

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for January 21, 2018. A quite historic week for your MOW Team – and the SSRR in general – as the very first train in years made its way down the Sutterville track. So, let's put this update in "run-7" and get you up to speed.

Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Chris Howard, Kyle Blackburn, Gene Peck, Joe Margucci, Alan Hardy, and Chris Carlson got the MOW week started on Tuesday with lots of good works. Chris C. procured a carburetor kit for derrick car's big Wisconsin engine. He and Chris H. put it together and got it installed. Pulling on the pull-start, Chris H. got the engine to sputter and cough a few times before it roared to life. Then he and Chris C. tested it and verified that the derrick is fully functional. Now, the only thing left is to figure out how to get it out of the building. Cliff and Kyle continued their efforts at fabricating new draw-bar connectors for the ballast hoppers. It's a big job as these connectors are required to pull a significant amount of weight. Joe managed to re-wire the malfunctioning dome and flash light on the tamper. Heather worked on getting the Weed Team's contrivances in tip-top condition as the Weedies prepare for their 2018 campaign. Indeed, lots of good works were accomplished on Tuesday.

The Mighty Weed Team gathered for the first time in 2018 for its annual herbicide application training. Team Captain Mike Taylor, Heather, Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, Joe Galipeau, and David Haskell convened class and reviewed the legal protocols necessary for the implementation of their weed eradication master strategy. Following training, the Weedies serviced the man-lift while Ed K. honed the chipper's blades. The Weedies are now fully prepared take on all vegetative species threatening invasion of our right of way.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Ed K., Heather, Chris H., Kyle, Joe, and Frank Werry put together the Team's effort for Thursday night. Kyle and Chris H. caused sparks to fly all night as they continued the work on the hopper-car's draw-bar connectors. Kyle is becoming an excellent welder. The opportunity to perfect one's skills is a great benefit of volunteering with MOW and Kyle has taken full advantage of it. The Jackson 125's turntable hydraulic cylinder has returned from the repair shop and was ready to reinstall in the machine. Ed K., on the forklift, grabbed it from the bed of the truck. Joe and Frank got the base prepared by wire-brushing the bolts and fittings. Ed K. maneuvered the cylinder over its base while Frank and Joe lined it up and bolted it down. Heather repaired the Weed Team's string-trimmer and tested it on some tall grass that was growing around the base of the building with it which will make Pat and Gene happy. Yes, another good evening for your MOW Team.

For 30 years, there's been talk of a "Zoo Train." Well, the time for talk is over. History was made Saturday as Alan, Chris H., Michael Florentine, Joe, John Rexroth, Clem Meier, Bill Hastings, Art Flutter, Mike Harris, Steve Nemeth, Ed K., Pam Tatro, Weston Snyder, Matt McCracken, Jose Gomez, Chris Carlson, and Ed Moriarty headed-up a MOW work-train down the Zoo Line. The train crew consisted of MOW Team veterans Frank as Conductor, Mike T. as Engineer, Ilias Athanisiou as Fireman, and Heather as Brakeman. The SSRR 2030 was tasked at running up and down the Sutterville Division several times to test the track under load and compress the roadbed. The MKT would come along as a crew-car. On the porch of the 2030 was our exceptionally large pink box containing extra doughnuts for such a large crew. Like the Arc of the Covenant, the pink box always is carried advance of the Team when on the march. At Baths, the MKT was cut-away. Then, the locomotive, under Mike T.'s expert hand, proceeded gingerly across the I-5 Bridge and onto the Sutterville Track. Along the side of the track, Team Members were strategically placed to watch and listen to the rails as the 2030 passed by. In addition, all three of the Railroad's trusty track inspectors were on hand observing the track under load. With the locomotive on spot at Sutterville Road, the Team conferred and reported that there was no deflection, no flange-resistance, no "popping" or "squealing" around the curve. The track was solid. The 2030 headed north to repeat the operation this time with Ilias at the throttle. He, too, proclaimed that the track was outstanding. Four round trips between Baths and Sutterville Road were completed before the locomotive reconnected with the MKT. A locomotive and car constitute a "train" and would be the first train in living memory to head down the line. The MKT's three-axel truck negotiated the curve south of the I-5 Bridge brilliantly and continued all the way down to Sutterville Road. Brakeman Heather called the shove and demonstrated precision train positioning by calling the "easy-stop" right at the flood wall. After five closely observed roundtrips, the Team boarded the MKT and headed back to town.

Folks, the track performed beyond all expectations. And believe me when I say that there were plenty of experts about to certify that fact. All of our tie-changing efforts, re-gauging efforts, ballasting, regulating, tamping, etc. have really paid off. It is absolutely solid and, frankly, may be one the best segments of track on the entire line. In fact, the rebuilt Sutterville Division more than complies with federal standards specified by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 49 Part 213.9 for Class 2 track and is ready for passenger trains to the Zoo. The valiant volunteers of the MOW Team have extended our railroad by a half-mile – the first extension in decades – and, as Frank says, we've added pretty good chunk considering the SSRR is only three miles long! Yes, it was a very satisfying day for everyone but, probably the most gratified member of the Team was Mike T. who, for 30 years, has been leading teams down the Sutterville Line maintaining the right of way. A multitude of thanks go to Saturday's exceptional train crew, Frank, Mike T., Ilias, and Heather. And, of course, to the all volunteers of the MOW Team – both those who were present on Saturday and those who were not – who worked so hard on our great quest to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the MOW adventure continues on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday is the Railroad's annual General Meeting, crew photo, and Frist Train of the Year. The MOW Team will have a presentation to make at the General Meeting. We'll gather at the Shops starting at 8 o'clock a.m. for doughnuts and briefings. Again, to the members of the MOW Team and all those who supported us throughout this project, thank you very much!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



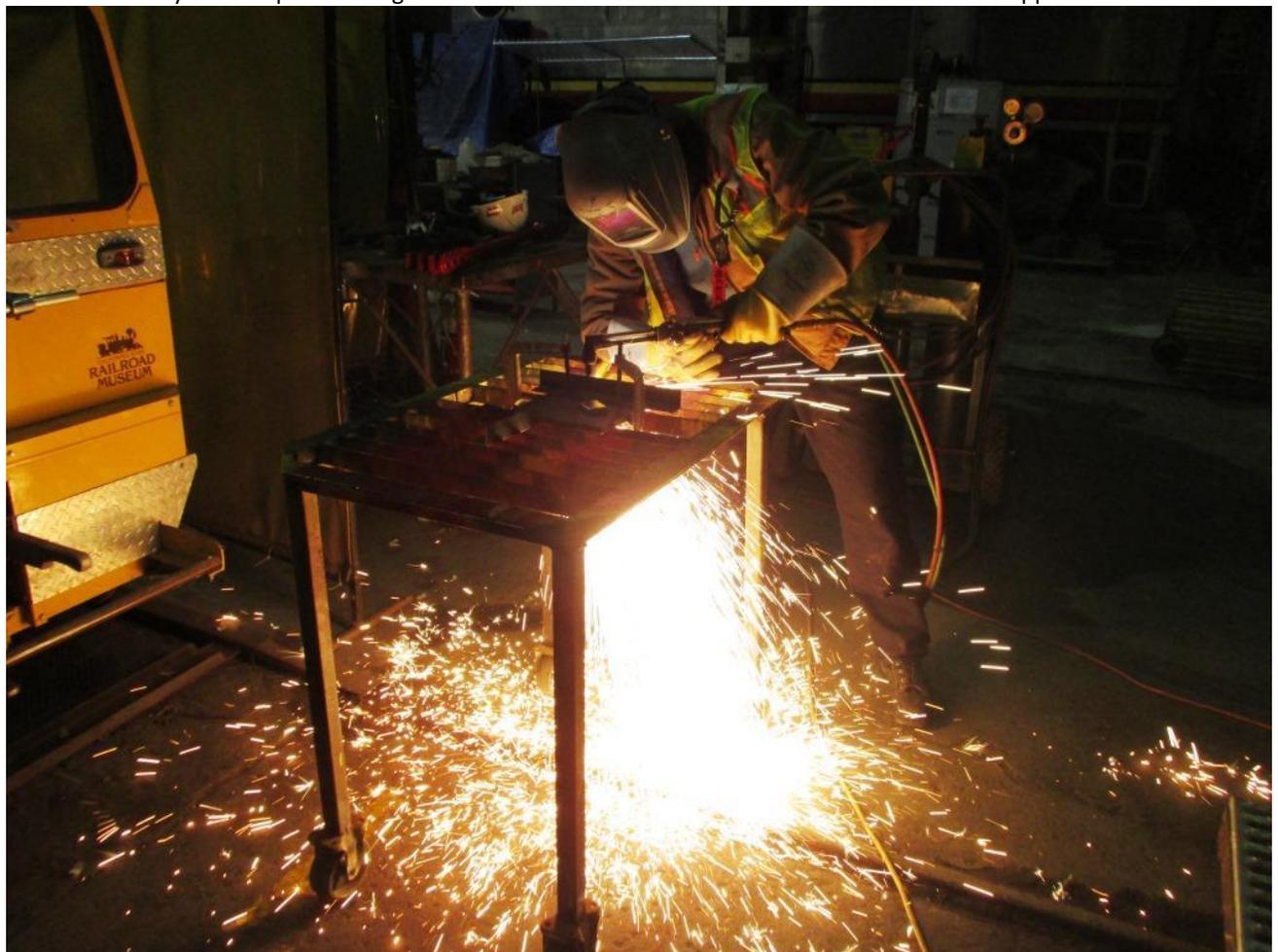
Chris C. and Chris H. rebuild the carburetor of the derrick-car



Chris C. and Chris H. get the carburetor reinstalled and test the derrick-car



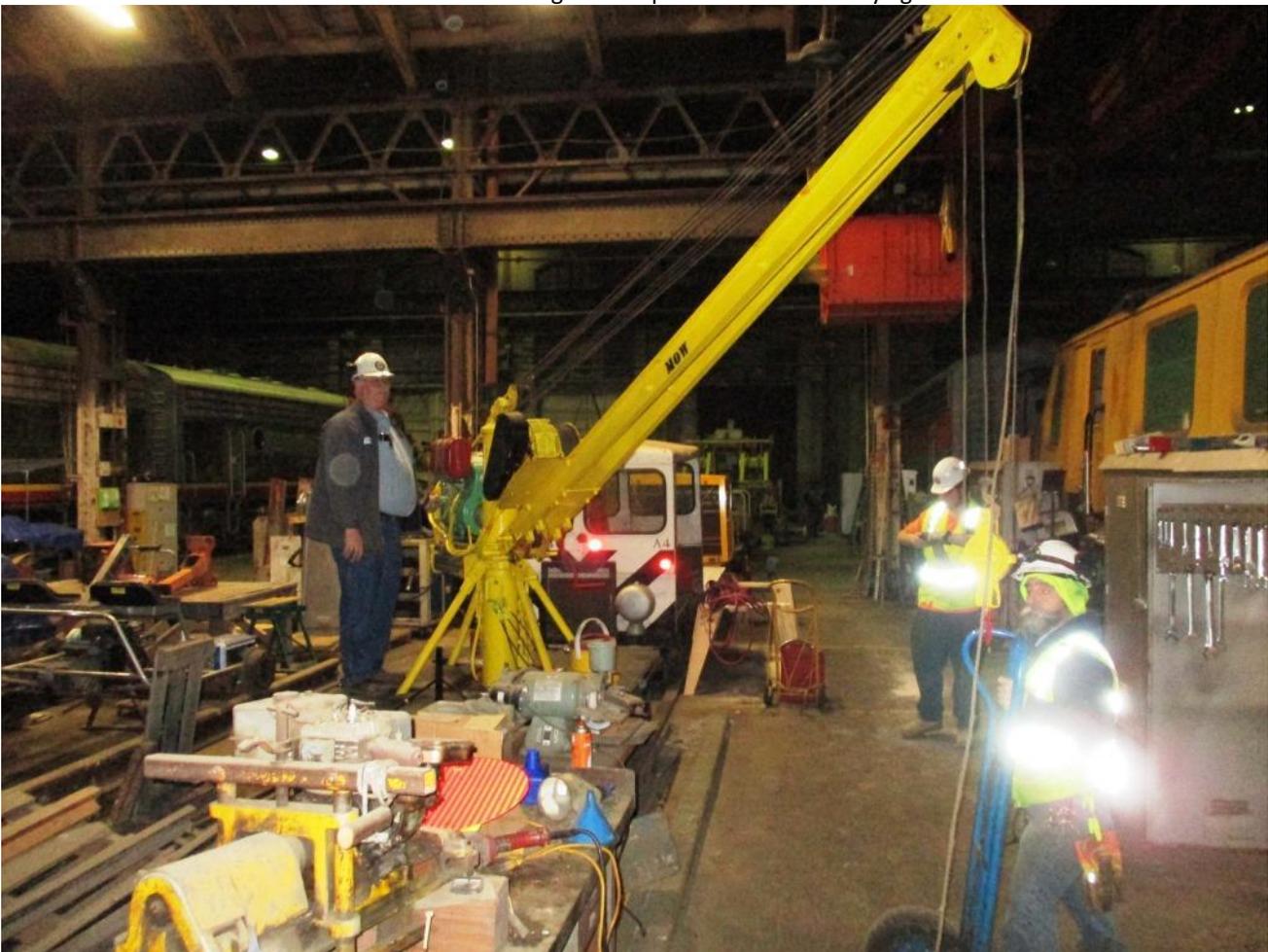
Kyle fires-up his cutting torch as he fabricates new draw-bar connectors for the hopper cars



It's 4th of July in January as Kyle cuts steel for the draw-bar connectors



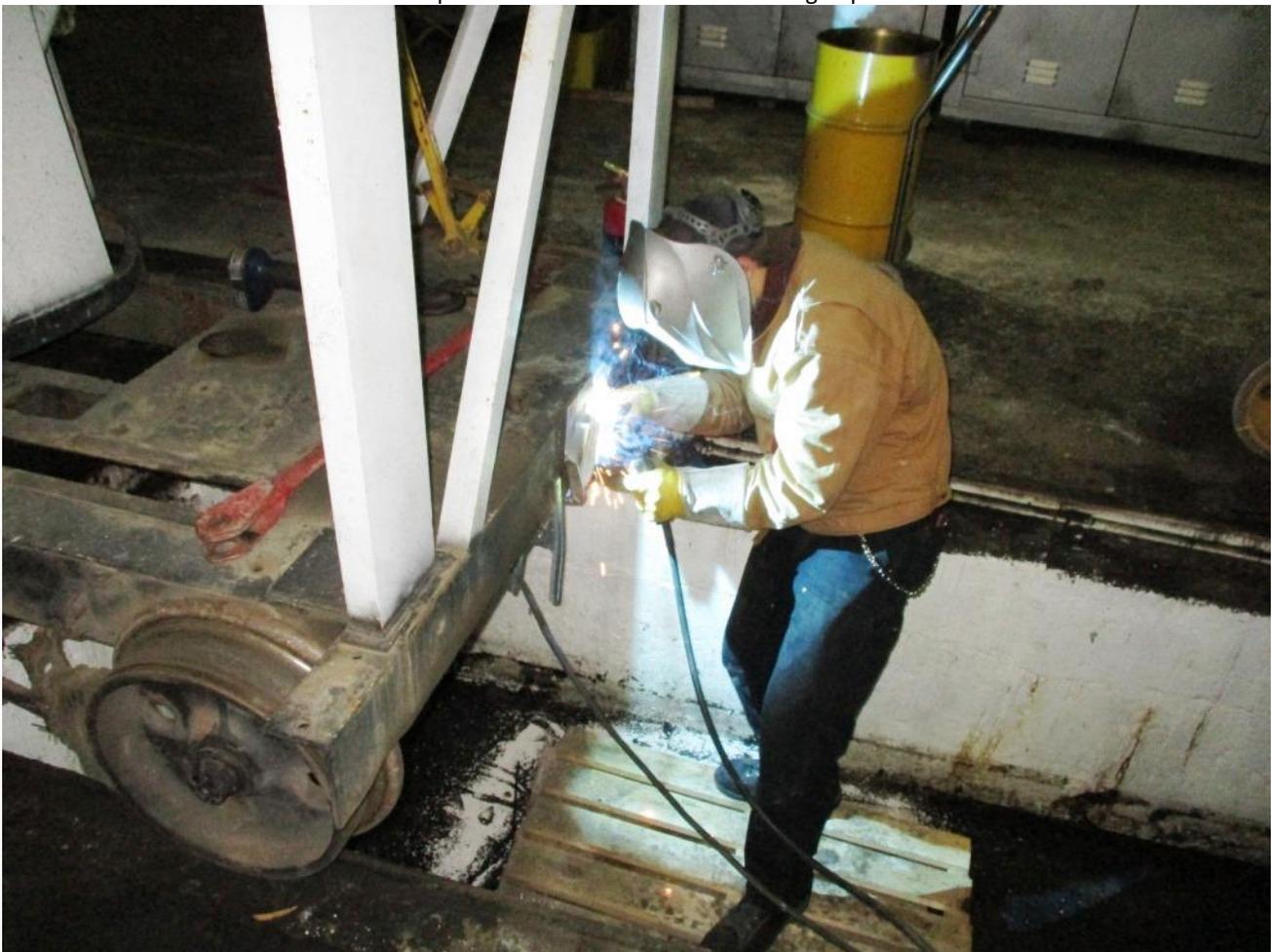
Joe works on rewiring the tamper's dome and flashy light



Yea! The derrick-car is working!



Heather repairs the Weed-Team's weed-eating implements



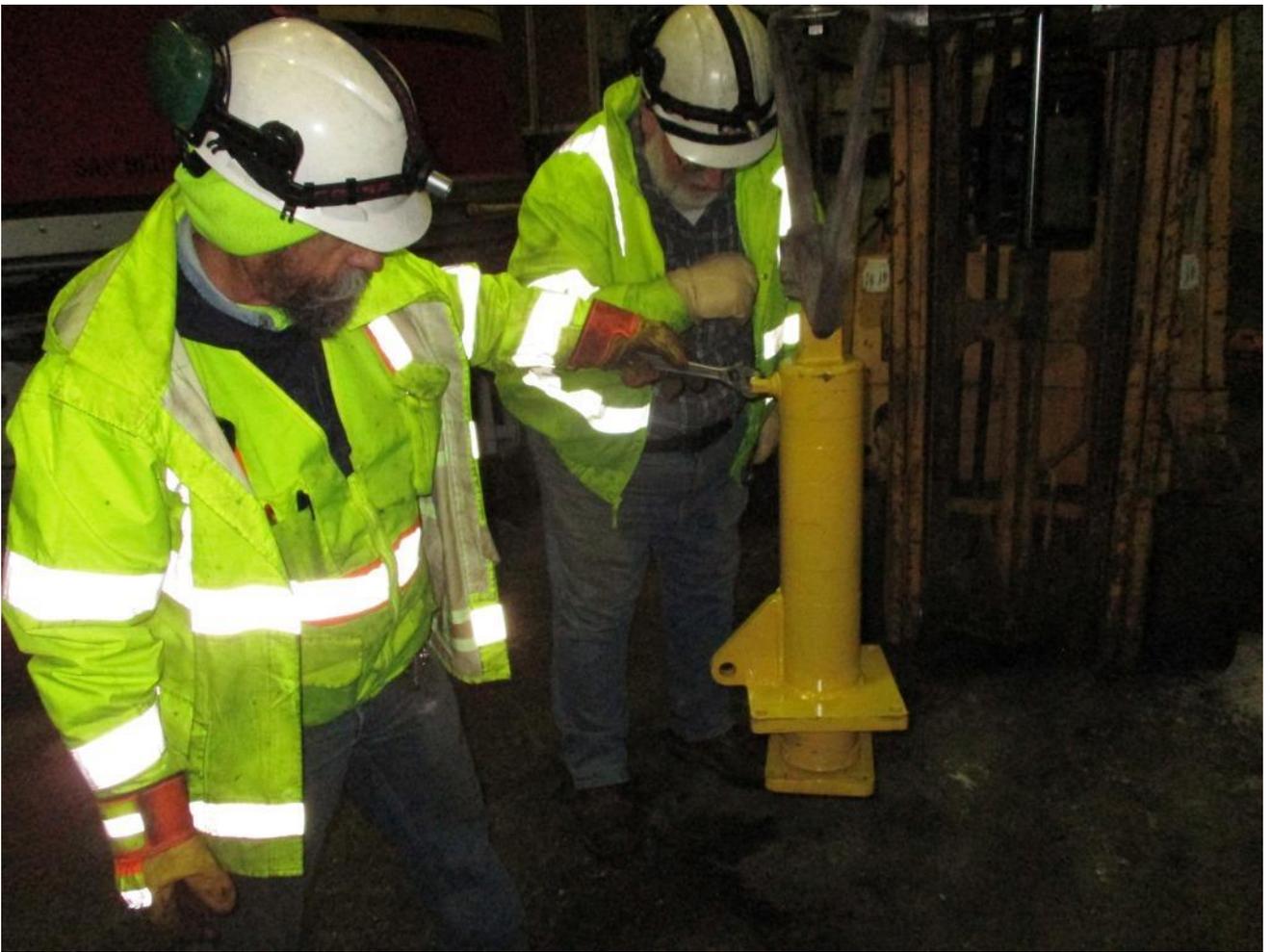
Kyle welds the new supporting brackets onto the one of the hopper-cars



Ed K. uses the Hyster forklift to grab the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger's rebuilt turntable hydraulic cylinder



Joe uses the wire brush to clean up the bolts that attach the 125's hydraulic cylinder to its base



Joe and Frank line-up the cylinder with its base



Ed K., Frank, and Joe bolt the 125's turntable hydraulic cylinder to its base



On Saturday morning, Conductor Frank conducted a joint briefing between train crew and MOW Team on the day's plan



Brakeman Heather brings the SSRR 2030 in for a joint with the MKT



Engineer Mike T. watches for signals



Pam keeps a keen eye on the pink box which always is carried in advance of the Team when on the march



Conductor Frank surveys his train



The MOW Team boards the MKT for the trip down the Sutterville Division



Thus, it begins. The 2030 ventures out onto the bridge over I-5



It's Batman! Indeed, John maintains tradition



Having successfully traversed the curve at the top of the hill, SSRR 2030 proceeds towards Sutterville Road



The 2030 receives an enthusiastic reception from folks at the baseball fields below the track



The locomotive arrives at Sutterville Road



The 2030 heads back up the hill towards Baths



Mike T. at the throttle of the 2030 as the locomotive moves back up the hill



Heading south again, Ilias takes control of the train



Here comes the train!



Pam stays close to the pink box as the 2030 grabs the MKT to take it down to Sutterville Road



Brakeman Heather calls the shove from the vestibule of the MKT as the train makes its way down to Sutterville Road



The train arrives at Sutterville Road



There is no question. A train simply improves the natural environment



A proud day for Engineer Mike T. as a train comes down the Suttersville Track which he's been maintaining for more than 30 years



That is one fine looking stretch of track



Your MOW Team with the SSRR 2030 at Sutterville Road