

6. Nigel Phillips' Great Northern Analog SD-7 to DCC Sound



I have a couple of N-scale Life-Like SD-7s in Great Northern Empire Builder colors. They are pre-DCC. Converting them to DCC DCC/sound is doable, but in practice, it is a pain in the derriere. Is there a Great Northern DCC sound SD-7 RTR model out there? Not that I can find. Atlas has a DCC sound SD-9 model in N-scale in various railroad colors, but not the Great Northern. Atlas did a Great Northern SD-7 DCC friendly model in 2005. Still with a split chassis though. So why not swap the Life-Like chassis for an Atlas DCC sound-equipped one? That way I get a Great Northern DCC sound SD-7.

The donor is an Atlas undecorated SD-9 model with an ESU LokSound V5 decoder/speaker. The chassis is used in their SD-7 model (and their SD-24 and SD-26 models), so does it fit into a Life-Like SD-7 body? It does. It's a nice friction fit. This was a no-hassle project, from testing the Atlas GP-9 to running it as the Great Northern SD-7 took 20 minutes. I'm now left with an undecorated SD-9 body shell. I am not tempted to fit it with the Life-Like chassis, as converting it to DCC or DCC sound is an exercise in diminishing returns. I have choices regarding the second Great Northern SD-7. Another Atlas DCC Sound locomotive for a donor chassis, or use it as a dummy with a DCC sound only decoder. They have different road numbers, and the Great Northern often used a pair of SD-7s in tandem for freight trains on secondary and branch lines. A project for next year. **Nigel Phillips**