



The route over Tennessee Pass is through a tunnel at 10,224 feet in elevation. The approach to the tunnel from the east or south side is a gradual incline up the Arkansas River valley while the west or north approach is much more rugged with grades in excess of 3% requiring helper locomotives eastbound out of Minturn.

The Rio Grande Midland functions primarily as a bridge line for transcontinental traffic between the Western Pacific Railroad and the Missouri Pacific Railroad and also for the transportation of local freight including raw materials for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The railroad handles transportation from various mines producing metallurgical coal, limestone, fluorspar, and iron ore. CF&I generates several types of freight including steel products, coke, aggregates, and various chemicals that are byproducts of the coking process. Agricultural areas surrounding Grand Junction, the Arkansas valley, and Pueblo produce products for shipment including fruits, vegetables, grains, and sugar. There are also shipments from oil fields west of Grand Junction, a refinery west of Pueblo near Florence and other industries at towns and cities along the route.

The RGM interchanges with the Santa Fe Railroad, the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad, and the Missouri Pacific at Pueblo where a yard handles freight movements among the railroads and local and route traffic. The RGM also interchanges in Salt Lake City with the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, and Western Pacific Railroads.

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The layout is in a room approximately 26 by 48 feet with finished walls and a low unfinished ceiling. The modeled track plan is point to point around the walls linear layout with a peninsula on two levels primarily single track with several passing sidings. The transition from the lower level at Minturn to the upper at Tennessee Pass is entirely open to the aisles and includes the helper district. Traffic originates and terminates in staging areas adjacent to Grand Junction (8 staging tracks) and Pueblo (7 staging tracks). Additional staging tracks are at Denver (lower level, 2 tracks) and Furnace Creek (upper level, 4 tracks).

Grand Junction is a crew change location between Salt Lake City and points east. It handles forwarding of freight to and from local industries with branch line traffic from the North Fork Branch leading to coal mines at Somerset and the agricultural town of Delta. Pueblo is a transfer point forwarding freight north to Denver via Rio Grande, Missouri Pacific, and CB&Q, South toward Albuquerque via the Santa Fe, East toward Kansas City via the Santa Fe and Missouri Pacific, or west to Salt Lake City. There are several local industries as well as the CF&I steel mill in this area generating traffic.

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Layout construction is a 1x3 open grid style benchwork with 3/4" spline sub-roadbed for much of the mainline and 5/8" to 3/4" OSB or plywood for the larger yards, towns, and passing areas. Track is primarily code 83 on Homabed with minimum #6 switches on the mainline and in yards (#5 in industrial areas) and a minimum radius of 30".

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The railroad's operation is radio controlled using the Digitrax DCC system with boosters and power managers to separate the layout into power control districts. Digitrax Loconet WiFi is available for train control using cell phones in addition to Digitrax radio throttles. Nearly all of the locomotives are equipped with sound and all of the rolling stock has metal wheels and metal knuckle couplers.

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Train movement is controlled by time table and train orders along with a dispatcher. A telephone system affords two way communication between the dispatcher and each station along the railroad. Train detection is in operation with lights on a dispatcher's panel. Signaling on the railroad is planned for the future.

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Scenery is a combination of carved Styrofoam, plaster cloth over a cardboard web surfaced with Structolite, and hand carved plaster of Paris rock faces. RGM scenery is over 95% roughed in with scenic details such as paint, people, vehicles, ballast, and vegetation in progress.

\* \* \*

I hope you enjoy your visual tour of the layout by following eastbound passenger train #2, the Royal Gorge, between Grand Junction and Pueblo. Thanks for visiting.

Photo1: Station Stop Grand Junction.



Photo 2: Palisade Near Grand Mesa.



Photo 3: Glenwood Canyon.





Photo 4: Red Cliff.

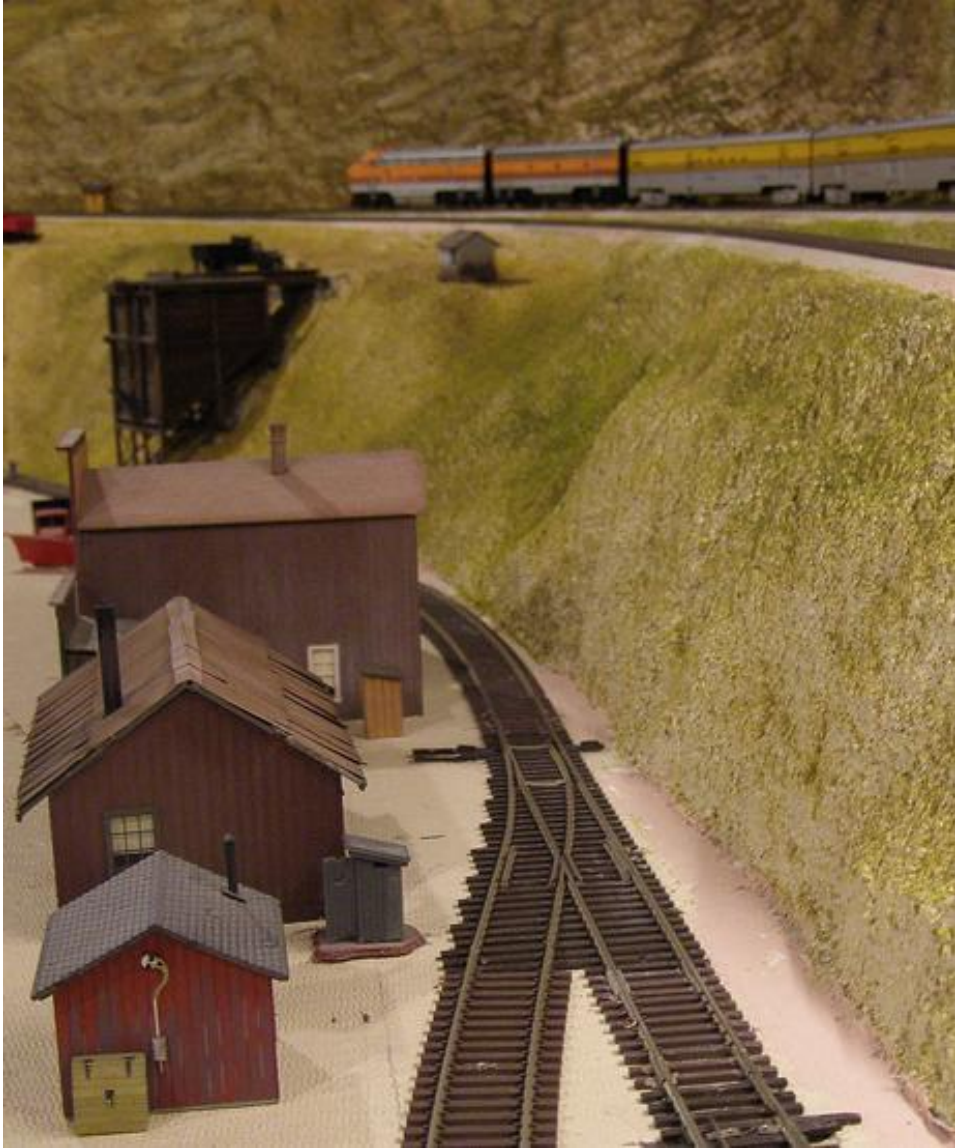


Photo 5: Palisades.

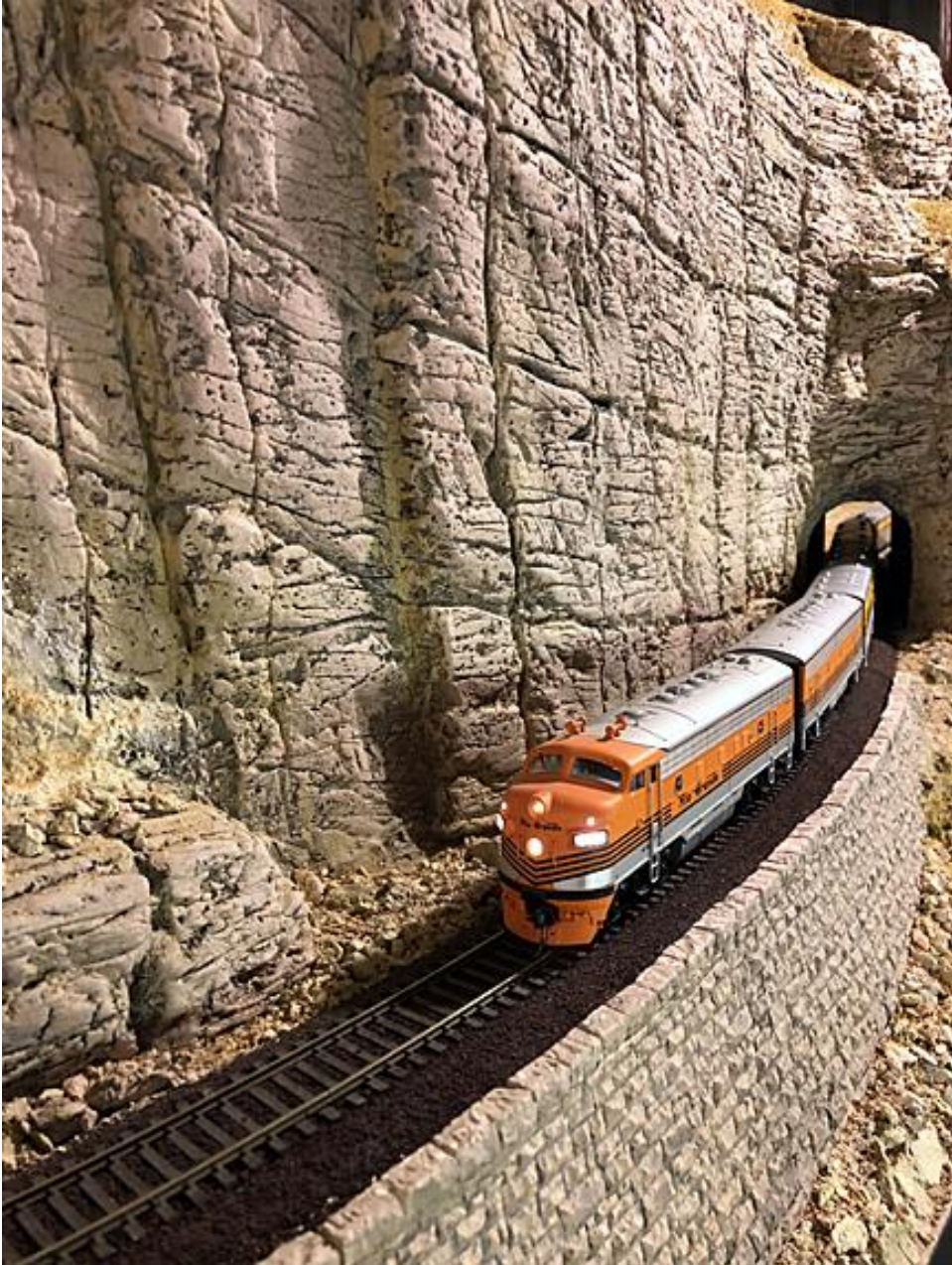




Photo 6: Devil's Slide Trestle.



Photo 7: Midland Trestle.



Photo 8: Tennessee Pass Depot.





Photo 9: Tennessee Pass at Malta.



Photo 10: Malta Wye and Leadville Spur.



Photo 11: Arkansas River Crossing.





Photo 12: Royal Gorge Hanging Bridge.

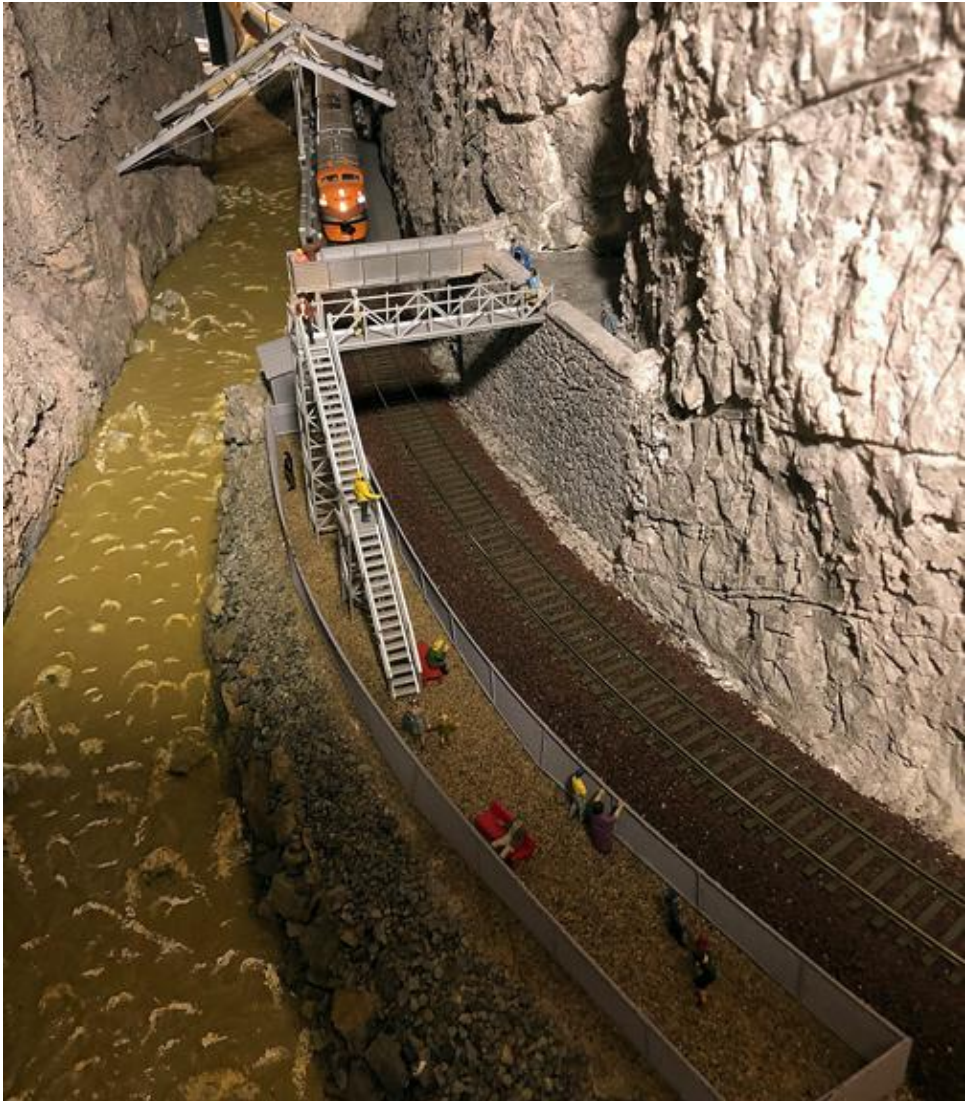




Photo 13: Pausing on the Hanging Bridge.



Photo 14: Exiting the Royal Gorge.





Photo 15: West Pueblo Industries.



Photo 16: Pueblo Union Station.





Photo 17: CF&I Steel Mill.

