

Chesapeake & McKenna Ridge Railroad

“Prototype History”

The C&MR was formed as a joint venture of the Chessie, L&N and Southern lines in post-Chessie 1973, with Headquarters in Sinclair, KY, operating as a belt line serving Lexington industries, with trackage rights with the parent companies, serving Chesapeake, KY, on the Ohio River, and McKenna Ridge, KY, with connections to Knoxville. It was reabsorbed into Norfolk Southern in 1995.

Model History

The C&MR began life as an N-scale 4' x 8' layout in Gaithersburg, Maryland, over 15 years ago. It was moved to Lexington, KY about 13 years ago, and has been through several expansions, growing to about 3 ½ by 45 feet in several additions, the latest of which is still not scenicked. It supports operations sessions, along with another Lexington layout, for 6 to 10 “regulars” in MCR Division 10. The plan is (big) loop to (little) loop with a single track main. Control is via Digitrax Radio Super Chief. Construction is luan over L-girder frames and joists. Sound is in development, as is signaling. Operations are run in fast time and managed by computer programs for switchlist generation and scheduling. Decoder programming is mostly by Winchief.

“CEO”

Pete Birdsong began modeling as a kid, and was into planes, boats, and cars as well as model railroads. Like most, he abandoned all the hobbies in the teens. He started up again when his wife gave him a set for Christmas. He is now retired after 38 years with IBM and Lexmark, and has served in several offices in the MCR and Division 10.

The Future

Trackage rights having been negotiated for a larger portion of the basement, including a new crew lounge, plans are being made to replace the existing layout with one about twice the size, but simpler, and with better standards for supporting operations.