Sand Patch Grade

Diese Strecke ist Teil des Release Titels: CSX Heavy Haul

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Zitat von Dovetail Games

Famed and historic Sand Patch Grade – in its modern form as a heavy-haul artery of railroading giant CSX – will be the first route featured in the upcoming, new-technology Train Sim World. With extraordinary realism, authenticity, and stunning life-like visuals, “CSX Heavy Haul” promises to bring challenging, big-time North American railroading to dramatic life!

The Baltimore & Ohio – America’s first common-carrier railroad – built Sand Patch, opening this important and demanding east-west route over the rugged Allegheny Mountains in the early 1870s. To lift the B&O’s endless armada of heavy trains over the rugged spine of the Alleghenies, Sand Patch Grade climbed from Cumberland, Maryland at an elevation of 627 feet above sea level to the line’s summit at Sand Patch, Pennsylvania and a rail elevation of 2,258 feet. From the Sand Patch summit, then the line began a westward descent toward Rockwood, Pennsylvania (elevation 1,837 feet).

Today, nearly a century-and-a-half after its hard-won creation, Sand Patch Grade serves as a critical and busy steel path for CSX and the railroad’s tonnage moving between the U. S. Midwest and East Coast. Expansive Cumberland Terminal – the Cumberland Terminal Subdivision – stands at the eastern end of the mountain crossing and is home to an always-busy complex of yards and locomotive facilities. At the western edge of Cumberland, at a place known as Viaduct Junction, Sand Patch Grade diverges from another ex-B&O line (CSX’s Mountain Subdivision) and the Sand Patch route (now formally known as CSX’s Keystone Subdivision) initially enjoys a relatively low-gradient westward passage through the scenic water gap known as the Cumberland Narrows. But at a tiny mountain hamlet named Hyndman, Pennsylvania (12 route miles from Viaduct Junction), that all changes. At Hyndman (which served as an east slope helper station well into the diesel era), Sand Patch’s ascent of the Alleghenies begins in earnest and the westbound gradients typically approximate 1.5 percent on much of the unrelenting climb to the summit. Following the path of rushing Willis Creek, the Sand Patch right-of-way is rugged, steep, and twisting. This section of the eastern slope of Sand Patch climbs through remote but iconic locations such as Brackens, Falls Cut Tunnel, and Glencoe and is highlighted by a horseshoe curve at Mance, Pennsylvania. Sand Patch’s east slope climb culminates with a tough final stretch of 1.94 percent gradient at Manila, then, just below the summit, a plunge through the 4,475-foot-long tunnel with the name “Sand Patch” cast into its weathered eastern portal. Sand Patch’s western slope features a gentler gradient (with a 1.2 percent eastbound ruling grade) but
nonetheless requires a lot of horsepower and skill to lift eastbound trains up and over the Alleghenies.

And the western slope, too, has many remarkable locations, perhaps none more notable than when the Sand Patch Grade line ducks under towering, 1,900-foot-long Salisbury Viaduct, once part of the Western Maryland Railroad’s main line and today a scenic highlight of the Great Allegheny Passage trail.

After long-serving as B&O’s primary east-west route, Sand Patch Grade welcomed the trains of the Chessie System (a combination of Baltimore & Ohio; Chesapeake & Ohio; and Western Maryland) in 1973, then again morphed into the property of today’s 21,000-mile railroad giant CSX in the 1980s. Today, CSX tonnage traffic on Sand Patch is heavy, frequent, (typically 25+ freights a day), and diverse (coal, coke, minerals, grain, oil, chemicals, steel, autos and auto parts, and other manufactured products). Locally-originated coal tonnage continues to be loaded at Rockwood on the Somerset & Cambria (“S&C”) Sub and drawn from the truncated Salisbury Branch near Meyersdale. Intermodal traffic is a primary component of Sand Patch operations, and the line’s tunnels – as part of CSX’s “National Gateway” project – were notched in recent years to allow for the passage of double-stacked containers. Train movements over Sand Patch continue to include accommodations for people as well as tonnage, with Amtrak’s Superliner-equipped Washington-Chicago Capitol Limited passing daily in each direction with a scheduled stop at Cumberland.

The upcoming Train Sim World “CSX Heavy Haul” Sand Patch Grade route will feature all the drama and intrigue of heavy freight operations across the rugged Allegheny Mountains. From massive Cumberland Terminal, up the treacherous east slope to fabled locations such as Hyndman, Mance, Manila, and Sand Patch summit, then across the west slope to Meyersdale, Garrett, and Rockwood, the mainline railroading in “CSX Heavy Haul” will be challenging and intense. And the upcoming Train Sim World Sand Patch route will also include coal loading operations on the Salisbury Branch and the S&C Subdivision at Rockwood, Pennsylvania.

With a trio of landmark and highly realistic locomotives – CSX’s General Electric AC4400CW and Electro-Motive SD40-2 and GP38-2 – and a variety of contemporary freight equipment, “CSX Heavy Haul” will bring you big-time North American mountain railroading! — Gary Dolzall

Located on the eastern end of famed Sand Patch Grade is the massive railroad terminal at Cumberland, Maryland. Known as the Cumberland Terminal Subdivision, the busy complex includes receiving, hump, and classification yards as well as expansive locomotive facilities.

Outside the Cumberland Locomotive Maintenance Facility, CSX GE and EMD diesels await duty on the upcoming Train Sim World “CSX Heavy Haul” Sand Patch Grade route. Screenshots by Gary Dolzall.

Twenty-four hours a day, year-round, and regardless of weather conditions, Cumberland Terminal is a beehive of contemporary railroading. On a stormy winter night (above), a pair of
CSX EMD SD40-2s begin their pull west from Cumberland Terminal with a manifest freight, while on a rainy, foggy summer afternoon (below), another pair of potent EMDs head west with a string of empty coal gons. Note: Screenshots depict content still in development.

At the western edge of Cumberland, Maryland is Viaduct Junction, where CSX’s Mountain Sub and Keystone Subdivision (Sand Patch) diverge. CSX SD40-2 8369 is on the point of a mixed manifest, rolling west through Viaduct Junction with the climb of Sand Patch awaiting ahead.

Immediately west of Cumberland, CSX’s route into the Alleghenies initially enjoys a relatively low-gradient westward passage for 12 miles through the scenic water gap known as the Cumberland Narrows. On the upcoming Train Sim World Sand Patch Grade route, a pair of CSX SD40-2s are hurrying westward below the scenic hills and high cliffs of the Narrows.

Following passage through the Narrows, the hard work for westbound trains begins at tiny Hyndman, Pennsylvania. From this hamlet – long home to the east slope’s helper station – the grade to Sand Patch summit is typically 1.5 percent and rises to nearly 2 percent at Manila. CSX SD40-2s are heading a westbound tank train through Hyndman at dusk.

Among the most beautiful – and torturous – portions of the Sand Patch Grade route is the section of the east slope around Brackens and Glencoe. West of Brackens (above), an empties train climbs high above Willis Creek, then swings through a tight-radius curve (below) as its climbs the rugged Alleghenies.

If there is a single location on the east slope of Sand Patch Grade most evocative of the famed route, it is Mance, Pennsylvania, where a rustic rural post office stands at the base of the line’s sweeping horseshoe curve. In the last light of an autumn evening, a set of CSX SD40-2s are easing downgrade through Mance with eastbound auto racks.

https://www.railsimulator.net/lexicon/entry/433-sand-patch-grade/
The summit of Sand Patch Grade rests at an elevation of 2,258 feet above sea level and is marked both by 4,475-foot-long Sand Patch Tunnel and the ragged red rock cliffs that stand just west of the tunnel. Near here in B&O days stood SA Tower.

On the upcoming Train Sim World Sand Patch Grade route, a pair of CSX SD40-2s draw eastbound auto racks under towering Salisbury Viaduct. Located on the line’s west slope, the 1,900-foot-long viaduct once carried the Western Maryland main line and is now part of the popular Great Allegheny Passage trail.

Near Garrett on the west slope of Sand Patch Grade, a duo of powerful General Electric AC4400CWs lead auto racks eastbound. In the valley far below is the Casselman River.

Sand Patch Grade’s west slope is home to a pair of coal loading facilities which are included in the upcoming Train Sim World route and which offer captivating operating challenges. On the remote Salisbury Branch near Meyersdale, CSX SD40-2s are slowing pulling coal gons through the Shaw tipple (above), while near Rockwood on the S&C Sub (below), a lone GE AC4400CW is working the coal-loading process.

At the western terminus of the Train Sim World Sand Patch Grade route stands Rockwood, Pennsylvania, the junction of the Keystone Subdivision main line and the S&C Subdivision, where a CSX SD40-2 is standing at the Rockwood depot. The overhead bridge once served as a connection between the B&O and Western Maryland. The upcoming Train Sim World “CSX Heavy Haul” Sand Patch Grade route will feature all the drama and intrigue of heavy freight operations across the rugged Allegheny Mountains and bring you contemporary North American railroading at its best!