

REVIEW *Traction*

Bullfrog Snot: Weird Name, Great Product

Review and Photos by Alan Houtz

Bullfrog Snot, 1-ounce jar, MSRP: \$24.95

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I'M sure someone's tongue was firmly in his or her cheek when this product was named. Our hobby has never been short of people with a sense of humor!

After reading the press release on this product (and when I finished rolling my eyes), I had to try it out. Most serious modelers I know have collectively turned their noses up at traction-tire-equipped models, and with good reason. The tires fail, wear out, or come off, and never at a good time. Installing new ones can be hard on your patience and your children's eardrums.

Enter Bullfrog Snot. It is a room-temperature-curing, liquid plastic compound that, when properly applied, dries into a perfectly formed traction tire.

It is simple to apply. The manufacturer's website shows a locomotive upside down with the wheels spinning and the compound applied with



Bullfrog Snot is essentially a "liquid traction tire" and is very effective. Be sure and keep the jar mouth and lid clean though, or you'll find it hard to reopen the jar, as I did.

a toothpick. I found that a small paintbrush works better for HO-scale models. Application is easy: Spread an even coat of Bullfrog Snot on the slowly spinning wheel and leave it to set. I allowed it to cure overnight with the model still upside down in the foam cradle.

Bullfrog Snot at Work

To see how well Bullfrog Snot really worked I chose a pair of Athearn SW-1500 switchers. Both were new in the box, and one was kept as a control. Testing was done in the main yard at my club's layout on flat, level, straight track. Without Bullfrog Snot I was able to start 21 cars, a mixture of 40-foot boxcars, gons, and reefers. With the "snotty" loco I was able to start 30 cars. With this model, the tractive effort required for pushing was different from that required for pulling, so I changed the car mix to 50-foot boxcars, autoracks, and three-bay cylindrical grain

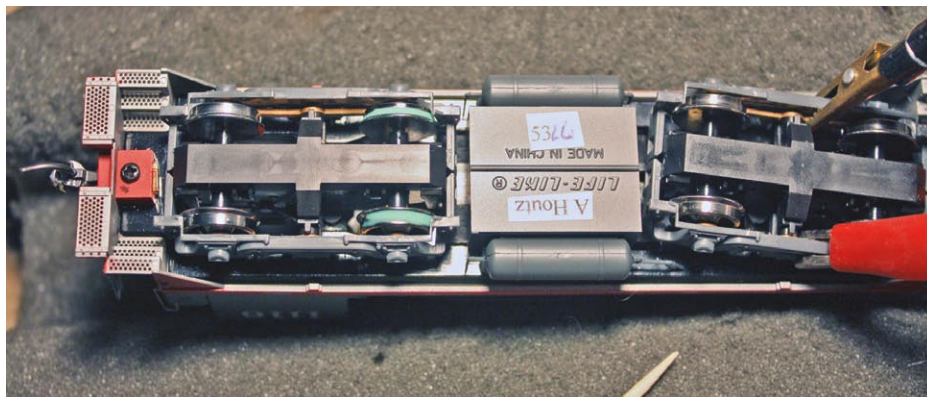
hoppers, and did a push test. The stock switcher was able to start 16 cars. The "snotty" switcher started 20. All cars were weighted to NMRA standards.

My test showed that Bullfrog Snot increased the drawbar pull of this model roughly 30 percent. I was pleasantly surprised. I also ran the snot-equipped locomotive around the layout and through turnouts and crossovers to see how electrical pickup was affected. The model handled everything quite well, and at no time did I stall in a turnout, or see any telltale headlight flickering. A word of caution here: this layout's turnouts have powered frogs. Your results may differ.

Those of us who favor the steam locomotive will find plenty of use for this product, as it has always been difficult to pull a prototypical looking train with one locomotive when you model steam era operations. Model steamers tend to not pull as well as model diesels, and here is where Bullfrog Snot really shines. I tried it on several older brass models. I recommend applying it to the geared axle only, and on my models I applied it only to the insulated side of the geared driver axle. You can apply it to more drivers, but I found that the insulated side of the geared driver added plenty of pulling power, and I didn't want to risk too much strain on the side rods, which could result in excessive wear. I found, as with the model diesels, that pulling power on model steam locomotives could be increased by anywhere from 30 to 50 percent. I was able to pull a heavy mail train consisting of fourteen cars up our layout's ruling 2 percent grade. Electrical pickup was not affected.

Summary

While the name and color may cause those with sensitive stomachs a moment of pause, Bullfrog Snot really does what it claims to do. It comes in a one-ounce jar, which should be enough product for hundreds of applications and is far less of a headache than replacing worn or lost rubber traction tires. Just make sure you keep the jar rim and lid clean, as this product is very tough and will seal the lid to the jar if you aren't careful.



The product was applied per the manufacturer's instructions. While a toothpick works for N scale,

I recommend a small paintbrush for HO models. The brush can be cleaned up with water.