

# Hand Carving Lava Columns for Model Railroads

Glenn Edmison Sep 2016

Exposed lava rock deposits are ubiquitous. They are everywhere, especially in the Western US. Many modelers wait until the basic scenery is formed up and then add the rock features using cast-on-site or pre-cast plaster to represent them. Available molds are likely not the same as the rocks one would like to have. And working with plaster is always a very messy proposition.

A more recent technique for building the basic land forms uses slabs of foam plastic insulation board. This stuff comes in one half inch, one inch and two inch thick slabs, usually 24' X 96" overall. Occasionally it can be found in thicker sizes. It is uniform in texture, easily glued to build up the thickness and easy to carve and sand into shape, and, more importantly, easy to clean up using a brush and vacuum cleaner.

This presentation is about using it to form columnar cliffs and other common shapes of rock deposits using foam plastic and a Dremell shaping tool.

## Here is what you need:

Dremel power head and conical shaping tool

Slim-bladed knife like boner

Misc scenery/foilage materials

Foam plastic sheet.

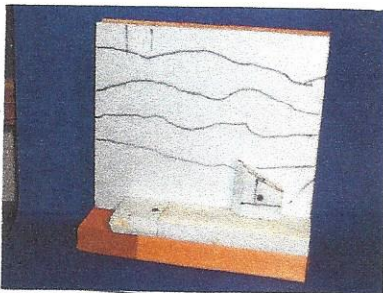
Latex basecoat paint

Picture or sketch of desired formation

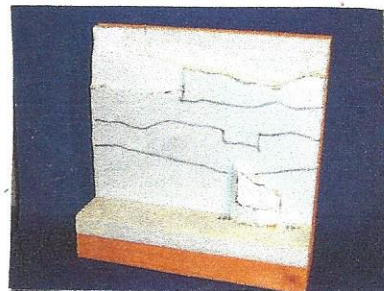
White glue or water-based caulking compound

Misc colors acrylic paint

## Procedure:



Step 1: Build up base layers



Step 2: Layout horizontal staging



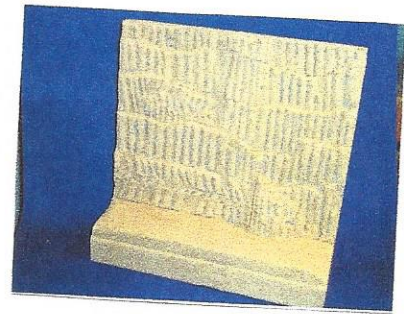
Step 3: Remove material for step back effect.



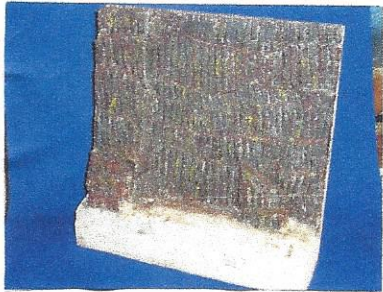
Step 4: Remove random step-back portions



Step 5: Fine tune for visual effect



Step 6: Seal with earth-tone latex paint



Step 7: Paint with rock colors. Shading and color variations.



Step 8: Add grass, foliage plants, scenic elements