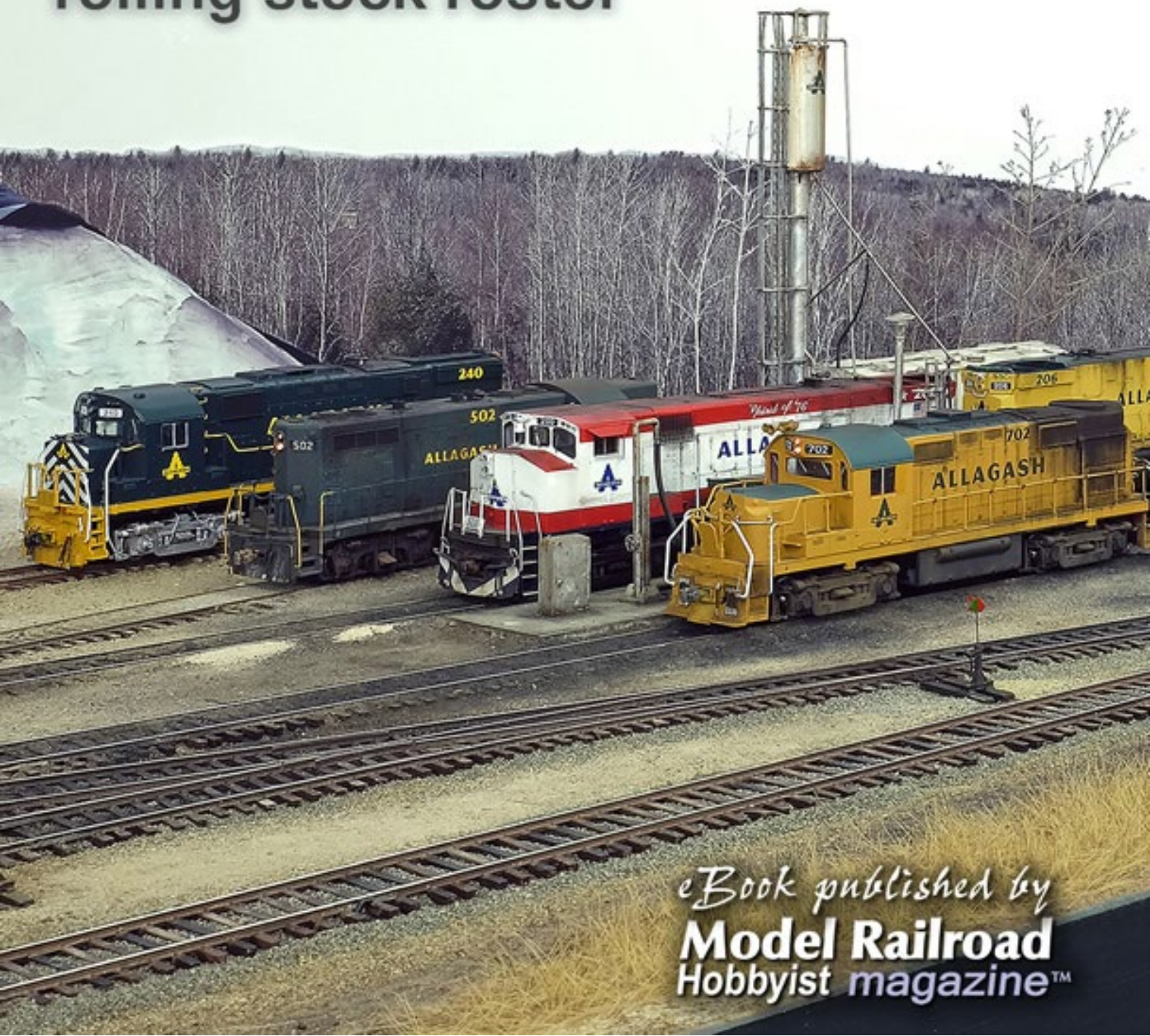


Mike Confalone's
ALLAGASH
STORY



Volume 2: Planning and
building the loco and
rolling stock roster



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Model Railroad
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VOLUME 2: Planning and building the
loco and rolling stock roster

By Mike Confalone

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104, 105: Alco RS32 700 rests between assignments at New Portland. Having been bumped from priority road trains by newer power, the 700 is now usually assigned to local or switching jobs. Today, it is the power for the New Portland Switcher (P1).



The Allagash Railway is a proto-freelanced HO scale model railroad based in Maine in the early spring of 1980. In volume 2, I review my diesel locomotive roster, discuss my rolling stock fleet, and take you on a town-by-town tour of the layout.

Creating a diesel roster was an important part of bringing the new railroad to life. It was also one of the most enjoyable of the myriad tasks required to get the railroad off the ground.

Planning the Allagash diesel roster

Joe Posik and I worked closely on the loco roster assignment and came up with what we think is a realistic roster



that reflects what a railroad similar to the Allagash might have had in service in 1980. We first looked to neighboring railroads Maine Central and Bangor & Aroostook for inspiration, but also tried to set the AGR apart at the same time. The temptation to have two of everything that we liked was strong, but we resisted it and went through the decision making process methodically.

Joe Posik wrote the following timeline. It chronicles the Allagash Railway's complete diesel locomotive history. This includes power that had long been retired, scrapped or traded in by the time my era of April 1980 rolled around.

Green and Yellow Growlers - the diesels of the Allagash Railway

After World War II, the Allagash sampled its first diesels. Arriving in early 1946 from Alco, and dressed in steam-era black, RS1s 100-102 and S2s 103-105 initiated the internal combustion era on the AGR. They were assigned primarily to yard and local duties out of Allagash, Madrid, New Sharon and Kennebec Junction. It would be another two years before S2's 106-108 joined the ranks.

With diesels firmly entrenched in the yards, it was time to see how they would perform out on the road. In late 1948, the AGR's first true road switchers, RS2s 200-201 arrived from Alco and performed admirably enough to generate a second order for sisters 202-204 in 1949. To help protect the remaining passenger service, the 203 and 204 were delivered with steam generators. While the Alco sales team was initially successful in stonewalling EMD, they were



106-110: The engine service tracks at Madrid are jam packed with power. On Service 1 and Service 2 we see GP7 500, RS36 702, former Conrail (PC) RS11 7605, RS3 303 and GP9 509, while Atlantic Great Eastern RS11 896 gets ready to depart with Train 87 for the AGE. On House 1 is the power for MB1 (Madrid-Bethel), a consist of five GP38s - 204, 212, 210, 211 and 209.

unable to keep LaGrange's finest from completing a sale of their own. In early 1949, the AGR took delivery of F3s 400-405, skipping the 300 number-series still occupied by the soon-to-be-retired 4-8-2 Mountain-Class steamers.

Despite a return to Alco in 1950 for RS3s 300-305, it was clear that EMD was now the preferred builder for the Allagash. Beginning with the late-1950, and early-1951 delivery of GP7s 500-507, and the late-1951 delivery of F7s 600-607, the AGR adopted the familiar Spruce Green with



Duluxe Gold lettering for all locomotives. With the arrival of GP9s 508-513 in 1955, dieselization was complete.

With the exception of wreck-retired RS1 100 in 1957, there would be no changes to the roster until 1961. As traffic began to increase, so did the need for larger, more powerful locomotives. With EMD busy, Allagash returned to Schenectady for a pair of the brand new, 2000-hp RS32 model. To help reduce the cost, the AGR traded in two of its RS2s on sisters 700 and 701, the first low-nose hood units acquired by the railroad. The remaining trio of RS2s were jettisoned over the next few years, replaced by a sole RS36 (702) and C420s 200 and 201 from Alco's newly-designed Century series.

EMD came calling again in 1967, and their salesman would depart with orders for their versatile GP38. Units 202 and 203 arrived in '67, while dynamic brake-equipped 204 arrived in 1968. The 38s came at the expense of older F3 and F7 cab units, which were traded toward the newer power.

More cabs departed in 1969 on GP38s 208-212 (the gap in numbers was due to a cancelled order with Alco for more C420s, as Alco was about to shut its doors for good). Roster numbers 205-207 were eventually filled by Alco-design, Montreal Locomotive Works (MLW) M420s, imported from Canada in 1973. These 2000-hp wide-cab brutes were noteworthy. Along with Providence & Worcester, the AGR was the only other U.S. railroad to purchase new products from MLW.



107: See caption on image 106.

The 205-207 were also the first AGR diesels to arrive in the new yellow with green trim paint scheme and the modern Allagash "A" logo. In 1976, to help celebrate America's Bicentennial, M420 number 207 was renumbered 200 and dressed in a snappy red, white and blue paint scheme. Original C420 200 was re-christened as the 220.

The AGR's final order for new power went to EMD, for GP38-2s 213-216 in 1977.

With the growth of gravel, lumber and ore traffic in 1979 came the need for additional power. With this came a change in philosophy regarding power acquisition and management on the railroad. By the late 1970s, the Class 1 railroads were retiring and selling-off most of their orphaned Alcos at a rock-bottom price for these relics.





108: See caption on image 106.

The AGR roster began to swell with older Alcos that previously toiled for Conrail, L&N and their predecessor railroads.

During this period, RS11 7605, C420s 221 and 2072 and C425s 2418, 250 and 251 joined the roster. Original C420 200 was re-christened as the 220. Just about all of these units were worn out, arriving in some degree of disrepair, but most were made serviceable by the AGR's talented Kennebec Diesel Shop forces.

In another interesting twist, a pair of former Conrail (original Erie-Lackawanna) Alco C424s joined other former Conrail C424s in a rebuild program at GE - Hornell, NY. Liberated from a certain date with the scrapper's torch at Naparano, AGR 240 and 241 emerged from GE's Hornell shops in January 1980 along with a group of the same model for the Delaware & Hudson.



109: See caption on image 106.

Interestingly, AGR's C424s kept their original Alco V16 251 prime movers while the D&H's received new new 12-cylinder 251s. The 240 and 241 unveiled an attractive paint scheme of green and yellow with white accents, and today represent the Allagash's "newest" power.

Diesel paint schemes and company logos

Designing a realistic paint scheme for Allagash diesels was also an important challenge. There were so many interesting color combinations on the prototype railroads; it was hard to choose which colors made the most sense.

I had to design several different iterations of Allagash diesel paint schemes, beginning with the very first diesels to current day (1980). The paint scheme had to evolve over time.

I once again looked to Maine-based prototypes Bangor & Aroostook and Maine Central, as well as other railroads



in the New England region. I started with what I thought would be a good early-1960s paint scheme of Spruce Green and Duluxe Gold. This scheme was dubbed the “green dip.” The inspiration for it came from both the MEC and BAR. Maine Central diesels used similar colors, but the design came primarily from the BAR.

The BAR began using a “blue dip” design in the 1960s. It was a very simple, austere paint design, but it looked tough. Allagash diesels in the “green dip” have a tough, BAR look to them, but the resemblance is only slight. In summary, there’s just enough prototype influence in the colors and style to make the scheme look “right” without copying any particular railroad too closely.

The second paint scheme design would also involve a bit of interplay between two favorite railroads. Beginning with the delivery of the M420s in 1973, the Allagash “flipped” colors.



111: The Kennebec Junction staging yard is also full of power between operating sessions.

Similar to what the Maine Central did in 1966 with the delivery of its GP38s, the Allagash’s primary diesel color became the Duluxe Gold, while the Spruce Green became the secondary color. In addition, the M420s featured green roofs, similar to the Maine Central and also the Lamoille Valley Railroad. The railroad also unveiled a new logo around this time with larger lettering.

The new scheme was bolder and more colorful, reflecting trends in locomotive paint designs in the 1970s. In addition, the nation’s Bicentennial celebration wasn’t that long ago, and just about all of the New England-area railroads had at least one locomotive painted into a Bicentennial paint scheme around 1975-’76.



110: See caption on image 106.

By 1980, some had been painted back into standard schemes, but some were still in the special paint. I decided to paint one of the M420s into a Bicentennial scheme to reflect this bit of history. AGR 200 looks sharp in its red, white and blue attire.

As time progressed into the 1970s, the railroad moved away from the green roof option, changed from Duluxe Gold to a brighter yellow and opted instead for a “yellow dip” scheme. This simple scheme began to show up on all shop repaints, as well as on the GP38-2s in 1977.

The final paint design, which adorns only the two GE-Hornell, rebuilt Alco C424s (240, 241) is a flashy, modern arrangement of the green and yellow colors, but with white safety striping on the nose. The scheme mimics that of the D&H C424s that were rebuilt by GE at the same time, and is a fan favorite!

There is one more scheme worth mentioning. F3 number 400, the last F3 on the roster wears a heavily worn version of its original EMD-design factory black and gold. A modern-era AGR logo was slapped on the nose by shop forces, but this relic is the last surviving reminder of the earliest AGR diesels that were delivered in steam-era black. Having at least one of the Fs in this old, EMD-design scheme completes the lineage of Allagash paint designs.

In order to do this, I purchased an F3 already decorated for Erie in factory-black and gold paint. This scheme was just one of many variations of the EMD factory design. With a few modifications to the paint, an AGR herald on the nose, modern number boards and heavy weathering,



112: GP38-2s 213 and 215 have terminated at Kennbec Jct. with train MK1 (Madird-Kennebec Jct.).

the 400 looked the part of an old F-unit playing out its final days. At press time, the 400 had finally hit the deadline and has been officially retired.

Along with the design of the paint schemes for the railroad, I had to come up with two company logos. I wanted an original logo design and a more modern version for the 1970s and ‘80s.

I turned to graphic designer Otto Vondrak. Otto had designed the logo for the Woodsville Terminal and had a great eye. I told him what I was looking for and he quickly went to work, presenting several completely different designs.



The first “Allagash Railway” logo we settled on had a classic, regal look to it, and it worked perfectly for the older era. The second design bounced back and forth a bit until I was satisfied with the final look. It went in a completely different, bold direction, combining the letter “A” with an evergreen tree, and dropping the word “railway” and instead featuring just the word “Allagash.”

After the design was complete, Jim Abbott of Highball Graphics Decals here in New Hampshire took the project. He contracted with a company in Italy to produce high-quality, silk screened decals for both Allagash diesels and freight cars.

This was not inexpensive, but like anything else in model railroading, it is a long-term investment, and important to attain the realism I was looking for.

All of the thought and design efforts have paid off. I am very happy with both the paint schemes and the logos. They project a strong image and give the railroad credibility. To my eye, the Allagash looks like it would if it were a real railroad operating in Maine.

Bringing the fleet to life - diesel sound

All diesel locomotives in the Allagash fleet are equipped with sound, and all but one with Soundtraxx Tsunami decoders. To me, sound is the most significant and exciting advance in the hobby in decades, and is an absolute prerequisite to model railroading fun. Without the sound, there is no railroad.

Any railfan who has spent time trackside knows that sound is a major component of the experience. Without the sound, the thrill goes away. This applies to model railroading as well. Without it, the model railroad is dead in the water. Frankly, it’s hard to imagine modeling at all without it.

I felt so strongly about the need for improved diesel sound choices in the hobby that in 2007 I contacted the folks at



113: A railfan’s dream lash-up of M420 206, C420 201, Bicentennial M420 200 and M420 205 rests after doubling a very heavy AK1 (Allagash-Kennebec Jct.) into the staging yard. Assorted Geeps and F-units, not active during the op. session, look on. GP7 506 has been updated with new logo and white number boards.

Soundtraxx and organized recording sessions in Scranton, PA on the Delaware –Lackawanna Railroad.

Mike Vassallo, a good friend of mine, worked on the D-L at the time and was able to get the railroad's approval to record their Alco fleet.

On one summer weekend, we all descended on Scranton and recorded five or six different Alco locomotives, all under load. This led to finished sound files for the Alco prime movers in the current Soundtraxx catalog. I also organized subsequent recording sessions on several short-line railroads here in New Hampshire, capturing the EMD 645 non-turbo and Alco 539 and 539T.

To be clear, not all diesel sound is good, and poor-quality sound can all but ruin your model railroading operating experience.

I make mention of Soundtraxx because they have made the effort to take their product to a high level, and for the sound-savvy modeler, they have been the only game in town for realistic diesel sound. Lok-Sound (ESU) is becoming a major player as well. Several of their recent diesel offerings are quite spectacular.

A proper install is also necessary for great sound. Installing sound decoders is not a trivial thing. It takes lots of planning in order to get the maximum sound output from the inherently small speakers required for a typical HO-scale locomotive.

My friend Mike Rose has become an expert sound installer, and goes the extra mile when doing installs.



114: Close-up view of the remaining Fs, playing out their final days of service. Looks like GP9 510 needs weathering!

He has done the entire Allagash fleet. Mike has a milling machine and uses it to good measure when needed. He does whatever necessary to get the largest possible speaker into the enclosure, while at the same time preserving precious locomotive weight.

Mike uses Railmaster speakers exclusively, and has gone so far as to modify the speakers to fit a particular locomotive. Each locomotive is different, and is in essence a custom install. This approach has given the Allagash diesel fleet a very robust sound. The thrill of hearing consists of three or four EMD GP38s or Alco C420s, all sound-equipped, is simply indescribable.

It's not quite like being trackside, but it's about as close as you can get.●



TABLE 1: Allagash Railway EMD Diesel Roster - April 1980

Builder/ Model	Road Number	Manufacturer	Paint Scheme / History	Sound Decoder/Install Type	Notes
EMD					
EMD F3	400	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR black and gold, new herald	Soundtraxx EMD 567 factory install	Just retired - deadline
EMD F7	601	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
EMD F7	602		Original AGR, solid green repaint, new herald	Soundtraxx EMD 567 factory install	
EMD F7	603	NA	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	NA	Just retired - deadline
EMD F7	604	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
EMD F7	607	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx EMD 567 factory install	
EMD GP7	500	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP7	501	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP7	502	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP7	503	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP7	504	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP7	505	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP7	506	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green, new herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	White numberboards
EMD GP7	507	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
EMD GP9	508	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP9	509	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP9	510	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green , old herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP9	511	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP9	512	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, yellow dip, new herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	White numberboards
EMD GP9	513	Athearn Genesis	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, EMD 567 custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	202	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, yellow-gold, green top	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	203	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, new herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	204	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, yellow-gold, green top	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	208	NA	NA	NA	On roster, not modeled
EMD GP38	209	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	210	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, new herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	211	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
EMD GP38	212	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
GP38-2	213	Proto 2000	Original AGR, yellow dip, new herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
GP38-2	214	Proto 2000	Original AGR, yellow dip, new herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
GP38-2	215	Proto 2000	Original AGR, yellow dip, new herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	
GP38-2	216	Proto 2000	Original AGR, yellow dip, new herald	Soundtraxx, 645 non-turbo custom install Mike Rose	



TABLE 2: Allagash Railway Alco and GE Diesel Roster - April 1980

Builder/ Model	Road Number	Manufacturer	Paint Scheme / History	Sound Decoder/Install Type	Notes
Alco					
Alco S2	103	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco S2	104	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, yellow nose, old herald	LokSound Select, factory install	Future project - due from Atlas February 2014.
Alco S2	105	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco S2	106	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco S2	107	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, yellow nose, old herald	LokSound Select, factory install	Future project - due from Atlas February 2014.
Alco S2	108	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco RS3	300	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco RS3	301	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR yellow dip, new herald	LokSound Select, factory install	
Alco RS3	302	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco RS3	303	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx Alco 244, custom install Mark Roach	Custom detailed - wire handrails, new exhaust stack, marker lamps and painted by Mark Roach of Roach Custom Painting
Alco RS3	304	NA	NA	NA	On roster - deadline - not modeled
Alco RS3	305	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, yellow dip, new herald - chop nose wreck rebuild	LokSound Select, factory install	Custom build/chop-nose Neil Schofield - future project
Alco RS11	7605	Atlas Kato	Ex-CR (former PC) PC black, original road number, AGR stencil	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12 Supercharged, custom install Mike Rose	Custom detailed by Jim Six and Earl Murphy. Wire grabs, PC-specific details, Valley Associates metal frame.
Alco RS32	700	Atlas Trainman	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx Alco V12 251 Supercharged, custom install	Bowser (Cal Scale) detail kit for Atlas Trainman RS32/36
Alco RS32	701	Atlas Trainman	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12 Supercharged, custom install	Bowser (Cal Scale) detail kit for Atlas Trainman RS32/36
Alco RS36	702	Atlas Trainman	Original AGR, darker yellow/gold, green top	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12 Supercharged, custom install Mike Rose	Bowser (Cal Scale) detail kit for Atlas Trainman RS32/36.
Alco C420	201	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, solid green, old herald	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12, custom install Mike Rose	Future project
Alco C420	221	Atlas Master Series	ex-L&N Yellow dip	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12 custom install	Currently numbered 201 - to be renumbered 221
Alco C420	208	Atlas Master Series	Original AGR, yellow dip	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12 custom install	original 200, to be renumbered 220
Alco C420	2072	Atlas Master Series	Ex-CR (former L&HR), Conrail blue, original Conrail road number AGR stencil	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12, custom install Mike Rose	
Alco C420	2076	Atlas Master Series	Ex-CR (former L&HR), L&HR paint, original Conrail road number, AGR stencil	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12, custom install Mike Rose	Future project
MLW M420	205	Kaslo Shops	Original AGR, yellow-gold, green top	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12, custom install Mike Rose	Custom build - Mark Roach, Roach Custom Painting. Atlas C420 chassis.
MLW M420	206	Kaslo Shops	Original AGR, yellow-gold, green top	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12, custom install Mike Rose	Custom build - Mark Roach, Roach Custom Painting. Atlas C420 chassis.
MLW M420	200	Kaslo Shops	Original AGR, red-white-blue Bicentennial scheme	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V12, custom install Mike Rose	Custom build - Mark Roach, Roach Custom Painting. Atlas C420 chassis. Original AGR 207
Alco C424	240	Atlas Kato	Ex- CR (former EL) Hornell rebuild. New scheme, green with yellow and white stripes	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V16, custom install Mike Rose	Custom kitbash/rebuild - Neil Schofield.
Alco C424	241	Atlas Kato	Ex- CR (former EL) Hornell rebuild. New scheme, green with yellow and white stripes	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V16, custom install Mike Rose	Custom kitbash/rebuild - Neil Schofield.
Alco C425	2418	Atlas Master Series	Ex- CR(Former PC) PC black, original road number, AGR stencil	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V16, custom install Mike Rose	Detailed by Neil Schofield.
Alco C425	250	Atlas Master Series	Ex- CR (former PC) repainted into AGR yellow dip	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V16, custom install Mike Rose	
Alco C425	251	Atlas Master Series	Ex- CR (former PC) repainted into AGR yellow dip	Soundtraxx Alco 251 V16, custom install Mike Rose	
GE					
GE U25B	TBD	Bowser	Several ex-CR (former EL) and ex-C&O	TBD	Future project





115: A study in contrasts between heavily weathered original green GP9 513 and freshly painted 512 in dip yellow. F3 400, in original AGR black and gold sports new, white number boards.



116, 117: Yellow dip EMD GP38-2 214 and Alco C425 250 (former Conrail) compare profiles.