All Aboard! Presents...

Fort Kent To Eagle Lake

By Richard Garber

For Railworks

All Aboard website: www.allaboardrails.com
Railworks website: www.railsimulator.com

To get the best reproduction of the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route be sure you have acquired and installed from 3D Trains the hi-res version of Rural Landscapes and Scaleroads. Website:

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Introduction

Let's step back to a simpler time in the United States of America and travel to the eastern seaboard and then northeast to the state of Maine. Even in Maine we will keep heading north until we reach the central northernmost part of Maine to just south of the Canadian border. We arrive at two towns separated by 19 miles of track, Fort Kent and Eagle Lake. This is where All Aboard's newest installment of the railroading experience begins.

With an abundance of vegetation and a river the route parallels, the Fort Kent route is what I call a "pretty route." Not as heavily populated with industry as other previous All Aboard routes go, the Fort Kent and Eagle Lake route is a fine example of a simpler railroading experience.

This isn't my first endeavor into small town railroading and some people have written to ask, why? To be frank I don't favor one or the other. Both kinds of railroading, large and small have an equal appeal for me. Where the large railroading experience is more complex due to the larger number of trains and rails to contend with, the smaller railroading experience intrigues me for the more intimate details you can discover about the people and the customers that make up the route. But this time with Railworks as the base platform I wanted to captialize on the strong graphics Railworks give us.

Imagine if you will a lone set of tracks along a well traveled road. There's no train in sight but the tracks look to be in good shape. Does it not beg the question, who uses them? Or, where do they go? It's as if the tracks themselves stir the imagination and tell you a story. To tell the story the graphics need to be convincing that while you drive the train you really feel you are there. I am impressed with Railworks that we are a big step closer with a graphics platform that can do just that. It's from the detail in the route which springs forth the storytelling that our imagination longs to hear.

While I did adhere to the realities of the real Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route I did cheat a little by adding a few industries not presently on the present day route. But you'll be glad to know that the layout of the scenery on this route adheres to the character of the real route. Even driveways are in their proper place. And a few real landmarks are included within this route for a better immersing experience. On the whole the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route is a fine representation of what is just a small subdivision of the Bangor and Aroostook railroad.

From what people tell me, they say what makes a route last the longest on their hard drives is the gameplay value of the route. The Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route is primarily a switching route. This means if you like to push freight cars around then this route is perfectly suited for you. At the same time there are also included some distance running so you'll get the chance to stretch your engines's wheels a bit. 20 scenarios are included in all kinds of combinations for switching moves and mainline running enough to satisfy everyone.

One thing you will notice different from other routes is that the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route scenarios starts out in Autumn and not in summer like most routes do. What better way to convey this is a North Eastern route in Maine route where the cold weather seasons last longer than the warmer months. And I have to admit that the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route is just flat out beautiful in Autumn. Winter looks great too. And you will also love how the summer months are also ablaze with color.

Finally, what is so neat about the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route (whether we're talking about the real route or this representation) is that it transitions very quickly from a fairly straight route with lots of small bends and curves to a rather twisty affair navigating tall cliffs and horseshoe-like curves.

Background Story

Each of my routes which I develop in conjunction with scenarios has a back story to bring the route, the scenarios and yourself together. For the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route you are assigned to a nearby railroad facility. Usually once a week you are run up to the Fort Kent area or you drive an engine to the Fort Kent rail yard. Your typical assignment to the Fort Kent is only one working day a week. The reason for this is because the Fort Kent region is the end of the line for the Bangor & Aroostook railroad and it's small enough customer-wise that it couldn't support an engine or crew being dedicated to the area full time. Now, what you do the rest of each week is the business of your own imagination, but that one day out of the week, you're in Fort Kent.

When the scenario opens typically you are immersing yourself for just a snippet of one day of one week selected from the annals from the Fort Kent work order log. Scenarios generally run from 25 to 45 minutes but they can get as long as an hour. You will usually start off at the 'shed' in Fort Kent. There are a few times when you will start off at the 'hut' at the Eagle Lake Gravel (which you can consider as a 'home away from home.).' When you are assigned a task at Eagle Lake Gravel, there's always the possibilty you'll have to spend the night. It doesn't happen very often.

With apologies to the purist, all my routes use the default equipment supplied with Railworks. This keeps cost down as well as makes it less confusing on where to obtain rollingstock. So once again, Union Pacific has taken over more Eastern USA territory in their quest to the be dominant railroad of the country and acquired the Bangor & Aroostook or the Bangor & Aroostook is leasing UP equipment. That part is up to you.

The Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route was given a PG (Parental Guidance is suggested) rating. This is because the route experiences a rather unsettling, for some, a phenomena in which vehicles will appear and disappear at crossings and road intersections. While many will speculate this has something to do with alien abduction (hence the PG rating) this is simply not true. In fact, it's rather the common usage of a teleport device where at any time a vehicle can dial-in a coordinate and transport past a crossing or intersection safely and appear somewhere else (driver's discretion). You are likely to see this phenomena happening quite frequently. Please do not call your local national security agency. This teleporting device is being tested in the Fort Kent area and could cause concern if its usage became public without the usual and customary denials and disclaimers.

While there are signals and a passing siding included with the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route, there is no AI traffic included in the scenarios. In line with the 'isolation' feeling of the route being located in rural setting, AI traffic was not included. In future scenario expansion packs, if they become available, you could see AI traffic included.

Scenarios

Plywood Pickup *autumn*

Fort Kent Yard Switching *autumn*

Autumn Potato Run *autumn*

Local Pickup 1 *autumn*

Delivery To Eagle Lake Gravel *autumn*

ELGrav Switching 1 *autumn*

ELGrav Switching 2 *autumn*

Gravel Haul To Fort Kent *autumn*

Deuce Lumber Delivery *winter*

Textile 1 Delivery Part A *winter*

Textile 2 Delivery Part B *winter*

Textile 2 Delivery Part C *winter*

ELGrav Winter Run Part A *winter*

ELGrav Winter Run Part B *winter*

Ft. Kent Classifying *summer*

Deuce Lumber Restock *summer*

Potato Restock *summer*

Haulin' North To Fort Kent *summer*

Eagle Lake Gravel Reload *summer*

Clothing Outlet Delivery *summer*

Scenarios for the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route come in a variety of playability. Most scenarios are stand-alones while others might be part of a group which are typified by the usage of Part A, B etc in the title. These parts are meant to be construed as one work order per day in which the dispatcher understood you have to leave your regular routine and travel to the Fort Kent area to complete assignments which couldn't be completed the day before.

In most scenarios you will begin at the shed at the Fort Kent rail yard. A secondary start point is at the hut at Eagle Lake Gravel. The time frame of the route is some point in history before the advent of cell phones so a "land based line" to connect you with the dispatcher is necessaryvia the shed or hut. The shed also has its own full-time foreman and one of his duties, naturally, is to take phone messages for you. And as well, each of the scenarios will have you return to either the shed or the hut. In all cases you will need to come to a stop at either to end the scenario.

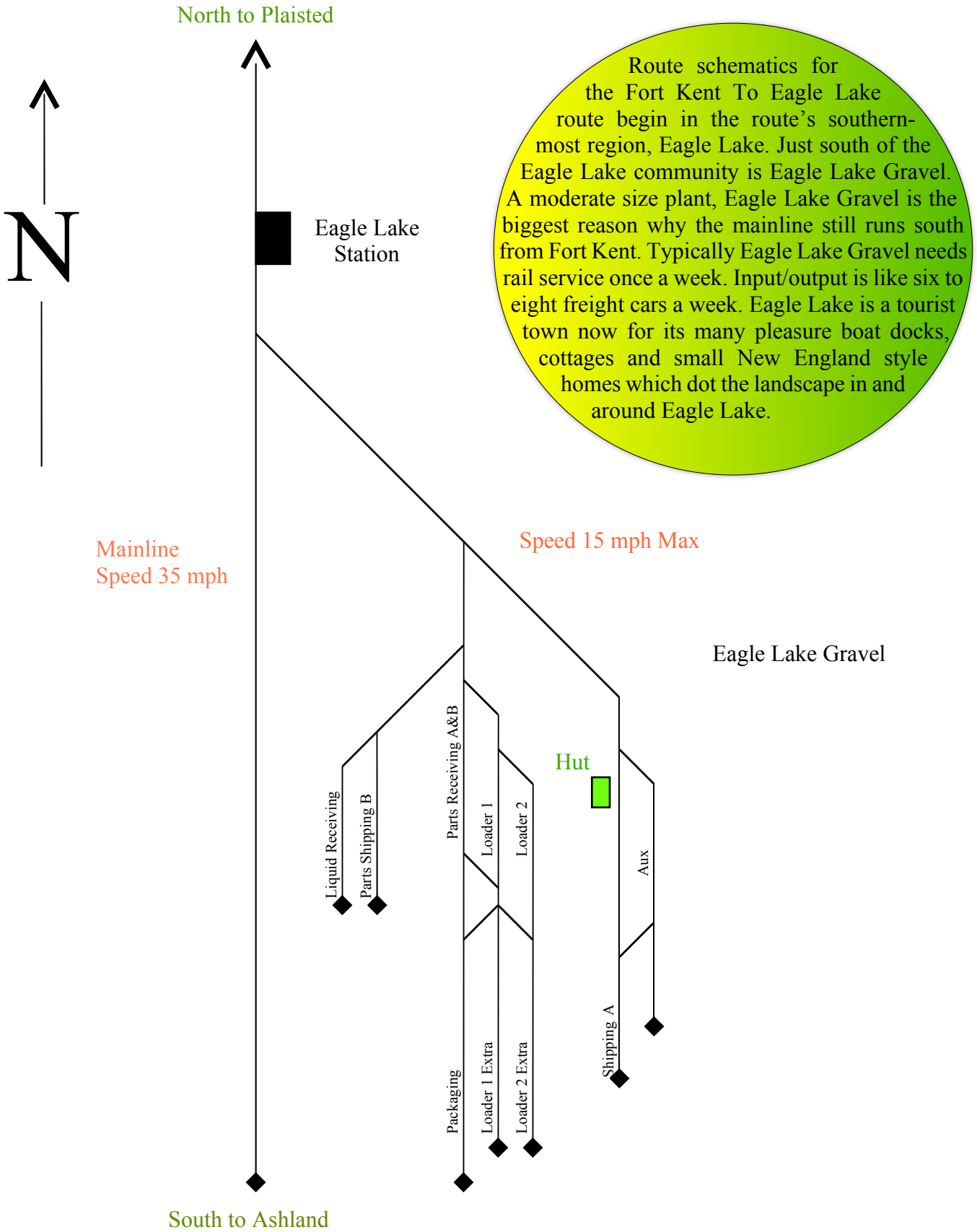
Scenario Thoughts

Scenarios in of themselves are an art form to not only learn but to tame as well. One of my longstanding issues with scenarios (even my own!) is the disorientation I feel when I first enter a scenario. My first question is, what to do? In fighter pilot language the feature most lacking in train games is what warriors call having "situational awareness." How that could be implemented in a train game is a discussion for another day. In Railworks there is the manifest which you can see by moving your mouse to the bottom of the screen and a small menu bar will rise up. The second icon from the left is the manifest. You can also see which of the manifest you have completed (big green checkmark) or not completed (big red X). That's helpful. What Railworks also gives you is a 2d overview which you access by pressing 9. In this view, you can zoom, move about (hold down the right mouse button and drag the mouse to move the view anywhere you want). This view is also great for watching your train when making switching maneuvers. Between these two views you can get a very good situational awareness of what is to be done and what you are doing.

However, even with those two features I still feel a general uneasiness when I first enter a scenario. So what I opted to do with the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake scenarios (which will certainly annoy the purist, again, my apologies) was to include a number of instructional messages per scenario as a "guidance" or someone looking over your shoulder kind of thing. This isn't used all the time but it's there more often than not. To remove a message from view, click on the X in the upper right corner of the message dialogue box. I want to emphasize that these message boxes are to bring a continuity to the "situational awareness" I would imagine a real train engineer has while being dispatched to do work orders.

Finally those who are familiar with my scenarios of previous routes may feel the puzzle element has been removed from most and that the scenarios are more scripted in nature. This is true. With the route being a prototypical one, in most scenarios I decided to focus more on what an engineer is likely to do on a day to day basis being assigned to this region.

Schematics



Schematic contributed by Don Hughes

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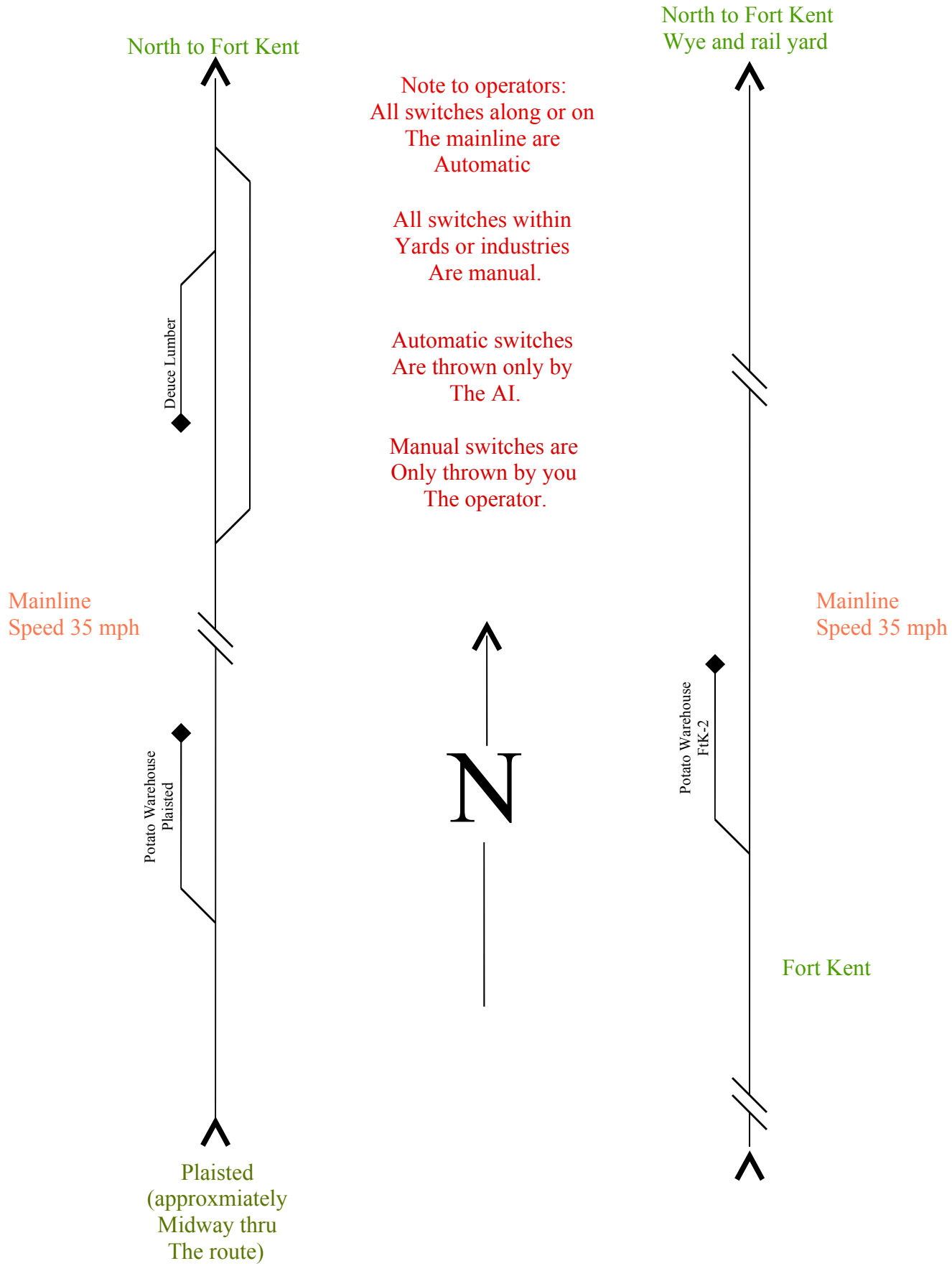

Schematic contributed by Don Hughes

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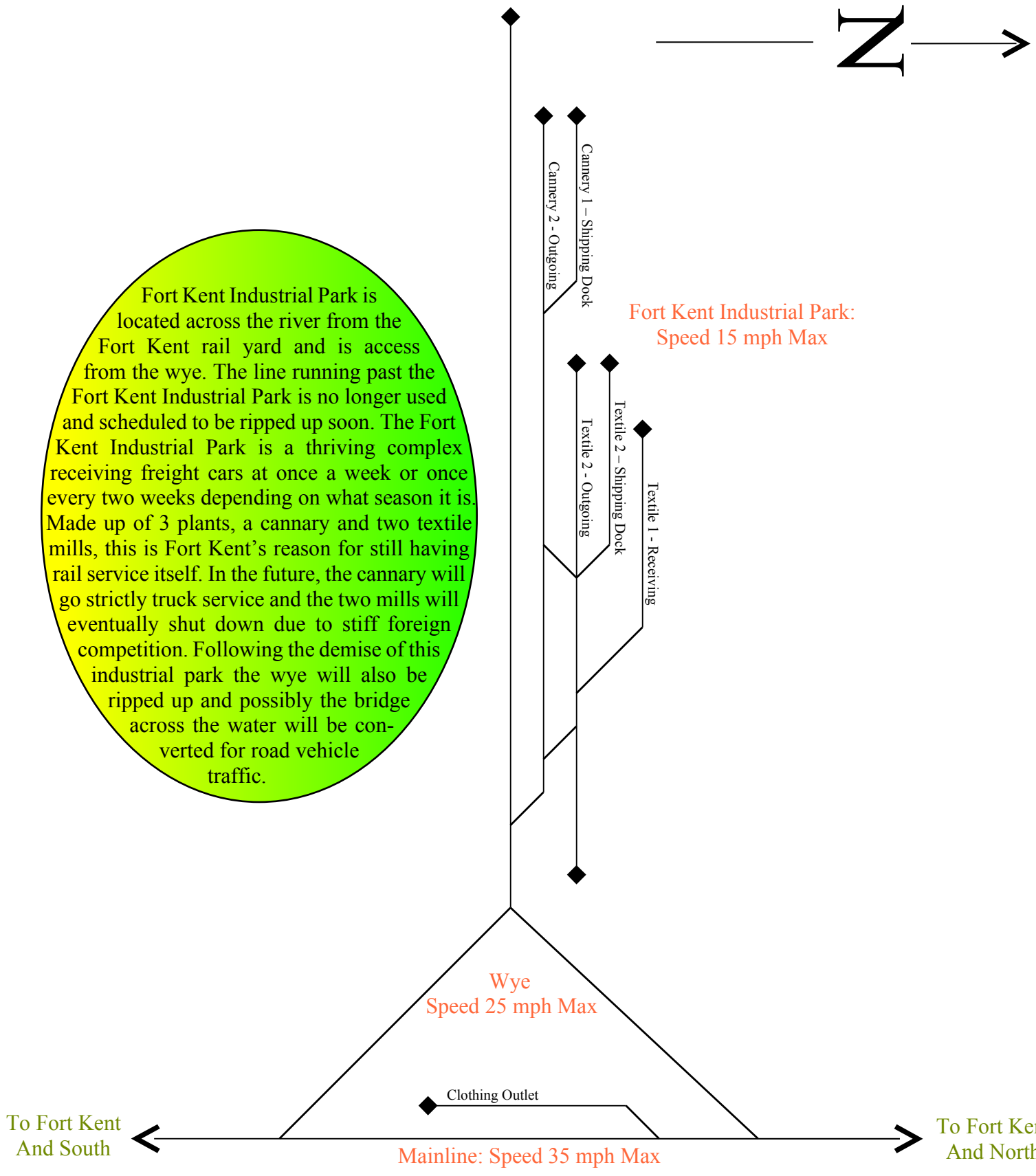
Fort Kent Industrial Park is located across the river from the Fort Kent rail yard and is access from the wye. The line running past the Fort Kent Industrial Park is no longer used and scheduled to be ripped up soon. The Fort Kent Industrial Park is a thriving complex receiving freight cars at once a week or once every two weeks depending on what season it is. Made up of 3 plants, a cannary and two textile mills, this is Fort Kent's reason for still having rail service itself. In the future, the cannary will go strictly truck service and the two mills will eventually shut down due to stiff foreign competition. Following the demise of this industrial park the wye will also be ripped up and possibly the bridge across the water will be converted for road vehicle traffic.



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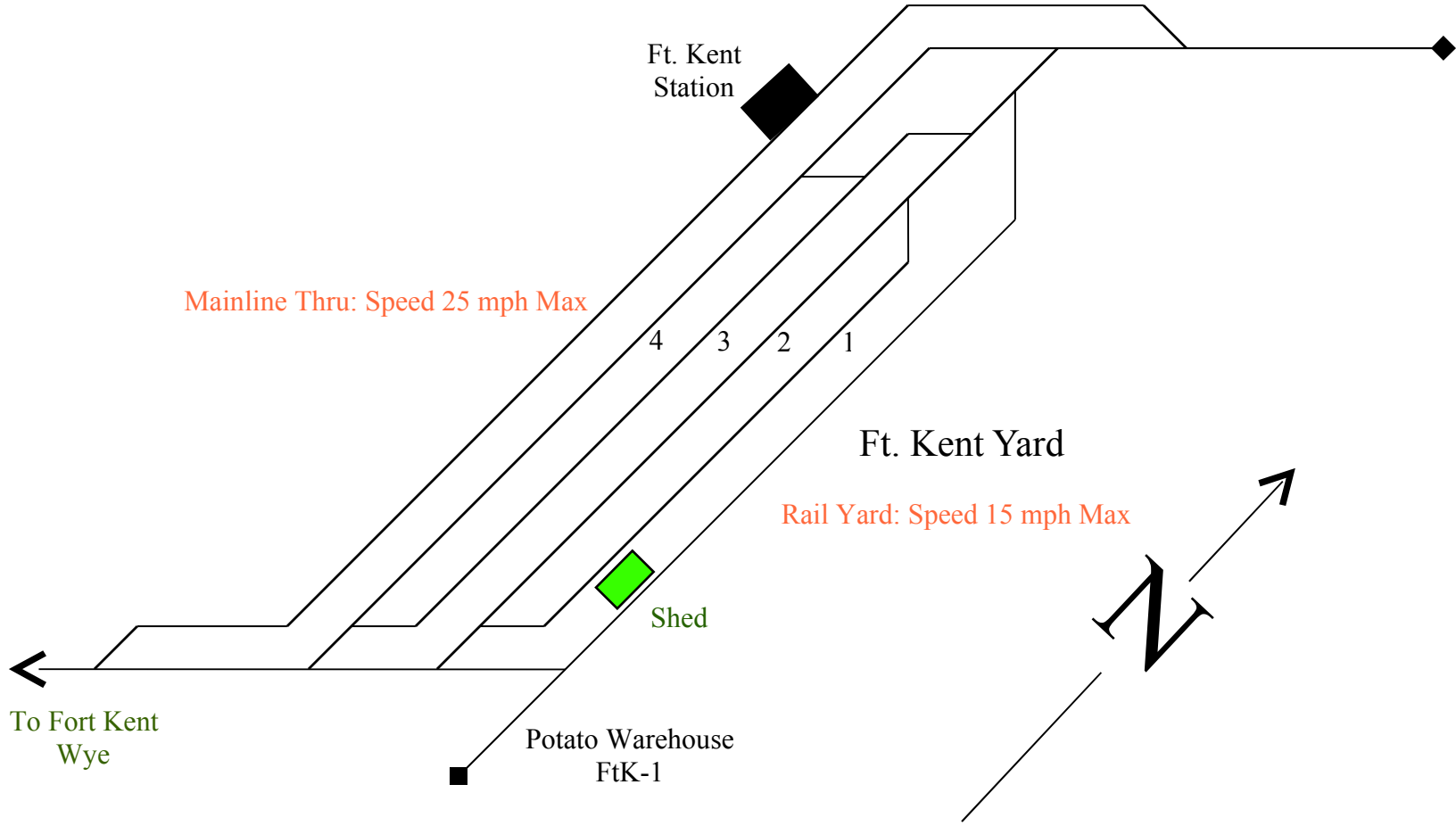

Schematic contributed by Don Hughes

Designer Notes

The Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route is not my first endeavor into a prototypical route though the word we typically use to describe the kind of route the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake is, is "proto-lanced." One thing I just won't do is spend months laboring over a route which I think will have little scenario potential. Understandably we can appreciate that the real world railroad "movers and shakers" didn't concern themselves with a line's entertainment value . So it's my job to compensate for the lack of "thrill" by delivering enough interest in the route experience that will keep players coming back for more. Early on it was my intention to do strictly a prototype route, but as the route developed I had second thoughts an increased the scenery potential by adding extra industries "that could've been there" in places where I thought an industry could be placed.

When I'm designing a proto-lanced or fictional route I am forced to pinpoint the route because automobiles lock the time period by their recognizable character. To me a route is a composite of all its history focused into a non-specific time frame (except for the problem of vehicles). So anything that brings interest to a route is fair game. Some of my customer feedback tends to lend me to see that customers view routes differently. They see them as stalwarts in time locked into a time frame where only certain variances are customary. And to be fair, that does make complete sense. But rail fans vary in likes and dislikes as any community does and I dare to say that I can only deliver product appreciated by those who appreciate it. In other words, if you feel a certain aspect of the route is out of sorts, chances I did too. But for reasons leaning towards entertainment assume that is why I did what I did.

In the case of Fort Kent To Eagle Lake, I included the Fort Kent Industrial Park (Ft. Kent Cannary, Ft. Kent Textile Plants 1 & 2) as well as the Eagle Lake Gravel plant in Eagle Lake. The rest of the route is completely prototypical. While its true the wye and the track which heads west from the wye is all gone now, at one time it was there and so the trackage is included. In most places you can literally take a birds eye look of the route and then compare it with a satellite image and you will see a great similarity between the two. I also had a number of recognizable landmarks included in the route as well. For instance, the potato warehouses are reasonable facsimiles of the real potato warehouses you would see in the route.

I made extensive usage of Marc Nelson's 3D Trains trees and roads in the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route and you will need his packages to fully populate the route properly in Railworks. Marc does offer a free version of these packages but I strongly recommend you use the hi-res versions instead. Be careful that other distributors which sell All Aboard routes aren't overwriting the hi-res packages if you have them. If they do, simply reinstall the hi-res package you acquired from Marc and you'll be all set. And please note that you only need to purchase these two packages once. You don't need to repurchase them for each route that uses them. And for those still using Rail Simulator you will need to acquire the Rail Simulator Foliage Pack from RS.com (www.railsimulator.com). For those with Railworks, it's not necessary as the package is included free n Railworks.

The Fort Kent And Eagle Lake route allowed me to break new ground where I created new ground textures for this route. New models were made by myself and Ed Hawkins. I added new trees for Summer, Autumn and Winter. In future route versions I plan on extensively creating and adding new vegetation variation as well as ground textures. The Fort Kent And Eagle Lake also features Marc Nelson's (3D Trains) Scalerail track which has been upgraded to include more track sounds than previously.

Credits

Routes are overwhelming to do by oneself so I enlist what help I can in order to survive the different tasks of researching, building and releasing a route. To those folks who helped me this time around I want to openly express a big hearty and healthy THANKS! My apologies if I seem to be shouting but starting over in a new train game platform is tough. I would like to publicly acknowledge these dear folk if you don't mind.

First and foremost with each project, and this was no exception, the number of prayers for help from above was quite extensive. Without His help and His beautiful creation to model after, the joy of delivering such a complicated mesh of different art forms such as a route would be nothing less than unhealthy. So a great big teddy bear of a hug in gratitude to the One and only Lord Jesus whom the Bible tells us is our Lord and Savior.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. - John 3:16-17

And I would like to thank the following people as well,

Dick Cowen - Always helpful with his friendship and rollingstock contributions. Be sure to check out Dick Cowen's Bangor & Aroostook rollingstock contributions which are perfectly suitable for running on the Fort Kent To Eagle Lake route. **www.dickyjim.com**

Marc Nelson (3D Trains) - Always helpful, insightful, knowledgeable, pioneering and a great friend. His own work and talents are inspiring. **www.3dtrains.com**

Ed Hawkins - Ed is a good friend as well as modeler who regularly contributes in other areas as well. Ed is very knowledgeable of internet languages and usage if you ever have a need of a website to be designed, Ed is your man. You can contact Ed at his main site. **www.hawkdawg.com**

Cecil Kerr - Cecil is an early pioneer of Rail Simulator, Railworks and 3d Canvas. His help in understanding the new train platform is invaluable!

Don Hughes - Don himself is an amazing person with an amazing history and his help over the many years and his schematics have been invaluable for myself and the many who use them.

All Aboard!

All Aboard began in mid 2001 with its first release of a route called Number 11 (later expanded into the East Metro route and then rereleased years later as East Metro Rebuild) named after a trackplan from the 101 Trackplans book for Model Railroading. In 2003 All Aboard went commercial with the release of the Canton route. In August of 2008 All Aboard released its first route for Railworks, the Rascal & Cottonwood. In 2009 All Aboard! Increased its distribution of product through other sources than its own via Just Trains, Steam (via RS.com) and Fspilotshop.com. You can follow and learn more about the many routes released by All Aboard! At the All Aboard! Website:

www.allaboardrails.com