

NWP Op Session Orientation

Welcome to my rendition of the Northwestern Pacific circa 1958-1960. The NWP was an SP subsidiary running from Tiburon on the San Francisco Bay northward 276 miles to Eureka, California on Humboldt Bay. Connection to the outside railroad world was by ferry from Tiburon to San Francisco and interchange with its parent road at Schellville, near Sonoma, California. Access to the Redwood forests of the California North Coast was the main motivation for its existence although dairy and other agricultural products were also handled. Motive power consisted mostly of SD7s and SD9s with a few SW8s and NW2s thrown in.

The Petaluma & Santa Rosa Railroad, at this point in time a subsidiary of the NWP although operating independently, interchanged with the NWP at Petaluma and Santa Rosa,. Its business included moving apples and apple products and other agricultural related products. Motive power consisted of two MU'd GE 44 tonners.

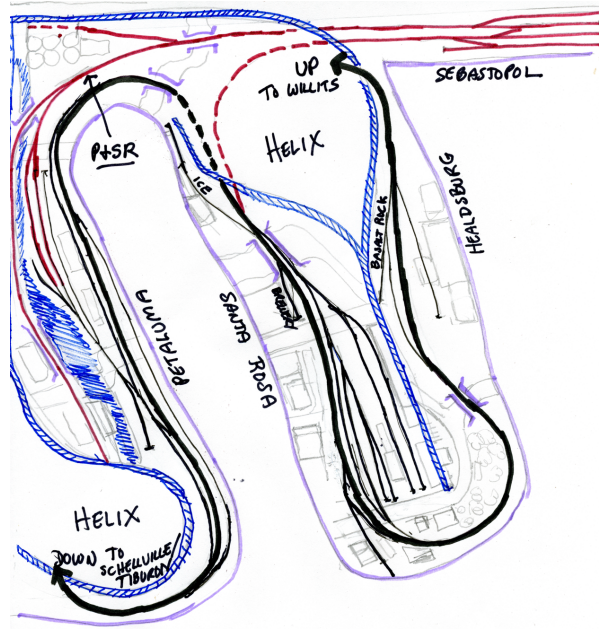
Briefly, the layout runs best with about eight operators. There are three "executive" positions, two yardmasters and a dispatcher, three switching jobs (Petaluma & Santa Rosa, San Rafael Local, Gravel Train), up to two passenger trains, and an assortment of second class and eastbound extra freights. Operations are TT&TO, with the orders preprinted to ensure the layout doesn't get jammed up. Dispatchers are free to improvise, however.

The Railroad

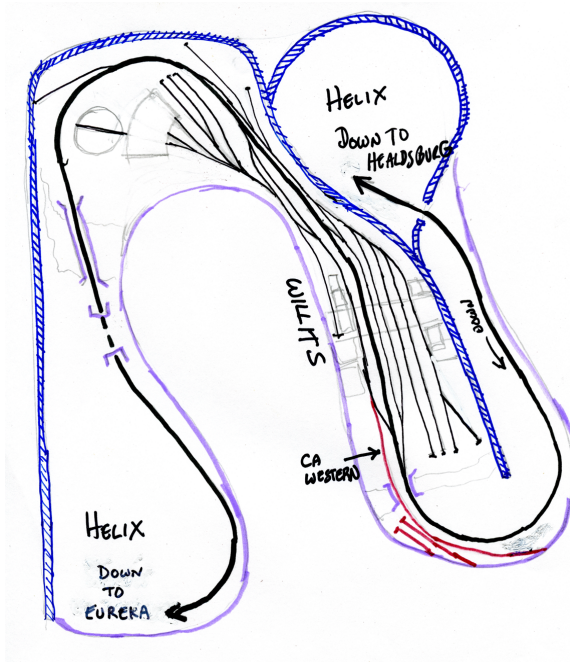
The layout is approximately 13 x 17 feet and runs on a Lenz DCC system. Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Healdsburg, and Willits (Division Point), basically the "Santa Rosa subdivision," are depicted as well as Sebastopol on the P&SR. Everything else is represented by staging. There are three levels (including staging) connected by two helixes.

Here's a crude track plan (staging not included):

Lower level (Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Healdsburg)



Upper Level: Willits, Eel River Canyon



The NWP is dark and controlled by train order and timetable. The only signals are in Petaluma, which guard the swing bridge at Haystack Landing.

Train Orders

We use “prefab” orders and clearances patterned after actual NWP paperwork, but additional orders can be written as well to cover unforeseen circumstances. Because this is in a small room, communications with the dispatcher are spoken, not by phone or radio. Also because of space considerations there are one man crews.

Traffic Patterns

Each day, two westward (geographic south) 2nd class freights (#77, #75) depart from Eureka and terminate at Willits (division point) and two more (#81, #85) originate from Willits and terminate in Schellville/Sonoma. Each day, two eastward (geographic north) extras (with lots of empties) depart Schellville for Eureka, also with stops only in Petaluma and Willits. Meets between east and westward freights occur at Willits and Santa Rosa.

The San Rafael Local runs from San Rafael to Santa Rosa and Healdsburg and returns. It carries traffic to and from Marin County and San Francisco via Tiburon ferry.

A gravel train extra runs between Marin County and Basalt Rock Company in Healdsburg, stopping to service Shamrock Materials in Petaluma.

The P&SR runs daily from Petaluma, through Sebastopol to Santa Rosa, and back again. There is no timetable or dispatcher, but it has to request entry into Santa Rosa from the dispatcher.

Passenger service consists of the Redwood (Train 3 and 4 running on alternate days between Tiburon and Eureka). There may also be a passenger extra running in the opposite direction.

Job Assignments

Dispatcher – Issues train orders and controls traffic in and out of staging, remotely throwing turnout routes via PanelPro. Controls all movements on main, and acts as agent for Santa Rosa (P&SR requires dispatcher clearance to enter Santa Rosa).

Willits Yardmaster - Assists westward and eastward freights in dropoffs and pickups, switches three sawmills, the freight station, and the California Western interchange. Hostler for engines to and from service tracks.

Petaluma Yardmaster – Assists westward and eastward freights and San Rafael Local in dropoffs and pickups; switches Shamrock Materials, freight station, team track, and the P&SR interchange. Sorts traffic bound for Schellville versus Marin County.

Road crews (one person):

Through freights: Westward 2nd class trains 81, 77, 85, 75; two Eastward Extras
San Rafael Local
Gravel Train
P&SR
Passenger (Redwood, Passenger Extra)

Mechanical stuff

This is a Lenz controlled layout, using tethered throttles for yardmasters and CVP (Easy DCC) wireless throttles for road crews.

Clipboards

Each train has a clipboard located on a hook or Velcro corresponding to the staging track or layout location where it originates. It includes a train description, key to routing colors, system map, and car cards/waybills. There are places to hang them on the fascia as you operate. When you have finished the job, hang the clipboard at the location it has arrived at.

Card and Card Boxes

We use old-fashioned car cards and waybills that are color coded to help with routing. The key to the colors is posted on each clipboard and at each yard.

Most card boxes have three slots. Those in the “Pull” box are to be picked up, those on the “Spot” slot need to be spotted at their industry. After a car is spotted, put its card in the “Hold” slot. If there is no room in the spur, leave the car on a nearby track and place its card in the “Spot” box.

In Petaluma and Santa Rosa there are separate card boxes for NWP and P&SR. Make sure to use the right one, identifiable by the RR logo. There are also separate boxes for the NWP/P&SR interchange tracks in Petaluma and Santa Rosa.

Turnout Controls

Most turnouts are controlled by tortoise stall motors or MP1 switch motors. Toggle switches are located near the turnout on the fascia or on track diagrams. For ergonomic reasons some turnouts are controlled at two separate locations. In those cases the switch throw is indicated by LEDs on the fascia. Crossovers are controlled by toggles identified

with a white “X.” Some turnouts are manually controlled, including the town of Sebastopol on the P&SR, several in the engine yard at Willits and at Santa Rosa, and one in Healdsburg..

Uncoupling Magnets

There are magnetic uncouplers in several hard to reach areas in Petaluma and Santa Rosa. Three in Santa Rosa are Rapido electromagnets controlled by fascia toggle switches. Their locations are marked by lightpoles.

When Disaster Strikes

Loose parts – If you find any, please put in Loose Parts container on windowsill.

Malfunctioning Equipment – If possible, shunt to a nearby track or siding and place a bad order slip, located in Loose Parts container, on or beside it.

Derailments and other similar problems – Please alert me so I can make a note of it.

Hope you have a good time!