

HISTORY OF CANTRAK MODELRAILROAD CLUB OF CALGARY

In the fall of 1974, with the encouragement of Jim Fitzgerald, Gil Gerretsen sought to start a N-Trak group in Calgary. With the help of Hans from Hobby West, who introduced several local N-Scalers to Gil, group discussions started about forming a club. This group started to call itself Cantrak (based on N-Track), Calgary..... In the spring of 1975, the group decided to build a display layout based on the Spiral Tunnels, but compatible with N-Trak at both ends. In October 1975 the Cal-O-Rail group offered space to build the layout and the club was formally organized. Gil Gerretsen was leaving to work in Winnipeg, the new Club changed its name to CANTRAK SOCIETY OF MODEL RAILROADERS and Don Churches assumed the role of President in the spring of 1976.

The display layout was designed by John Hoggard, and consisted of 2 modules each 7'-6" long by 3'-0" wide. All track and switches on the layout were hand laid using code 55 rail. The mountain scenery was made out of plaster using many different rock moulds to create the many rock faces on the layout. Hundreds of hand-made trees completed the award-winning landscape.



Left hand side of "Spiral Tunnels"



Right hand side of "Spiral Tunnels"

The layout was first displayed (although not completely finished) at the Calgary Area model train show in 1977. During the next 10 years (1978-1988) Cantrak displayed the "Spiral Tunnels" during each year Calgary area model train show and also during the 1979 NMRA convention in Calgary, Alberta (Rail-Rodeo) and in 1983 at the NMRA National Convention in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was at the Winnipeg Convention that the CANTRAK won the "Best in show Module display" award.

The Club Incorporated as a Society in Alberta in 1981 under the name “CANTRAK SOCIETY OF MODELRAILROADERS”.

The club had grown from a small group in the mid 1970’s to a large club by the mid 1980. In 1983 the club decided to start building transportable modules which interfaced with the “Spiral Tunnels” to grow the clubs layout.



New Cantrak Club Modules – 1984 (Spiral Tunnels in Background)

After losing its permanent club home in the late 1980’s, the clubs modules were stored at members homes. The Spiral Tunnel layout was abandoned by the club in the early 1990’s, and Cantrak started building smaller (2’-0” by 4’-0”) individual member modules (loosely based on the American N-trak standards) but with 2 main lines. These new modules could be put together during shows to form a large layout (similar to the N-trak concept).

We had a club house (to set up a permanent layout) and meeting place at Palliser Square East from 1984 till 1991.

We had a club house and meeting place at #4822 Centre Street South from 1994 till 1996.

A club room in the Burns Building from 1997 till 1998.

Club room in the basement of #2050 – 10th Ave SW from 1999 till 2001

Club meeting were held at Chris Michiels basement from 2005 till 2007.

In 2002 The Club lost it Society Status, and was stricken of the registry.

Club meetings at Selwyn Morris garage and basement from 2008 till 2011

Meetings and a small layout set up at Eastridge Hobby Shop and warehouse from 2012 till 2016.

In 2014 the Club Incorporated again as a Society in Alberta under the name “Calgary N-Scale Traksters Society”

Club meetings were held at Dave Bates basement from 2016 till present.

During the 1990th till present the Club displayed it’s growing modular layout at various Model Railroad shows in Calgary.



Our 2015 (40th year) display layout at the “Supertrain” Show in Calgary.

In 2006, with the advancement of DCC, the club made the decision to convert the inner mainline to DCC operation, while keeping the outside main line as analog. The first DCC trains (using MRC prodigy advanced DCC system) operated on the layout during the 2008 Calgary Area "Supertrain" model railroad show. To day the Club is 100% DCC operated.