

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 8, 2017. The 2017 SSRR Regular Season concluded last week which means Polar Express is right around the corner. So, let's get this update going before that incessant "Hot Chocolate" song starts driving us all nuts.

Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, DJ Mandella, Dave Wolf, Joe Margucci, Chris Carlson, Anthony Filamor, Mike Harris, Cliff Hayes, Frank Werry, and Heather Kearns were all on hand Tuesday for some MOW fun. Chris C. and Mike H. went to work on the tamper's breaks. The push-rods needed to be shortened to get them to fit properly in this machine. Dave, DJ, Anthony, Joe, and Heather headed to Old Sacramento to switch-out some equipment needed by the Weed Team Thursday. Anthony fired up the scarifier and DJ got the 125 going. Dave acted as switchman. After everything was tied down, they joined Heather and Joe who were repairing two broken shunting wires on the wheels of the A-6 motorcar. Anthony, DJ, and Dave then headed over to service Switch 9, the south center-siding switch. DJ and Anthony cleaned out debris from between the points and stock-rails. Then Dave was handed the grease bucket. Greasing a switch is kind of the initiation event for all new MOW Team members. He slathered grease all over the switch-plates which did the trick. Switch 9 now throws nicely. With that, they headed back to the Shops just as the rest of the Team was getting ready to shut things down. Indeed, Tuesday was an evening of great success.

Thursday, the mighty Weed Team reconvened to continue the battle against its green foe. Mike Taylor, Heather, Anthony, and Steve Wilson had planned to go down the Zoo Line to take on the abundant foliage encroaching on the line. In fact, Mike T. estimates that at least three days of working down there will be needed before trains can run on it. But, events forced Mike T. to call an audible and, instead, led the Team down to Hood where pole-saws and chainsaws were deployed against trespassing trees. It's truly an amazing job the Weedies do to keep that lengthy line open and accessible and, in doing such, they keep the "Hood dream" alive.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, the Team welcomed two new members, Chris Howard and Eric Baugher from the recent docent training class. Welcome aboard, guys! They were joined by Joe, DJ, Mike H., Kyle Blackburn, Taka Blackburn, Frank, and Anthony. The Kalamazoo's new Detroit Diesel 3-53 engine was installed on Wednesday and the Team was anxious to try it out. Joe arrived early and got the exhaust system hooked up. Then, the magic moment occurred when it started right up. Man, did it sound nice. Unfortunately, it developed a significant hydraulic leak from one of the hose-fittings which forced us to shut it down. Mike H. and Joe tried to derive a patch which worked temporarily but couldn't hold under the pressure. So, instead of moving it under its own power, Mike H. towed it out with the forklift and moved it to Bay 5. This freed-up the tamper which would be needed on Saturday. Kyle, Frank, Chris H., DJ, and Taka then loaded the truck with all the tools and equipment we'd need for Saturday. Mike H., Joe, and Heather adjusted the brakes on the tamper and reinstalled the deck plates. The evening ended with some fireworks as Kyle grinded excess metal off the wing rail for the Switch 19 frog. Indeed, another good evening of progress.

Joe, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Mike Willis, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Mike H., DJ, Anthony, Frank, Weston Snyder, Matt Blackburn, and Taka were all on hand Saturday morning as Chris C. arrived with the sacred pink box. With doughnuts devoured, the briefing could take place. The major project for the day was to return to the track-raise under the Pioneer Bridge. Over recent months, our trusty track inspectors have noted that part of the raise done earlier this year had settled resulting in reverse-elevation in the curve-- where the outside rail was lower than the inside rail. Since the Mainline was blocked south of Broadway due to "Operation Big Lift," where four Santa Fe diesel locomotives were being lifted onto flatcars, the Team would use Saturday to fix this problem. But first, the Team headed to Old Sacramento and the K Street crossing where contractors rebuilding the waterfront had uncovered the track in the crossing. It was noted that several of the ties in the area were bad. So, the Team wanted to make sure the track was safe by installing gauge rods in the crossing. After the Team cleared the debris off the ties, it turned out that they weren't as bad as initially thought. Nonetheless, the gauge-rods were installed -- just to make sure. With that done, the Team headed south to the Pioneer Bridge. Weston piloted the tamper pulling the MOW work-train. At the area in question, track-jacks were deployed. The track-level was used to determine the proper new elevation throughout the curve. Joe and DJ got the jacks spaced along the length of the curve. Then, Pam, Anthony, Matt, Heather, Joe, Clem, DJ, and Mike W., and Steve dug pockets under the rails and installed the jacks. The Team then started cranking on them to lift the west rail to the determined height. This was old fashioned track-gang railroading at its best and provided an excellent opportunity for the Team to interpret railroading history. But, raising the track this way is hard work requiring strong backs to carry those jacks, crank on them, and pull them out. No wonder the big railroads sought to mechanize this process. Weston then brought in the tamper and, with Chris C. guiding from the ground, tamped the track to the new elevation. Jacks were then removed and hop-scotched down the line. The Team traded off the operation of the tamper so that everyone who wanted to could get a chance to operate this machine. There was lots of tamping to do so, plenty of opportunities for everyone. Mike H., DJ, Matt, Steve, and Anthony all got a shot at the tamper. But, it wouldn't be a proper MOW day without some mechanical difficulty and, when nuts and bolts started flying off one of the work-heads, the tamping operation was shut down. But, it was a good place to stop as we had already built a "run-off" and were doing mostly touch-up tamping. With that, the Team packed up its wares and headed back to town. Conductor Heather negotiated a quick crossing of the UP Main for the tamper to return to the Shops for repair. It had been a very successful day out on the line where two major projects were accomplished with few problems. The day's success is a testament to the skill, hard work, and dedication of the all-volunteer MOW Team.

This coming week, the MOW Team will be back at it on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. The Weed Team will deploy to Hood again on Thursday as work at the K Street crossing will block the deployment of the man-lift. Meet at 8:30 in the Shops. Saturday, the Zoo Line beckons for the MOW Team which will start promptly at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks, as always, to everyone!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



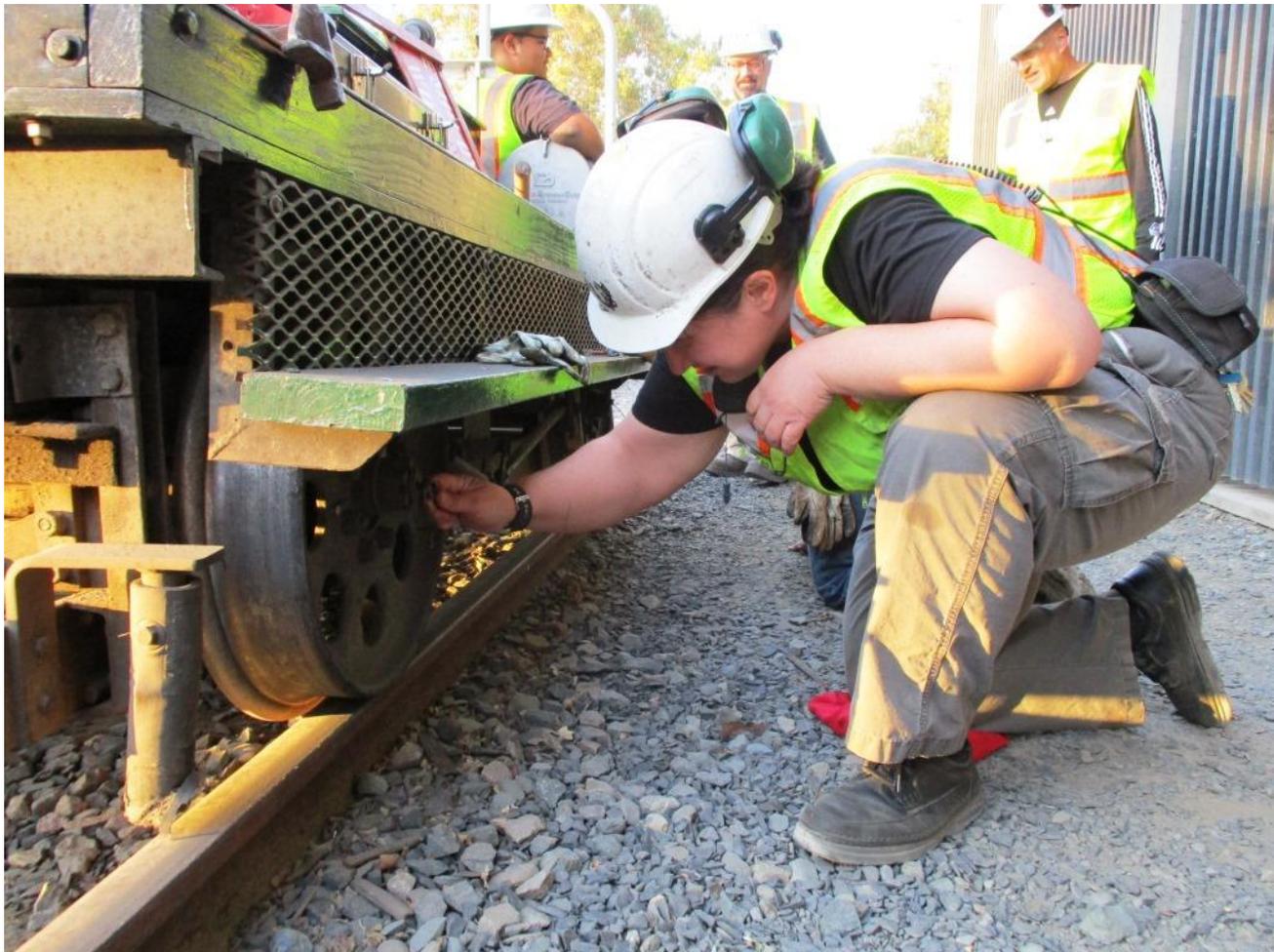
DJ and Dave get the switches lined for switching the equipment around



Anthony pulls the flatcars needed by the Weed Team off the 150 Track



DJ moves the Jackson 125 off the North Turntable Lead and onto the old 150 track



Heather fixes one of the broken shunting wires on the motorcar



Dave brings out the grease bucket



Anthony clears debris from between the point and stock-rail



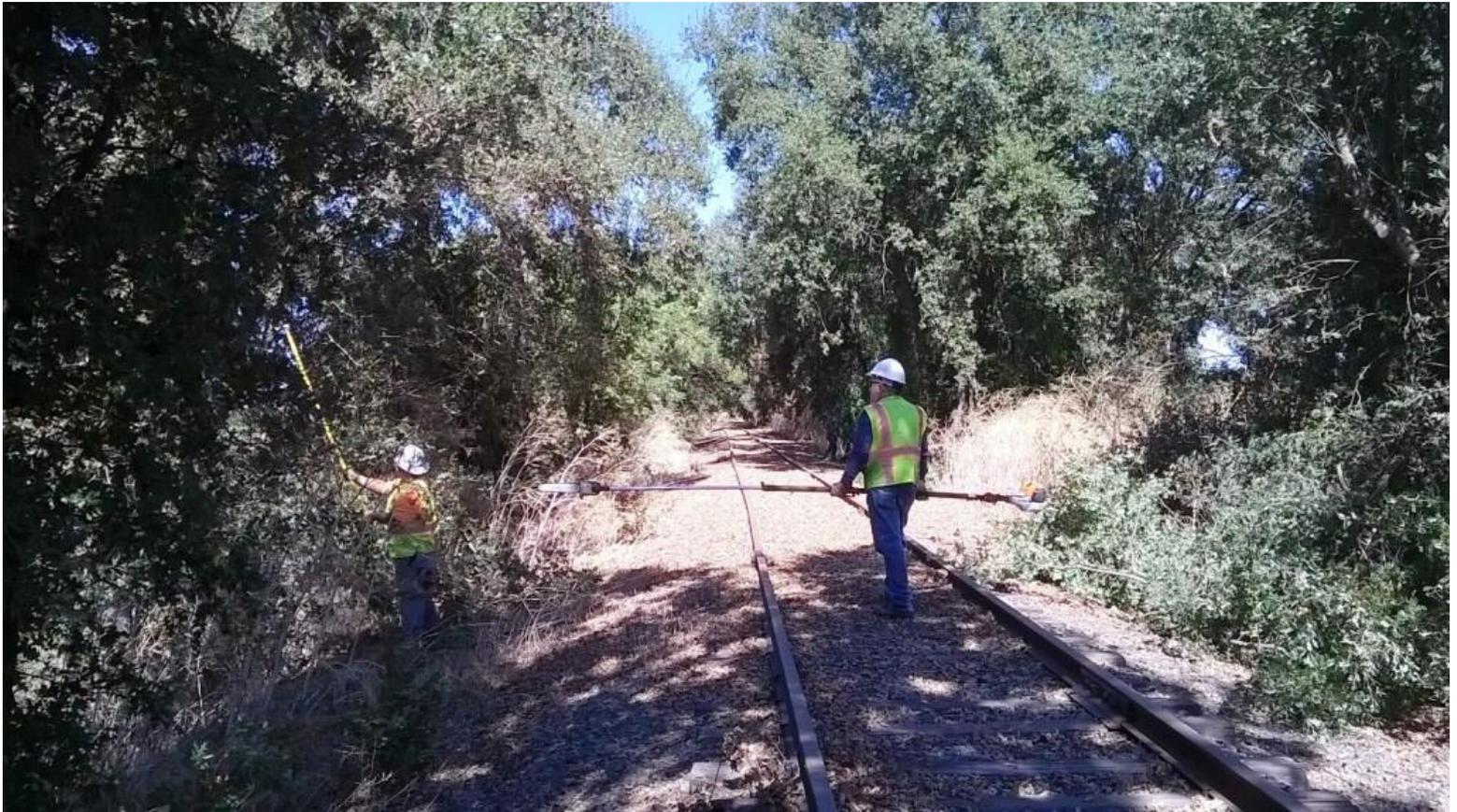
Dave slathers grease on the switch-plates



Steve W., Anthony, and Mike T. clear the Hood Line of invading branches



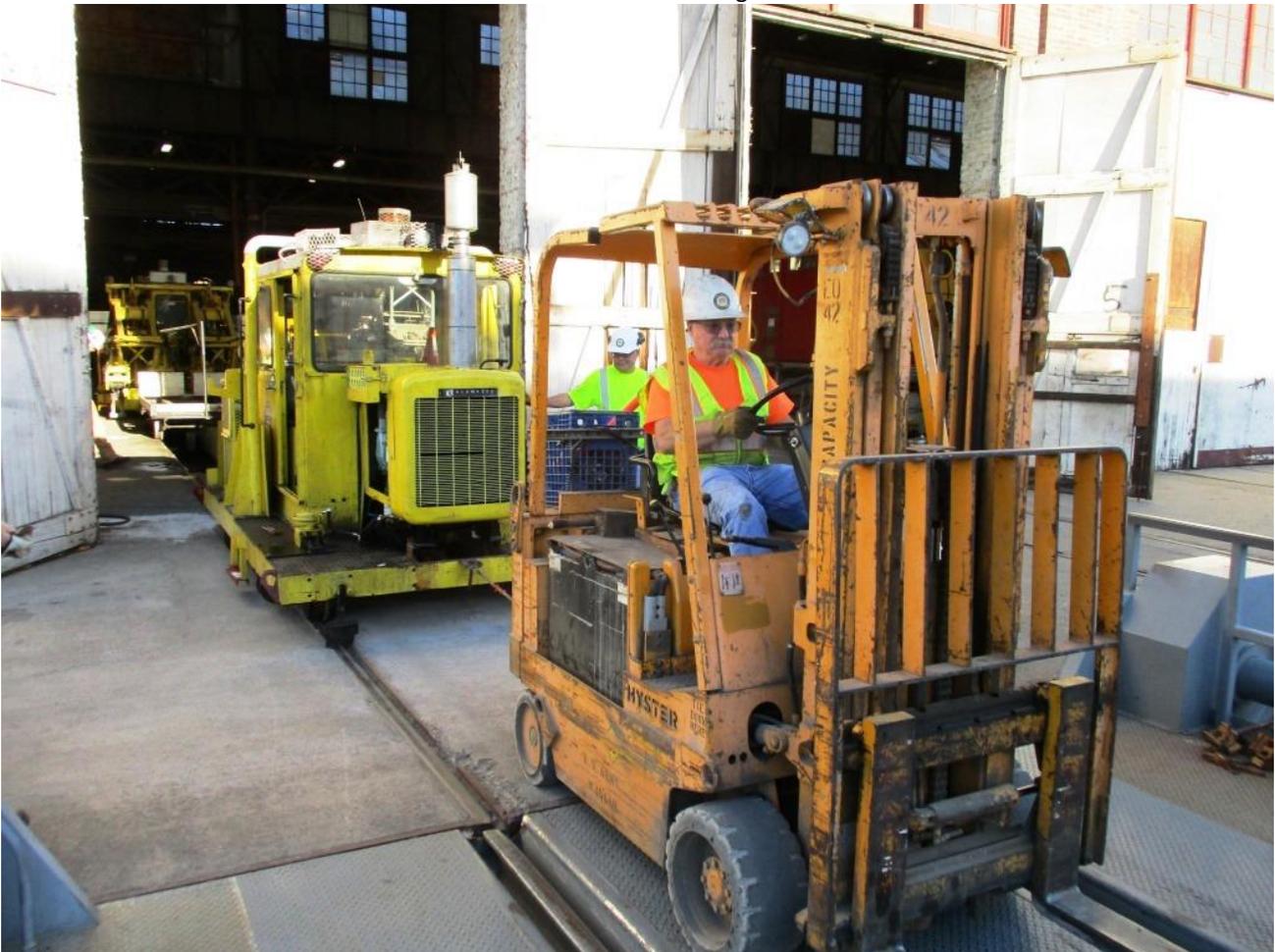
Further down the line, Mike T. watches as Anthony uses the pole saw to take on a wayward branch



Anthony and Steve W. keep the Hood Line clear



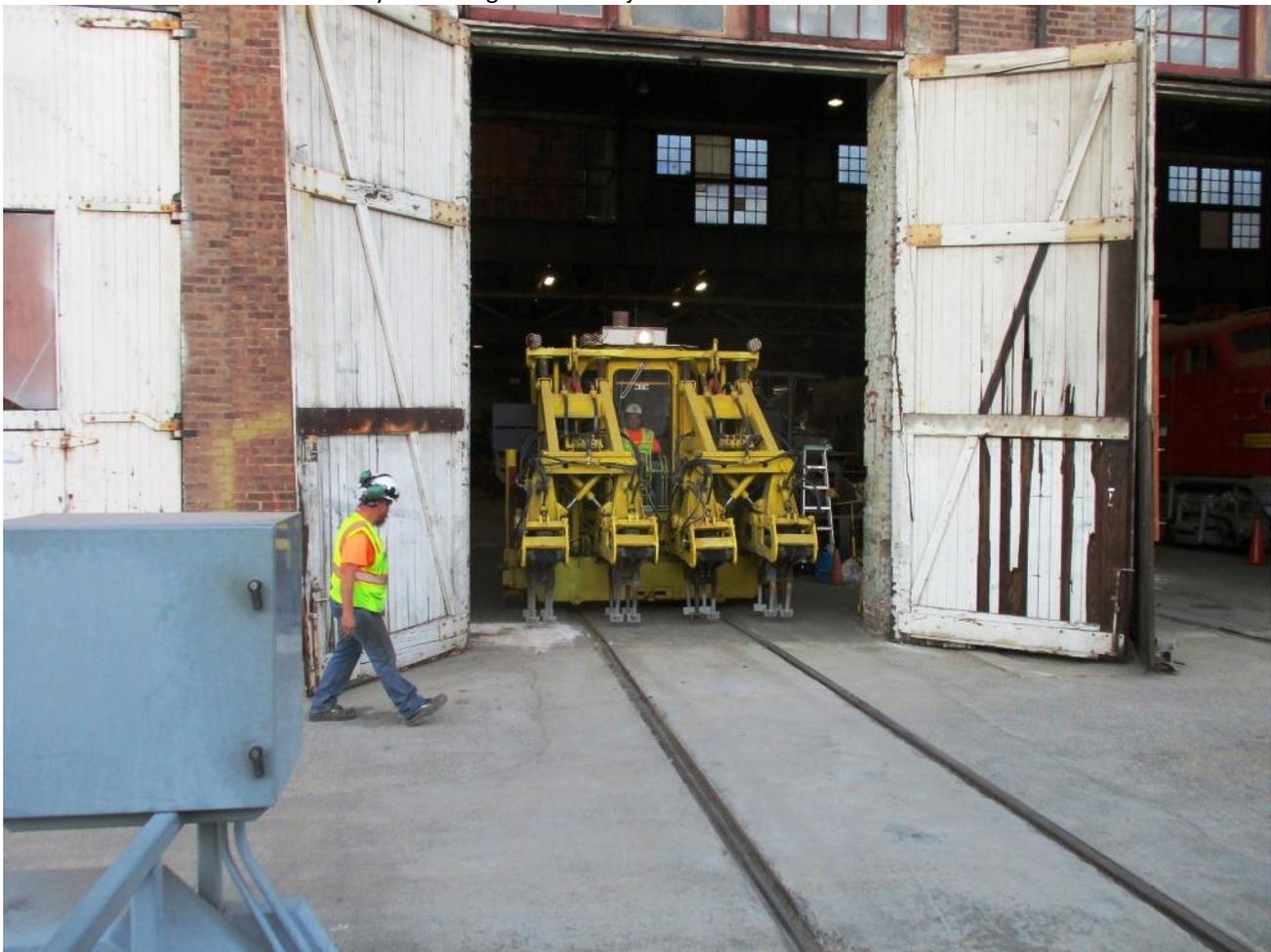
Joe reattaches the muffler to the new engine of the Kalamazoo



Unfortunately, the hydraulic leak forces Mike H. on the forklift to move the Kalamazoo by other means than under its own power



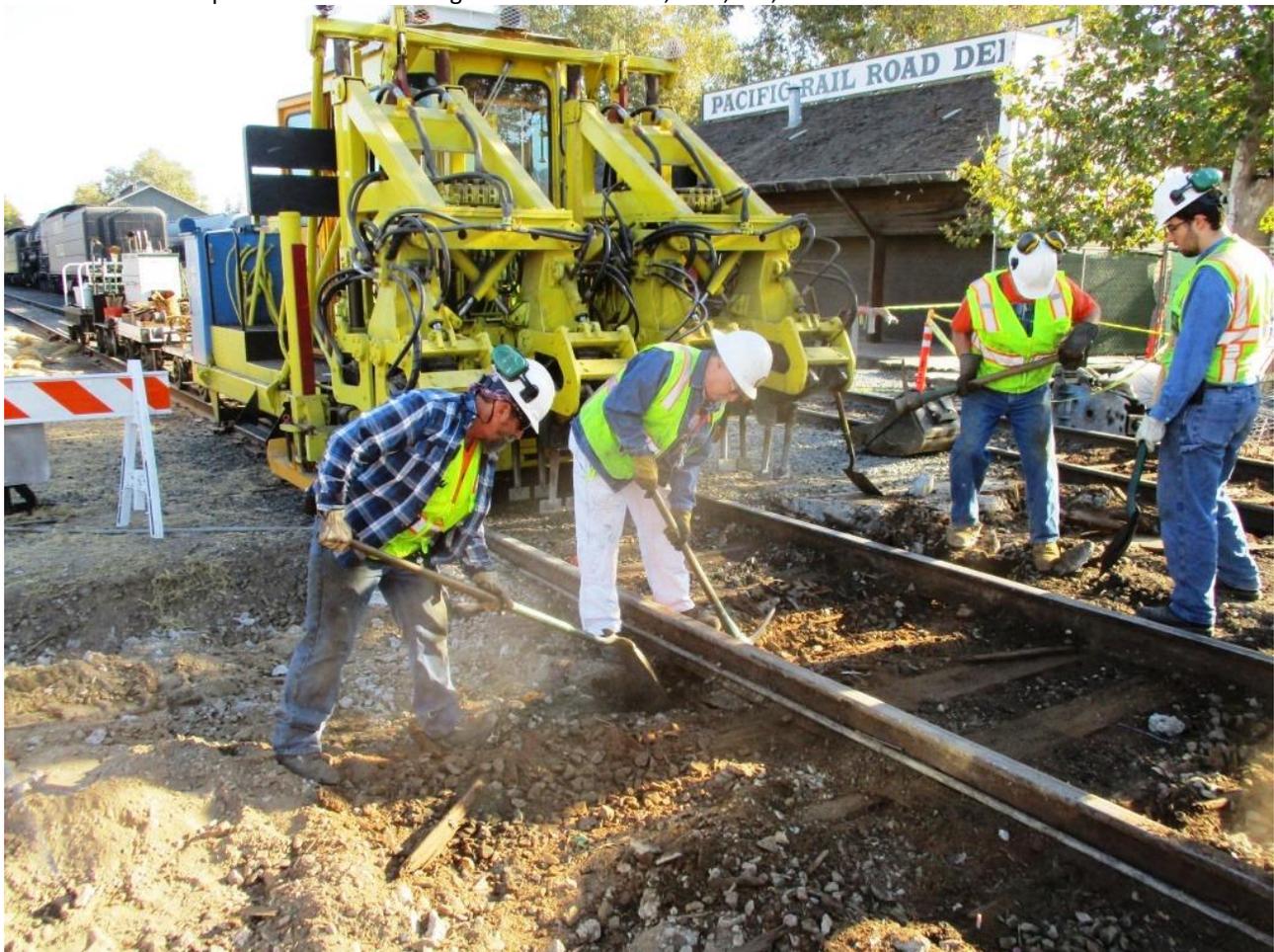
Kyle and DJ get the track-jacks loaded onto the truck



Mike H. moves the tamper out of the building to test the new and adjusted brake-pods



At the exposed K Street Crossing in Old Sacramento, Pam, Joe, and Chris C. clear debris off the ties



Joe, Mike H., Clem, and Weston clean-up the Old Main and dig-out pockets under the rails for the installation of gauge-rods



Matt and Mike H. get the gauge-rod under the rail



Steve and Joe get another gauge-rod installed



Mike H. and Clem adjust the gauge-rod as it is placed



Matt and Weston tighten-down the clamps on the gauge-rod



At the track-raise site, Joe deploys track-jacks from the back of the truck



Pam gets to work digging pockets under the rail for the track-jack to be inserted



DJ, Anthony, and Heather transport track-jacks down the line



The Team sets up jacks through the curve



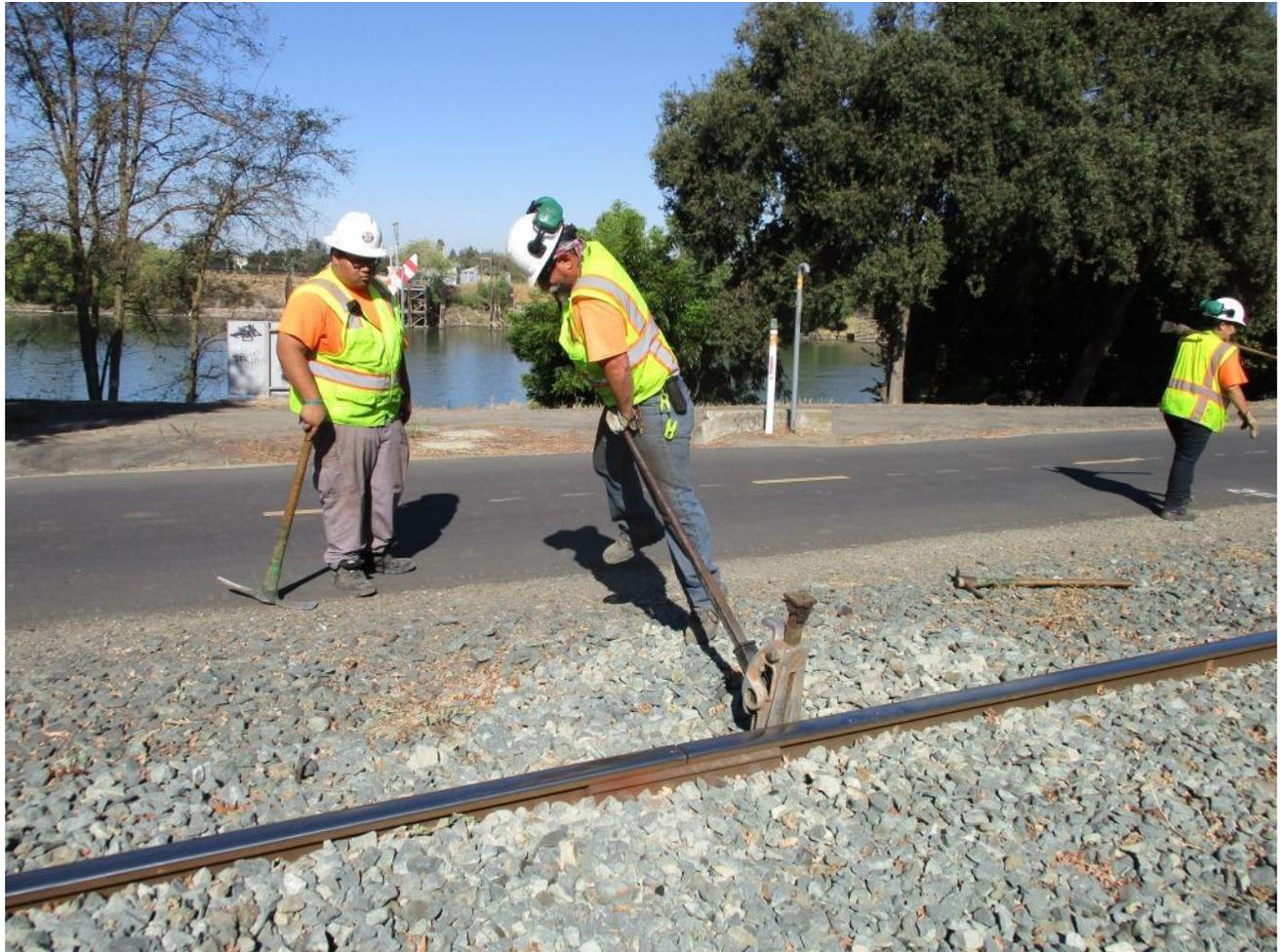
Pam and Heather get jacks under the rail



Mike W. monitors the track-level as Steve and DJ combine their efforts to crank on the jack



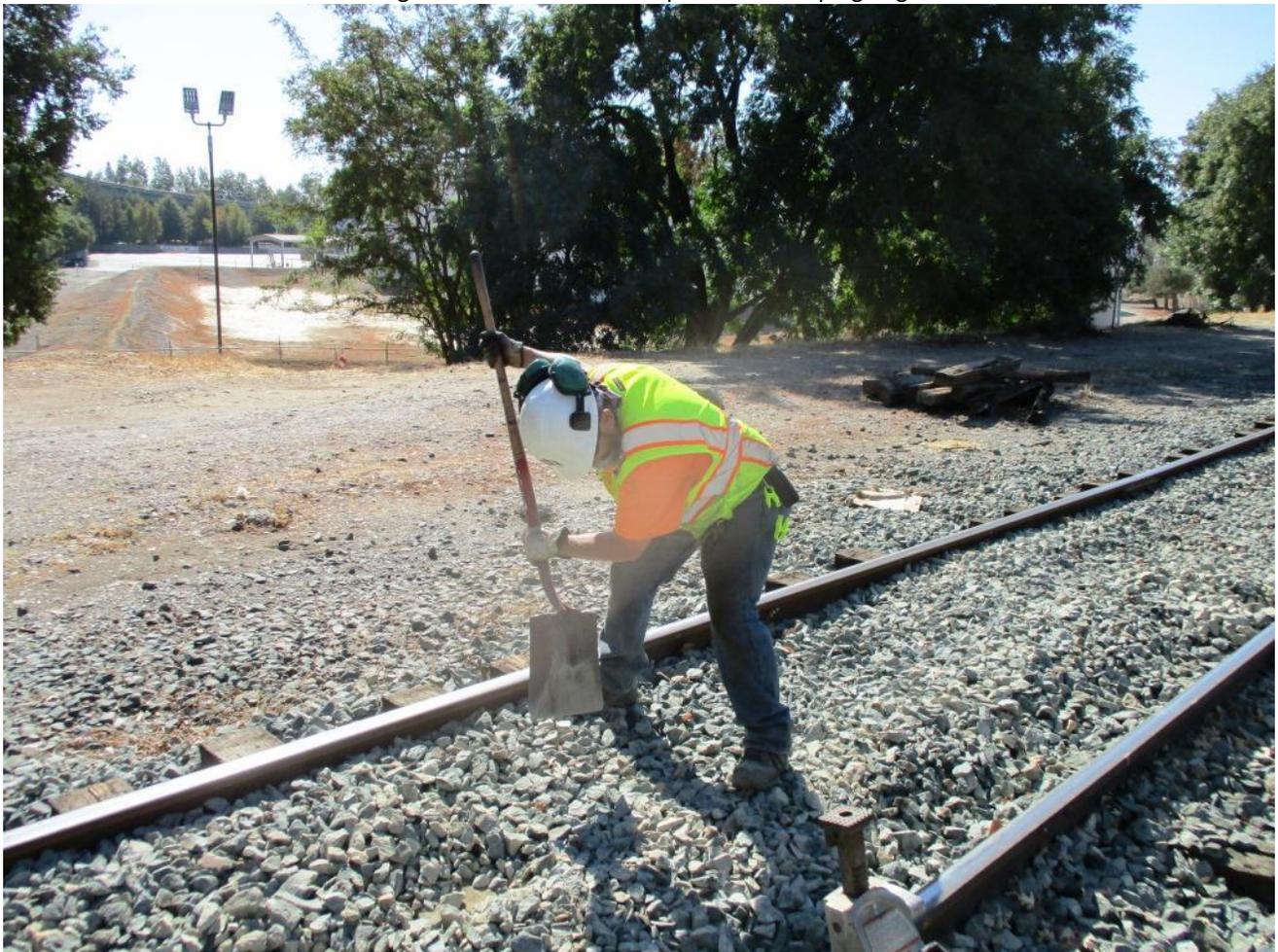
Yea! It worked! Mike W. confirms that the west rail has risen to the desired elevation



Joe puts his back into it



Chris guides Weston in the tamper as the tamping begins



Joe moves rock off the top of ties to make them easier for Team Tamper to spot them



Mike H. is in the tamper now, guided by Frank, as Weston prepare to pull a jack



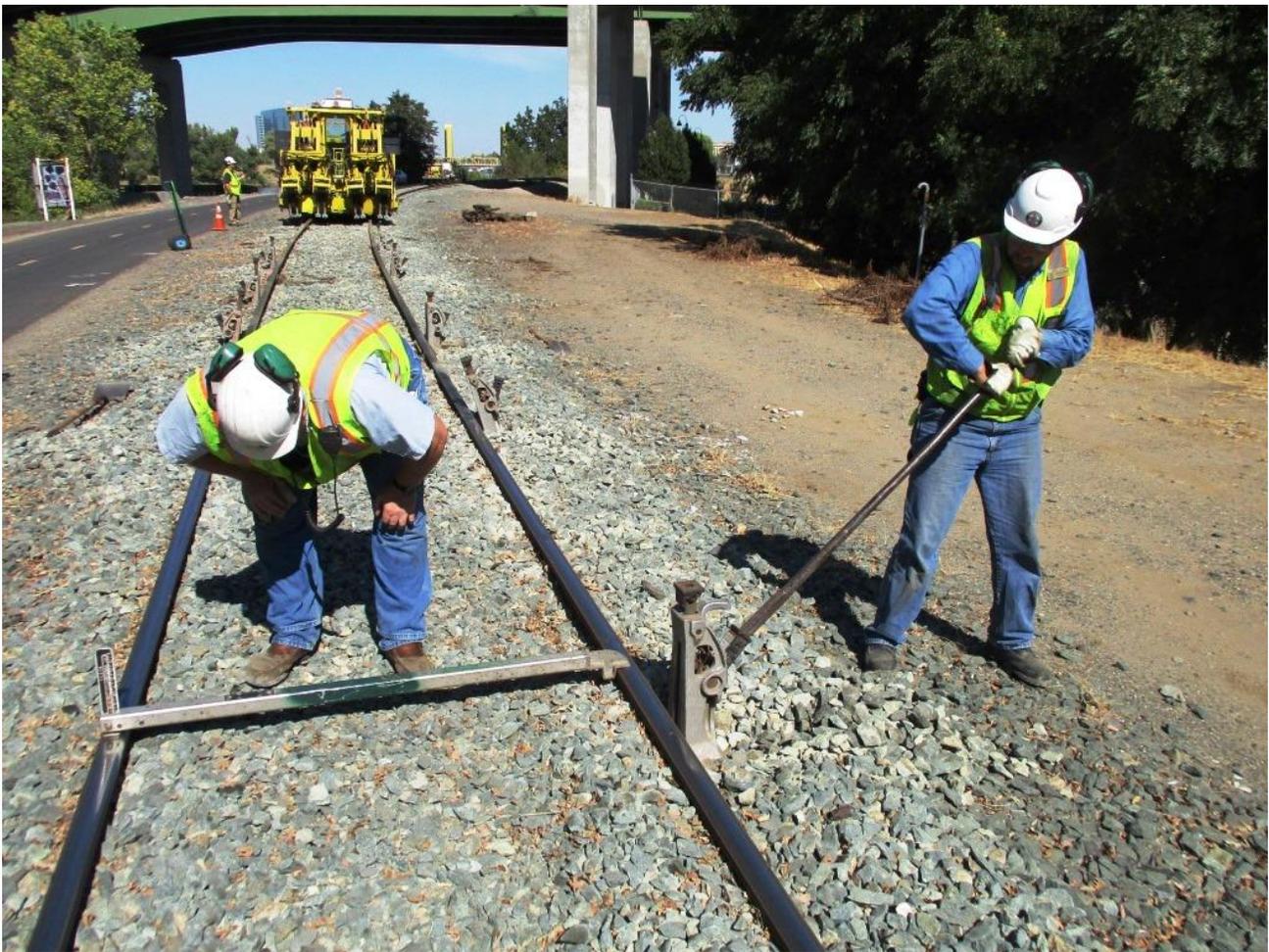
Next, DJ gets a go at tamping the track while Chris guides from the ground



As we build a run-off at the end of the raise, Weston jacks-up the east rail



Super-elevation has been reestablished on the west rail in the curve and now we return to level as the curve straightens out



Chris verifies the cross-level as Weston cranks on the jack



With Matt in the tamper now, Steve prepares to pull a jack



Uh oh, somethin' ain't right. Chris notices nuts and bolts dropping from the work-head of the tamper



With nuts and bolts flying out all over the place, Steve and Mike H. check out what's going on as Matt "photo-bombs" the picture



Another opportunity for interpreting good old fashioned track-gang railroading as the Team hand-tamps the last tie to be tamped



Day is done: the tamper returns to the Shops for repairs