

Review: Bullfrog Snot Liquid Traction Tires; MSRP: \$24.95/oz.
www.bullfrogsnot.com

Reviewed by Chris Smith

The Product

After reading a post on the Internet about Bullfrog Snot Liquid Traction, I was very interested to see how it would improve the traction on one of my engines. Some of the claims by the manufacturer are that it is easily applied, and removed, ready to apply straight from the bottle and cures at room temperature. Further claims are it provides a thin, tough coating and leaves no residue on the track or engine and can be used on any locomotive.

The Test

I would not consider this to be a scientific review, but rather some observations about how this product works for my own needs on my own layout, and therefore your results may vary. One important note about this product is that Bullfrog Snot is non conductive. The engine I tested is a stock 2-Rail MTH 4-8-4 N&W J that picks up power from its trailing wheels, so this review will not address any concerns about conductivity from the drivers. There are no rubber band style traction tires on the wheels of this engine and therefore the wheels have no grooves.

Applying the product is simple. I put the engine in a cradle upside down and I removed the brake shoes. I did not prepare the wheels in any way. Using a toothpick as suggested in the instructions, I put a dot of Snot on each of the rear drivers. I then put the power to the engine using alligator clips. The instructions say to use the toothpick to smooth out the Snot while the drivers are rotating but I found a screwdriver works better than a toothpick for spreading on O Scale wheels. I used the edge of the screwdriver flat against the edge of the wheel to cut off the Snot there, while lifting slightly toward the flange to allow the Snot to build up some.

I applied two coats to the rear drivers in about 10 minutes. I'd suggest applying to one wheel at a time until you get the hang of it. If you mess up, it is easily removed with a razor knife. Within 10 minutes or so, the green color of the Snot started to disappear and eventually dried to a very faint greenish color. I then moved to the front drivers and applied a single thinner coat to those. As claimed in the product literature, the Bullfrog Snot formed a thin, very grippy plastic traction tire, virtually invisible after it cured. The instructions say to let the Snot cure overnight. I let it dry for six hours before I put the brake shoes back on the engine, placed the engine on the track and put some cars behind the engine.

Each of the cars in the Overland N&W Powhatan Arrow set weighs about 4 pounds. For some reference, I weighed a Golden Gate Depot plastic heavyweight Pullman at about 2.2 pounds. I weighed a Sunset brass heavyweight Pullman at about 3.4 pounds and an American Lightweight Car Co. built-up kit at a little less than 2 pounds.

Initially I put seven cars behind the engine since this is most likely the longest I'd ever want to make the Arrow train on my layout. The engine pulled away without any problem, and continued up the grade without slipping at all. Several times around the track and it continued without a hitch. I then stopped the engine on the hill, and then started the engine and cars up the grade without a slip.

After a few trips around the 200' mainline, I added an eighth car. At this point I started to notice a difference. The engine pulled the train up the hill, but the drivers were slipping. I

stopped the engine on the hill, and then restarted. The drivers began to slip and the train remained stationary. I backed the train up and gave it some speed and the engine again managed the hill with some slipping. I pulled the train like this for about 10 trips around the layout. I noticed the Bullfrog Snot from the front drivers was peeling off at this point. The thicker application on the rear drivers remained intact.

I removed the eighth car and carried on around the layout with seven cars. After about 10 trips around the layout I noticed the engine started slipping on the grade. I suspect by now the Snot had lost some of its tackiness and had accumulated some dirt and dust from the rails. After seeing this I expected the experiment to be short lived.

However, over several weeks time, I ran the train with seven cars in tow at a comfortable speed around the layout for about 40 more laps. I expected the train would eventually get to a point where it would slip too much for my liking on the grade, but it never reached that point, so I was pretty satisfied with this.

At this point I removed the seventh car to run a six car consist which is what I had intended for this train from the start. The train started and ran up the grade without slipping. I ran the train for another 20 laps around the layout with no apparent change in pulling. I let the train creep up the grade and run around for another 20 laps very slowly. My goal was to eventually reach a point where the train would slip and not climb the hill at that slow speed/voltage, but it never slipped. On what was nearly the one hundredth lap, I stopped the train on the grade and then started it and pulled away without any problem or slipping at all.

After a few more laps around the layout, I noticed that some of the product was beginning to shred off the rear drivers and that concluded the experiment. I've scraped off the remaining Snot traction easily with a razor knife, and I've reapplied more to the rear drivers and I am back to pulling trains again.

A Comparison

While I was conducting this experiment, impatience got the best of me and I decided to get some weight into the Overland brass J to compare against the MTH J with the Bullfrog Snot on the wheels. With the weight added to the Overland J, the pulling power is comparable to the MTH J with Bullfrog Snot on the wheels. Either engine will pull the Overland six or seven car train fairly easily up the grade with a little slipping with 7 cars. I've also tacked the engines on a mixed train of 11 cars which includes 4 Weaver head end cars, three of the Overland brass cars, one Sunset brass 12-1, one GGD 12-1, an American Lightweight, and a built up MAC Shops car. Each engine pulled the 11 car train up the grade with a slight amount of slipping. On the level, both engines pulled 18 of the cars, not that I'll be doing that on any other occasion.

Conclusion

My impression of Bullfrog Snot is that it does meet the claims by the distributor and can be useful for anyone looking to get more traction relatively easily. For my purposes it exceeds what I expected and I typically would not run 100+ laps in such a short amount of time on my layout. I expect it would take many months for me to wear away the Snot under normal circumstances.

