

# Hints for Operating on the Mystic Mountain Railroad

## North End area

North End yard has three tracks for classification, storage, and run-arounds. The turntable (manually turned) can, of course, be used to turn engines. The turntable has a “thru track”- an engine ready track. North End has a freight station track and a spur onto the wharf. North End is also the junction for the branch lines to Mystic and Costa. In addition to the two yard storage tracks, there is another storage track when needed accessed via the turnout under the tunnel portal.

## Mystic

Mystic has a team track and a spur servicing Wells Fargo (lots of gold shipped out of the local mines)

## Mystic Gulch

The interconnection with the Santa Fe RR is here as well as a station track for freight.

## Costa

Costa has several industries and provides a challenge switching all of them.

## Newton

This area is the latest addition to the railroad. In addition to the freight station, there are many industries and an engine service facility. The interchange with the Union Pacific is nearby.

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## Signage

Locations are identified with a) small signs, or b) titles on buildings. Signs also remind one of North/South direction on the railroad. While Newton has marked arrival and departure tracks labeled, this is just a suggestion.



## Radio Controls

Engines are all battery powered with radio control (*Aristo Revolution*) and sound. Select the train to control by engine number (the “T” buttons). On *Revolution* the direction buttons select forward or reverse.



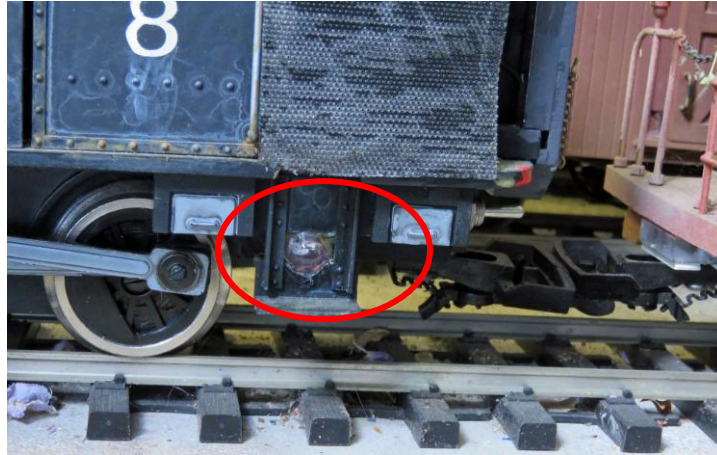
For most engines, sound is: #1 is the whistle, #2 is the bell, and #3 is steam blow down. Some engines blow grade crossing whistles when #1 is pressed (also when passing a station); on others the whistle blows as long as the #1 button is pressed. On some engines, the #2 (bell) button turns the bell ringing on and off; on others the bell will ring for 5-10 seconds and then stop.

Exceptions are listed on the back of the throttle. The display shows direction, speed, engine #, and “Link OK” or “No Link”. The latter shows whether the engine is within range for control. If you find your engine is not responding, check that you have the correct engine # and look for “Link OK” on the display. If you accidentally hit a “T” button, you will lose control of your engine and you may be controlling another engine! *Emergency Stop* only stops *your* train. Most engines have some momentum. *Revolution* systems have bi-directional radios; if out-of-range, trains will respond when they come back in range.

## Engines

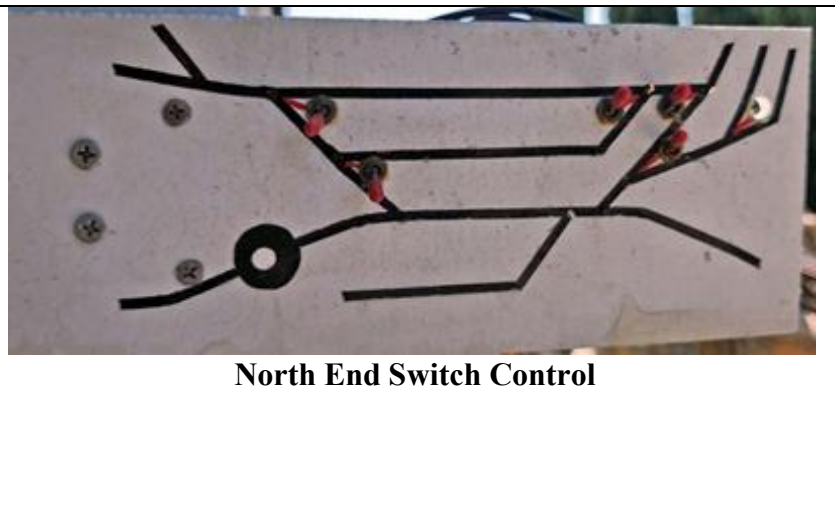
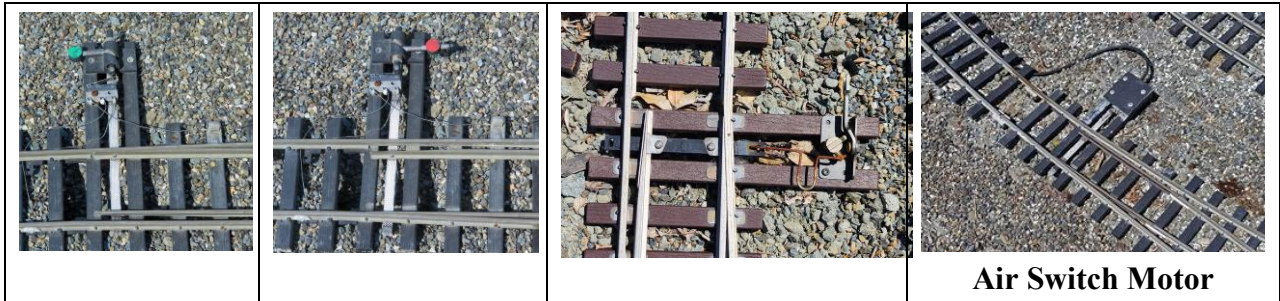
Engines are numbered on the cab. The 0-4-0's have their on/off switch under the fireman's door. Other engines have an on/off switch on the front or back of the tender. Most engines have self-contained batteries in the cab or tender; engine #1 has batteries in a trailing box car which must remain connected to the engine and is not called out in switch lists or included in car counts. A

Caboose should be used on all trains unless otherwise noted in train instructions. Just pick any caboose you want. Batteries usually will have enough energy for a complete operating session. If a blue or white light under the engine, tender, or battery car begins flashing, a new battery will soon be necessary (It is much better to stop and swap batteries at an easy-to-reach location rather than when the train stalls inside a tunnel.)



**Turnout Control**

Most turnouts are controlled with hand throws. Where appropriate green and red sides of the hand throw indicate the mainline vs. siding.



There are two areas of remotely operated switches: a) one switch at Mystic Gulch on a post which leads to the upper storage tracks and isn't used during operations, and b) several switches at North End that are hard to reach, which are controlled via a panel on one of the posts. A control box on one another post allows control of the turnout to the upper storage. A small compressor under the mountain at North End will cycle on and off as needed for air pressure.

Clearance points of switches are marked with tan paint on the ties.

The number one cause of derailments is forgetting to throw a switch, so check turnout alignment as you approach. Early in the session, be alert that points throw completely - there may be dirt or grit in the point area. There may also be gravel in the frog and guard rails. And please return turnouts to the mainline when done switching.

### **Mainline dispatching**

The Mystic Mountain RR doesn't use dispatching or time tables to control mainline traffic. Engineers should just be aware of other trains coming their way and be cooperative. You could consider that the whole railroad is operating within yard limits. Passenger trains have priority over freight (nostalgic, huh?). Local switching jobs should try to clear the mainline as quickly as possible when a passenger train or express freight approaches. Otherwise, just be kind to trains in your way - and to trains that need to get by you. Cooperating with another train in the same area is part of the fun and can be quite useful.

### **Coupling/Uncoupling**

The Mystic Mountain RR has standardized on hook-and-loop (aka "LGB") couplers. These proved the most reliable at staying coupled when they are supposed to and being easy to uncouple. Uncoupling is by pressing down with a thin "blade" of an uncoupling tool between couplers while pulling them apart. For reliable coupling, ensure that both hooks engage with the opposite loop.

