

Winter on the Sandy River and Rangeley Lakes Railroad

By Brian W. Eckard

Work continues on the layout for the next version, which will include the line from Strong to Bigelow. I thought it would be fun to release a winter version of the layout, and I also wanted to write a description of a typical freight run on the Sandy River. I believe it is important to imagine how a freight run would happen in real life, and then use that storyline to perform the operating session on the Sandy River layout. So, here is my attempt to bring you back in time to an era that is now long gone, and describe a fictional freight run that might have happened numerous times on the Sandy River. After reading this article, try creating an operating session in *Trainz* and actually making this run performing the various pickups and deliveries as described herein. Imagine seeing your virtual crew playing out our brief story; imagine their conversations and actions. So, sit back, grab some hot cocoa, and enjoy a journey back in time as we follow a freight train from Rangeley to Farmington in the snow.

Our winter journey begins...

It is wintertime, and the year is 1913. The Sandy River and Rangeley Lakes Railroad is as busy as ever moving timber, lumber, and other goods up and down its line. Passenger traffic has been brisk through the fall, but now that the holiday season is over it has dropped significantly to about one trainload in each direction every day.

The air is crisp and cold, and there is a serene silence across Franklin County. Snowflakes gently fall to the ground creating a white blanket of snow as a snowplow train takes on water and prepares for its lonely journey down the mainline to make sure it remains clear. Finally it is ready, and with the blast of its whistle the snowplow train departs Rangeley.

At the same time, preparations are being made for the morning's first freight run, which will follow the snow train down the line. Engine #16 sits in the engine house in Rangeley, building up steam. The engineer walks around the engine carefully greasing up the drivers and other joints to ease the effects of friction when the locomotive makes its run down the line.

Finally the locomotive is ready to head out into the cold snow. The locomotive, bell ringing, slowly moves out onto the turntable. Once centered, the engineer and fireman secure the brakes and climb down. They go to opposite sides of the turntable bridge where there are poles that they will use to turn the locomotive and line it up with the track that leaves the engine facility. After lining up the turntable bridge they climb back up into the engine and slowly

proceed down the track to the water tower where they stop and take on water for the morning's journey.



After taking on water, engine 16 slowly moves down the track. The brakeman jumps off and runs up to the switch, throwing it to allow the locomotive out onto the mainline. He then resets the switch and climbs up onto the tender to catch a ride over to the freight consist that is waiting on the siding by the Rangeley freight depot. The locomotive slowly makes its way over to the siding, stopping briefly to allow the brakeman to jump off and throw the switch. The locomotive moves onto the siding and picks up its consist. The brakeman connects the brake line and they test it. Satisfied that the train is ready to go, the brakeman moves back over to the switch so that he can reset it for the mainline after the train passes.

In the freight depot, the conductor finishes his initial paper work and talks to the dispatcher, who gives him the train orders that will allow them to start their journey. The dispatcher has authorized the train to move down the line to Eustis Junction, where they will receive further orders enabling them to continue their journey to Perham Junction.

Orders in hand, the conductor rushes out of the depot and climbs up into his caboose. He signals the engineer that it is all clear to proceed. With two short blasts of the whistle, the train jumps to life and slowly moves off the siding onto the mainline. After resetting the switch for the mainline, the brakeman runs down the track and climbs aboard the caboose. He goes in and warms his hands over

the wood stove. The aroma of coffee fills the air as it brews on the stovetop. The conductor is seated at his desk, doing some paperwork. He notices that the brakeman has come in, so he gets up and walks over to the wood stove and stands next to him. He pours two mugs of coffee and hands the brakeman one of the mugs. They both sit down to enjoy their hot drinks and review the day's activities as they begin their run to Farmington.

Eustis Junction

The train passes through Dallas and makes its way into Eustis Junction where the switch has already been set to direct the train onto the passing siding in front of the depot. The train comes to a stop, and the conductor climbs down from the caboose and enters the building.



The dispatcher gives him some pickup orders for camp eight, and then authorizes the train to continue on towards Perham Junction, where it must stop for further instructions. Clutching the orders and paperwork, the conductor leaves the depot and climbs back up into the caboose. He signals the engineer that the train is clear to proceed. The train pulls out of Eustis Junction.

Camp Eight

Camp Eight is a logging camp situated right on the mainline. It contains a passing siding and also a stub end siding, which serves a busy sawmill. There is some lumber loaded on flat cars located there that needs to be picked up.

The train makes its way down the line, crossing over a trestle and winding its way through the forest. The locomotive blows its

whistle as it approaches the camp and then the fireman starts ringing the bell. The train slows down and comes to a stop.



The brakeman disconnects the locomotive and then runs over to the switch and throws it so the engine can enter the passing siding. He goes over to the other switch that will allow the engine onto the siding to pick up the cars, and waits.



The locomotive moves onto the passing siding, and the brakeman throws the switch to allow for the pickup. The engine slowly moves

backwards and connects to the flat cars. The brakeman connects the brake line and they test it. Satisfied that the brakes work, he signals the engineer to move the cars off the siding. The train slowly moves forward and clears the switch. The brakeman throws the switch to allow the locomotive to move back onto the mainline in order to connect up with the train consist.

He climbs up onto the last flat car and signals the engineer to move back on to the mainline. The locomotive pushes the flat cars back to the train, and the cars couple together with the train consist. The brakeman jumps off the car and connects the brake line. They test the line and are satisfied that the brakes work. The brakeman throws the switch to allow the train to proceed down the mainline. He then walks back to the caboose and climbs aboard. The conductor signals the engineer that he can proceed down the line to Perham Junction.

Perham Junction

With two short blasts of the whistle the train once again jumps to life and makes its way to Perham Junction. It continues to wind through the countryside as the snow falls. The conductor is busy filling out the paperwork at his desk in the caboose while the brakeman sits in the copula and observes the train for signs of hotboxes or other problems that might arise. The snow has covered the countryside like a blanket, and the air is still very cold and brisk.



Upon its arrival at Perham Junction the train comes to a stop. The fireman jumps down and greases the locomotive. The conductor climbs down from the caboose and walks over to the station and

enters it. He quickly heads over to the dispatcher's office to get his orders and authorizations.

A logging train arrives from one of the camps near Perham Junction. Some of its timber cars are added to our train while the conductor is talking to the dispatcher. After returning to the caboose, the conductor signals the engineer that they have clearance to proceed to Madrid. The train continues its journey through the snowy winter wonderland down to Madrid Junction.



Madrid Junction

They arrive in Madrid and receive authorization to continue to Phillips. After the conductor returns to the caboose and signals the engineer, the train makes its way to Phillips where they will leave some of the cars on one of the sidings.



With a long blast of the whistle, the train slows down and comes to a stop right before the passing sidings that are located outside of Phillips. The brakeman disconnects the caboose and runs up the track to throw the switch in front of the engine. He signals the engineer to pull ahead onto the passing siding. The train slowly moves away from the caboose and onto the siding, where it leaves the timber cars. It then moves back onto the mainline and picks up the caboose.



The train pulls into Phillips where it takes a 20-minute break for servicing the locomotive. Once the train is back together, they proceed to Strong, where they will leave some of the cars for a northbound train to Bigelow.



Upon arrival in Phillips, we meet train number 11.



Strong

The train enters Strong and comes to a stop. It leaves some of the cars on the passing siding.



After dropping the cars, the train pulls forward onto the mainline. The brakeman throws the switch once more to align with the mainline and signals the engineer. The engine slowly backs up and reconnects with the train consist on the mainline. The dispatcher authorizes the train to continue on towards Farmington.

With two short blasts of the whistle the train lurches forward and heads for Farmington.

Fairbanks

Time passes quickly, and the train reaches Fairbanks, where it stops for water. After servicing the engine, the train pulls out and makes its way to Farmington. Just outside the town the train slows and comes to a stop. There the train drops off it's consist on the team track, for transfer of goods to cars on the Maine Central tracks on the other side of the platform.



The locomotive picks up the caboose and takes it down the line to the engine facilities, where it can be turned for the return trip to Rangeley later in the day.



Brian

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Brian's original Sandy River and Rangeley Lakes layout (srrl20final by woodbrdge) is available at the Trainz Download Station (KUID: 64598:100351). Watch for the updated version, which was used for this operating session. Rolling stock is available at Sirgibby's TrainZone web site (<http://www.trainzone.co.nz>). -Ed.