

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 1, 2017. Freedom's torch shone brightly on your MOW Team this week as the tracks were clear of impediments for our equipment move. So, let's get this update started before an iron curtain of tyranny descends upon us again!

With the Transfer Table Lead finally clear, DJ Mandella, Heather Kearns, Alan Hardy, Gene Peck, Anthony Filamor, and Mike Harris were raring to go on Tuesday. Anthony, DJ, and Heather took on moving the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, a tie-laden flatcar, and the Weed Team's chipper over to Old Sacramento. Conductor Heather briefed the crew then toned-up Dispatcher 62 in Omaha and arranged a quick crossing of the UP Main. In Old Sac., DJ was the switchman and Anthony moved the scarifier-inserter along with a bundle of ties spotted on the North Turntable Lead. The two bundles of ties would be consolidated up on the 150 Track and the chipper dropped onto the North Turntable Lead behind the scarifier. It was a very successful operation and, thanks to such a great crew, was completed with alacrity. Meanwhile, back at the Boiler Shop, Mike H. located and replaced the faulty fuel return line in the front end loader. It was a very good evening, indeed, for your MOW Team.

The Weed Team's fall campaign continued on Thursday down at Hood as Mike Taylor, Ed Kottal, and Steve Wilson went a-huntin' for invasive species fouling our line. Trees were trimmed and bushes obliterated as the Weedies worked their way north from Hood. The Team did stop to appreciate the natural beauty and abundant wildlife along the Hood Line. This isolated rail line is located alongside the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Restoring the Hood Line would provide the public with a means to access to this region of great biodiversity. Currently, most of it is inaccessible. Fortunately, the mighty Weed Team is keeping the Hood dream alive in hopes that, someday, everyone will be able to experience this beautiful part of California's Great Central Valley.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, DJ, Chris Carlson, Alan, Joe Margucci, Frank Werry, Mike H., and Heather kept this incredible week of progress progressing. Thursday evening started with a planning session for Saturday's return to the Zoo Line. It was decided that some rearrangement of equipment over in Old Sac. was necessary to provide a better distribution of resources on that line. Frank, Chris, and DJ took on the task. DJ fired up the Jackson 125 and Chris the scarifier. These machines were switched around so that the scarifier could get out first. Again, this was accomplished quickly and without incident. Joe got the motorcar out of the container and repaired the busted shunting wire on one of its wheels that triggers the grade-crossing warning systems. When the Team returned to the Shops, they joined Mike H. and Alan who were putting the Big Green Machine's exhaust system back together after the engine's recent major overhaul. DJ removed the deck-plate over the brake-pod on the tamper which is being replaced. Indeed, the Team enjoyed an evening of MOW fun while getting a great deal accomplished.

Doughnuts arrived before dawn on Saturday as Team members arrived early to deploy equipment in Old Sac. so that the Team could make an escape from town. With equipment in all set up and ready to roll in Old Sac., back at the Shops, Alan, Pam Tatro, Michael Florentine, Clem Meier, Anthony, Kyle Blackburn, Taka Blackburn, Mary DiPietro, Frank, Chris, and Harry Voss received a briefing on the plan of the day. The Team would head down to the Sutterville/Zoo Line after a two-week hiatus (because the tracks between the Shops and Old Sac. were blocked) where new ties would be pulled under the rails and old, rotten ties extracted. Alan operated the scarifier which headed out first. It needed to be at the south end of the Zoo Line so that it could work north. Next in line was Anthony on the motorcar, which pulled the bundles of ties and tools. Then Chris took out the Jackson 125 which would pull old ties from the north working its way south. The Team executed the plan brilliantly. Taka, Mike F., and Kyle rolled new ties off the tie-bundles at the empty tie-cribs. Anthony skillfully piloted the motorcar for tie distribution. Mike F., Mary, and Clem worked with Alan in the scarifier to dig-out the empty tie-cribs and pull new ties beneath the rails. Chris and Harry worked from the top of the hill south pulling old, rotten ties with the Jackson 125. This operation continued swimmingly throughout the morning. Clem and Mike F. got ties lined up. Mary attached the scarifier's inserter to each new tie which Alan then pulled in with the hydraulic winch. After disbursing all the new ties, Kyle and Taka then lined them up for insertion near the cribs while Chris and Harry pulled-out more bad ties. It was one Team with three simultaneous operations going at once!

Following lunch, Kyle, Taka, Alan, Mary, Chris, and Anthony remained on site for more MOW fun. Taka and Kyle soon were working with Alan to insert new ties. Chris continued pulling bad ties. Mary and Anthony collected tie-plates that were strewn about. Working on the steep hillsides did take its toll on the Team. Ties would slide down the hill and would need to be pulled back up by hand. Walking parallel to the track on those hillsides also was quite wearing. But, the work continued throughout the afternoon without complaint. The final act of the day was to do a general sweep of the line for wayward tie-plates. A full count was then made of how many ties got pulled and changed. In the end, 64 new ties were put in the ground on Saturday. An additional 70 ties were pulled out which will be replaced in the coming weeks. Considering the tie work done in the previous weeks, we have now changed out 166 ties as part of the third phase of the Zoo Line restoration. That, plus the 180 ties changed out in phase-one takes us to **346 ties replaced on the on the line, so far** – and, we're not finished. Nonetheless, Saturday was an amazing day of progress – probably the best so far on this project – thanks to the fantastic volunteers of the MOW Team.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather as usual on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the Erecting Shop at or before 5 o'clock p.m. The Weed Team is deploying its wares, as well, on Thursday. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, the Team will again be blocked from heading south by "Operation Big-Lift," where those old Santa Fe diesel locomotives are being lifted onto flatcars. Therefore, we may or may not be able to get down to the Zoo Line. In any event, the Team will be busy on Saturday starting with doughnuts at 8 o'clock a.m. As always, thanks very much to the dedicated, hardworking folks of the MOW Team who are succeeding at building a better railroad!

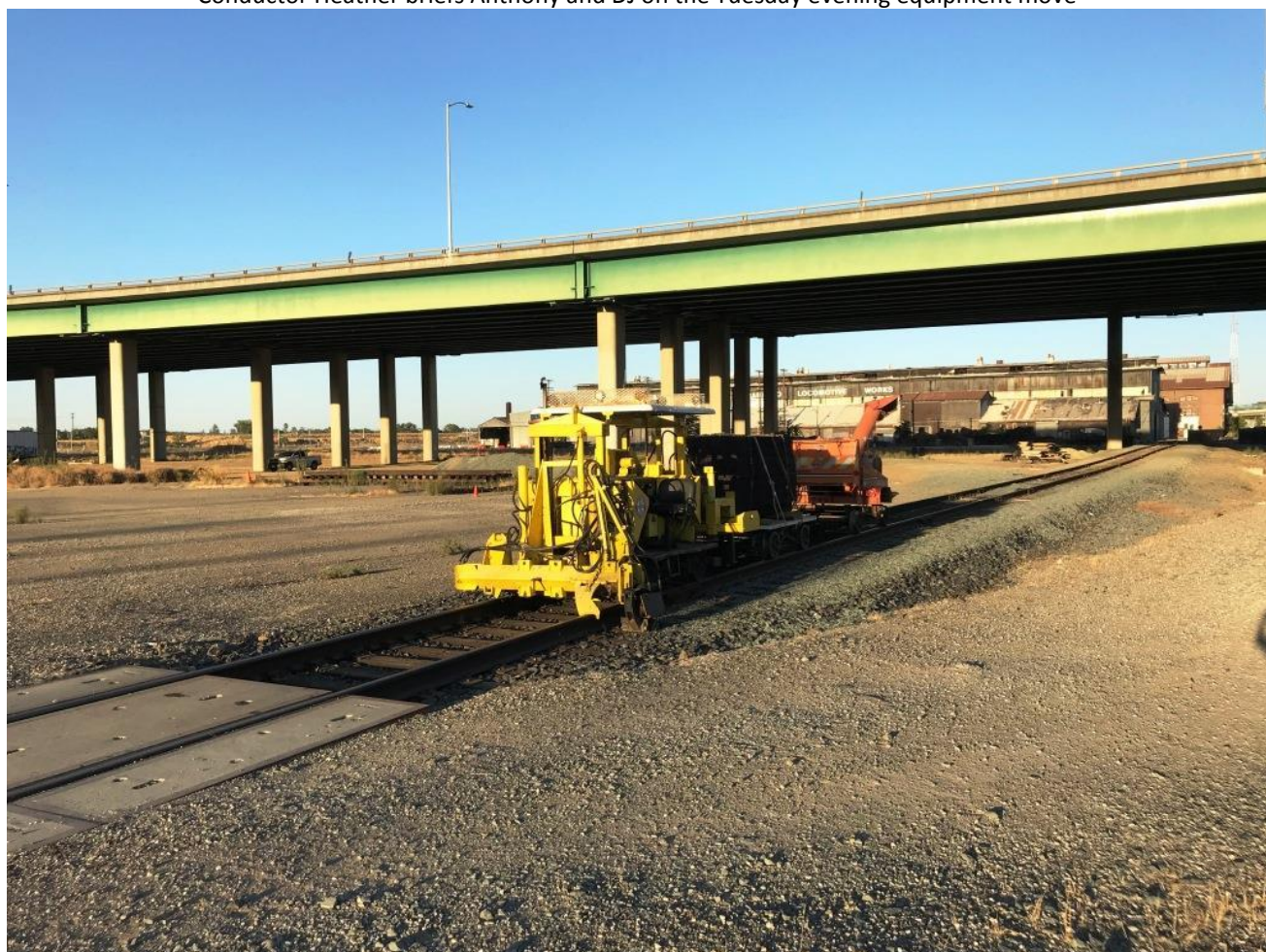
See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.





Conductor Heather briefs Anthony and DJ on the Tuesday evening equipment move

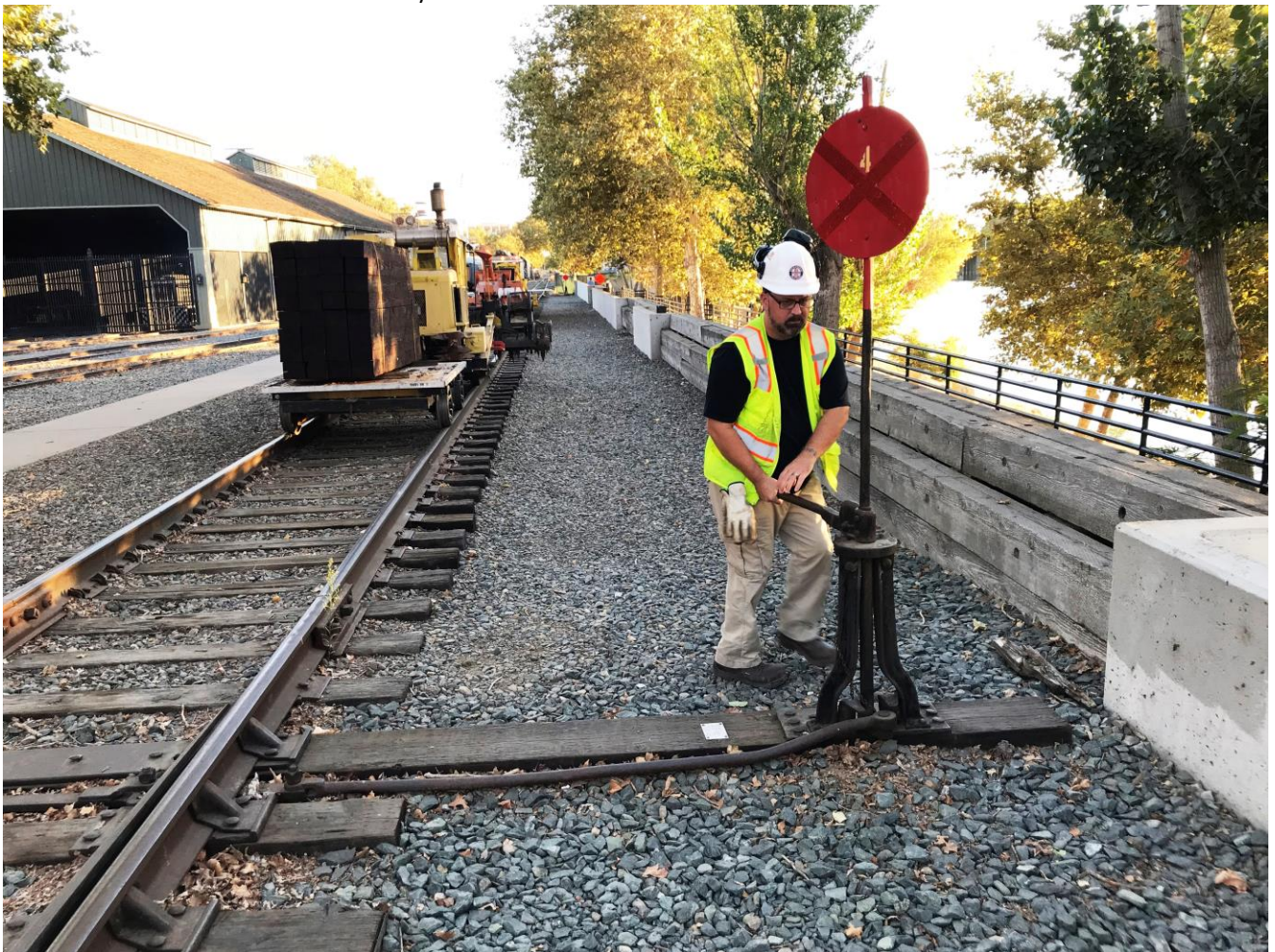


All dressed up and ready to go: the Jackson 125 is primed to pull the ties and chipper over the UP Main



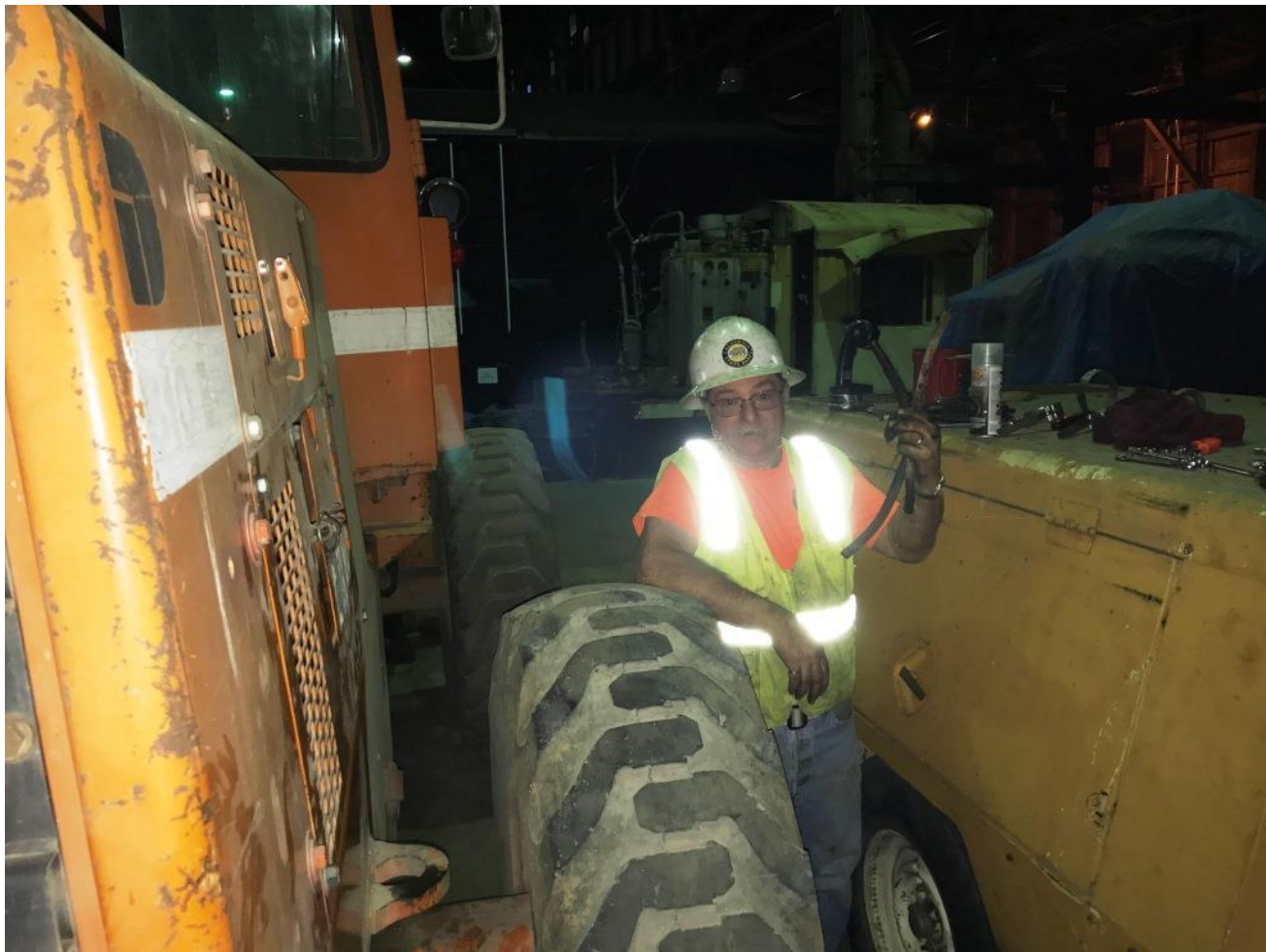


Anthony moves the scarifier off the North Turntable Lead

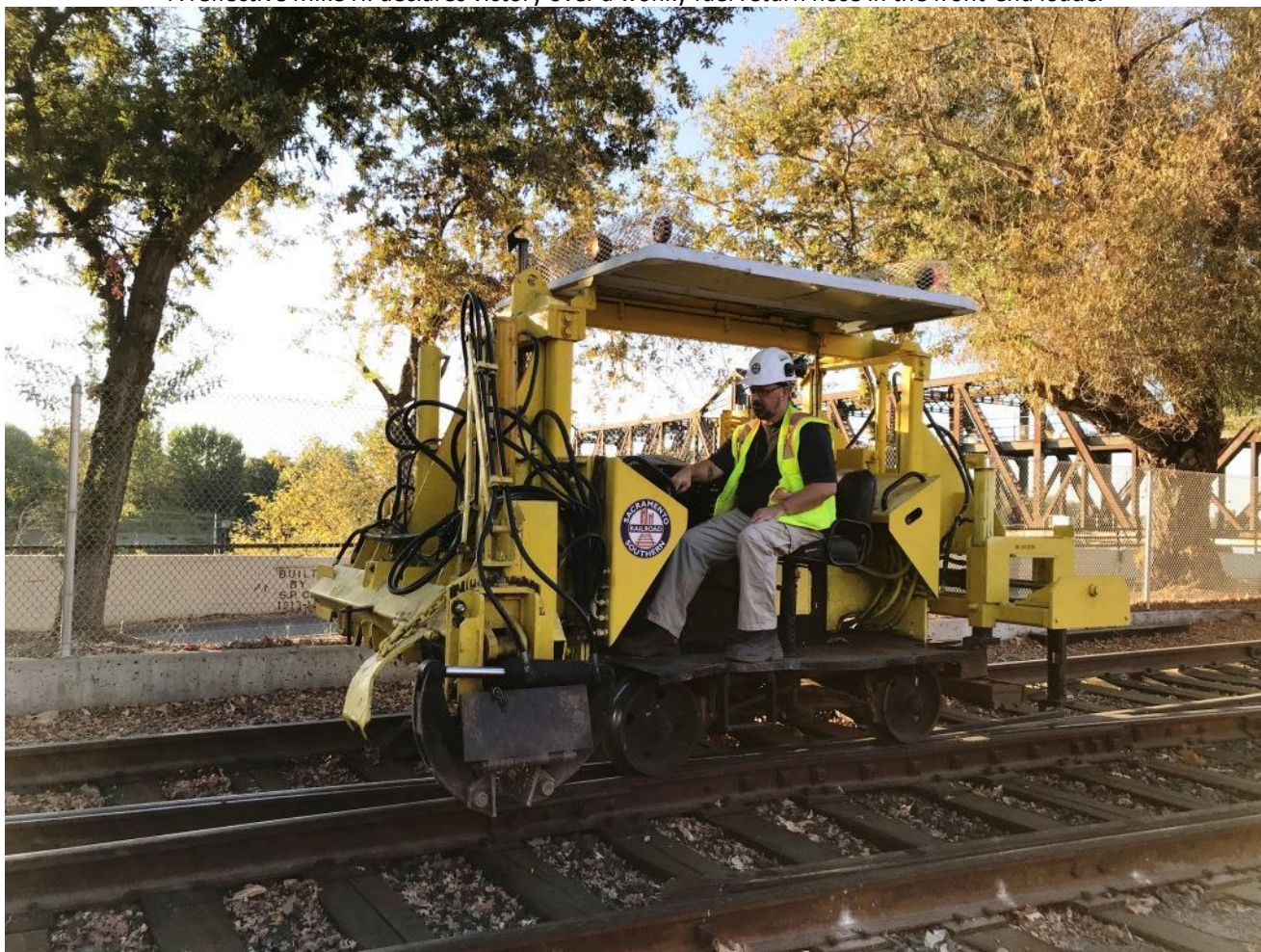


DJ Throws Switch 4 to move the tie-laden flatcar onto the 150 Track





A reflective Mike H. declares victory over a wonky fuel return hose in the front-end loader



Thursday night's equipment re-arrange included DJ moving the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger off the 150 Track





Don't worry. Joe's just fine. He's just fixing the shunting wire on the motorcar's wheel and axel



Chris moves the scarifier onto the 150 Track



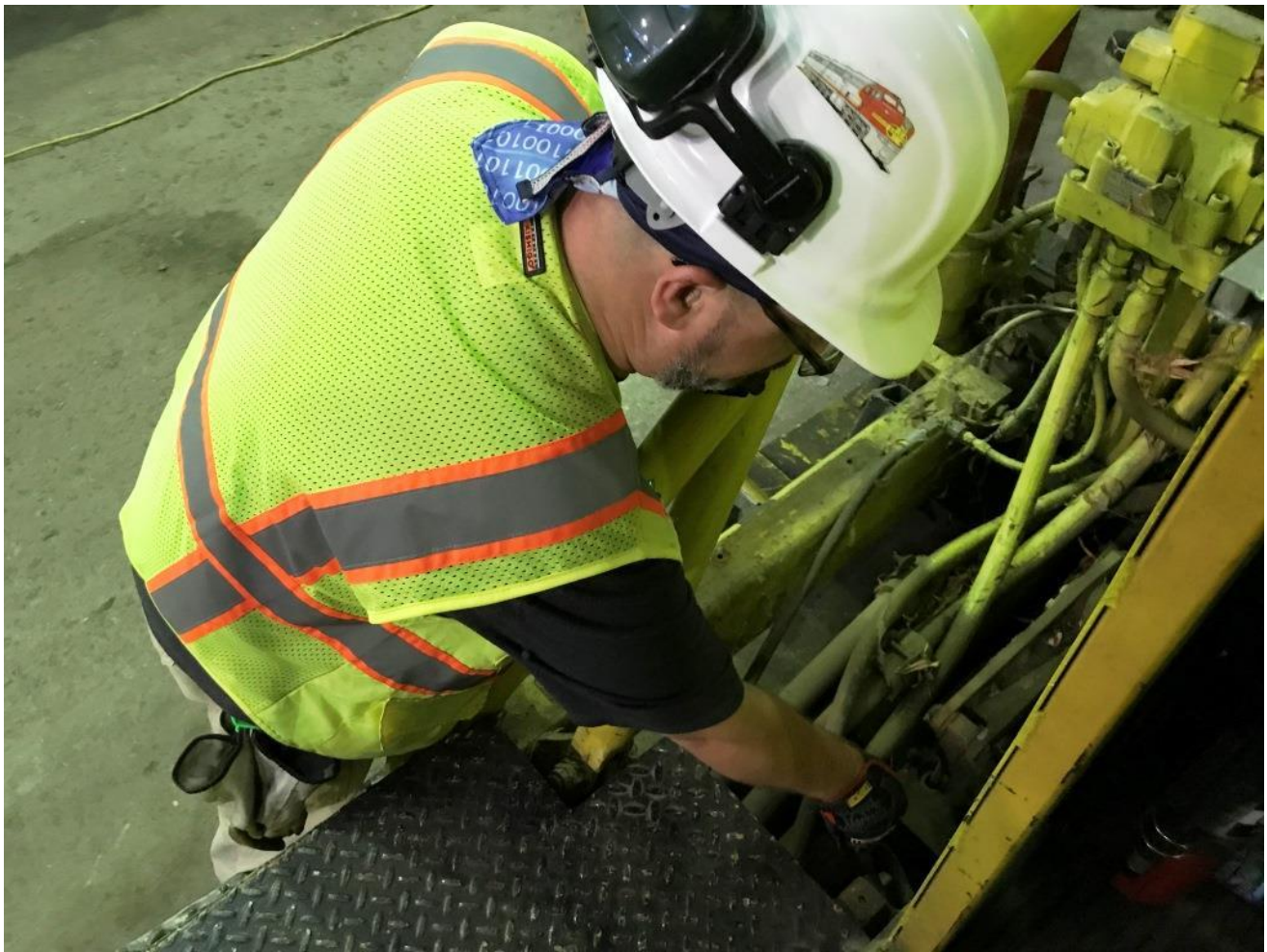


Mike H. getting the Big Green Machine back together

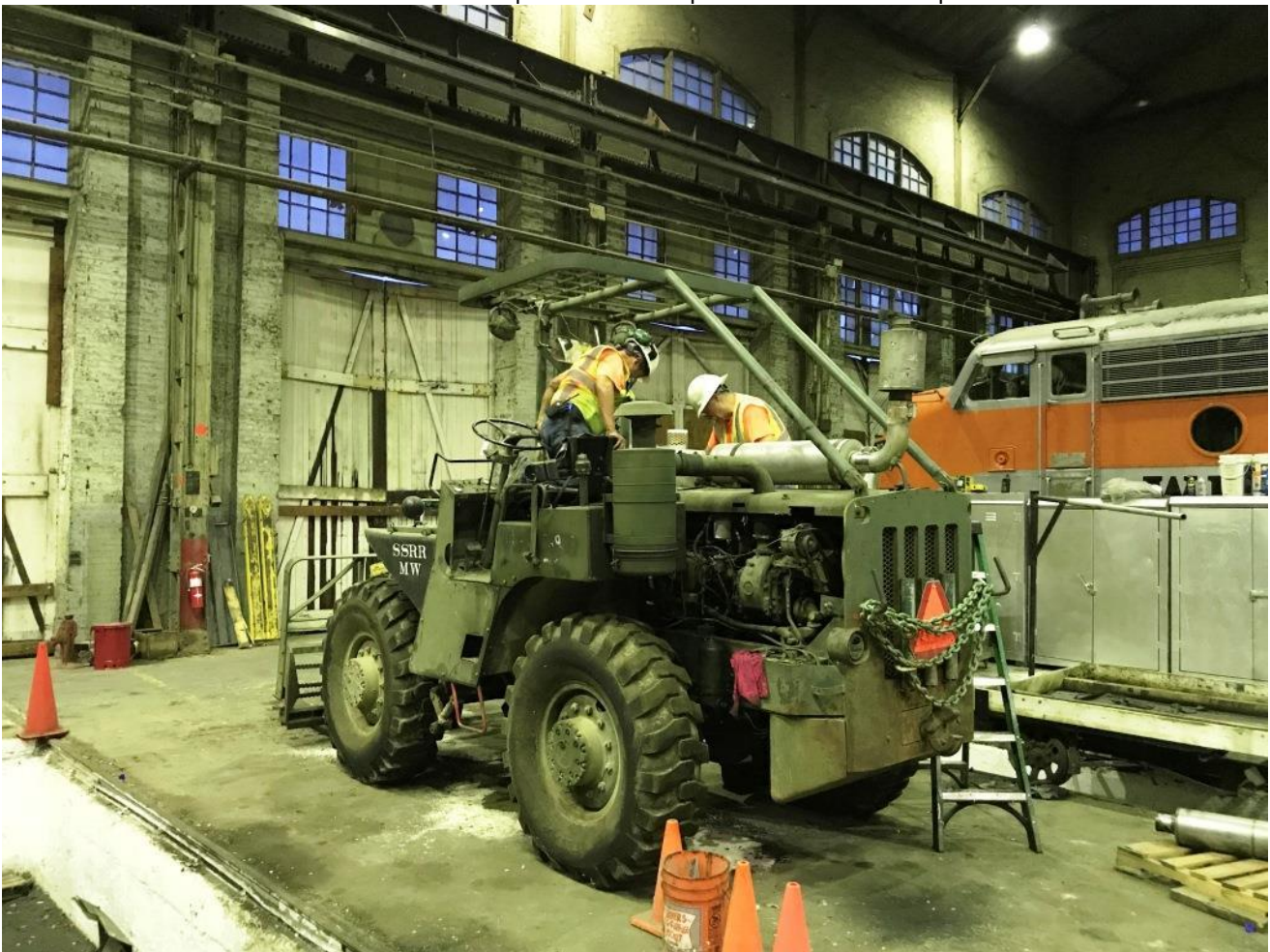


Alan uses the forklift with the stinger attachment to lift the exhaust system back onto the Big Green Machine





DJ removes the deck-plate on the tamper to access the brake pod



Joe and Mike H. reattach the exhaust system on Big Green





Your MOW Team, Mike F., Kyle, Anthony, Mary, Taka, and Chris, ready to roll



And, ready to stop. The MOW Team arrives on the Zoo Line





Kyle, Taka, and Mike F. roll a new tie off the bundle



Taka and Kyle drop more ties...





...Some of which roll down the hill and have to be dragged back up

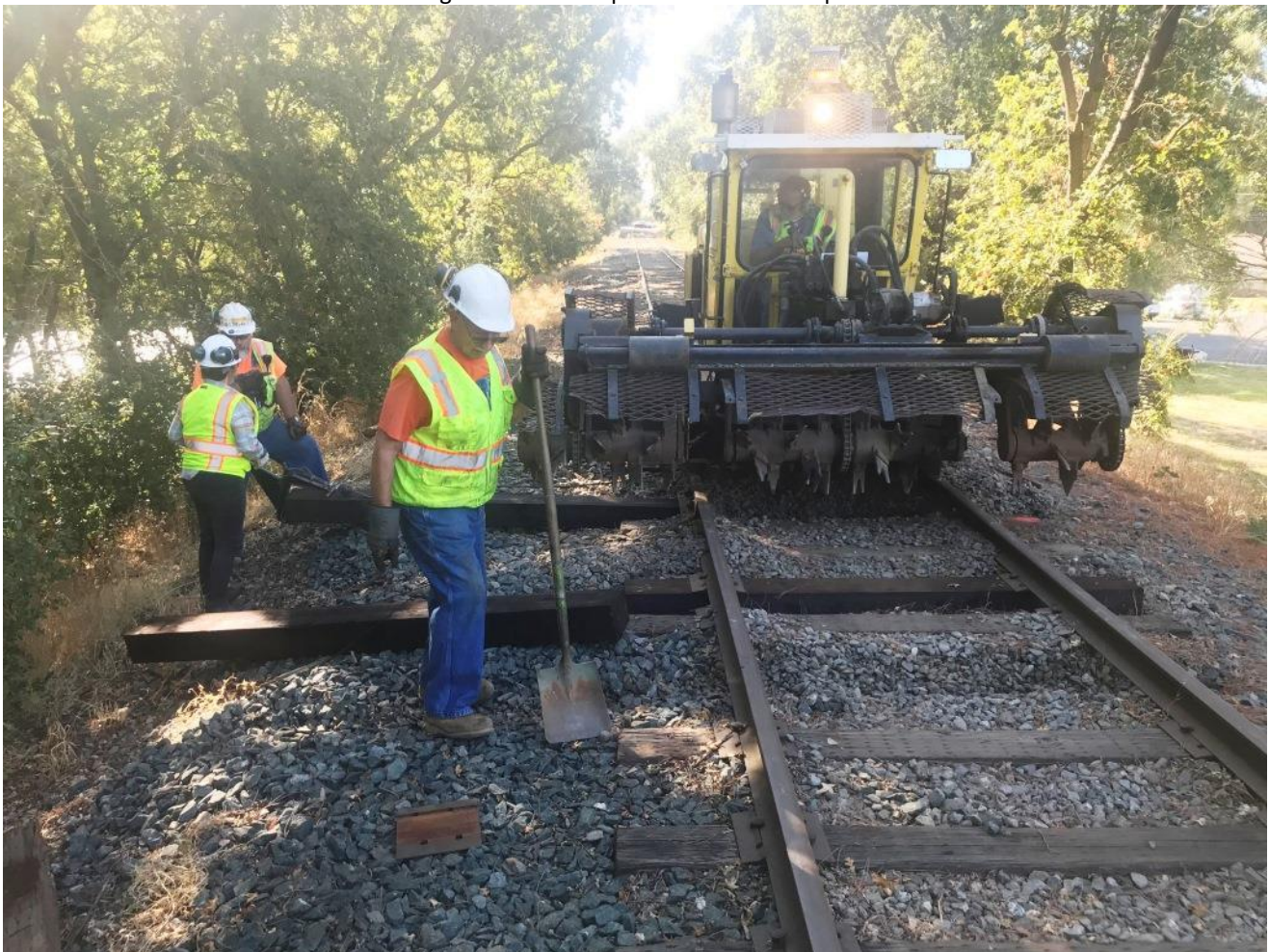


Mike F. and Mary line a tie up for insertion



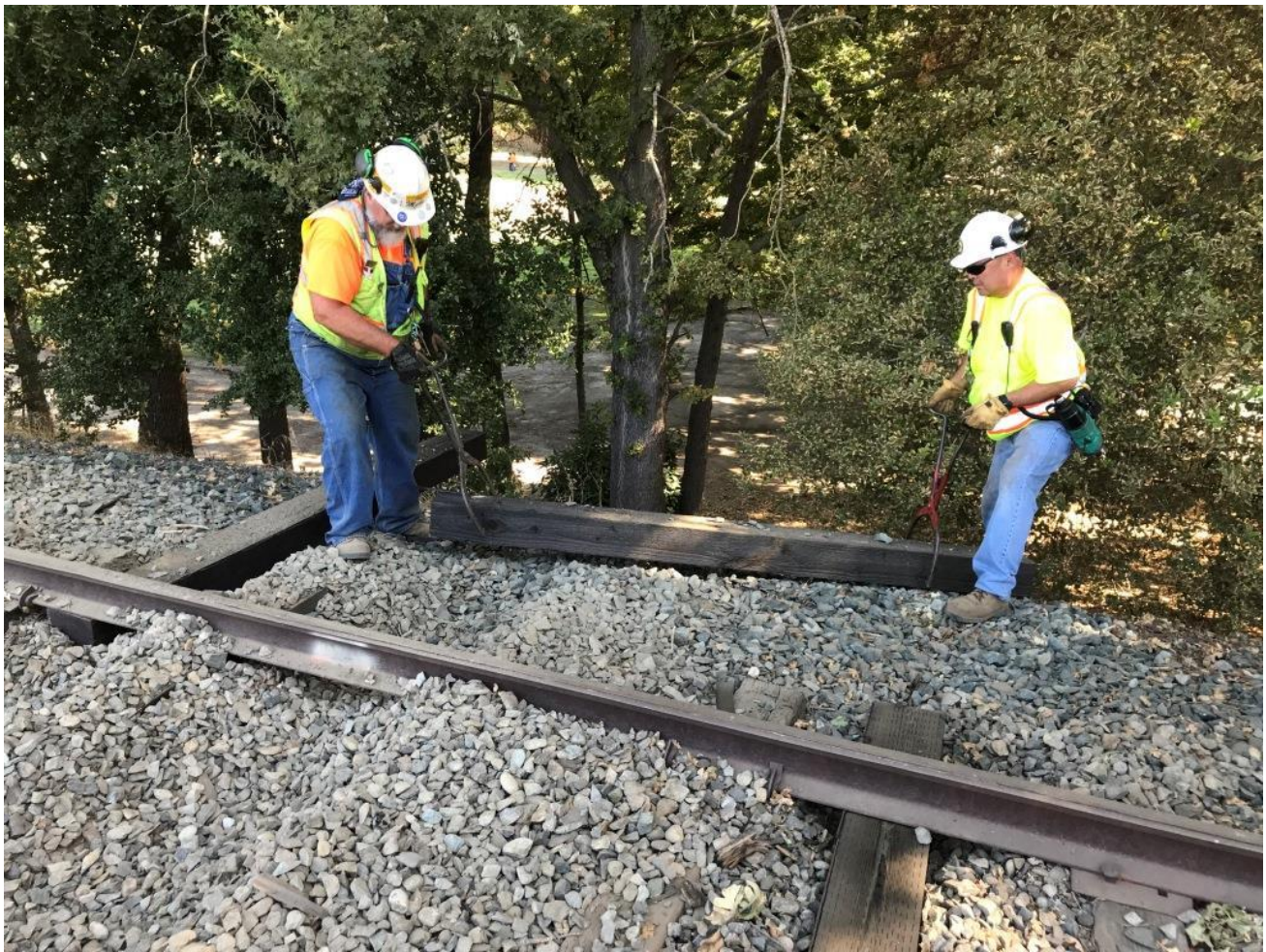


Clem gets a tie lined up for the scarifier to pull in



Mike F. shows Mary how the inserter function on the scarifier works as Clem clears rock from under the rails





Mike F. and Taka retrieve a wayward tie...



...And, get it lined up for its journey under the rails





Alan brings in the scarifier-inserter and, with Mike F.'s help, inserts a new tie under the rails



Taka now works with the scarifier-inserter to pull in another new tie





Chris and Harry pull spikes on a tie slated for removal



Chris on the 125 slides an old, rotten tie out from under the rails





By lunch time, evidence of our work was plentiful: removed ties are on the right, new ties ready to insert are on the left



Taka guides a new tie as Alan in the scarifier pulls it under the rails





Kyle gets the next set of ties inserted



The Team does a sweep of the line to locate any tie-plates that may be lying about