

**TALKIN'**

**T-TRAK**

Painting Panel Modules



Professor Choo Choo

T-TRAK 101



T-TRAK modules are  
hard to find so you  
may need to look in  
the strangest places.





Other panel sizes are available.



These "Wooden Painting Panels" were mentioned on social media a while ago. This 3 pack came wrapped in cellophane with each panel also individually wrapped. Although not perfect they are good by mass production standards. With T-TRAK module kits hard to come by recently these panels are an alternative and readily available for the construction of single modules with a little additional wood working.



Actual size is  $11 \frac{15}{16}$  x  $11 \frac{15}{16}$  inches and these were only slightly out of square, but no more than many T-TRAK modules. Bases for single modules at 308 mm (12.125") are  $\frac{3}{16}$  inch longer than these panels but that can be corrected by adding thin strips of wood to one end.



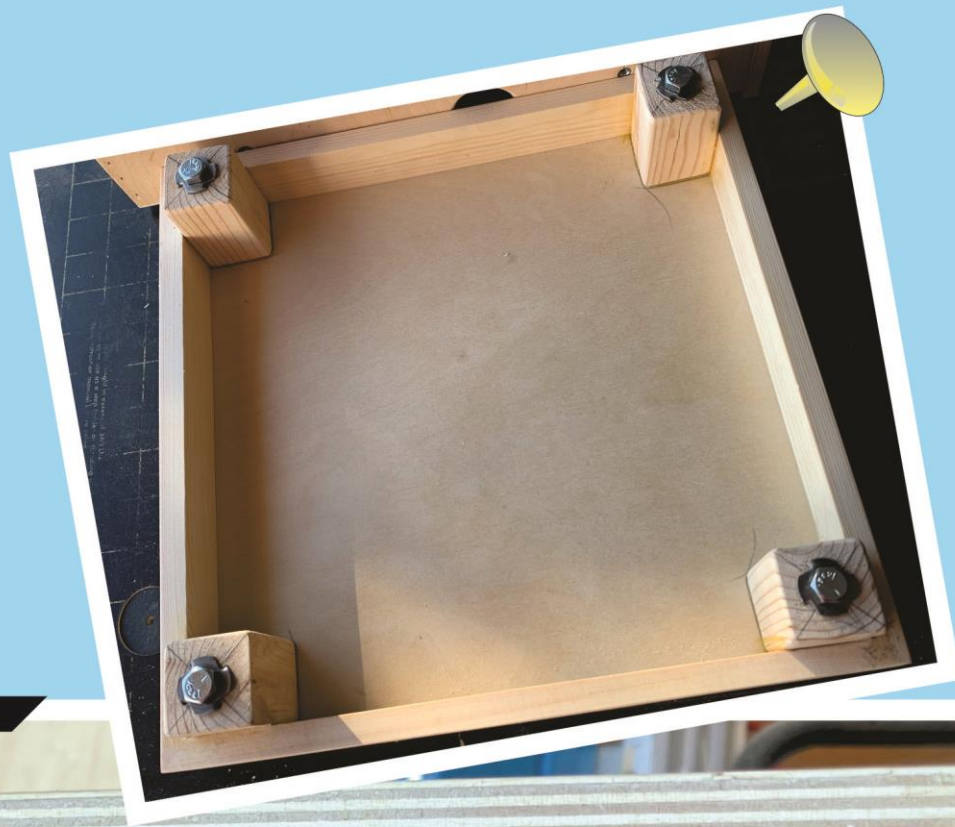


## Attaching the module "legs"



The legs are just lengths of 2x2 lumber cut to length (determined by the thickness of the deck sheet and the hardware used for height adjustment). These wooden painting panels are simply glued together (no indication of any mechanical attachment - nails/screws/brads) so the glueing in of the legs will only help to strengthen the module's base. Just a bunch of clamps and some carpenter's wood glue.



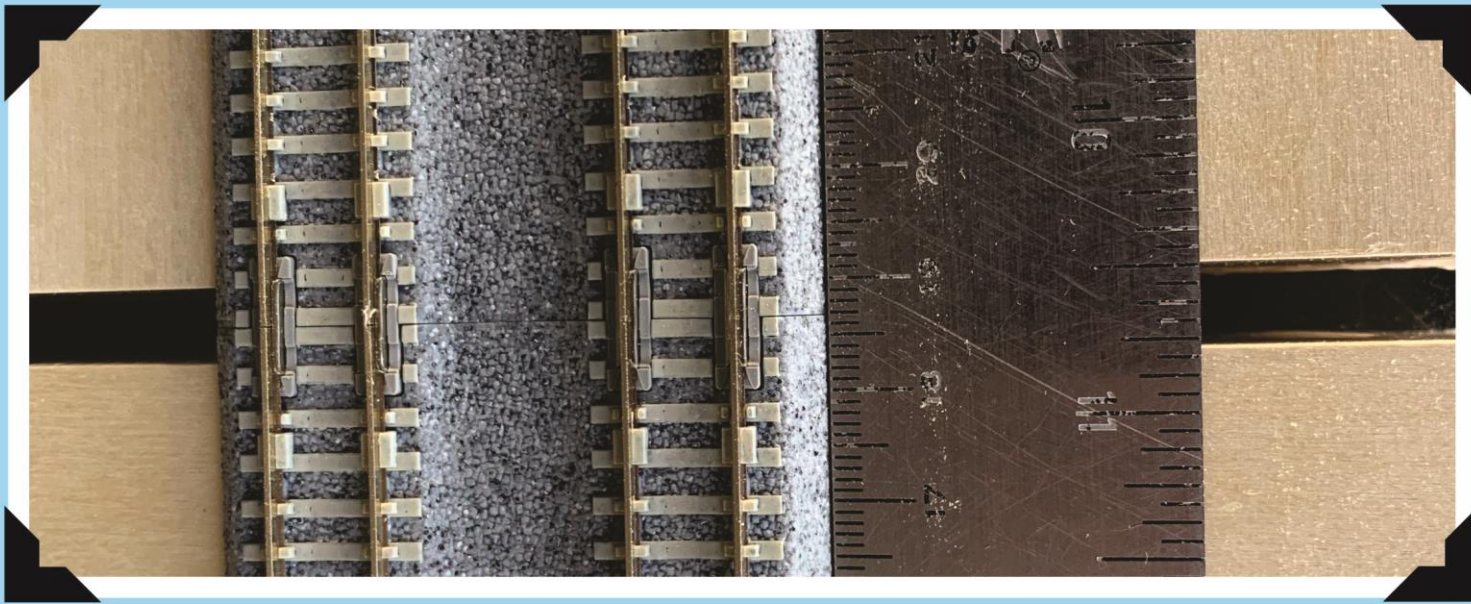


With the legs attached and the hardware added (I use 5/16" T-nuts and hexhead bolts. Overkill since most use 1/4" hardware but this is a throwback to my NTRAK days) the module compared to a "normal" module has a large open space beneath. With a module constructed height of 2 3/4" the 1 1/2" depth of the painting panels leaves a 1 1/4" gap even before the module is raised to the 3 1/2" setup height. Lot's of room for cables and easy leg height adjustment!



It's a module on stilts! ;-)





As mentioned before, the panels are  $1/16$ " shy of 12" making them  $3/16$ " shy of a proper single module length. That shortfall plus the 2mm space between "perfect" modules leaves a  $1/4$ " gap, or about  $3/16$ " too much. That gap can be reduced by simply adding a thin strip of wood to one end to make up the difference.

To lengthen my new single modules I simply glued  $1\ 1/2 \times 12$ " strips of  $1/8$ " "hard board" to one end. It's what I had on hand so it will work fine. The thick piece of plywood in the picture simply spreads the clamping force across the whole face of the end of the module. Afterwards some sanding work will make the added material all but disappear after painting.







For those of you who like to model sub level scenes shorten the legs by the thickness of your styro sheet or height of the bridge you wish to use. Although gluing track to styro or ?? is common I prefer to mount to wood so I added a wood base for my track with styro on both sides. (that gap will be hidden)

Using added material on top of the deck for scenery also lowers the wooden edges removing the large gap under the module by the thickness of the added material.





All aspects of the wooden painting panels as modules can be seen here. With a little of the usual woodworking required as any modules are built, reasonably suitable modules can be created. Only the large space below the module may be questioned but that space can be lessened by various methods of decorating as the module is sceniced. 1/4" T-nuts and bolts have been added for plexi guards and skyboards.



Power feeders may not be required on single modules but they are handy when included in layout module runs with few connections.





OK, so now that I've got 'em, what am I goin' to do with 'em? I have a couple of Woodland Scenics buildings that don't have a purpose, until now. The gas station will be "Cisco Clifton's Fillin' Station" after an old Johnny Cash song. One will be "Trains don't stop here no more", an abandoned train station which means destroying the Woodland model. The adjusted height module will be one of my first attempts at styro modeling inspired by the "Mink Tunnel", a small single track rock bore on the road (railroad) just east of here.

Bottom line, like 'em or not, I'll have 3 new T-TRAK single modules for a lot less work.





Set at 3 1/2 inch preheight, if the gap under the module on the right is considered excessive a "skirt" could be added or the bottom 2 3/4 inch (or as required) of the security panel could be painted to match other "normal" modules.



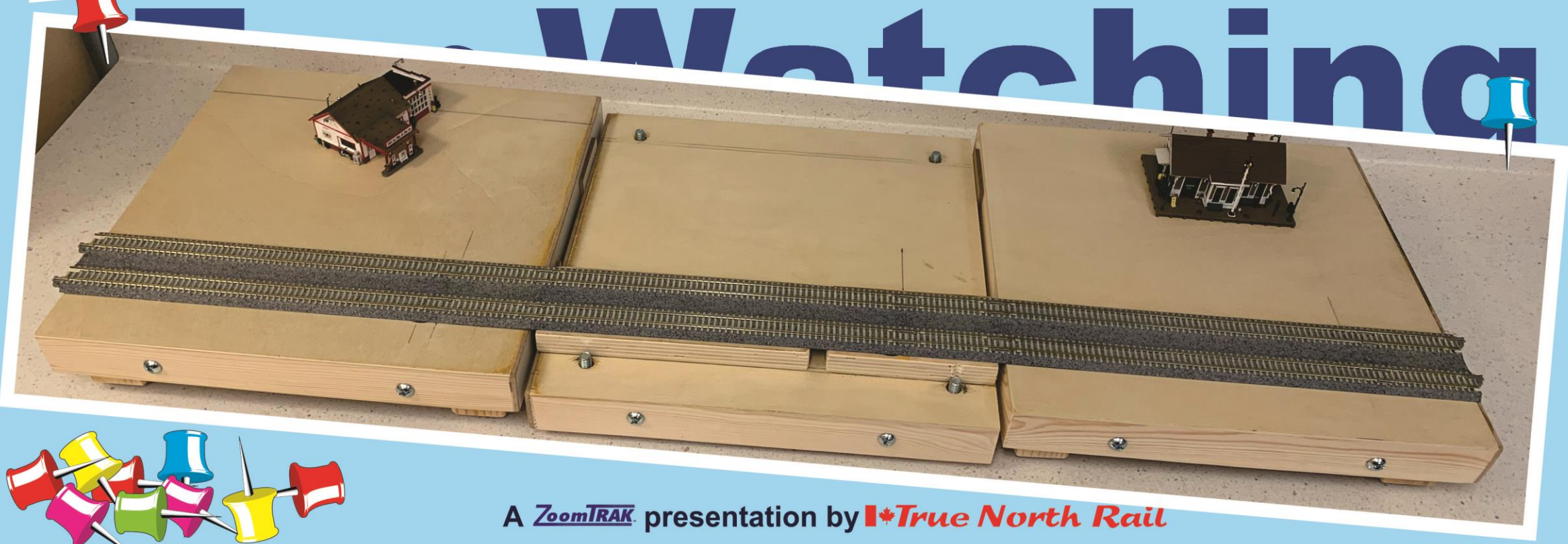
"Painting Panel" modules painted, track mounted and wired. "Sky boards" and security panels created. Scenery under consideration.





# HANKS

# Watching



A **ZoomTRAK** presentation by **True North Rail**