

The Milford-Bennington RR operates 24 miles of ex-B&M trackage in southern New Hampshire. From an interchange point a few miles outside Milford, the M-B operates daily gravel and sand trains from a quarry in Bennington back to the interchange with Guilford. Empties head north and loaded cars come back. The line shuts down during the winter months when construction demand for gravel and sand is low.

The line has one locomotive, an ex-CN SW9, #901. Current plans call for a tourist dinner train to start operating on the line this year.

### Selected Resources

Railfan site: <http://www.nh.ultranet.com/~petlick/mb.htm>

Photos Online (NERAIL Archive): <http://photos.nerail.org/>

NashuaArea Transportation Plan: [http://www.nashuarpc.org/longrangeplan/tp\\_chap5.pdf](http://www.nashuarpc.org/longrangeplan/tp_chap5.pdf)



Milford-Bennington's sole motive power clearly shows its CN heritage. A simple relettering was the only change made before operating on the M-B. Both photos from the NERAIL online photo archive.





The Belfast & Moosehead Lake Railroad has operated freight and passenger trains over a 33 mile main line since 1870. Some lean years when freight traffic dried up and legal problems are past and the railroad continues to operate today as a tourist line featuring a Swedish built 1913 4-6-0 steam locomotive.

The line runs from the seaport town of Belfast to a connection with the Maine Central at Burnham Junction along the MEC Waterville-Bangor main line.

Motive power has been exclusively GE 70 Tonners, with 3 still remaining today. The Swedish steam engine was added in 1995 and this really helped resuscitate the passenger operations. An RDC is also used for some special trains.

The line is almost exclusively tourist trains, but at least one online shipper, a rope company, still sees occasional service.

Selected Resources

New England Shortlines 1970-1980, Tom Nelligan (available from amazon.com)

Railroads of the Pine Tree State Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 1999

Railroads of the Pine Tree State Vol. 2, Four Ways West, 2000

Modeling B&ML GE 70 tonner and Caboose, June 1997 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 50

Scanner Frequencies: 160.710 and 161.385

Official Website: [www.belfastrailroad.com](http://www.belfastrailroad.com)

B&ML History site: <http://www.cpr.org/Museum/BMLRR/>

Railfan site: <http://www.nh.ultranet.com/~petlick/bml.htm>



Two of the B&ML's GE 70 Tonners at work on the railroad. Both photos from the Larry Goss web site.

The Grand Trunk operated 280 miles of track between Montreal and Portland, Maine. Like the Central Vermont, the GT was a U.S. subsidiary of the Canadian National. Officially, the GT was the CN's Berlin Subdivision and is not part of the Grand Trunk Western RR. Plenty of CN power operated here along with GT units and even CV and DW&P locomotives occasionally.

Compared to the Maine Central's Mountain Division, the GT line follows a more northern route in Maine, across New Hampshire and into Vermont. The importance of this route diminished somewhat in the 1950s when the St. Lawrence seaway opened. However, it still serves as an important bridge route, linking northern New England to Canada and the west.

Starting in Portland with a connection to the Maine Central, the GT line runs northwest, crossing the MEC at Yarmouth Jct. and again at Danville Jct. The line continues through Maine and crosses into New Hampshire, arriving at Berlin, the site of a large paper mill. A few miles west, another paper mill is located in Groveton. From here the line continues north in New Hampshire, crosses the Connecticut River in North Stratford, travels through a remote section of Vermont, usually referred to as the Northeast Kingdom, before reaching the Canadian border and continuing on to Montreal.

Trackwork on this line, like the CV, has always been exceptional and trains to this day travel at good speed (making railfanning difficult!). Maintenance of the GT right-of-way was handled by the CV.

An interchange used to occur in Portland until a fire burned the trestle across the bay that connected to the MEC. Other MEC interchanges are in Danville Jct. and Auburn-Lewistown.

In New Hampshire, the GT would interchange cars for the Berlin Mill RR at the paper mill in Berlin. Cars would also be interchanged in Groveton for the paper mill and the B&M. Further towards Vermont, an interchange occurs in North Stratford. This used to be the MEC Beecher Falls branch. In the late 1970s, the MEC abandoned this line. The state bought it and for years it was operated by the North Stratford Railroad. Today, it is operated by the New Hampshire Central.

Locomotives on the GT usually consisted of some GT-lettered GP9s and RS11s on the locals, but the run through trains would utilize CN M420Ws. Locomotive work was handled by the CV at their St. Albans shops. Since the 1960s, the paint schemes were generally black with red ends and white "noodle" lettering. Some GT locomotives transitioned into a scheme that had blue replace the black. It was also not uncommon to see CV lettered equipment on the GT, including some of the CV's green & yellow.

An interesting historical note: the original GT was built with a track gauge of 5'6". The need to change to a US standard was realized and in only one night in 1874, 500 workers regauged the track to the 4' 8-1/2" standard gauge!

In 1989, the Canadian National sold the 165 miles of track between Portland and the US-Canadian border in Norton, VT to the Emons Corp. This group also owns the Maryland & Pennsylvania RR. Over the next 10 years, the new shortline would triple the amount of traffic handled and increase the number of online industries. A new intermodal terminal was opened in Auburn in 1994 and this added two daily intermodal trains to the operations. The service provides two day

shipping between Maine and Chicago.

Early on, the ST&LA used green & yellow Central Vermont GP9s and leased power from GATX in the form of blue MP1500s. Eventually locomotives were repainted into a nice yellow and black scheme. Later, GP40s were acquired to replace the leased MP15s. Leased GP38-2 locomotives augmented the fleet. With the 1997 purchase of the Berlin Mills RR, two ex-Amtrak SW1's were added to the roster. These are still needed in the mill because of the tight clearances.



The switching of the Groveton paper mill is now the responsibility of the ST&LA. First, the B&M pulled out in the 1980s. Then the state appointed a new shortline, the New Hampshire & Vermont RR, to perform this work. When this operation ended, the ST&LA took over.

Two years ago, the ST&LA acquired the CN trackage in Quebec from the Vermont border to Richmond, Que. Some M-420s and a GP11 were added to the roster for this expanded operation.

In February 2002, the St. Lawrence and Atlantic was purchased by the Genessee and Wyoming. The leased GP38-2s left for another member of the family, the Buffalo & Pittsburgh. GP40-2 locomotives, painted in the family's orange and black scheme, have started to arrive to replace the departed GP38-2s.

## Operations

### Grand Trunk operations prior to 1989

The GT operated much the way that the ST&LA started out. The through trains were also numbered 393 and 394 and a crew change occurred in Island Pond, VT. A local would originate out of South Paris and basically perform the same operations described below.

### ST&LA operations since 1989

At startup, one out-and-back through train and two locals and were run each day. The through freight operated from Danville Jct. to Island Pond, VT. One local originated out of Lewiston Junction, ME, while another started out at South Paris, ME.

The through train 393/394 operates between Danville Junction and a CN "train exchange" in Island Pond, VT. The 393 assembles its westbound train in Danville Junction, picking up cars for South Paris, Berlin, NH and through cars to Montreal. The train then heads to South Paris to drop off and pick up any cars before leaving town at 40mph. The train runs straight through to Berlin, where it stops to set out and pick up cars for the paper mill. The paper mill is switched by the Berlin Mills RR (Until the purchase of the Berlin RR by the ST&LA). Heading west again, the next stop for 393 is Island Pond, VT and the exchange of trains.

Eastbound train 394 covers the line from Montreal to Island Pond, VT. The eastbound train 394 meets 393 here and the two crews and their locomotives swap trains, bringing the new trains back the way they came. The 394 heads back through New Hampshire and into Maine. It will set out cars at Danville Jct. for the interchange with MEC/Guilford before calling it a day.

In later years, due to more traffic and industries on the east end, the train exchange would occur at Berlin instead of Island Pond.

The 512 South Paris switcher performs yard duties, getting cars ready for the through train 393. The switcher will then run east to Lewiston Jct., switching industries and leaving cars for the Lewiston local. Then they will head back to South Paris, do some more yard work and then head west to switch industries before returning to South Paris at the end of the day.

The 513 Lewiston local handles switching to the south, picking up any cars at Danville Junction (from MEC/Guilford as well as the South Paris switcher) and serving the industries down to Portland.

Due to increased traffic and online industries, two locals are now needed, a 513 and 513A. The 513A handles switching for the intermodal trains in Auburn-Lewiston and other switching that the 513 cannot get to.

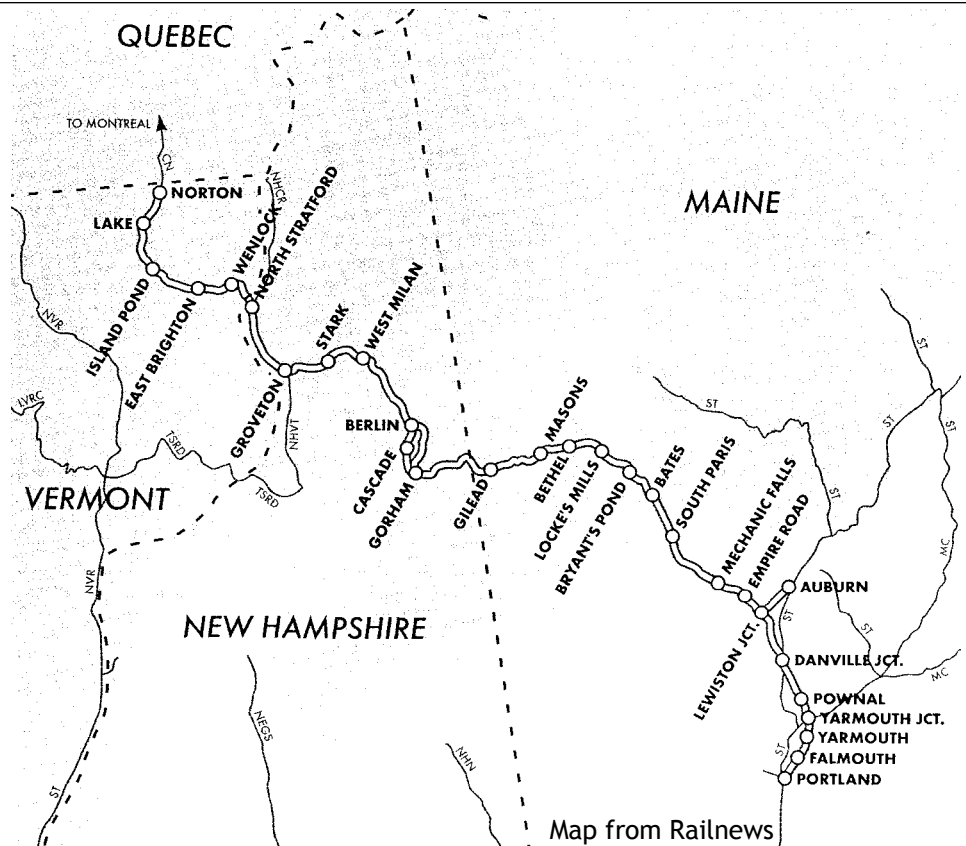
Since the acquisition of the Berlin Mills RR, the switcher based there has been numbered 511 and utilizes the two ex-Amtrak, ex-Berlin Mills SW1s. A switcher is now assigned to Groveton as well and is numbered 514. This switcher serves the mill, plus the interchange in North Stratford and newer industries in Vermont.

Selected Resources

- Railroads of the Pine Tree State Vol. 2, Four Ways West, 2000
- New England Rails 1948-1968, Morning Sun Books, 1989
- New England's Colorful Railroads Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 2000
- St. Lawrence & Atlantic, April 2000 CTC Board magazine
- The St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR, February 1992 Model Railroader, p. 78 - 84
- South Paris Switcher, January 1987 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 70-72
- Grand Trunk, September 1985 Railfan & Railroad
- Spotlight: St.Lawrence & Atlantic, September 1998 Railnews, p.76-77
- Yarmouth Junction pt. 1, May 1990 Model Railroading, p. 51
- Yarmouth Junction pt. 2, June 1990 Model Railroading, p. 50

Official site: <http://www.gwrr.com/default.cfm?action=rail&section=3B6a>  
 Railfan site: <http://www.nh.ultranet.com/~petlick/slr.htm>

Video: "Today's Maine Railroads" - 105 minutes, 1993, Pentrex



Map from Railnews