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Craftsman Boomer Trail - April 2010



All aboard the Pine Creek Railroad! Passengers purchase tickets at the gift shop as others watch and wait for the train to pass by the water tower. This model railroad is patterned after a popular attraction in Allaire State Park located in Wall, New Jersey. Photo by R. Steven Lang

The Pine Creek Railroad in N Scale

By **R. Steven Lang**/photos by the author

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The Pine Creek Railroad is a narrow gauge tourist railroad at the [New Jersey Museum of Transportation](#) located in Allaire State Park, Wall, NJ. The New Jersey Museum of Transportation, Inc. Pine Creek Railroad dates back to 1951. At its current location since 1963, the Pine Creek Railroad is one of the oldest continually operating narrow gauge steam preservation railroads in the country. It is staffed completely by volunteers and funded entirely by donations and train fares.

I am a relative newcomer to model railroading. As a youth I played with Lionel trains that had belonged to my father. In the late fifties I received my own Lionel train set for Christmas and ran them until my teenage years. I never totally lost interest in model railroading but I never picked up on it again until 10 years ago when I purchased an N scale set and became hooked. I started building a small N scale layout but I was not satisfied with the way it was turning out. I tore the track off and left it sit while I worked on building up my modeling skills. Following my son's wedding at Allaire State Park I decided to build a model of the Pine Creek Railroad. It was small, provided many modeling opportunities, and would also be suitable for some basic operations.

I went back and looked at the layout I had started a few years earlier and decided that it was just right for the project. I did a search on Google Earth and printed out a couple of satellite photos of the railroad. They provided me with the track layout and position of all of the major buildings. Next I hit the ground with my camera and took hundreds of pictures. To this day I go back and take more detail pictures when necessary. Although the layout is complete, I am still adding details, replacing stand-in buildings, and adding new buildings and rolling stock. The layout has been displayed at the Pine Creek Railroaders Days and the InfoAge Holiday Train Show for the past two years. It is always a hit with the children because they can start and stop the train at the station.



The engine house in this picture is a modified [Dayton Machine Co.](#) building by Walthers Cornerstone. It is a stand-in for a building that I am working on as I am writing this article. The open passenger car is scratch built to match the prototype. It is made from brass and styrene and populated with Model Power sitting people and park benches. The caboose started out as a Santa Fe steel caboose. I disassembled it, filed off all of the detail, and rebuilt it with styrene shapes and brass wire to match the CNJ caboose on the Pine Creek.



Another feature of Allaire State Park is the "Deserted Village." One of the signature buildings in the village is the Chapel. It is unique because the steeple is on the back end of the building. My son got married there in 2007. That was one of the motivating factors for my decision to model the railroad. I purchased a Model Power built up building for the chapel. As soon as I looked at my photographs of the prototype I realized that I would have to scratch build the building. Built from styrene and [Tichy](#) window and doors, the chapel includes a complete detailed interior; the only part of the original Model Power building is the roof.



Passengers enjoy a warm Fall day on the Pine Creek Railroad as others enjoy their time riding horses and bicycles on the bike path that is the original Central New Jersey RR right of way. White tailed deer graze in the field ignoring the train as it passes by.



The steel storage buildings were built from [PikeStuff](#) kits. Still left to build is a scratch built dog house style dormer for the larger of the two steel buildings. Also appearing in this picture is a conveyer used to load coal into the tender. It was kit bashed to match the prototype from a kit by [Model Tech Studios](#).



The CNJ Freneau Station was originally located just north of Matawan, NJ. It was moved to the Pine Creek Railroad site in Marlboro and then moved again to the current location in Allaire State Park around 1964. In its original configuration the roof extended to the left forming canopy next to the station. When the station was moved this roof extension was cut off. There are plans to restore the station to its original configuration. I purchased an Atlas kit of the [Maywood Station](#) thinking that I could just shorten it up and use it as a stand in for Freneau. As soon as I started working on it I knew that it would not work. So on to another scratch built building. I am calling this a "scratch-bash" project as I did use the roof, bay window and detail parts from the Maywood Station kit.



One of the unique buildings on the Pine Creek Railroad is the water tower. Built to conceal a stainless water tank, this one of a kind structure necessitated another scratch building project. I agonized how to build this structure out of styrene, trying to cut and glue all of the tiny parts did not appeal to me, model railroading is supposed to be fun. *Railroad Model Craftsman* came to the rescue and as soon as I saw the title of the article, "Wood Block Buildings" in the [August 2009](#) issue I know that I had my answer. I used to build these little solid block buildings for my wife when she was doing craft shows. Why didn't I think of it before? I went out to my work shop, trued up the blade and fence on my table saw and started cutting little blocks of wood until I got what I was looking for. I applied brick siding to the base, cedar siding to the top section and laser cut shingles to the roof. After a little paint to match the prototype, I had a suitable water tower. While the steam engine is in the shop being rebuilt a GE diesel pulls the freight train past the water tower and the ticket office.



At 3' X 5' the Pine Creek Railroad is designed and built to be a self contained, interactive, display layout. Although the prototype is a narrow gauge railroad, I chose to build the layout as standard gauge. This was done for reason of cost, availability of materials, and reliability. The control panel on the front of the layout gives children the opportunity to start and stop the train at the station.

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