

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway

Fall River Division



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Welcome to the BNSF Fall River Division, a prototype based freelance model railroad of the BNSF Railway. Scenes on the layout are representative of cities, industries, lifestyle, and scenery found almost anywhere throughout the United States. The era of the layout is considered “modern” as the details, structures, engines and rolling stock are typical of what may have been found along the railroad between the year 2016 and the present time.

Construction on the BNSF Fall River Division began in January of 2007. The layout is located in a 3,000 square foot area, specifically designed for the railroad.

The layout is primarily a double deck “mushroom” type design, with only one deck visible at any time. Trains move between decks through helixes located throughout the railroad, as well as a 1.8% ruling visible grade between Winston and Kimber. Aisle widths are generally between 36 and 48 inches to comfortably accommodate many operators and visitors.

Digital Command Control (DCC) is utilized on the railroad. Digitrax is exclusively used for power management, train detection, and signaling. All trains are sound equipped, and sound effects are located throughout the layout.

Lighting consists of “daylight” color tones to better represent the true color of sunlight. Night lighting effects (blue LED lights) are also used throughout the layout during night operations.

Train Operations

The track plan is linear in nature and includes a large staging area (representing five destinations), a large division classification yard, and several junctions and interchange tracks used by other railroads. More than 1,000 feet of single and double track mainline is operational, which *excludes* yards, staging, industry track, and passing sidings. A modern computer-based centralized traffic control (CTC) system, and signals, are utilized to manage all mainline traffic movement. A dispatcher’s office is located adjacent to the crew lounge. Crews communicate between the dispatcher, yards, and Traffic Center using both two-way radios and a stand-alone telephone system.

Car forwarding is managed using JMRI OperationsPro in “real time,” meaning that manifests and switch lists are generated during the operating session.

On a monthly basis, between 18 and 20 people operate the railroad, moving freight across the division. Commodities of all sorts are transported across the system. Railfans can observe unit trains (coal, intermodal, autorack, tank, grain, etc.), local trains servicing customers, Amtrak passenger trains, and even an occasional passenger special or excursion train.

Layout Specifications

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| Name | BNSF Fall River Division |
| Scale | HO (1:87) |
| Layout Size | 3,000 sq. feet, including crew area and dispatch office |
| Layout Style | Mushroom, linear walk around |
| Mainline Length | 1,300 Feet |
| Period/era | Modern |
| Layout Height | Between 48 to 60 inches |
| Track | Code 83 mainline & yards |
| Turnouts | No. 8 mainline, No. 6 yard and industries |
| Mainline Roadbed | Masonite spline, ¾ plywood, and Homosote |
| Yard Roadbed | ¾ plywood & Homosote |
| Min. Radius | Easements, 38 inch min., superelevated curves |
| Max Grade | 1.7 percent ruling, visible |
| Scenery | In Progress |
| Control | DCC - Digitrax Radio |
| Signaling | Tomar and BLMA signals, CATS CTC dispatching program, Digitrax SE8C and BDL168 |
| Car Forwarding | JMRI Operations, used in “real time” |

Frequently Asked Questions

The staging area is referred to as the “Traffic Center.” Please use caution when entering.

The backdrop is made from .060 thick styrene, painted several shades of flat blue latex paint.

The backdrops are a combination of preprinted backdrops from Backdrop Warehouse, King Mill Enterprises, and SceniKing. The buildings are cut away and then glued to the painted backdrop with rubber cement.

The lighted structures and fixtures use LEDs (95%) and some incandescent light fixtures (5%). They are powered by a 12 volt power bus which runs the length of the layout.

DCC circuit breakers and reversers are made by DCC Specialties, Powershield X (PSX).

Contact Information

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