

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 25, 2018. Spring has sprung this week which has put a spring in the steps of your MOW Team members. So, let's spring this update into action right now so you'll be sprung up to date on your MOW Team's week.

Mike Taylor and Ed Kottal constituted the Weed Team on Tuesday. They put the 65-gallon spray-rig on the crew truck to apply "blue-brew" to as much of spring growth popping up between the rails that they could. They sprayed weeds along the 560-Track in the Rail Yards as well as the spur running west from the Firing Line. Indeed, with the weather challenges this year, the Mighty Weed Team is taking every opportunity it can to eradicate weeds growing within our right-of-way – even if it means spraying the entire excursion railroad 65 gallons at a time!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Chris Howard, Joe Margucci, Alan Hardy, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns declared victory over the tie-shear's hydraulic kicker cylinder. Getting this rather hefty cylinder back into position under the tie-shear after its rebuild was quite a struggle. The tie-shear was not designed with ease of maintenance in mind. Also, when a cylinder is rebuilt, it doesn't always fit like it did prior to being removed. Although it was a Team effort, Mike H. was the Team Captain. He devised the plan and came up with the many modifications necessary to answer each challenge. Under his guidance on Tuesday, the Team managed to complete the installation and make all the adjustments necessary for the cylinder to do its job. Again, Joe descended into the pit under the machine to "tap" in the keeper-pins. Chris, Mike H., Alan, and Gene worked from above. Their efforts paid off as, for the first time in years, the cylinder, kickers, and securing latches now work exactly as they were designed to work. Many thanks to a dedicated Team of amazing mechanics!

Early in the day on Thursday, Jim Bays of the Mechanical and Restoration Shop began the process of repairing the A-6 motorcar's wonky transmission. You may recall that several months ago, the A-6 suffered a catastrophic transmission failure. Well, the repair requires the removal of the engine and transmission from A-6. The MOW Team is eternally grateful to Jim for taking on this project to restore this very important machine to operation. In the evening, Heather led the Team in a major switching operation in Old Sacramento. Chris, Joe, Harry Voss, Alan, Mike H., and Frank Werry handled the machines and switching operation. With the tie-shear now fully functional, the goal was to get it to Old Sacramento and exchange for the tie-crane which needs some repair work. While Frank got the shear ready to roll, over in Old Sac., several machines, including the tamper and Jackson 125 tie-exchanger needed to be moved to access the crane. The Kalamazoo was brought out to activate the signals at the interlocking on the 560 Track. Conductor Heather made the arrangements with Dispatcher 62 in Omaha for the transits of the shear, crane, and Kalamazoo. Soon everything in Old Sac. was rearranged and shielded-up. Shops-side, Chris ran Alan in the tie-crane on the transfer-table up to Bay 5 where it was stowed for its repairs. Great job by a well-managed Team!

Alan, Joe, Michael Florentine, Bill Hastings, Ed, Harry, Bev Ratzlaff, Mike H., Steve Nemeth, Frank, Al Utzig, and Heather were more than ready to devour the doughnuts on Saturday morning. They knew the plan was to replace as many ties as humanly possible and required plenty of sugary, fired-dough fuel. All fueled up, the Joe and Alan began by loading the hydraulic power unit and tools into the Crew Truck. Mike F. hopped on Green Machine 2 (GM2) and grabbed a bundle of brand-new ties. Steve, Bill, and Ed chained the bundle to the forks. Harry handled the truck and headed to Old Sac. where the hydraulic power unit and tools were loaded onto a flatcar which was pulled by Bev and Steve in the Kalamazoo. Ed ran the Jackson 125. At the head of the MOW work-train was Alan in the tamper. At the job-site, while the hydraulic spike puller was being set up, Mike H., Bev, and Steve took it upon themselves to start pulling spikes the old-fashioned way – by hand using claw-bars. Then Heather, Al, and Joe used modern mechanics to pull spikes hydraulically where Steve, Bev, and Mike H. left off. Next, Ed on the 125 started yanked the de-spiked ties out. Joe used tie-tongs to move the dead-ties off the bike path. Meanwhile, further south, Alan was tamping all the ties that had been installed in previous weeks. Frank, Al, Mike H., and Mike F. set and drove spikes in those ties that didn't get spiked a couple weeks ago. As Ed pulled ties like a mad-man, Joe and Heather worked with Mike F. on GM2 to pick up all the dead ties. After loading up the GM2's forks, Mike F. headed to Setzer where they were deposited in the growing dead-tie pile. When Mike F. returned, he grabbed the pile of new ties and, working with Joe, Heather, and Steve, placed a new tie alongside each empty tie-crib. Next, Harry took a turn on the 125 and inserted ties. Harry used the 125's track-jacks to nip-up the rails enough for Bev, Steve, Heather, and Joe to slide tie-plates between the base of the rails and the ties. Harry traded off 125 duties with Joe and Ed who pulled in the remainder of the 31 ties. Mike H., Mike F., Steve, and Heather set spikes in the newly inserted ties then drove them home with the hydraulic spike driver. Further up the line, Alan was tamping-up all the joints. Al returned to the Shops and fired-up the front-end loader. He took it to Setzer where he scooped up a couple buckets of ballast rock to place around some of the low joints near Mile Post 2.35. As the time was approaching to begin the shut-down process, Mike F. and Joe undertook what became the most challenging undertaking of the day: chaining down the three remaining ties onto the forks of GM2 with a 20-foot length of chain and one binder. It was quite an endeavor. Soon, the Team had everything put away in Old Sac. and headed to the Shops where "quittin' time, USA" was announced. It had been a very good day with great accomplishment by a crew that really knows what it's doing.

The MOW Team sends its best wishes for a speedy recovery to Bill who injured his finger on Saturday while deploying tools. A broken finger-tip and seven stitches later, Bill reports that he is doing well. Get well soon, Bill. We look forward to seeing you out on the line, soon!

This coming week, the MOW Team will meet as usual on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock. Thursday, the Weed Team is spending the day spraying. Meet at the Turntable at 7:30 a.m. Saturday is our last day to work out on the line before trains start running again. 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time. Thanks to the Team for dedicating your blood (literally), sweat, and tears towards building a better railroad!

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Joe, down in the pit under the tie-shear



With everything back together, Chris, Mike H., Alan, and Joe run the kicker cylinder through its paces





Chris uses a grease gun to grease the zerk fittings on the shear



Alan bolts-down the hose reel on the new dedicated hydraulic power-units' flatcar that he has built





Jim Bays successfully removes the engine and transmission from the A-6 motorcar



The Team opens up the equipment stored on the 150 track to shuffle things about so that the tie-crane can head to the Shops





Alan in the tie-crane on approach to the interlocking with the UP Main



Because the tie-crane does not activate the signal system, the Kalamazoo, which does, traveled with it





Alan and Joe load the hydraulic power unit into the truck since the dedicated flatcar is not quite ready for action



Mike F. on GM2 grabs a bundle of new ties while Steve provides a little extra guidance to make sure nothing gets scratched...





Steve, Ed, and Bill chain the bundle to the forks



At the job-site, Steve and Bev get right to work pulling spikes the old fashioned way





Mike H. joins the spike-pulling fun – especially since many of them were coming up without any effort



With the tamper now working, Alan tamps the new ties that the Team has installed over the past several weeks





Joe and Heather deploy the hydraulic spike-puller

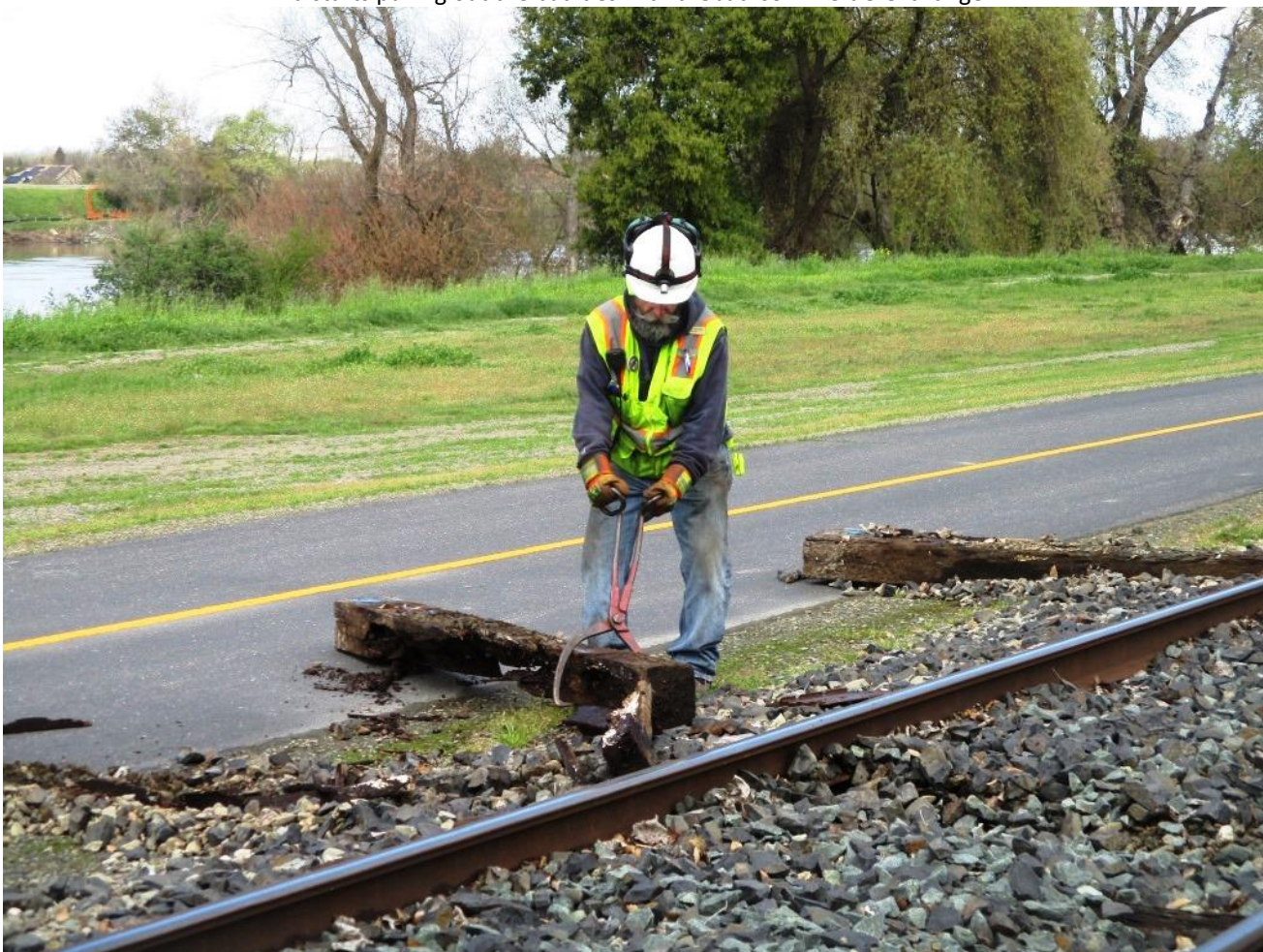


Al takes over pulling spikes with the hydraulic spike-puller





Ed starts pulling out the bad ties with the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger



Joe moves the dead-ties into position for easy pick-up by Mike F. on GM2





Frank sets spikes on the few ties that didn't get spiked-down last time



Heather moves a dead-tie out of the way so that GM2 can scoop it up





Joe and heather work with Mike F. on GM2 to load dead ties for disposal



Frank uses the hydraulic spike driver to drive spikes





Mike H. relieves Frank in the spike-driving role



Ah yes, of course, the pink box is always on hand





Bev moves the Kalamazoo up to the next area where spikes need to be driven



Indeed, it's a lovely day out on the line





Time to insert some ties so Harry takes up the controls of the 125

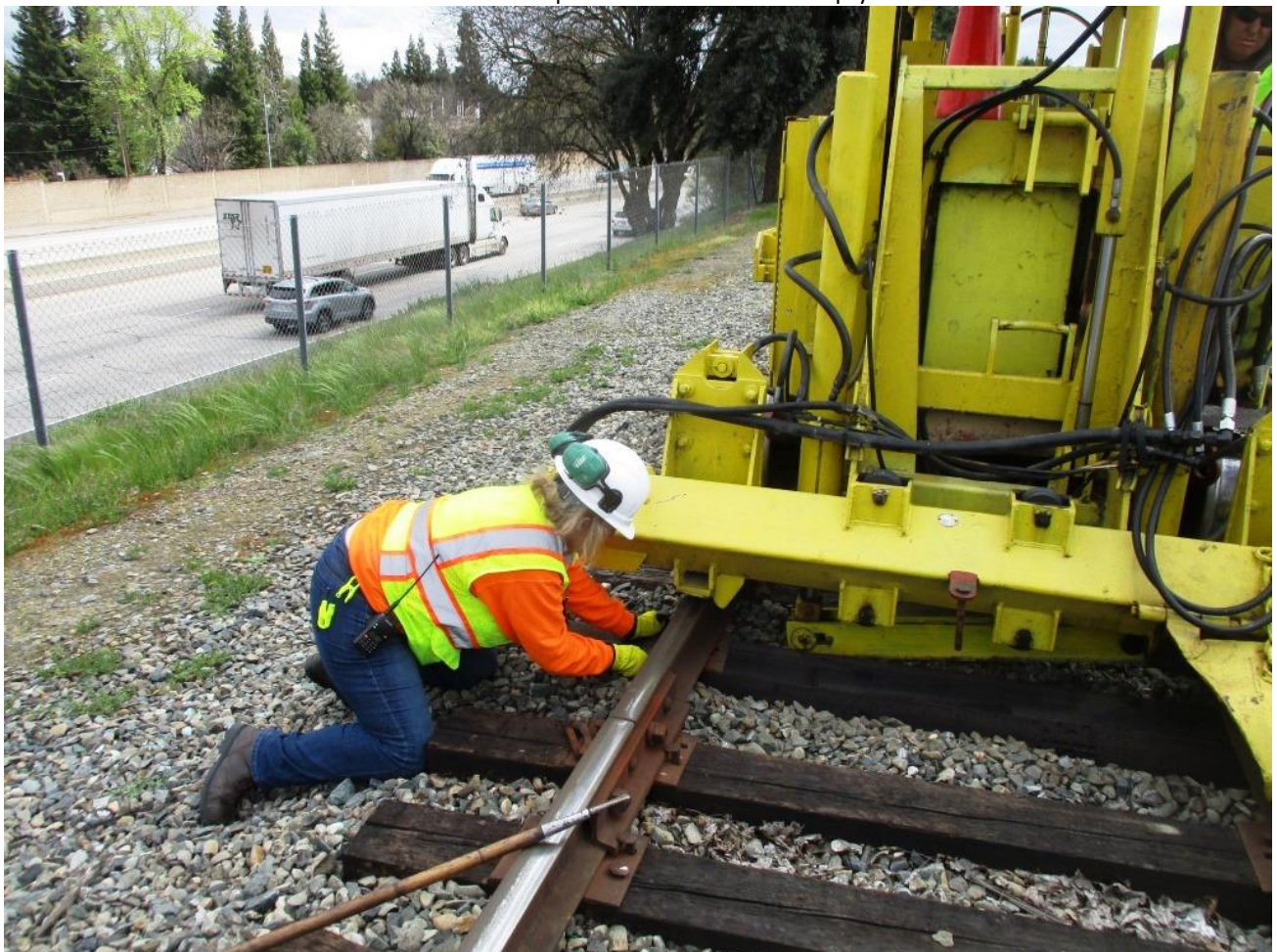


Steve inserts a tie-plate after Harry uses the 125's track-jacks to lift the rail slightly





Joe lines new ties up for insertion into the empty cribs



Bev places a tie-plate between the base of the rail and the top of the tie as the 125 jacks the rail up slightly





Mike H. sets spikes on all the new ties while Ed and Bev continue pull in more



Steve and Mike F. deploy the hydraulic spike-driver





Further up the line, Alan tamps low joints near MP 2.4



Al in the loader brings a bucket of rock to fill in around joints to provide a better base for the tamper to tamp





What seemed like the biggest challenge of the day: trying to figure out how to secure three ties with 20-feet of chain and only one binder



With it all figured out, Mike F. climbs aboard GM2 for the journey back to the Shops