

Greetings! This is your slightly late Maintenance of Way Team update for March 1, 2015. It was another good week. Lots got done. So, let's not impede progress by wasting any time. Let's get right to the update!

On Tuesday, the Weed Team headed all the way down the line to the area between Sutterville Road and South Land Park Drive. Mike Taylor, Joe Galipeau, and Frank Werry were active spraying nasty green things encroaching on the railroad's right-of-way. Each year, the Weedies head to that part of the line to keep the weeds at bay. But, the Team is helped out by local resident, Museum volunteer, and MOW Team supporter, Carol Nelson, who, on her own, has done an exceptional job of landscaping and caring for the south side of Sutterville Road. Many thanks to Carol!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Frederick Carr, Scott Morrison, Frank, Mike Harris, and Harry Voss were working away on a variety of projects. Pat, Cliff, Fred, and Alan continued with the retrofit of the Jackson 125 Tie Exchanger. They finished fabricating the roof and implements necessary for permanently affixing it to the machine. Alan has been putting in a great deal of overtime painting the machine and upgrading its electrical system. He has installed new horns, new headlights and taillights, as well as an amber flasher. Cliff continues to make anti-vandalism shielding for the new lights and controls. Mike H. and Frank tackled the issues with the Kalamazoo Tug's turntable by jacking up the machine and cribbing it with ties so that they could lower the turntable and access the latching system. Scott, Harry, and Fred focused on the air systems of the Tie Shear which is almost ready to deploy.

It's always a good day when the MOW Team can welcome a new member. On Thursday, Steve Hall joined the Team. Steve is an antique engine expert and will prove an invaluable resource keeping SD&AE Model AA fire truck in operating condition. Welcome Steve! Joining Steve on Thursday was Alan, Cliff, Heather Kearns, Fred, Mike H., and Frank. Alan and Frank spent the first part of the evening assembling Part 214 binders for the second class on Saturday. Heather and Steve did maintenance on the fire truck. Cliff created more protective shielding for the 125 as well as other machines. With the turntable latch fixed on the Kalamazoo, Frank and Mike H. pulled the cribbing.

The second session of Part 214 training took place on Saturday. All 36 attendees scored 100 percent on the grueling exam (obviously a testament to the thoroughness of the presentation – and the fact that it was an open-book test...). Congratulations! Over in the Shops, it was banner day as all five of the MOW Team Mikes were hand: Mike Taylor, Mike Harris, Mike Miller, Mike Willis, and Michael Florentine. In addition to the doughnuts provided by doughnut in chief Harry Voss, DJ Chapman surprised the Team with a special offering of doughnuts. Alan, Frank, Josh Ilac, Scott, Cliff, John Rexroth, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Matt Blackburn, and Chris Carlson were quite pleased with variety contained in two pink boxes. Since Chris and Alan were conducting 214 training, Frank was EIC for the day. The plan was to head south on the Mainline to finish tamping where of several of the new ties installed recently. Also, the Team would collect all the dead ties strewn about the line. Mike H. ran the Scarifer/Insertter, Matt the Tamper, Steve, Heather, Mike F., and Mike W. would head south with the motorcar consist. First the Team inserted a tie in an empty tie crib just south of the Pioneer Bridge which they did with speed and professionalism. Then, they headed south of Mile Post 2.0 to tamp the line where new ties had been inserted in recent weeks. Heather and Mike W. donned wind machines to blow away the thick layers of organic debris covering the track. Steve, Frank, and Mike F. collected dead ties and loaded them onto flat cars. Mike F. wondered why the Green Machine hadn't been brought out scoop up dead ties rather than handling them by hand? So, the plan was amended and, after lunch, Mike F. deployed Big Green.

Following lunch, the team split up. Chris, Scott, Alan, and Cliff remained at the shops while the rest of the team headed back out on the line. Chris and Scott worked on the Tie Shear restoring the operational controls and setting pressures on the hydraulic pumps. Cliff and Alan built new security doors for the engine compartment of the Jackson 125. Out on the line, several ties needed to be plated and spiked. Fortunately, world-famous "windmill-swing" spike-maul spiker, Steve, was on hand. Always one to share, Steve conducted a clinic on his patented spiking method demonstrating and teaching how to swing the spike maul properly, as well as correct hand and foot placement. The most difficult part of the "windmill-swing" is bringing the spike-maul down onto the head of the spike consistently. Of course that takes practice. Meanwhile, Frank and John worked with Mike F. on Big Green to collect dead ties. Mike W. continued blowing leaves and needles away from the track. In Old Sacramento, Mike T. used his backpack spray rig to spray unwieldy green things growing around Tracks 1, 2, and 3, the House Track, South Turntable Lead, bleachers, and everything else east of the Old Main from I to J Streets. Then, he and Heather managed to pull the big spray-rig out of the container along with the MW 51 Motorcar and spot them in the Passenger Station ready for action on this coming Tuesday. Everyone finished up at about the same time and returned to Old Sacramento to put away equipment and head over to the Shops. It was a very good day working with some outstanding and dedicated volunteers.

In other news, congratulations to the incredible volunteers and staff of the SSRR Mechanical Department who have been rebuilding the Granite Rock 10. On Thursday, the GR10 passed its hydrostatic test in the presence of Federal Railroad Administration inspectors. This was a major milestone in the restoration of the steam locomotive. Steam will return the Sacramento Southern Mainline early in the 2015 season!

In the week ahead, depending on the weather, the Weed Team will continue spraying weeds north of Capitol Mall on Tuesday. In the afternoon and evening on Tuesday and Thursday, the Shops Crew will meet at the appointed hour of 5 o'clock (or earlier). Saturday, at least one box of doughnuts will show up at 8 o'clock a.m. sharp.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Frank, Mike H., and Alan remove the cribbing from under the Kalamazoo Tug



Cliff installs new security doors over the engine compartment of the Jackson 125 Tie Exchanger





Mike T. presents the annual Pesticide Hazard Communication Presentation at Part 214 Training

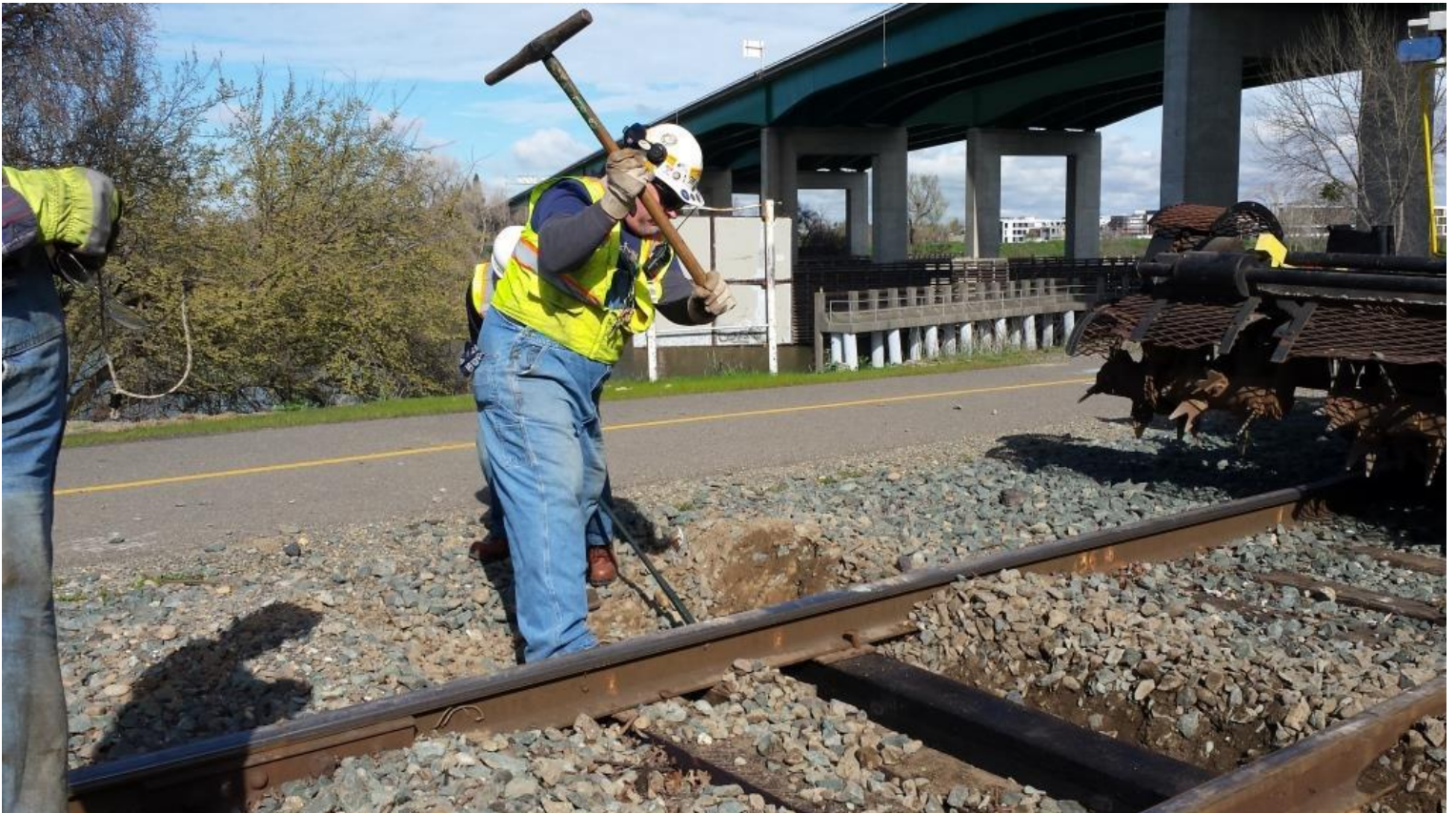


Mike W. and Heather use the wind machines to remove organic debris from the track





Mike W. nips as Mike F. prepares to drive a spike



Mike F. now driving a spike





Five Mikes in a line up outside Carol's in West Sacramento (the official luncheon destination of the MOW Team). Now, for extra credit on your Part 214 exam, assign the correct last-name initial to each Mike...



Steve, Mike H, John, and Matt have just spun the consist on the turntable and are ready to take it down the line





Steve put on a clinic on how to drive spikes using his patented “windmill” stroke. Here, he’s giving pointers to Mike M. while Mike H. nips the tie.



Mike M. gives it a go





Mike H. and John nip the tie, Mike watches as Steve shows us how it's done.



After a long but good day, crew is ready to head back to town.