

The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 121)

This article looks again at a feature reported in a previous article. It's the inclined railway in the Middle Period engine servicing facility area of the EnterTRAINment Junction (EJ) layout, (Figure 1). It's located behind the roundhouse to the left. The job of the incline was to transport passengers to and from the roundhouse level to the level of the interurban track, which runs on a level track along the hillside, part way up the hill behind the servicing facility.

Inclined railways are sometimes called "Funiculars," but that term is usually used to describe a system of two cars on steeply inclined tracks which are tied together with a cable so that they balance each other: when one goes up, the other comes down. This incline has only a single car, but it is operated by a cable (just visible between the rails in Figure 2). When this incline was installed in January 2014, it was static, with the car in a fixed location at the bottom of the incline. Recently, the car has been animated, moving slowly down from the upper station and then up again, the motion initiated by a push of the button on the layout wall at the EJ aisle.



Figure 1. Inclined Railway

Figure 2 is from 2014, showing the car at the bottom station. Note that the car's support structure is in a hole below ground level so that the car can be entered without the need to climb up.



Figure 2. Incline Car at the Bottom of Its Run

Figure 3 is a current view, seen from the mezzanine stairs, with the incline car stopped at the upper station.



Figure 3. Incline as Viewed from the Mezzanine Strairs

Even though the incline car moves very slowly, it's challenging to get a picture of it part way during its run, because the EJ lighting is not bright enough for fast camera shutter speeds, needed to eliminate the motion blur. Figure 4 was taken at 1/20th of a second to reduce the motion blur, but the picture had to be post-processed to brighten and increase contrast to make it light enough to be usable. (The fuzziness in the image is a byproduct of the post processing.)



Figure 4. Incline Car Part Way Along Its Run

Figure 5 was taken with a 1-second exposure. The motion blur of the incline car proves that it is, in fact, moving, but not very fast.

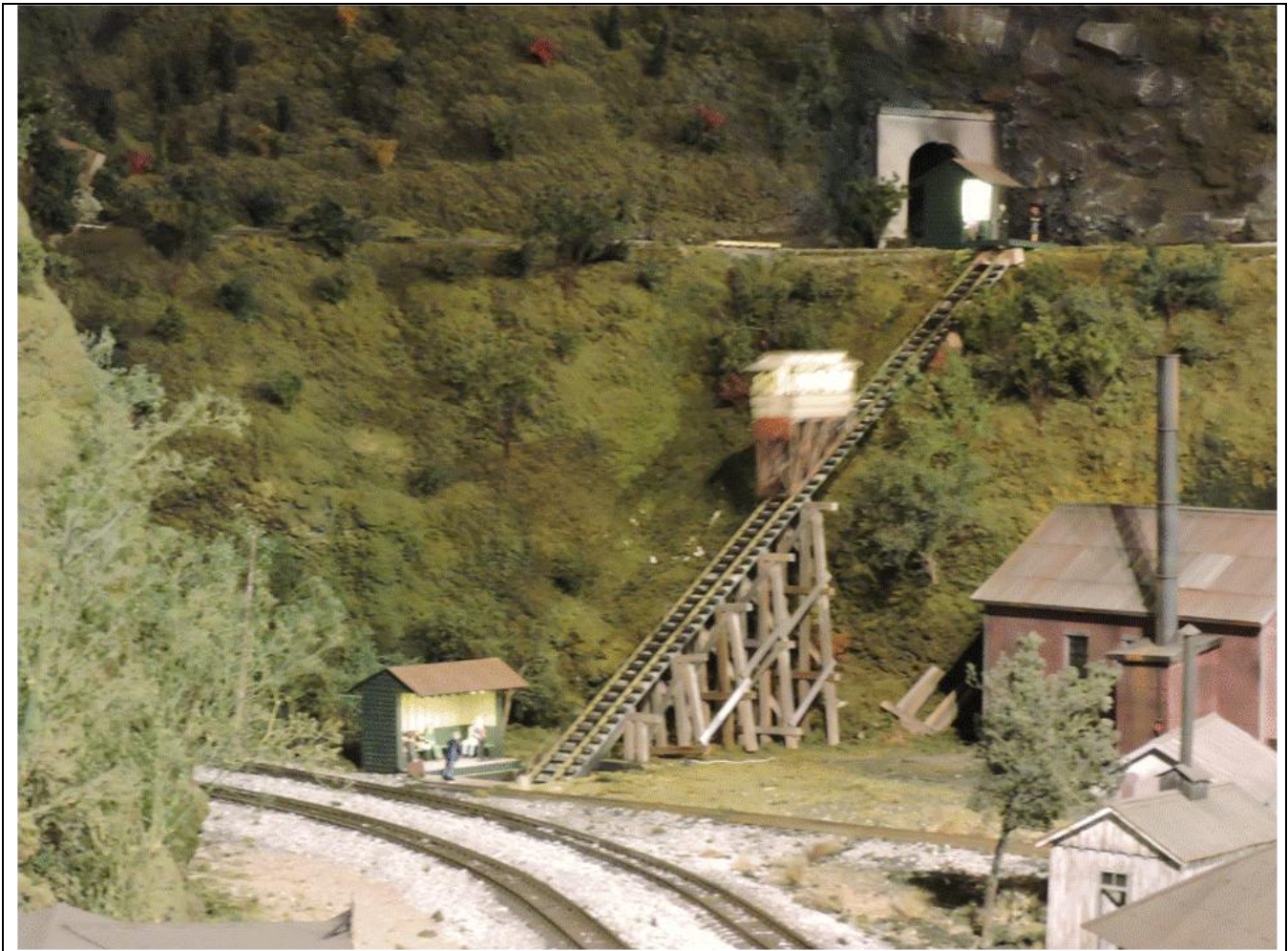


Figure 5. Incline Car in a 1-Second Exposure

So, we have another EJ layout feature successfully upgraded to be functional. The original intent for its inclusion on the layout has finally been realized. Come check it out and push the button the next time you're at EJ.

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