

MAKING MARSHES

Marshes and rivers are prominent features of the Byelorussian landscape. The Red Army negotiated their way through vast areas of marshland to outflank the German defenders.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- 1/8"/3mm MDF or hardboard
- Ready-mixed filler
- Old sprues from model kits or thin balsa wood strips
- Two-part epoxy resin
- Fine sand
- Static grass
- PVA wood glue
- Dark brown paint (872 Chocolate Brown)
- Light brown paint (874 USA Tan Earth)
- A sanding block with fine and coarse textures
- Hand saw or jigsaw
- Electric sander or file

STEP 1

Draw the shape of your marsh onto the hardboard and cut it out with a saw. Bevel the edge of the board with either an electric sander or file to a 45 degree slope. This will help prevent the marsh from warping once glue is applied and also blend the finished terrain piece into the rest of your board.

Cut your plastic sprues or balsa wood into short lengths and glue them down to your hardboard 1/4"/5mm in from the top of the bevel. Place a few pieces of sprue or balsa randomly in the centre of the hardboard to create islands in the marsh.

STEP 2

Once the glue has dried, score the exposed hardboard with your craft knife, to give the ready-mixed filler something to adhere to. Apply the ready-mixed filler to form small mounds around the plastic sprue or balsa. The ready-mixed filler does not need to be super smooth, but it does need to be solid all the way around, inside and out. Leave this to dry overnight.

STEP 3

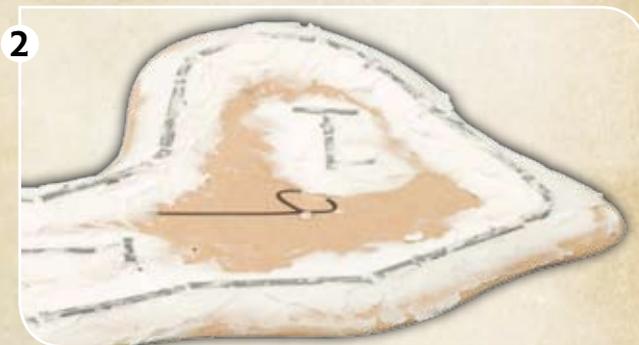
Once the filler is dry, lightly sand it to remove any serious lumps. Apply a layer of PVA wood glue over the entire terrain piece. Sprinkle your sand over the marsh and leave to dry.

STEP 4

Shake off any excess sand. Paint your entire marsh in your dark brown colour. If you are making a lot of terrain, get test pots from your local paint shop as they will go further and cost less than model paints. After your dark brown paint has dried, drybrush your marsh with your light brown colour.

STEP 5

Dab PVA wood glue on the raised mounds around the edge of the marsh and the islands, then apply static grass.



FINISH

Now you can add any additional effects that you want to the model. You could add reeds by using old paint brush bristles, clump foliage or even a bogged-down tank if you like.

Mix up your two-part epoxy resin. Envirotex is an easy-to-use resin for this type of project, and is available through most arts and crafts stores. Always read the instructions on your resin bottles and follow them precisely. Try adding a small amount of ink to change the resin's colour. We have used green ink in some of our marshes and brown ink in others.

Pour your resin. All resin is self levelling so make sure that your base is on a flat surface so that it stays in the marsh and doesn't run onto your table. Allow the resin 24 hours to cure before moving it.



The finished marsh.

EXPERTS

Once you have mastered making your marshes to place on the top of your gaming table, you can experiment using the same marsh-making technique to sculpt marshes directly into your table.

The two tables below have marshes sculpted directly into the table. The top table had deep gullies carved into it during construction and then filled with resin after the rest of the table was completed.

The other table was constructed in a similar way, but instead of several large gully-like marshes, there are a lot of smaller and shallower marshes on the table.

You can also create a river board using this technique.

