

Tips & Tech #06

- SCENERY -

Plaster Scenery

Using the Terra-server on the Net

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When using plaster for scenery or filling rock molds mixing the plaster and water can sometimes be a hassle. I have tried putty knives and spatulas and while they worked it always left something to be desired. The putty knives would not get into the corners well and this always left unmixed plaster. The spatula would get into the corners but would soon not be stiff enough to mix the plaster mix. And in both cases there were always lumps in the mix. Well after watching pancake batter being mixed up using a wire whisk it looked like the answer to the plaster mixing problem. It would get into the corners and it eliminated the lumps in the plaster. Something to look into!

- Using the Terra-server on the Net -

Now that I have progressed to the point of getting serious about Scenery on the layout (actually I have done some of the preliminary scenery rough-in) I have to begin layout out the roads and land forms.

With the layout being a prototypical design this will necessitate trying to make the scenery represent the real thing.

Now with me living in the area I am actually modeling I can get in the car and go look at the town, building, road or hill I am trying to model. I take pictures of the item and then use them as reference.

I also use topo maps both the old as well as the new ones to help locate the hills, cuts and tunnels. But this always leaves something to be desired. While cruising the internet one day someone made mention about this new site Terra-server. It was supposed to be showing aerial photos of the USA. Well I went to this site and did a little looking around. Now at the time I had a very slow connection (and still do) but the first photo downloaded. I could not make any sense of it as it showed the area from a mile in the air. Well I finally figured out how to zoom in and soon was able to recognize down town Clarion. It took a while to be able to recognize the railroad tracks and roads but once I did, I spent quite a bit of time looking at the towns from the air. But there was a problem as they did not have all of Pennsylvania available. Well this was way back in 1997/98. I had forgotten about the Terra-server site for a number of years. But as I progressed on the Lowgrade line I needed to have a better maps. Again someone talked about the Terra-server site and I remembered all of the things that showed up when seen from an aerial view.

Well now all of the areas were available and I was able to follow the tracks from Dubois to east Brady. I printed out a few areas and found that I helped me greatly in laying out the roads for the some of the towns. Well it did not take me long to begin the process of printing out almost all of the towns and any special scenic areas along the Lowgrade.