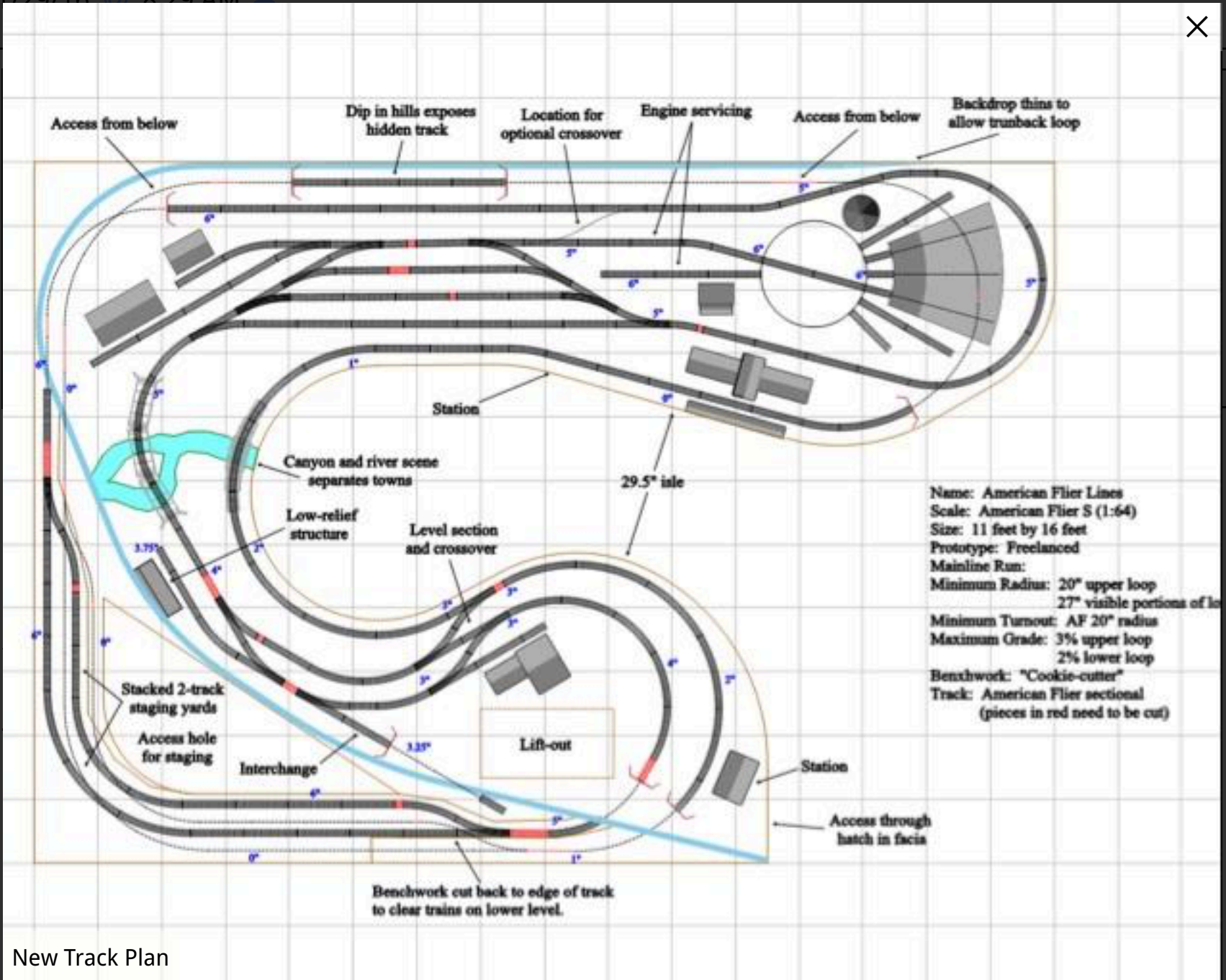


68 REPLIES

# Brand new to the hobby-need some guidance

RUSTY TRAUQE ● MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 8:29 AM



New Track Plan

The earlier Lionel/Flyer U33C's also can be converted to scale with wheels from the Parts Department, but the electronics are AC/TMCC/Legacy only.

We're still waiting on MTH.

The former S Helper Service was set up for Hi-rail/Flyer, with conversion wheels and a DCC shorting plug included. (With the exception of the 2-8-0, one specified wheels and AC/DC/DCC when ordering.) When buying on the secondary market, be sure the original

owner didn't discard them.

Rusty

[DAVID SHAPIRO](#)  OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 9:54 AM

Hi Flyer and Rusty,

Very helpful information. Much appreciated. I'm starting to hone in on what I'm looking for. The American Models gear seems to be the place to start. I've already researched River Raisin. Very nice but \$\$\$\$\$. I'm going to wait on those. I'm going to research the AF/Lionel models. In the meantime, it's construction time.

David

[AFLYER](#)  MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 11:52 AM

David,

Glad to be able to provide some information, and you are right RR is awesome but pricey.

The American models locos are great, and I have two steam, and three diesels from Lionel American flyer, I just stay with high rail for my use.

Since your post starts with Polar Express, I have to say the Lionel American Flyer S gauge set is not a scale unit, but is a great train, at a very god price point. Check out the you tube video below, if you have not seen it already:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsSIYqH3mac>

Aflyer

[ARTFULL DODGER](#) ○ MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 11:57 AM

I would call the PE set semi scale. Kind of like the 773 hudson in the O gauge line. Nearly scale size if not scale size, but mixed with hi rail style with molded hand rails, deeper flanges. I have seen video of the set running on a scale layout mixed in with other true S scale trains and it looked good from 5 foot away. Since its a fictional train (movie wise), its good enough for me. Just depends on what direction you want to go, which track ect. Since I handle my trains more, the molded on hand rails do not bother me. Deeper flanges equil less derailments. Being autistic, some of my finer skills will never be as sharp as others that I so admire. So the cross over zone between scale and vintage AF toy trains is where I live. Good luck and post up your progress. Mike

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Silly NT's...I have Asperger's Syndrome!

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[DAVID SHAPIRO](#) ○ OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 4:44 PM

Can an American Models S scale Hi-rail be converted to scale wheels and couplers?  
Easily?

Thanks

David

[RUSTY TRAUQUE](#) ● MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 5:24 PM



**David Shapiro posted:**

Can an American Models S scale Hi-rail be converted to scale wheels and couplers? Easily?

Thanks

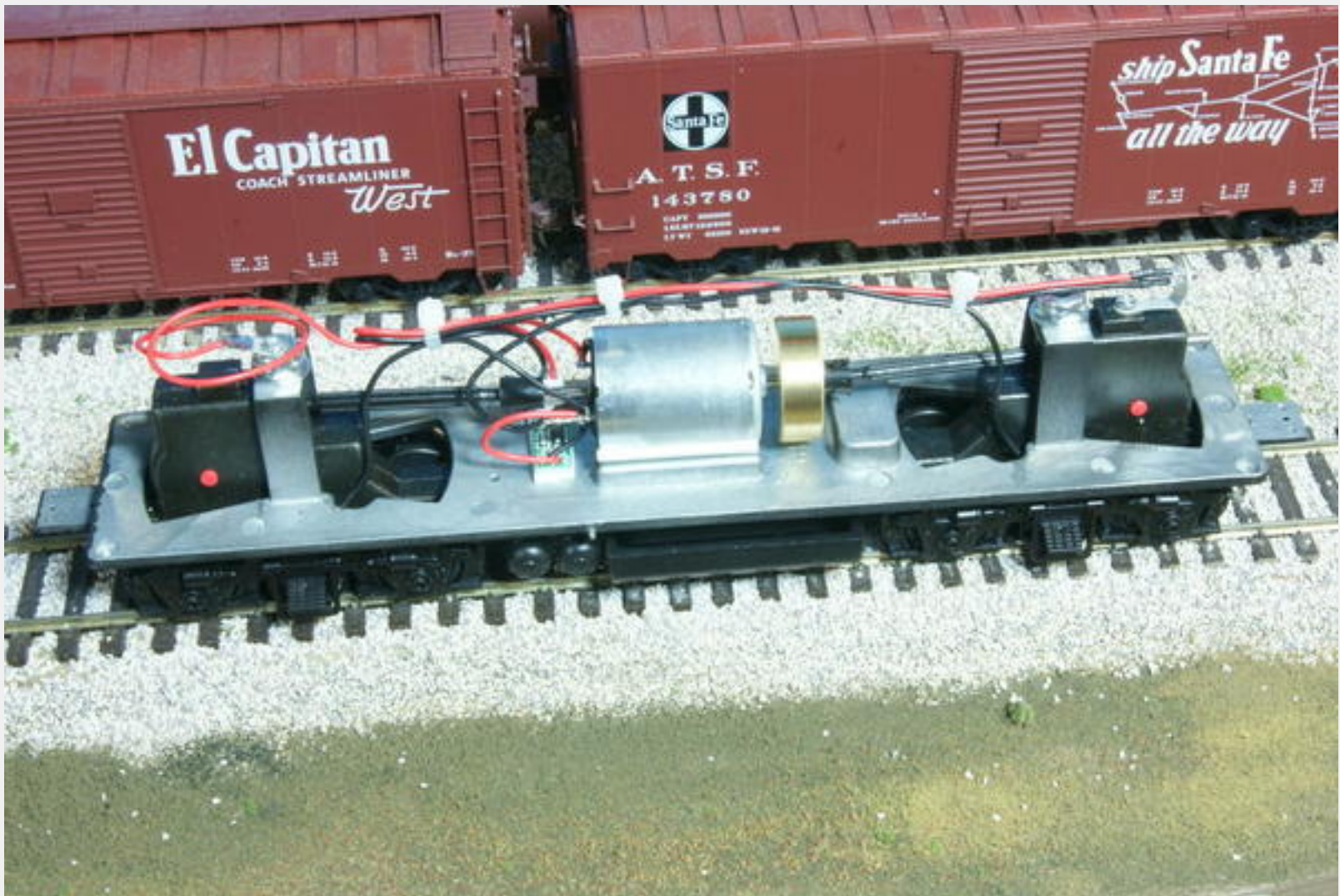
David



Easy. I've converted cars both ways: Scale to Hi-rail and Hi-rail to scale.

For freight cars, change either the trucks or wheels. The Hi-rail coupler is held on by the truck and truck screw. Add Kadee or AM Snap-Lock dummy coupler. The older cars like boxcars and plug door boxcars were set up for the Kadee #5, (there was no S Scale Kadee when AM started up) so a little care is needed to mount the 802.

AM's diesel drive is simplicity itself, basically unchanged for 30 years. This is their GP9. I put on the cable ties to bundle the wires:



AM usually has diesel wheels in stock, remove the cover plates and have at it. You'll probably have to bend the pick up wires a little to contact the back of narrower scale wheel.

AM's steam locomotives are a little different. All drive wheels are geared (it's essentially one big power truck) and the side rods are just along for the ride. It's important to get all the drivers lined up so the rods don't bind.

A note: AM's scale wheeled locomotives don't have couplers mounted, but they do throw

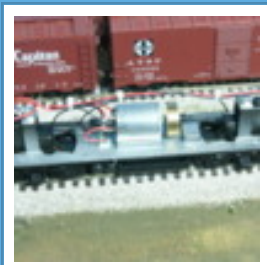
in a packet of Kadee S Scale couplers.

Rusty

 **Attachments**

Hide 

Photos (1)



[DAVID SHAPIRO](#)  OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 6:27 PM

Looking at a used AM Scale with a D.C. motor, that's Hi Rail.

David

[RUSTY TRAQUE](#)  MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 6:45 PM

It's OK, all AM loco's use a DC motor. The AC is converted to DC in the electronic sequence reverse unit on the AC Hi-rail units.

Something you may want to consider: Hi-rail with Kadee couplers. This is how one of the well known S Scaler has done it:

<http://www.buffalocreekandgaul.../ModelRailroads.html>

Brooks Stover uses AM's code 148 track and uses Hi-rail wheels, but by every definition he operates a scale railroad. He initially used redetailed American Flyer 0-8-0's

converted to 2-8-0's and as better equipment came out, saw no reason to change track. He's had articles in several Model Railraoder's, NMRA Bulletins, NASG Dispatches and even Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazzette. Nobody's ever complained about the height of the rail or wheels...

Rusty

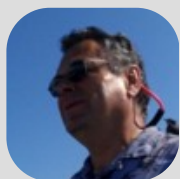
[DAVID SHAPIRO](#)  OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 9:04 PM

Can true S-Scale wheels run encode 148 track and switches? I did a search but I couldn't find anything definitive. It certainly looks like it's made for the American Models version of Hi-rail track. Will it accommodate Lionel/American Flyer equipment? There seems to be a number of really good-looking engines they make in their Hi-rail.

I apologize for asking what seems to be simplistic questions, but I'm trying to get a handle on which way to go now. The homesite layer is drying as we speak. The next step is to decide what track system to go with. That's why I'm asking, since it will decide my equipment choices.

David



[OMAN](#)  MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 9:08 PM

David

You need to decide between High Rail Wheels and Scale wheels. I do not believe there is such a thing as a turnout that will support both.

Keith

[DAVID SHAPIRO](#)  OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/29/16 @ 9:30 PM

Hi Keith,

So 148 track will support both scale and Hi-rail, but the issue is the turnouts. Pity. It would definitely expand the available equipment choices.

David

[RUSTY TRAQUE](#) ● MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 7:39 AM

The AM turnouts can support scale wheels. The frog and guardrail need to have shims added to reduce the gap. However, I can't say by how much because I've never done it.

Rusty

[DAVID SHAPIRO](#) ○ OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 8:27 AM

Hi Rusty,

I've seen the issue of 148 turnouts adapted to S scale referenced before, but not explained. Any idea why Fox Valley would choose to make 138 code track? Is this size a better compromise to allow both wheel sizes to run?

I'm trying to figure out which way to go. I really like the look of scale wheels and couplers. I like a lot of the Hi-rail equipment. I haven't even gotten to the issues of control systems. After I select the track system, wiring and control are next. I've done some searches here and generally on-line. Are there any good books anybody can point me to?

My next stop is to my local shop, Des Plaines Hobby, to get some advice and buy some

equipment.

Thanks

David



[OMAN](#) ○ MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 8:40 AM

Fox Valley is offering their turnouts in both High Rail and Scale, so I can only assume that neither one can accommodate both types of wheels. As Rusty said, people have modified the American Models turnouts to accommodate scale wheels. But, after modifying, will High Rail wheels still pass through without issues? ??? 🙄

Keith

[RUSTY TRAUQUE](#) ● MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 9:09 AM



**David Shapiro posted:**

Hi Rusty,

I've seen the issue of 148 turnouts adapted to S scale referenced before, but not explained. Any idea why Fox Valley would choose to make 138 code track? Is this size a better compromise to allow both wheel sizes to run?

I'm trying to figure out which way to go. I really like the look of scale wheels and couplers. I like a lot of the Hi-rail equipment. I haven't even gotten to the issues of control systems. After I select the track system, wiring and control are next. I've done some searches here and generally on-line. Are there any good books anybody can point me to?

My next stop is to my local shop, Des Plaines Hobby, to get some advice and buy some equipment.

Thanks



David

I believe Fox Valley went with code 138 to be compatible with Lionel S FasTrack and SHS/MTH S-Trax.

It's a tough call on which way to go nowadays. I suppose if I had it to do over again, I'd go Hi-Rail with Kadee couplers. It's really no worse than the old AHM HO with the deep flanges that wouldn't run on anything less than code 100.

I'm pretty much a conventional DC guy. I added the MRC Prodigy-2 DCC system to my layout, but I do very little with it as I haven't been motivated to convert many loco's to DCC. (although I'll admit, it's kinda neat when I drag out my Lionel/Flyer SD70's for a spin...) The nice thing about MRC is some of the basic commands are printed on the back of the controller.

Rusty



[CALDWELL](#) ○ MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 9:21 AM

There is the option of hirail wheels with Kadee couplers and everything else "scale". There are those who would say it is not scale if everything is not per NMRA. But Brooks Stover has done it effectively with American Models track and high rail wheels [Brooks Layout](#). I think there were a couple others doing that also.

You can still have a scale looking railroad and if you see a must have Lionel AF steam engine it will run. Of course electronics etc has to be dealt with but no need for the difficult wheel replacement. Not to mention if someone sees your new layout and really really wants to run to run his/her vintage American Flyer.

Just an idea and another option.

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Cal

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[DAVID SHAPIRO](#) ○ OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 9:36 AM

Rusty and Cal,

Both of you make a lot of sense. The issue for me is the coupler size. Hi-rail track and scale couplers, as Rusty also pointed out, makes a lot of sense. I see a LOT of must have Lionel AF engines. This is what my son calls a "first world problem" If this is my most pressing issue, life is very, very good.

David

[RUSTY TRAQUE](#) ● MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 9:45 AM

Just remember: As of now, **ONLY** the SD70's and ES44's were sold with DCC compatibility built into the Lionel electronics code. The steam locomotives and U33C's require conventional AC or TMCC/Legacy to run. (And they run much better on TMCC or Legacy.)

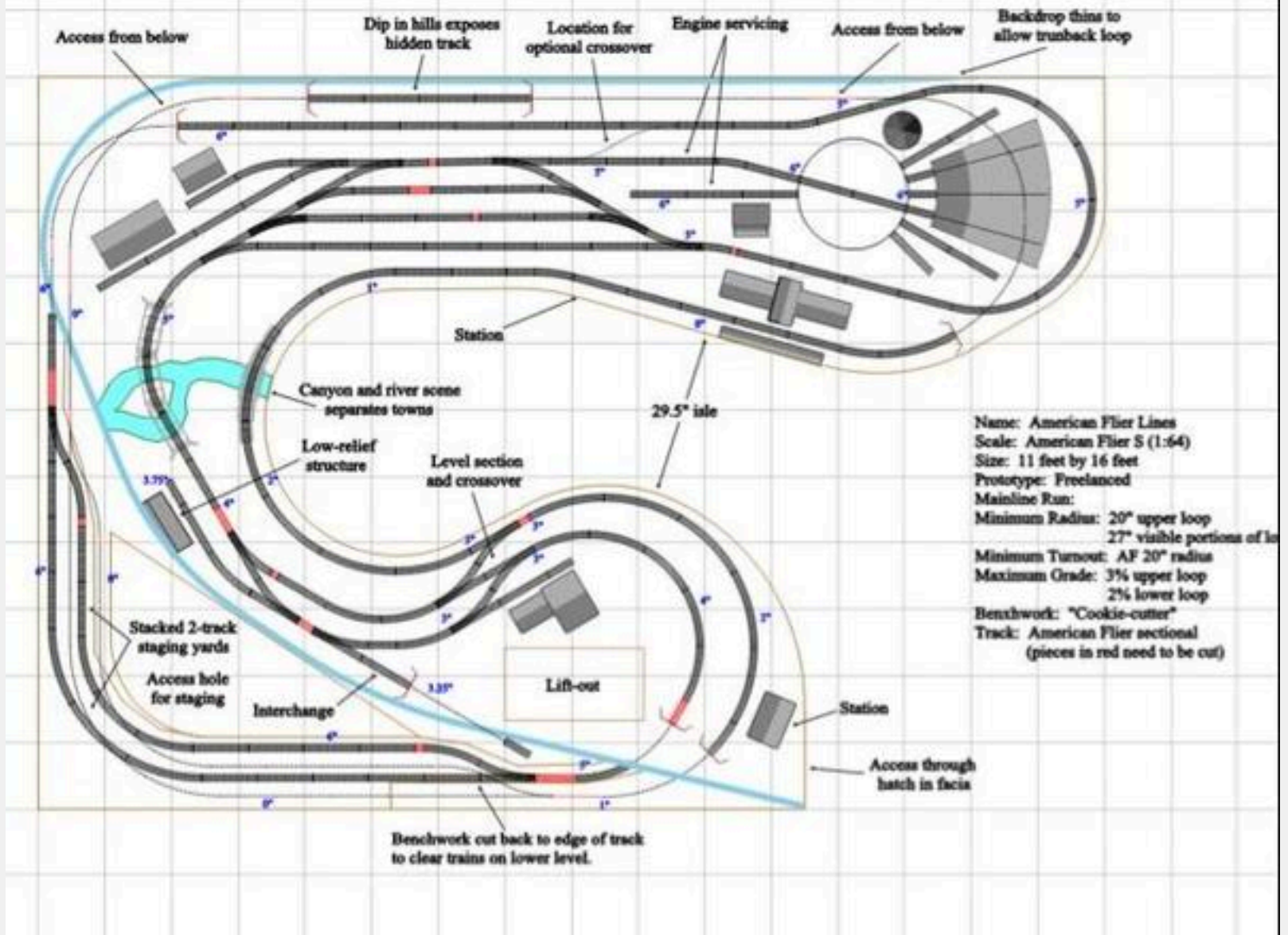
Rusty

[AFLYER](#) ○ MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 10:37 AM

I think the Brooks Stover layout is awesome, best of all worlds.

I started collecting AF tubular track and rubber roadbed many years ago, so when it came to the new/current layout, I couldn't justify switching to a newer more "scale" looking track.



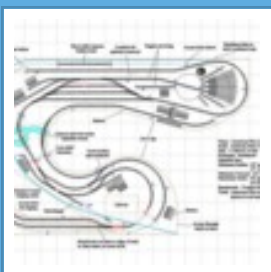
Good luck with your decisions

Aflyer

 **Attachments**

Hide 

Photos (1)



11/30/16 @ 11:20 AM



**Rusty Traque posted:**

Just remember: As of now, **ONLY** the SD70's and ES44's were sold with DCC compatibility built into the Lionel electronics code. The steam locomotives and U33C's require conventional AC or TMCC/Legacy to run. (And they run much better on TMCC or Legacy.)

Rusty

Well, I started to research that as well. It seems that Legacy and DCC can't co-exist, unlike DCS and Legacy in O-scale. Another pity. If I had to choose between the two, given the equipment that's available, I'd go Lionel/AF.

David

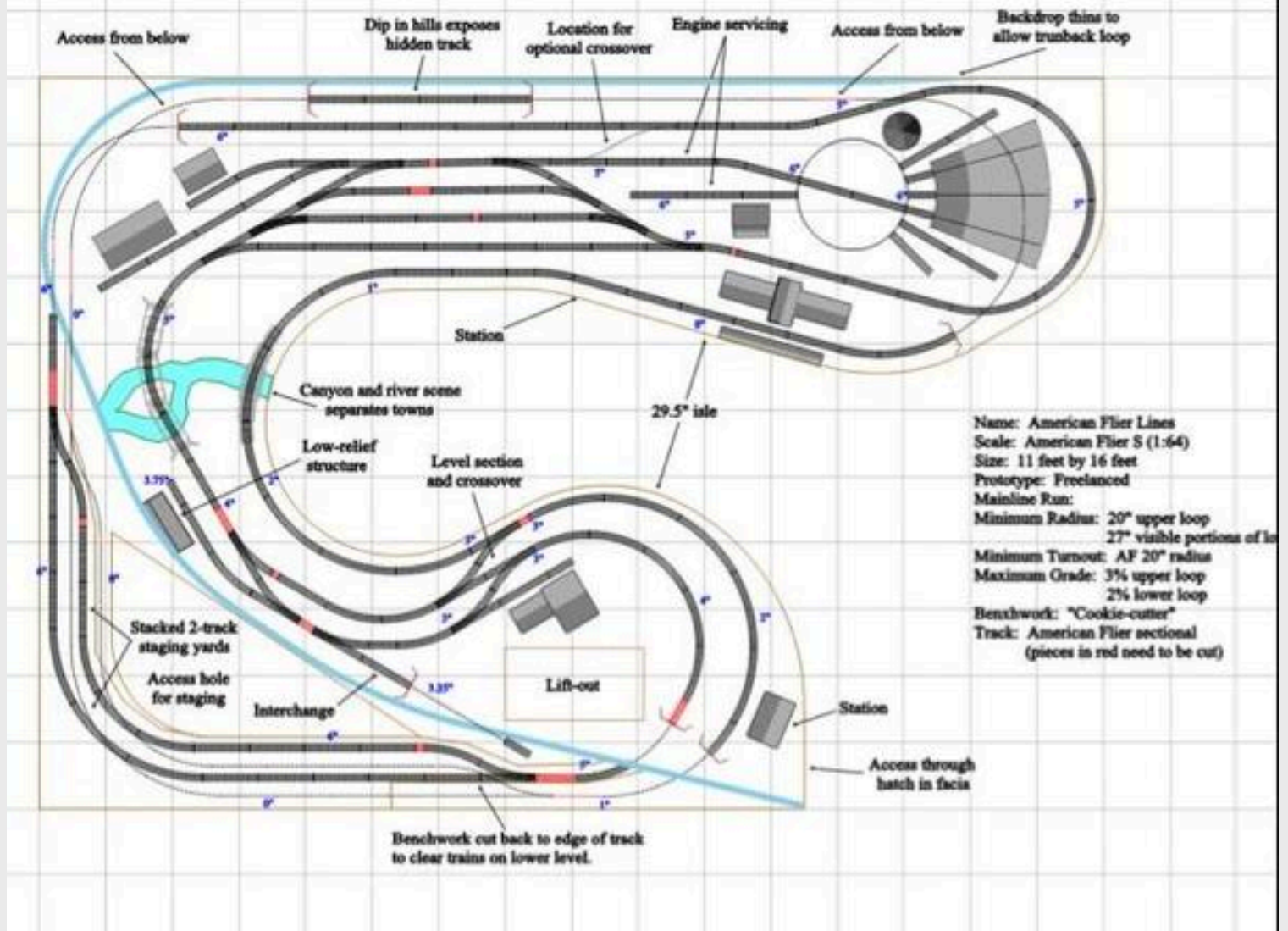
11/30/16 @ 11:21 AM



**Aflyer posted:**

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Good luck with your decisions

Aflyer

Is this your layout. Looks awesome!

David

[RUSTY TRAUQUE](#) ● MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 11:35 AM

“ David Shapiro posted:

“ Rusty Traque posted:

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Well, I started to research that as well. It seems that Legacy and DCC can't co-exist, unlike DCS and Legacy in O-scale. Another pity. If I had to choose between the two, given the equipment that's available, I'd go Lionel/AF.

David

DCC compatibility was developed specifically for the Flyer SD70's and should be in all future Legacy Flyer locomotives. Someone at Lionel realized the scale folk didn't particularly want to buy the U33C's and to pay for electronics they were going to have to remove.

The reason DCS and TMCC/Legacy co-exist is more by accident than design. Lionel had released some information back in the early TMCC days for the computer-savvy hobbyists and MTH took full advantage it.

Rusty

[TOKELLY](#)  MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 11:49 AM

Lionel's Y3 steam locomotive can run on AC, DC, or Legacy. On DC, there are engine sounds and the rear light on the tender stays lit. Lionel had not intended the locomotive to run on DC, but their chief technical officer confirmed it--and it works that way on my layout. I also use American Models track, high-rail wheels, and scale couplers. Whenever I regret not moving to scale wheels, I place an articulated Lionel locomotive on the track and try to put all the high-rail wheels properly on the track. Trying to do that with scale wheels would take me soooo much longer.

[AMFLYER](#) ○ MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 12:05 PM

David, if you are going to buy Lionel Flyer engines then Legacy is your best choice. TMCC and Railsounds can easily be added to the American Models engines so all can be run with the Legacy system. I recommend the LCS as well so the entire layout can be controlled from an iPad, no control panel required.

My turnouts are made from .138 MTH rail. They operate both Scale and high rail wheels. Tried to post some pictures but the hotel internet I am connected to seems to be blocking the file upload. If you want to see pictures I can post them on Sunday at home. The layout looks scale but it allows Gilbert equipment to run unmodified.

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Tom

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[AMFLYER](#) ○ MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 12:20 PM

If you look further down this forum (multiple pages) there is a thread started 6/3 called Solid track v.s. Flex track. In it are pictures of my turnouts if you want to see how they look. Sorry I cannot get them to post here.

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Tom

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[RUSTY TRAQUE](#) ● MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 12:33 PM

 **TOKELLY posted:**

Lionel's Y3 steam locomotive can run on AC, DC, or Legacy. On DC, there are engine sounds and the rear light on the tender stays lit. Lionel had not intended the locomotive to run on DC, but their chief technical officer confirmed it--and it works that way on my layout.

There is a caveat on DC operation.

It depends on the pack.

My Y3 will work with my 40 year old MRC Controlmaster X and the DC unit (GML I think, I can never remember) on my layout, but doesn't like my MRC 6200, 6000 or the Bachmann pack that came with an On30 set.

Lionel has fiddled with the code since then, but anything on the shelf won't have the updated code.

Rusty

[AFLYER](#)  MEMBER

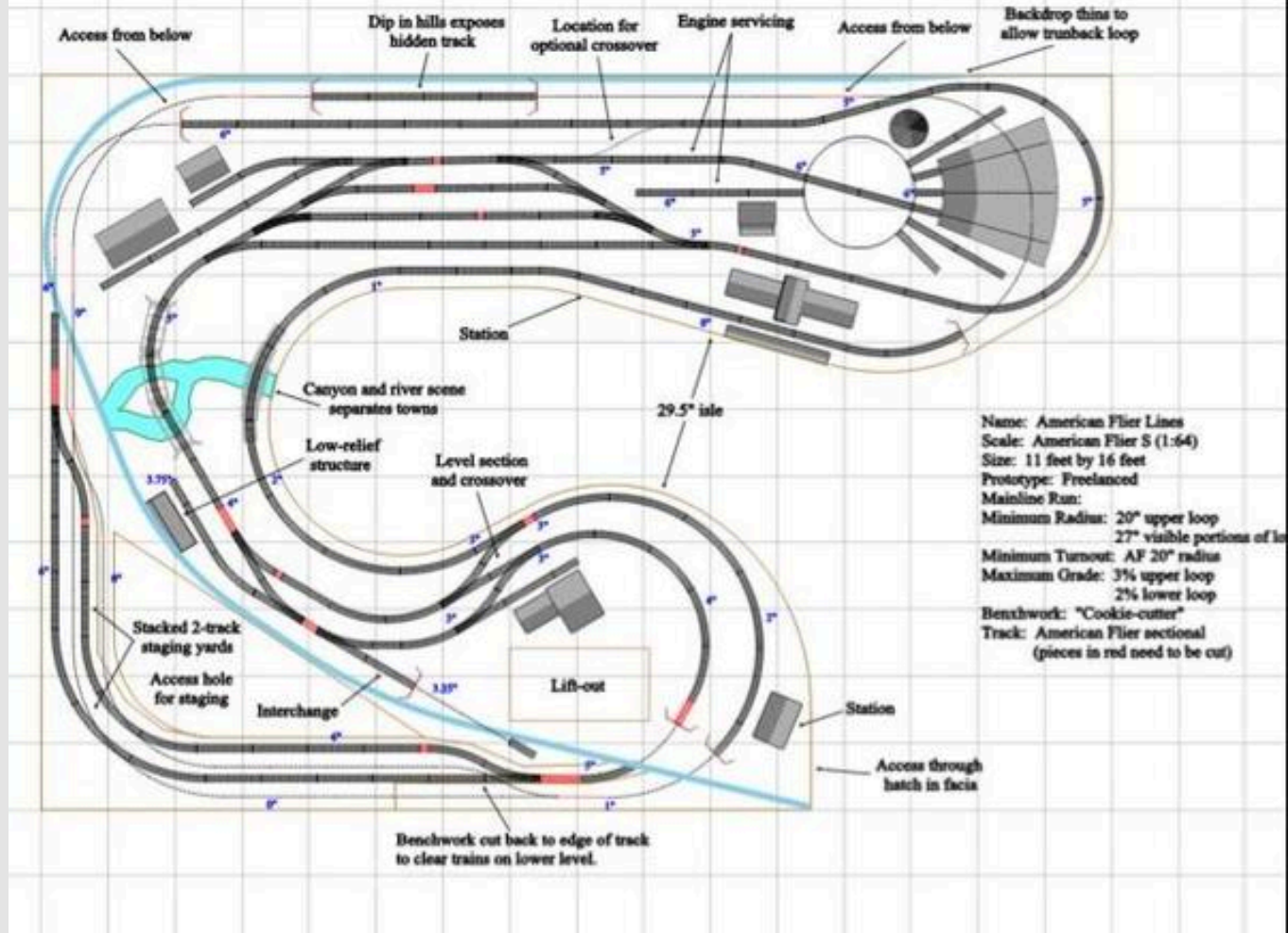
11/30/16 @ 12:38 PM

 **David Shapiro posted:**

 **Aflyer posted:**

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Good luck with your decisions

Aflyer

Is this your layout. Looks awesome!

David

It is still a WIP, the lower loop is completed, the upper loop is completed except for the two bridges over the water. It's getting colder outside, I need to get back to work on it.

Thank you,

Aflyer



David Shapiro posted:



Rusty Traque posted:

Just remember: As of now, **ONLY** the SD70's and ES44's were sold with DCC compatibility built into the Lionel electronics code. The steam locomotives and U33C's require conventional AC or TMCC/Legacy to run. (And they run much better on TMCC or Legacy.)

Rusty

Well, I started to research that as well. It seems that Legacy and DCC can't co-exist, unlike DCS and Legacy in O-scale. Another pity. If I had to choose between the two, given the equipment that's available, I'd go Lionel/AF.

David

Actually Legacy and DCC can co-exist.

One of the guys in our club built a harness to isolate dcc from ac with a switch. We ran it on our modular layout at a train show.

Aflyer

[DAVID SHAPIRO](#)  OGR FORUM MEMBER

11/30/16 @ 9:02 PM

So at the end of the day, I decided to take someone's advice early in this thread and go simple to start. Lionel Fastrak oval, to run the fantastic Lionel Mikado in Southern Pacific livery that I couldn't stop myself from buying. I also bought a Legacy control and some very nice rolling stock on EBay. Eventually I'll do a proper layout, probably when the new Fox Valley track becomes available.

Thanks for everybody's input. It was most appreciated and very valuable.



David

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/ BRAND NEW TO THE HOBBY-NEED SOME GUIDANCE

ed by  HOC