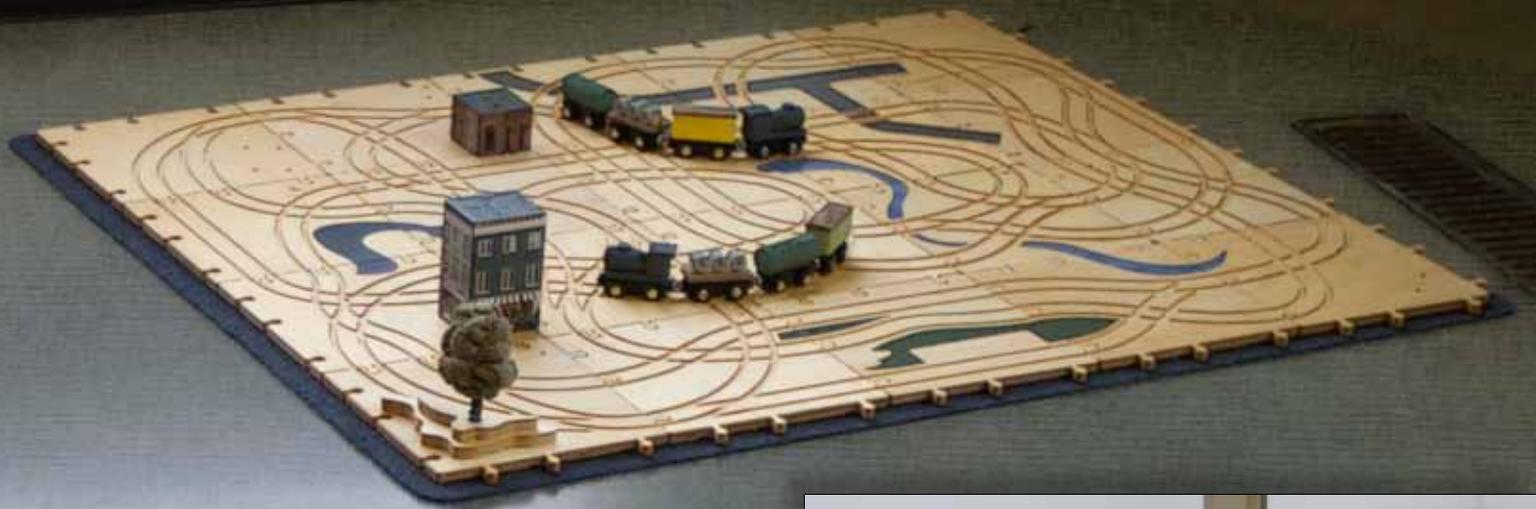
Published by wTrak.org

Copyright © 2021
by Tom D. Stephenson

All rights reserved

Additional content online:
www.wTrak.org

Translations provided by Tomiko
Ikegami and Szilvia Atwood



2020

The year included a Maker's Day at Seattle's MOHAI. 40 children assembled custom train cars – painting, weathering and stamping before taking their project home to add to their own railway. For this Maker's Day, we also brought along a reversible tile railway built for Reading's 'The Engine Shed' and it served as a 'test track' for kids as they completed their rolling stock. 2,097,152 layouts in a cubic foot box.

Later in February, that reversible tile railway and materials needed for the train-building workshop boarded a plane for London and arrived for the monthly gathering at 'The Engine Shed' on February 29th. Sarah's family graciously collected me from Heathrow and provided a ride to my hotel and the next day was a wonderful time building train cars with kids on the spectrum and exchanging insights.

Then the world paused...

For the balance of the year events were cancelled and it became a time to explore, conceptualize and reimagine modular railways, wooden trains and cooperative play. In many ways it was a sabbatical and we are often at our best when presented with both challenges and limitations.

Unfettered by shows and schedules, a range of track elements were designed, melded into series, reshaped, discarded and often reworked and reimagined. Interlaced turnouts, branching wyes, curved turnouts, intersections and even a tramway series. All are fully-formed designs ready to CNC.

New portable railway modules were sketched and modeled using Rhino 7 with some subsequently prototyped in the workshop.

Mostly, we hunkered down, waiting for the storm to weaken.

2021

Though still in isolation, an integrated set of custom tracks were developed and cut for 'The Engine Shed' to facilitate collaborative play in their monthly wooden railway setups. This includes a mix of sways, bulges, joggles, turnouts, crossovers, slips, parallels, platforms and wyes commonly found in mainlines, spurs, yards and sidings.

A few Fall events were scheduled and tentative plans outlined. My brother invited us to visit and mentioned a train museum in town that we had to see while there. So I looked it up online

Reflecting on a decade of train shows and events, our ability to consistently support organizations beyond a day's drive proved challenging. Twice or so was feasible, but after that, not so much. Learning from layouts left with Seattle ReCreative, River City Modelers, WMPM and The Engine Shed, resourcing innovative groups and organizations was worthwhile.

The Wilmington Railroad Museum's community engagement, child-friendly exhibits and tie-in with model railroad groups checked a lot of boxes. Having family in town was an added plus. More importantly, the museum saw opportunity in leveraging a hands-on railway that connects with a broad age range that might also serve as a bridge between toy and hobby. Their custom layout was completed in seven weeks and traveled as LTL Freight to North Carolina for a September 11th debut.

Our focus was originally providing resources and tutorials online for others to leverage while sharing our layout at various regional shows and events. Building on that, we hope to also equip an organization annually in serving children and families in their community. To date, that includes a group serving kids on the spectrum, one reclaiming materials for craft use, a model railway club, a children's museum and a train museum. What have we overlooked?



2020

29th UNW Train Show:
Monroe, WA

MOHAI Maker Day:
Seattle, WA

Tile Railway Project:
The Engine Shed,
Reading, UK

2021

Modular Railway Project:
Wilmington Railroad Museum,
Wilmington, NC

Custom Railway Set:
Santa Fe Children's Museum
Santa Fe, NM

Custom Railway Set:
Zing Zumm Children's Museum
Jacksonville, NC

Custom Railway Set:
Las Cruces' Railroad Museum
Las Cruces, NM

2022

Modular Railway Project:
Wilmington Railroad Museum,
Wilmington, NC

Wooden Railway Presentation:
NMRax Virtual Clinic
April 23rd, 2022

Resources for Wooden Railways
wRailway.org

Resourcing & Equipping

Prospective organizations for a Modular Railway Project or wooden railway resource donation should:

- be a 501(c)(3),
- serve children through at least elementary school,
- be capable of minor touch-ups (*glue, sharpie, varnish*), and
- be accessible to the public

Other factors to share might include:

- Links underserved communities (*broadly defined to include those remote from population centers, kids on the spectrum, families with limited resources, cultural diversity or other barriers and challenges*),
- Space available for permanent or periodic hands-on exhibits,
- Geographically distant from an existing modular layout,
- Active in a variety of community events and/or Train Shows,
- Affiliation with local train clubs,
- Regularly conducts Workshops or Maker Events for kids, or
- Holds periodic train-themed evening or weekend events

...got Trains?

Egy nagyméretű elrendezésre a megoldás a vonat asztal. Sajnos a legtöbb túl nagy könnyű szállításra és elég nehéz elérni keresztül. Néhányat lehetne összekapcsolni hogy létre hozzon egy nagyobb asztalt, de szükséges hogy a szélek szorosan egymás mellett legyenek, hogy megkönnyítse futópályát az asztalok között. Mivel kevés lakásnak van helye egy nagy vonat asztalra a szoba közepén, keskenyebb vonat asztalok inkább praktikusabbak.

Modell vasút klubok kifejlesztettek számos megoldást ami alkalmazható a fa vasúthoz, a modul részeket beleszámítva.

Ez megkönnyíti a nagy berendezések szállítását, és lehetővé teszi átalakítását - még együttműködést modell vasút klubok vagy családok között is, összeegyeztethető részekkel. Egy másik stratégia ha nem elég hely vagy hozzáférhetőség van egy keskeny polc vasút lenne, amely biztosít hozzáférést mindenhová csak az egyik oldalról - az fontos, ha az elrendezés a falnál lesz nem a szoba közepén.

Nem találva említést keskeny vasúti fa asztalok és modulokról, javaslom az alábbi ötleteket és méreteket szabványra - alkalmas hordozható vasúti asztalok és polcokra...



Looking Ahead...

A modular wooden railway for the National Train Show (August 2022 in St. Louis) is in work. The layout will be donated to the Edwardsville Children's Museum, but part of the railway will arrive early and be available as a hands-on exhibit in ECM's Nickel Plate Station beginning late-March.

Modular Wooden railways, custom track and rolling stock along with age-appropriate modeling techniques for family engagement will be shared as an NMRAX Clinic on April 23rd, 2022. That presentation will include video clips of module construction, track design, custom rolling stock, weathering, landscaping, making trees and other techniques leveraging current projects - including ECM's layout traveling to the National Train Show.

Other projects in work - or delivered in recent weeks - include custom track engineered for collaborative play for the Santa Fe Children's Museum, Jacksonville's Zing Zumm Children's Museum and the Las Cruces' Railroad Museum. Accessories for River City Modelers' modular wooden railway is partially complete - with a couple of

buildings, a contoured hill with tunnel and a bend module. Refurbishment of Seattle ReCreative's modular wooden railway built from reclaimed wood is also planned.

[Watch our website for updates...](#)

