TALKIN' T-TRAK™

Professor Choo Choo
T-TRAK 101
The sky is not the limit of your imagination when it comes to sky boards!

T-TRAK Standards & Recommended Practices

3.1.Skyboard

Skyboards are optional backdrops mounted to the rear of the module to provide a visual block behind the module. Skyboards vary in height between 6" to 15" above the surface of the module. Each club should adopt a specific standard to provide continuity throughout the layout. The width of the skyboard should be approximately the width of the module on which it is mounted. There should be no more than a 1/8" gap between modules to provide visual continuity between adjacent modules.

I am not a big fan of skyboards. Although they can hide the cluttered space between back to back rows of modules they can also be an unwanted view block. When a display can only be viewed from one side or module access from the back is necessary they can be in the way. In the case above the display is against a wall and features 3 tracks lengthwise. Without skyboards the view is like a rural scene seen from a plane flying overhead. If the modules at the back were anything but a yard skyboards could be used on backwards facing modules.

BUT, if you're going to enter a module contest you will want to include "skyboards". I'm sure this unique rock wall background helped these beauties win that Best of Show award.

Skyboards can be fanciful

Or scenery or just sky as their name suggests

Looking down on modules does not present the background well. Your 4 year old at eye level will have the best view.

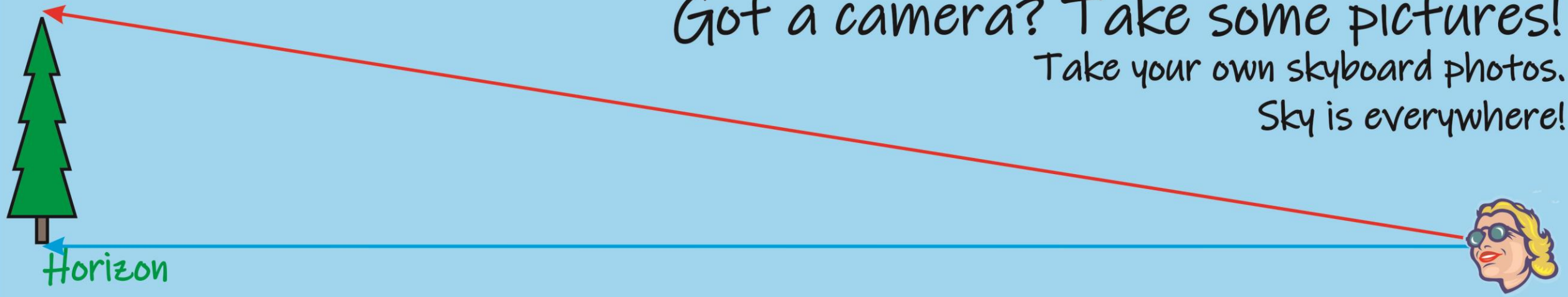
Or, if the module is a dedication, they can be an informative story board telling the spectators about the modular presentation.

When I started with NTRAK I didn't want sunny day blue sky. Everyone has blue sky so I had an artistic friend paint stormy skies on my skyboards. She has passed on so now I needed a new idea for my skyboards. I would never be happy with anything I'd create so I let Mother Nature do it for me.

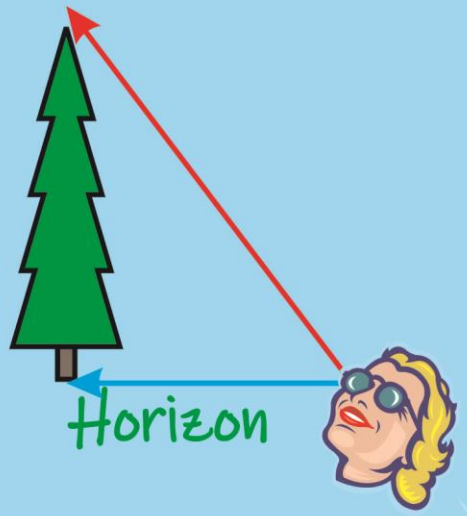
My NTRAK skyboards are permanently attached to the modules. Skyboards can be removable. And, they can be made with any sheet material: wood, plastic, heavy paper. They can be painted, photographs, printed commercial products and can include cut and paste details. But they need not be painted on or glued onto heavy wooden pieces for structural support.

Got a camera? Take some pictures!

Take your own skyboard photos.
Sky is everywhere!

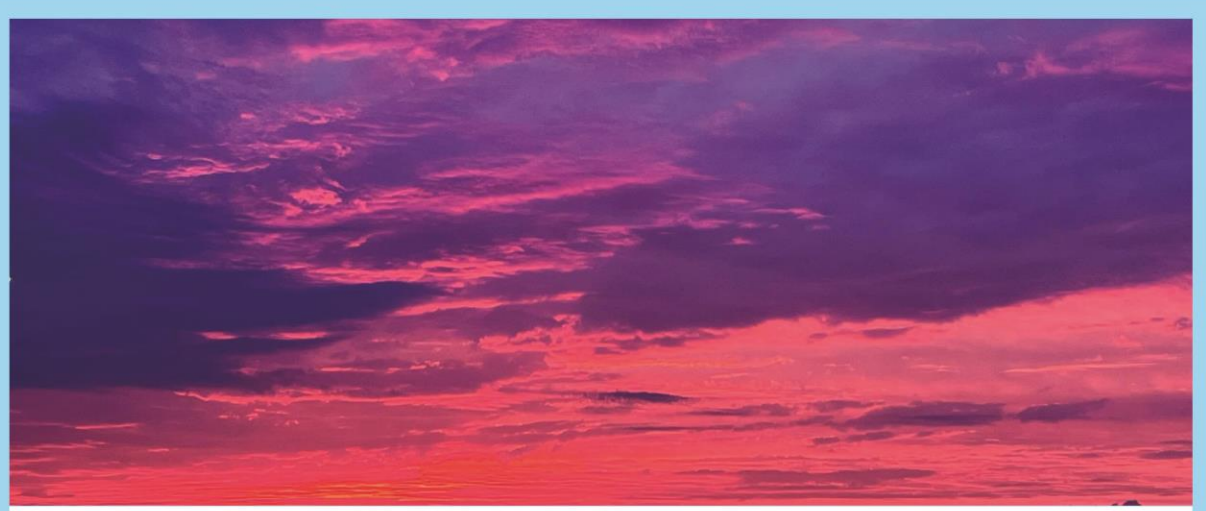


The further away your horizon the more horizontal your line of sight. This will give the best perspective of the clouds in the sky and a better size of distant scenery if included.



If the horizon is too close you will be looking up at the sky at a greater angle resulting in a picture of the bottoms of the clouds. For realistic photos for backgrounds that is not the perspective you want. Any scenery that may be included will be too large to resize for use as a background.

This area will be hidden as the mounting surface to the module



This area will be added to create the module mounting surface

Since everyone has different computer programs and skills I am not going to tell you how to crop, resize and otherwise fiddle with your photos as you create your backgrounds. My idea here is to take your photo that you fiddled with to create your skyboard and have it printed in the size you require at a print shop (these will require special paper sizes but an 11x17 inch sheet will be large enough for a single module skyboard) and have them laminate it with clear plastic (the thicker/heavier type). This will create a skyboard that does not require gluing your photo to a heavy piece of "wood" or cardboard and will give you a very durable yet light skyboard that is very easy to transport. Depending on your photo you may include part of the photo that will be hidden when mounted to the module base or you will need to add a blank area to the bottom of the photo for mounting before laminating.

Due to the way I transport my modules I have 1/4" T-nuts in the back of my modules which allow me to bolt my skyboards on. Optional attachment simply uses paper clamps to clamp the skyboard to the module base. Paper clamps are available in several sizes with selection based on the thickness of the material used to construct the module.

SceniKinG provides printed backdrop scenery of many styles on 6 foot rolls of 8 or 16.5 inch height that can be seamlessly added to other rolls for many feet of continuous backdrop scenery. See their web site for more detailed information and product catalogues.

SceniKinG was introduced to Nrail members in the May - June '22 newsletter.

Since SceniKinG backdrops are printed right to the bottom of the sheet 2.5 inches of material needs to be added to the bottom for attachment to the module base as shown.

Looks like a nice day as what appears to be crop circles are discovered and investigated in this farmer's field

THANKS
For Watching
A ZoomTRAK presentation by True North Rail