

## A cramped backwater location

The layout represents one of the many minor facilities the CHB serves, a collection of run-down wharves and a small repair yard that maintains tugs, lighters (barges), and other harbor craft. A compact engine terminal tends to the one assigned switcher.

The format is the usual continuous run with harbor operations arranged on each side of the waterway and a short staging siding on the "off-stage" part of the circuit, hidden by a removable block of structures. If the layout is built near eye level, these structures don't need to be overly large to conceal trains and tracks.

To aid access and get away from the boxy look that characterizes many 4 x 8s, the front of the baseboard follows a flowing line that produces a concave curve in the center while losing an angular corner.

The focal point is the central waterway, crossed by the railroad on low timber trestles patterned on those of the N&W and VGN over the Elizabeth River. At one end, a swing span allows small ships, tugs, and lighters to enter the confines of this side creek of the river. In addition to the small repair yard with its slipway, gantry crane, and fabrication shops, there are two general wharves, a bunker fuel dealer, a steel yard, and a warehouse.

Walthers' waterside-series structures, most notably the Front Street Warehouse, offer excellent opportunities for the kitbasher. And don't overlook the potential of Design Preservation Models modular kits.

The track is almost all curved with a minimum radius of 20". I envisioned using Walthers code 83 flextrack for most of the layout along with the matching turnouts: no. 5, no. 6½ curved, and wye. Lighter rail would look nice, especially on the spurs. Don't overdo it on the ballast; cinders would suffice. This ain't the high iron!

## Ships and cranes

Here's where you get two hobbies for the price of one, thanks to some nice kits that let even a novice enjoy the challenges of a little ship modeling. Walthers' tugboat is an obvious choice, but spend time looking at the model boat section of your favorite hobby shop and at ship model catalogs for other ideas.

I've featured a number of cranes, with Walthers' chunky overhead traveling crane an ideal choice to serve the shipyard. Piko's neat little no. 61102 gantry would work fine for the steel yard. Check Model Power's no. 424 traveling crane or Walthers' no. 933-3067 pier with crane for the main wharf. That's Alexander Scale Models' no. 7519 Brownhoist Little Hook mounted on a gantry or tall pillar

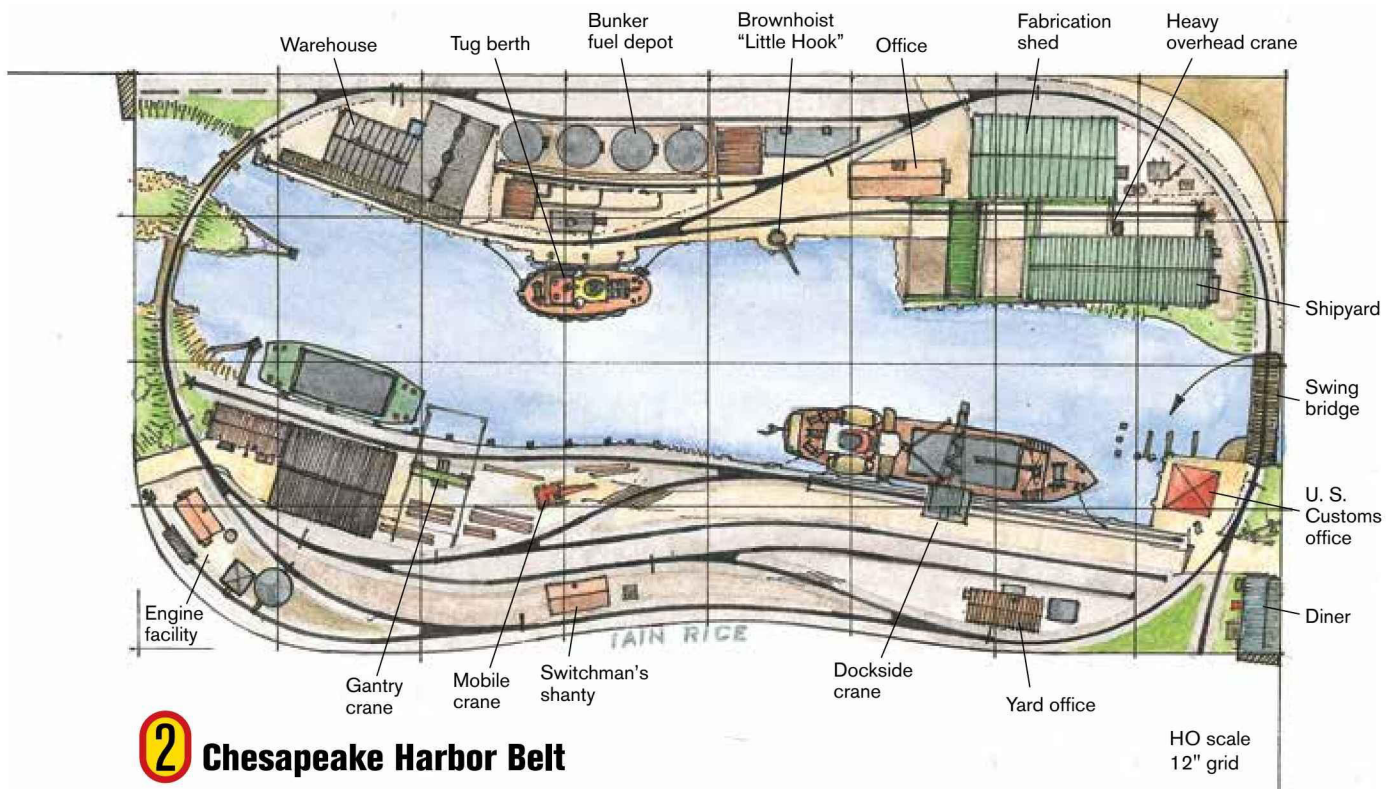
## Learning Points

- You get two hobbies for the price of one when a layout combines railroad and harbor facilities.
- Be sure you can acquire, and enjoy building or detailing and running, the required type of motive power for a given type of layout design.
- A watercourse down the center of a table-type layout divides the area in half and can be used to create two or more distinct scenes.
- Building the layout closer to eye level adds to the illusion of depth and helps disguise sharp curves.

on the lighterage quay across from the foreground wharf.

## Harbor Belt operation

Switching and transfer runs are the business of the Chesapeake Harbor Belt. The various industries allow an interesting mix of car types: flats and mill gons for the steel fabricator and the ship repair yard, tank cars to the oil depot, and boxcars to the warehouses. The repair yard also might get boxcars or flats carrying lumber. And the general wharf can accept a wide variety of car types.



## 2 Chesapeake Harbor Belt