

# Building the NEW New Boston and Donnels Creek – So Far

Written by Paul Race for Family Garden Trains, November, 2018

I love running trains outside. I love gardening. But when we moved in late 2016, I knew something would have to change if I wanted to keep running trains outside for very much longer.

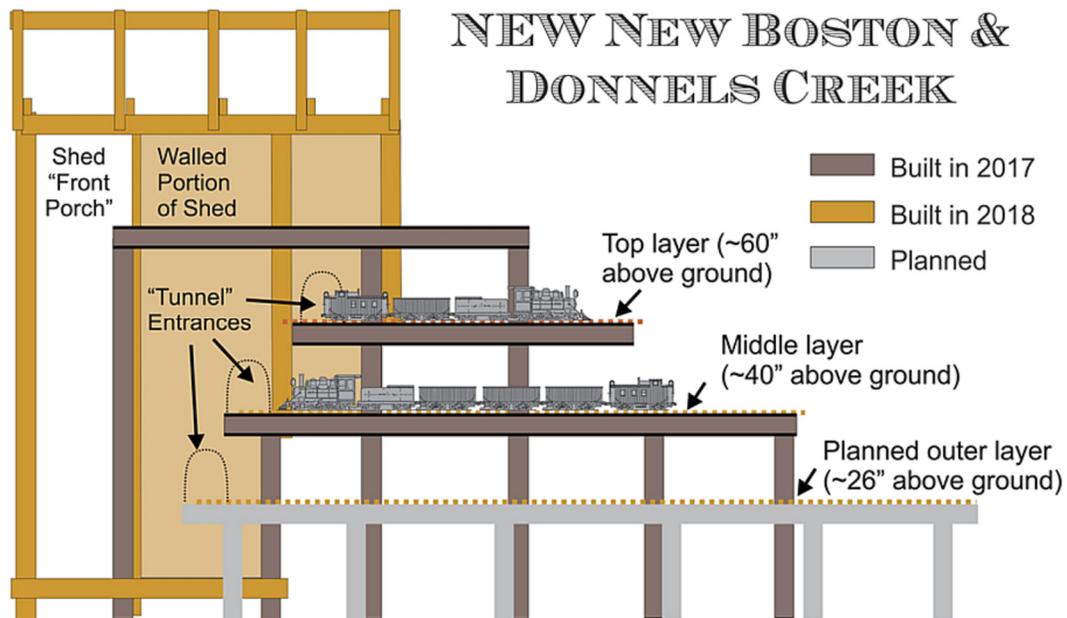
Maintaining our old 70'x18' railroad took too much work to keep up. Yes, it was lovely to look at, especially after I had just spent 30 hours or so weeding and clearing the right-of-way, much of it on my hands and knees.

But at least one reason for having a garden railroad is to run trains, and I spent far, far more time on maintenance every summer than I ever did running trains. Not to mention that my back and knees aren't what they used to be.

And, the truth is, I also got tired of telling visitors who dropped by unexpectedly to come back in a week if they wanted to see the trains running.

So for the new place, I planned an entirely raised railroad, with an attached shed so I could have trains ready to go at a moment's notice.

I revised my plans many times. The most recent plan, created nearly a year after I broke ground is shown below in a side view.



There would be three concentric layers of railroad, attached to a train shed just large enough to protect the power supplies and keep short trains on the tracks ready run.

Admittedly, the top and middle tracks are just loops that the trains run around. But both right of ways cross over little ponds and in front of waterfalls for maximum visual interest.

In 2017, I sunk a bunch of 5' and 8' posts and built two decks to hold track and scenery. I also started adding the water feature, though I didn't get the waterfall running until 2018. Early snows and bitterly cold weather kept me from working on the railroad past early November, though I did set one train on the tracks for Christmas.



By July of 2018, I had "dirtscaped" the top two layers and gotten the upper levels of the waterfall working.

The photo to the right shows two of the Maccourt ponds I used. The lower containers will be replaced when I add a small pond eventually.



I worked on this before finishing the shed in part because I got tired of telling visitors "this is where the waterfall will be." 😊

The rest of the summer and most of the fall, I spent building the shed. The basic construction was like that of a pole barn – vertical posts sunk into the ground with plates and rafters on the top, and the siding eventually fastened to horizontal boards on the sides.



I wanted it to resemble a Victorian country-station. So I used one arched windowframe from Hobby Lobby and two from a flea market. The siding is 5/8"x5.5" fencing boards from Lowes. I like the rough-cut look and know from experience that they should gray up fast, but last as long as most T1-11 or LP Smartside intallations.



One reason I rushed to finish the shed was that I wanted to be able to have a Christmas-themed open railroad like we used to have at the other house. I've been trying out Christmas trains, hooking up Christmas music and lights, and cleaning out the popcorn popper.

If you see this article before Nov. 10, 2018, and you live close, feel free to stop by my back yard between 1:00



and 5:00PM. And bring the kids – we always try to have several trains the kids can run.

Of course if you want to volunteer to help with the event, that's great, too.

But in the meantime, the most fun thing about all this is being able to walk down to the shed, turn on the power, and watch the trains running without performing countless hours of backbreaking work first.

Garden trains are a lot more fun when you can run them!