

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 29, 2017. This was a banner week for our machines! Thanks to the Foundation's support, we're beating back the mechanical malfunctions that have sidelined our machines. So, let's not sideline this update any further.

The mechanical mayhem started early Tuesday when Heather Kearns and Alan Hardy met a mechanic from Valley Forklift who we called out to repair the broken brakes on both green machines. Brake calipers needed replacing on the Big Green Machine and the blown master cylinder on Green Machine 2 (GM2) was removed for rebuild. Also on Tuesday morning, our order of brand new, creosote-soaked ties was delivered (I love the smell of creosote in the morning). Thanks to our friends Bill Martin and Berry Leviton in the Restoration Shops, the ties were unloaded using the Shop's 15,000-pound forklift. Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Chris Carlson, Eric Baugher, Joe Margucci, Frank Werry, Gene Peck, Harry Voss, Mike Harris, and Art Fluter joined Alan and Heather in the evening for more progress. Thanks to Chris C., the Team has acquired a second (used) hydraulic power unit which they managed to get working. This has the potential to double our spiking productivity (now all we need is another hydraulic spike-driver). Frank and Art picked up and organized one bundle of ties where the bands holding it together broke. Gene, Chris C., Joe, Mike H. and Chris H. got the wonky drive-gear on the Kalamazoo tug's hydraulic pump removed and then reinstalled the control panel. Alan headed to the Sutterville/Zoo track to measure the broken rail. It turns out to be an odd size – 30-feet, one-inch long. This means we have to cut a replacement rail to size and drill new bolt-holes. Then, he measured the distance between Sutterville Road and South Land Park Drive for the possible future addition of a siding track down there. What a productive evening. It's all almost too much to keep up with!

The miraculous Weed Team did miraculous work on Thursday down on the Sutterville/Zoo Line. Mike Taylor, Steve Wilson, Ed Kottal, Heather, and Dave Megeath cleared the overhead and side clearance issues that could have impacted any train headed down there. They sawed and cut and sliced and chipped more vegetative chum than you can shake a stick at (or a gas-powered chainsaw-on-a-stick for that matter). In two days' work, these proud Weedies tamed the jungle to the point where there's now a clear view from the top of the hill all the way to Sutterville Road. Thanks to this remarkable crew of extremely dedicated and hardworking Weedies, no vegetation defects will be logged on this track. Folks, this is the kind of behind the scenes work that rarely gets any notice yet is essential for trains to run. After all, no Weedies, no trains!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, the mechanical mayhem continued. The Valley Forklift mechanic returned to install the rebuilt master-cylinder in GM2. Then Steve Nemeth took it out and ran it thought its paces testing the brakes in every way he could. Steve N. reported that GM2's brakes were working at 100-percent efficiency! Using GM2, Steve N. unloaded the rail-mounted air-compressor's engine from the truck which Heather picked up earlier in the day. It's been professionally rebuilt after it went kablooe earlier this summer. DJ Mandella then moved it to the Erecting Shop with the yellow Hyster forklift (which got new tires this week). Matt McCracken, Mike H., Frank, and Alan headed over to Old Sacramento to rearrange the MOW Team's work-train consist to provide a more efficient order for use out on the line. When they returned, Chris C., Joe, Heather, and Chris H. had the Kalamazoo tug running and moving under its own power for the first time since the new engine was installed. Kyle Blackburn finished the modifications on the Kalamazoo's engine cover to fit over its new air-compressor. The Team then took it on a trial run on the 560 Track giving it a good work out. Mike Willis and Art worked on the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar and got it started for the first time after having been out of service for two years. What a night! MOW machines are actually working for a change!

While our machines mostly run on diesel, the MOW Team runs on doughnuts. Thanks to Chris C., Alan, Joe, Michael Florentine, Clem Meier, Eric, Bill Hastings, DJ, Steve N., Frank, Anthony Filamor, Paul Jansson, and Harry were well fueled. The Sutterville/Zoo Line was our destination. But first, the Kalamazoo, operated by Chris C., and tamper, under Harry's skillful hands, had to cross the UP Main from the Shops. Joe ran the Jackson 125 tie exchanger, and Heather piloted the A-6 motorcar. Speaking of fuel, two 55-gallon barrels of doughnuts – er, diesel – were loaded into the truck. At Baths, Steve N., Mike F., Art, and DJ filled the Jackson 125, Kalamazoo, and tamper with the entire contents. Heather, on the A-6, headed down the line with Paul, Bill, Clem, and Anthony begin spiking the 200 or so ties in the ground. Each tie gets four spikes and each spike has to be hand-set before the hydraulic spike-driver can drive them home. Everybody traded off on the spiking duties. As the hydraulic spike-driver weighs 67-pounds, lugging it about does tend to wear a fellow out. Chris C., Art, and Steve N. were soon on hand to help-out with the spiking. At the top of the hill, Harry and Mike F. tamped the 50 or so ties that needed tamping. After each week of work down there, our trusty track inspectors ascertain issues that need to be addressed. They identified several joints as needing more support. So, Joe, in the 125, worked with Steve N., Clem, and Art replacing ties under rail-joints. They were plated and spiked, as well. As day wore on, everyone went spiking crazy. With having to hand-set every spike, this is the part of the project that takes the most time. We lost count of the number of ties spiked at 80 but, undoubtedly, the Team easily spiked an additional two dozen if not more. That's at least 420 spikes set by hand then driven deep into the wood. In fact, so many spikes were driven that we exhausted our on-hand supply of spikes. By 3:30, just about everyone on the Team admitted to being pooped – everyone but Joe who was all set for a second shift. Nonetheless, Joe was outvoted. So, the Team packed up its wares and headed back to town very pleased and proud of, not only the day's progress but, the weeks, as well. Folks, we see the proverbial "light at the end of the tunnel" with this project. We have 85 more ties to spike and a rail to replace. But, soon thereafter, the lions, tigers, and bears domiciled at the Zoo will be joined by the velvet tones of locomotive whistles on the Sutterville/Zoo Line adjacent.

This coming week, your MOW Team will keep the progress progressing by meeting at the Shops on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, we're replacing the broken rail on the Sutterville Track. 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time for this interesting project. This Team of volunteers who keep the SSRR rolling down the track is inspiring. Many thanks to all for your continued dedication to building a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Alan supervises the mechanic from Valley Forklift who is working on replacing Big Green Machine's brake calipers



Our supply of fresh, new ties has arrived!



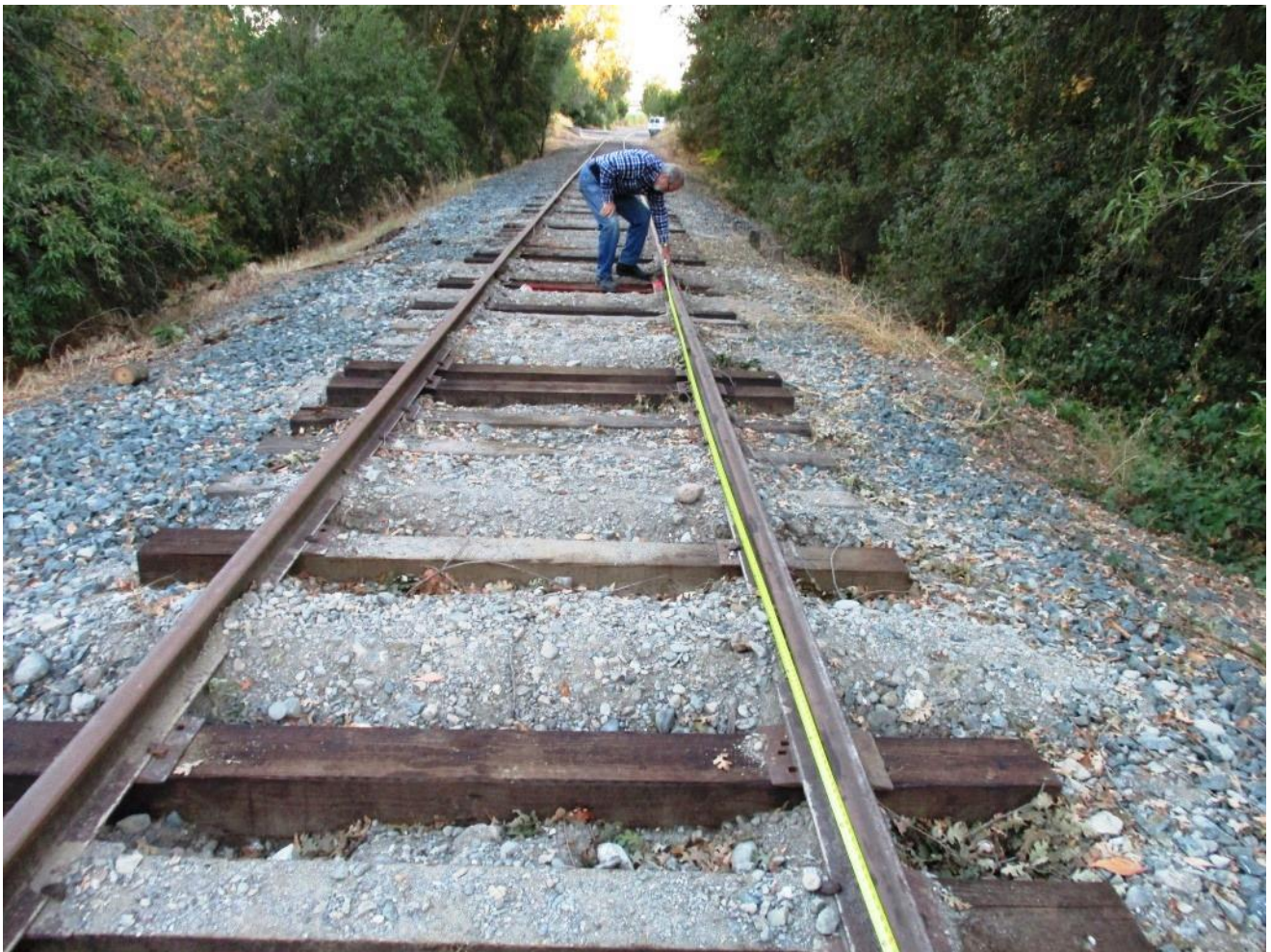


Chris C. gets the newly acquired hydraulic power unit up and running



Art and Frank straighten up the bundle of ties where the straps holding them together broke apart when they were removed from the truck



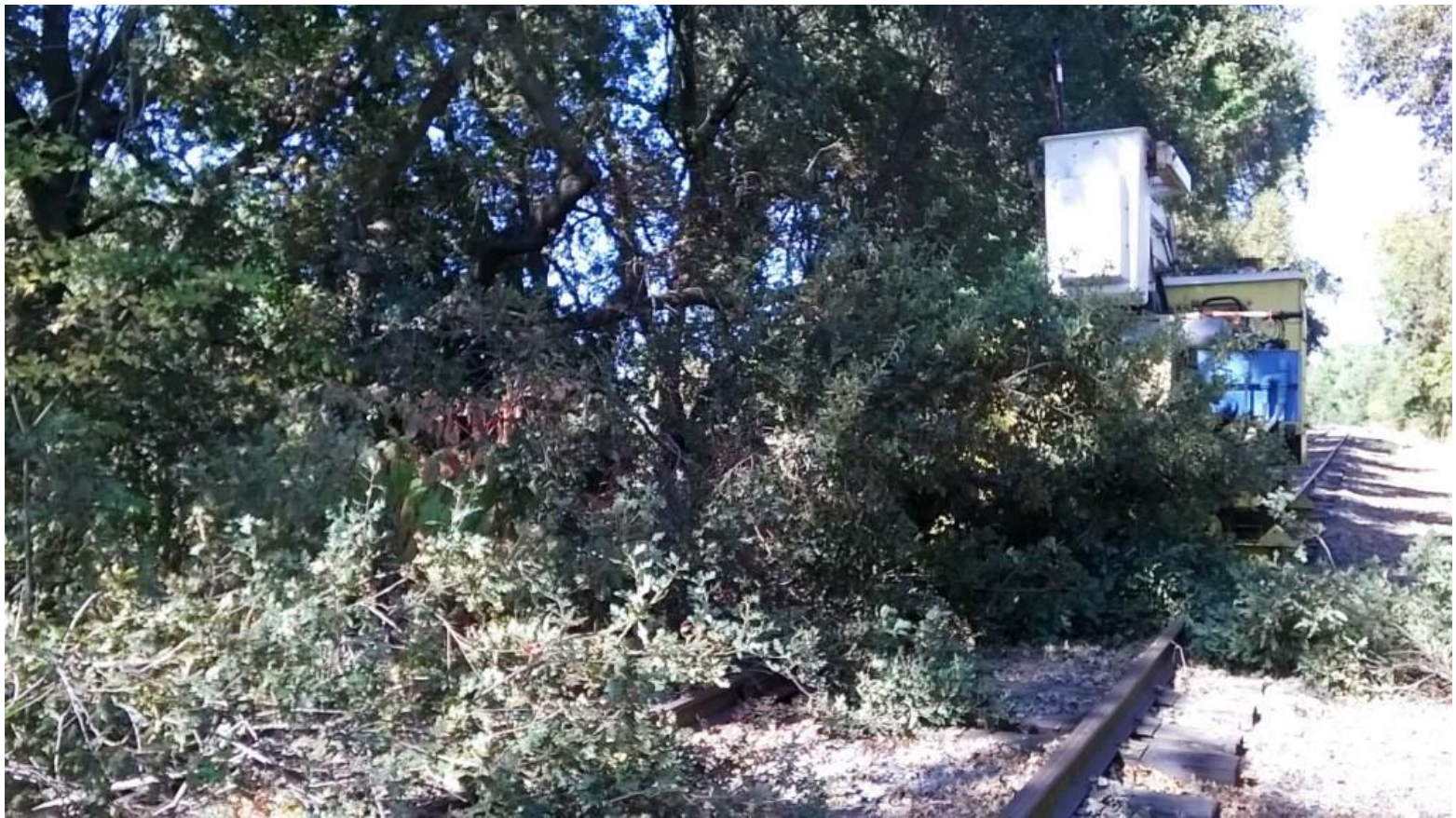


Alan measures the broken rail on the Sutterville/Zoo Line

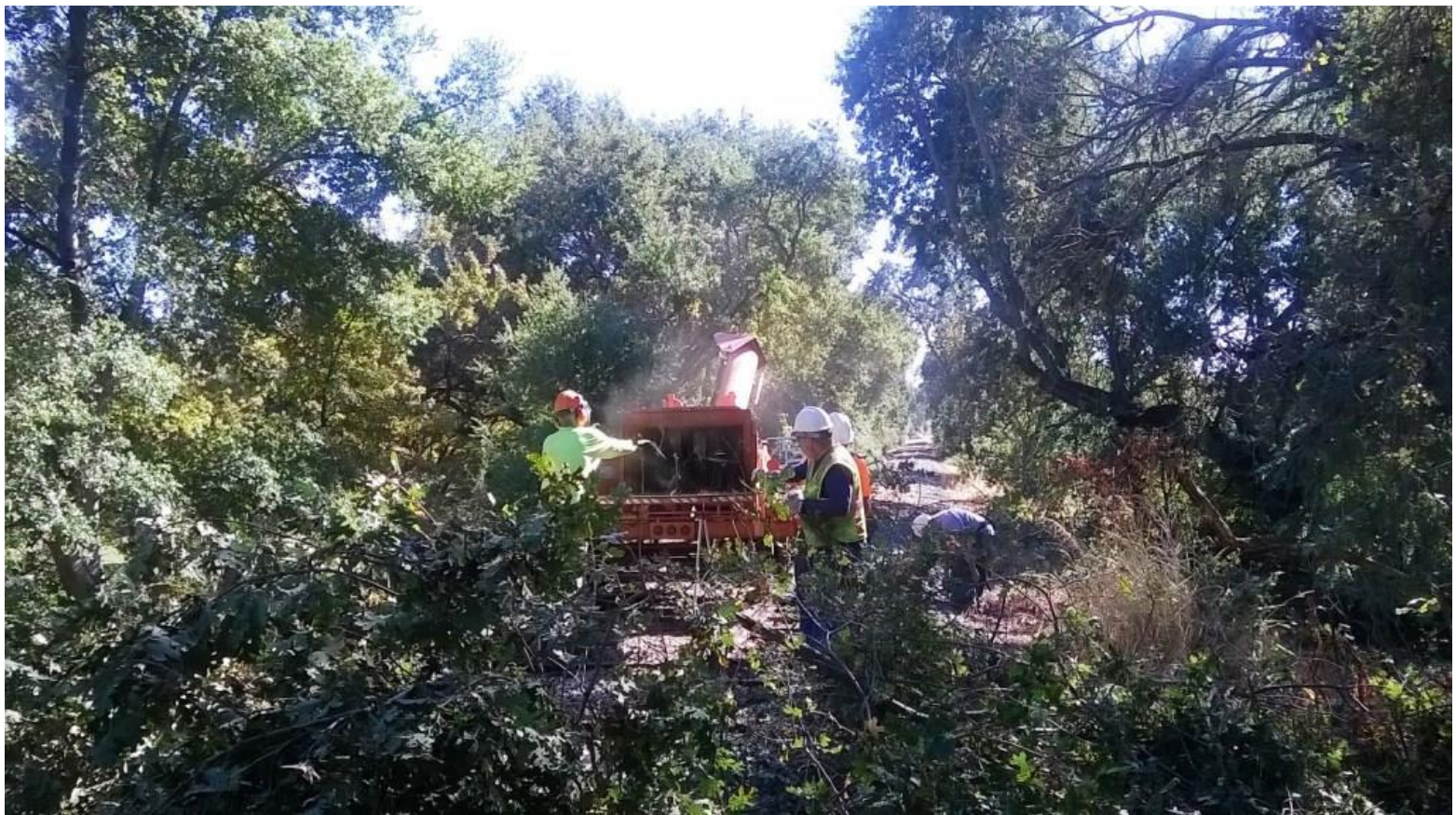


Then measures the length of the track between Sutterville Road and South Land Park Drive. There is room for a run around track.





The miraculous Weed Team clears a path through the Suttersville/Zoo Line jungle



Dave, Steve, Ed, and Mike T. chip the jungle into chum





Dave flies overhead in the man-lift's bucket and uses his mighty gas-powered chainsaw on a stick to mitigate overhead clearance issues



Dave and Mike T. fire up the chain saw





The Weedies load up a season's worth of firewood cut from intrusive branches on the Suttersville/Zoo Line



A miraculous day's work: Weedies Dave, Heather, Steve W., and Ed show their pride in their work





With GM2's brakes certified as 100% efficient, Steve removes the rail-mounted air-compressor's engine from the truck



Kyle makes the final modifications to the Kalamazoo's engine cover to fit its new air-compressor





Matt moves the motorcar work-train consist out of the container for rearranging



Mike H. puts the consist back together





Brakeman Frank switches the rearranged motorcar work-train consist back onto the House Track



DJ on the yellow Hyster forklift brings the air-compressor's engine over to the Erecting Shop as Chris H. moves the transfer table





Chris H., Chris C., and Joe fire-up the Kalamazoo and get it ready to roll under its own power for the first time with its new engine



Matt, Chris C., and Chris H. take the Kalamazoo on its trial run





Having crossed the UP Main from the Shops, the MOW Team's "Great Yellow Fleet" is set to deploy



At Baths, Mike F. and Joe feed fresh diesel to the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger





Clem and Joe prepare to distribute new ties at rail-joints identified as needing more support



Joe lines up a tie for insertion





Clem keeps a close eye on the tie as Joe pulls it in with the 125 to make sure it clears the west rail



Chris nips-up the tie as Anthony drives in spikes with the hydraulic spike-driver while Paul guides the hydraulic hoses





Clem sets spikes

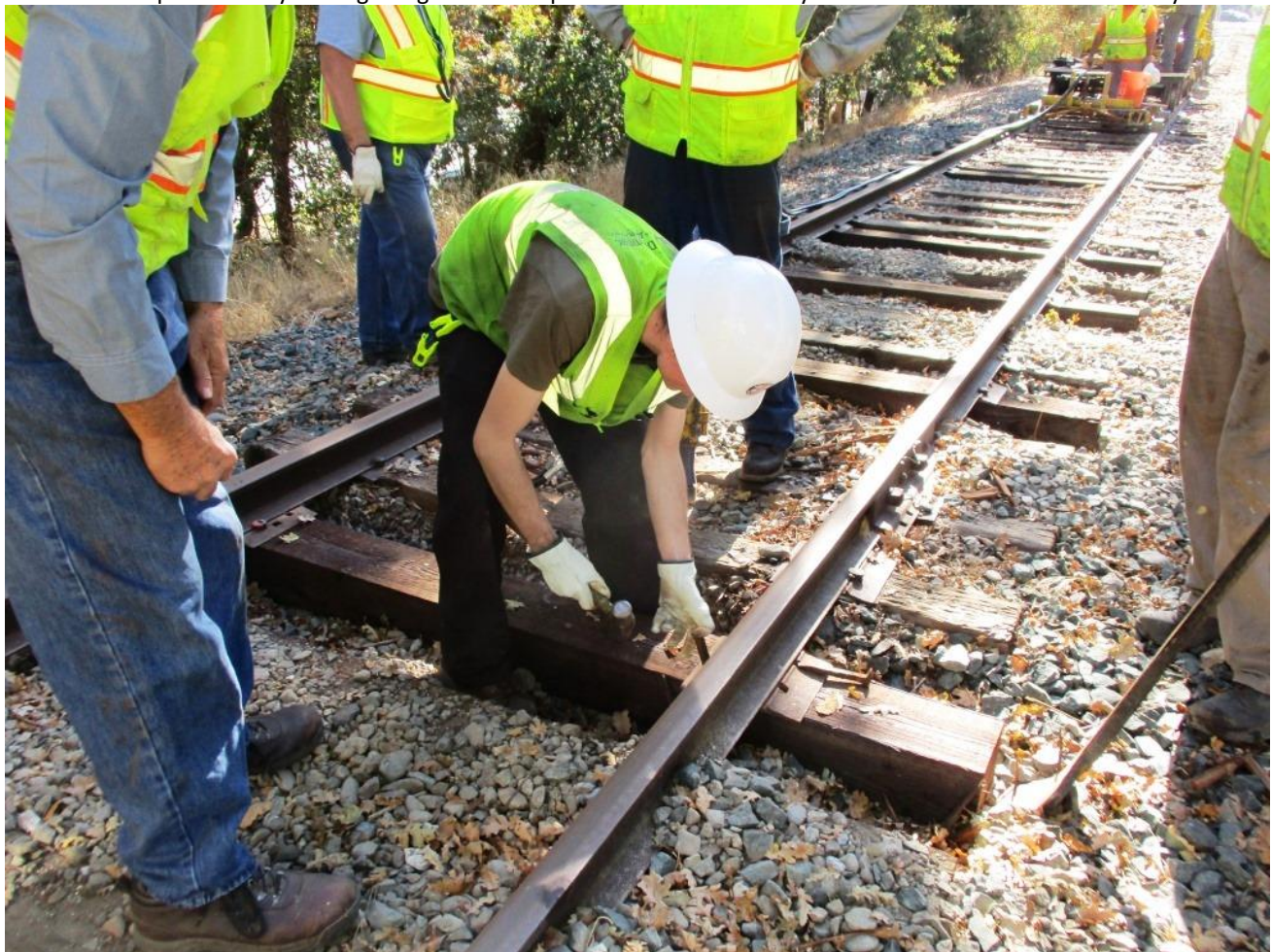


Even the hydraulic power unit is thirsty!





Heather keeps a close eye on signals given from up the line as she skillfully moves the motorcar consist slowly north



Paul sets spikes





Steve N. nips-up the tie as Art drives spikes with the hydraulic spike-driver

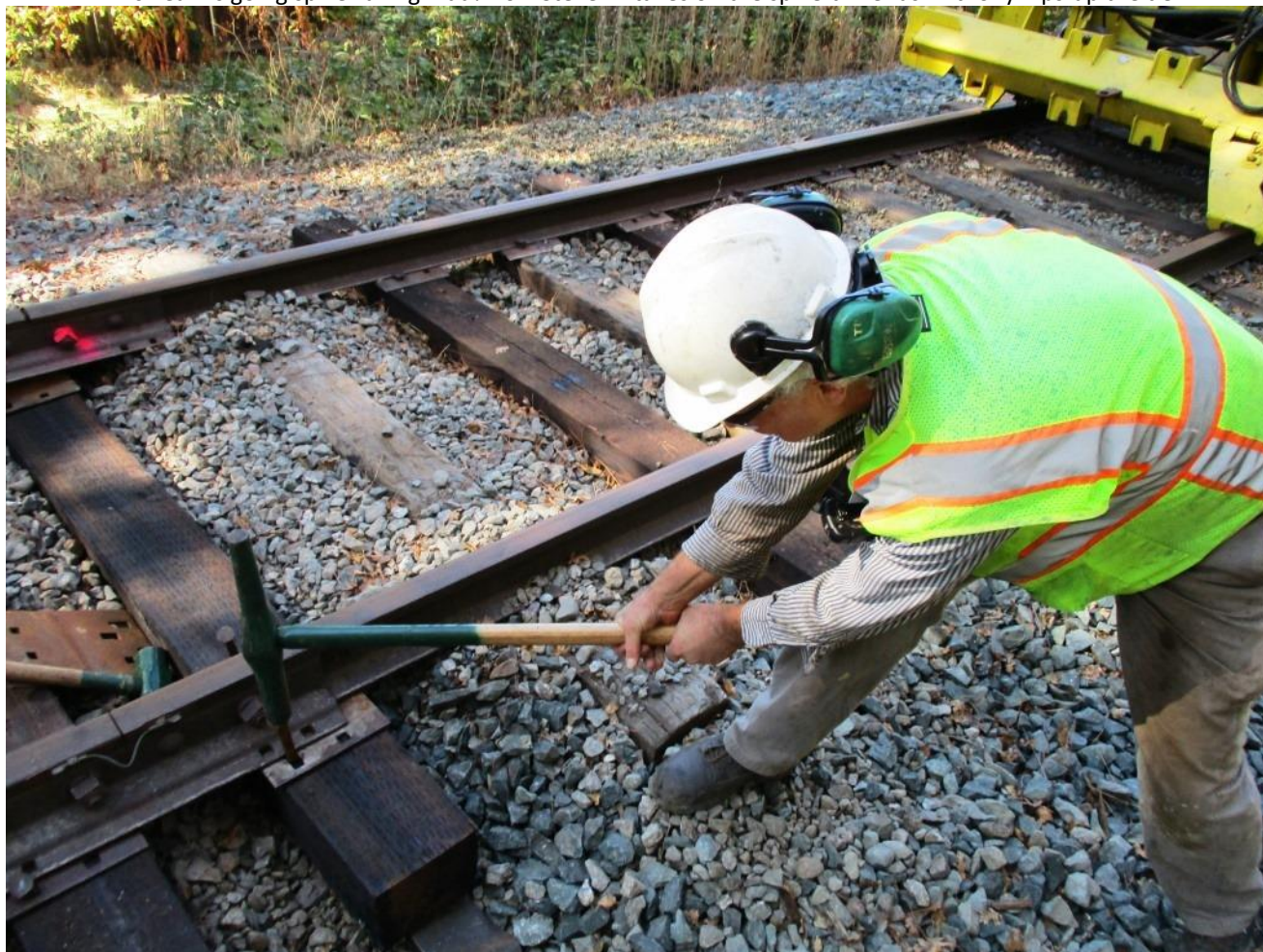


Bill takes the next shift on the hydraulic spike-driver as Steve N. nips-up the tie





This Team's going spike-raving mad! Now Steve N. takes on the spike-driver as Anthony nips-up the tie



Steve N. can't stand it any longer. He just has to drive a spike by hand!





The photographer, being overly impressed with his photographic artistry, had to include another picture of Joe pulling and inserting more ties



The spiking madness continues as Bill and Art set more spikes





Further up the hill, Steve N. works with Harry in the tamper as they tamp the newly inserted ties



Well, would ya lookie thar. That's a mighty fine looking stretch of track





Joe coils the hydraulic hoses as the time has come to put all our toys away



Bill and Anthony secure the hydraulic power unit to the flatcar





Harry in the tamper is ready to follow the 3:45 train back to Old Sacramento



The Kalamazoo fulfilling its role as a tug for the first time since its new engine was installed





Back in Old Sac., the motorcar work-train consist is spun on the turntable (note the prominent position of the sacred Pink Box...)



Final task of the day: Steve N. on GM2 retrieves the now empty 55-gallon diesel drums from the truck