

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 29, 2015. As the track machines come on line, we're learning to manage our increased productivity quite well. So, let's keep the productivity productive by getting this update started!

Tuesday, the Shops were busy with lots of activity. Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Frederick Carr, Heather Kearns, Steve Hall, Mike Harris, and Gene Peck were quite productive, indeed. Pat and Gene ventured over to the Boiler Shop to take a look at the brakes of the Big Green Machine. Last week, it appeared it had suffered a broken brake line. Gene and Pat inspected the malfunction thoroughly and, after a bit of discussion, determined that the problem is a bit more complex. So, they formulated plans for its repair. Cliff and Fred built a leaf-guard and light-shield for the tie-shear. Mike H. installed a new fuel line on the Kalamazoo. Earlier in the day, Alan had retrieved the bench-car from the far reaches of the Erecting Shop. It hadn't been used in years. This car seats eight people and can be pulled behind the A-6 motor car for transporting the crew. He, Steve H., and Heather then cleaned it up. Later, Alan touched up the paint.

Thursday, Alan, Heather, Cliff, Fred, and Mike H. were on hand for more productivity. Cliff continued building shields for the equipment. Mike H. removed a tool-box mounted on the deck of the new-old tamper which was impairing our access the engine belts. They need replacing. This was a rather involved operation as it required getting under the machine. Fred found the great horned owls who have taken up residence in the in the rafters of the Erecting Shop. These owls keep a keen eye on us from their perch as we work below. We've dubbed them the OIC – "Owls in Charge." He managed to get couple good photos one of which can be found in the attachment.

Throughout the week, plans were being drafted for on-track activity in Old Sacramento on Saturday. Not only was the MOW Team planning to deploy just about every piece of track equipment it has but, also, the Sacramento City College Railroad Operations Class was conducting field training in the Old Sac. Yard – as were the new student brakemen. SSRR Chief Conductor and Freight Dispatcher, Chuck Maley, called it, "A perfect storm of track occupancy." As this was the final weekend that the MOW Team had unfettered access to the Mainline before the 2015 season commences next week, it was vital that we were able to make the most of the day out on the line. With that in mind, several members of the MOW Team arrived well before the sun to start moving out our equipment. In Old Sac., Steve Nemeth and Heather Kearns sparked their flashlights and managed to pull together the entire panoply of equipment and move it south of "garbage crossing." Meanwhile, over at the Shops, Frank Werry, Mike H., Michael Florentine, Alan, Clem Meier, Josh Ilac, Mike Miller, and Pam Tatro arrived extra early to prepare the Kalamazoo tug, two flatcars with ties as well as the bench car for their journey over the UP Main. Chris Carlson and Harry Voss made sure everyone was sufficiently doughnuted-up. Conductor Frank "toned-up" dispatcher 62 in Omaha and received permission for engineer Mike H. in the tug to cross at 8:12 a.m. By 8:30, we were on the move and headed south across Capitol Mall.

Down at the work site, we had 29 empty cribs that needed ties. Mike H. in the Kalamazoo brought in the ties. Chris, Frank, Steve N., Heather, and Mike M. rolled them off the flatcars and positioned them for insertion. Alan in the scarifier-inserter lined up with each empty crib and, with Mike F's help, used the inserter function to pull in the ties. Heather, Pam, Frank, and Clem shoveled rock back into the cribs. Then, Steve N. jumped in the tamper while Chris guided the tamping of the new ties in order to draw them up with the base of the rail. Pam delivered tie-plates and spikes to each new tie. Mike M., Mike F., and Josh then used the rail-lifter to give the track a little tug in order to place tie-plates. With this method, there's no need to "nip-up" the ties when spiking which is a tremendous time saver. After a round-trip journey in the bench-car to Old Sac. for lunch, the Team returned to spike the ties. Mike M., Steve N., Chris, and Heather set spikes while Mike F., Frank, Harry, used the pneumatic spiker to drive them in. Mike H. piloted the A-5 motorcar shoving the compressor. Frank and Harry managed the hose. This was an incredibly successful and well coordinated operation. By 3 o'clock, we were done and began packing up for the return to Old Sac. The ahead-of-schedule completion gave us the time necessary to do some switching around of our equipment, some of which had to return to the Shops over the UP Main. It was one of our most productive tie-changing outings to date. The entire Team ended the day feeling great about the amount of work we got done in less time that expected. We're learning to cope with greater productivity thanks to having working machinery that alleviates the back-breaking labor of maintaining a railroad by hand.

The "perfect storm of track occupancy" that was anticipated for Saturday turned-out to be more of a spring lamb than a winter lion thanks to Chuck Maley who worked with all the parties throughout the week to coordinate the operation. Considering the demands on the Old Sac. tracks, Saturday morning's activities went exceptionally well. The MOW Team owes Chuck a great debt of gratitude. Many thanks to Conductor Tom Peterman, as well, who worked with us to accommodate our need to move out of town quickly. It was a pleasure working with Tom and 2030 engineer Joe Mikula on Saturday morning. Thanks to Leonard Cassieri and his student brakemen who halted their training to allow us to move through their "work-limits." During the afternoon put-away, Mike Collins and Bob Ress helped tremendously by giving us access to the turntable during their move of equipment out of the Museum. Of course, extra special thanks goes to dedicated MOW Team volunteers Steve N., Heather, Frank, Mike H., Michael F., Alan, Clem, Josh, Mike M., Pam, Chris, and Harry for the "above-and-beyond" effort of arriving extra early – before the sun or doughnuts – to make all this possible. We've got a great Team and work with a great railroad. Many thanks to all!

This coming week, the Weed Team will be convening at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday to eradicate many weeds down along the Sutterville Line and elsewhere. In the evening on Tuesday and Thursday, the Shops crew will gather at or before 5 o'clock p.m. Saturday, the Team will meet in the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. as usual for more MOW fun – and doughnuts, of course. Again, thanks to all who keep the MOW Team moving.

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Cliff is a master of metal manipulation. Here he creates custom crafted brackets for the new leaf-guard on the tie-shear



Heather and Steve H. give the bench-car a bath. It's been years since the bench-car has seen the light of day – or evening...



Alan, who built this car in the Shops some years ago, washes the benches.



Fred fits the first segment of the leaf-guard/light-shield on the tie-shear.



The OIC keeps a keen eye on us...



It's 8 o'clock a.m. and Steve N. and Heather have been on the job for two hours already assembling the MOW work-train. They're just waiting for the Kalamazoo tug pulling two flat-cars carrying ties and the bench-car to come over from the Shops. Shown here are the old-old tamper pulling the A-5 motorcar, rail-lifter, rail-mounted compressor, materials car, tool car, spike puller, and A-6 motorcar. The Jackson 125 tie-exchanger and scarifier-inserters are spotted just out of the picture by the L Street crossing.



Mike H. pilots the Kalamazoo as Chris and Frank drop ties by the empty cribs.



Alan in the scarifier-inserter pulls in a tie as guided by Mike F.



Steve, Frank, Heather, and Josh, our human tie-cranes, position ties for insertion.



Chris guides from the ground as Steve in the tamper tamps up the new ties.



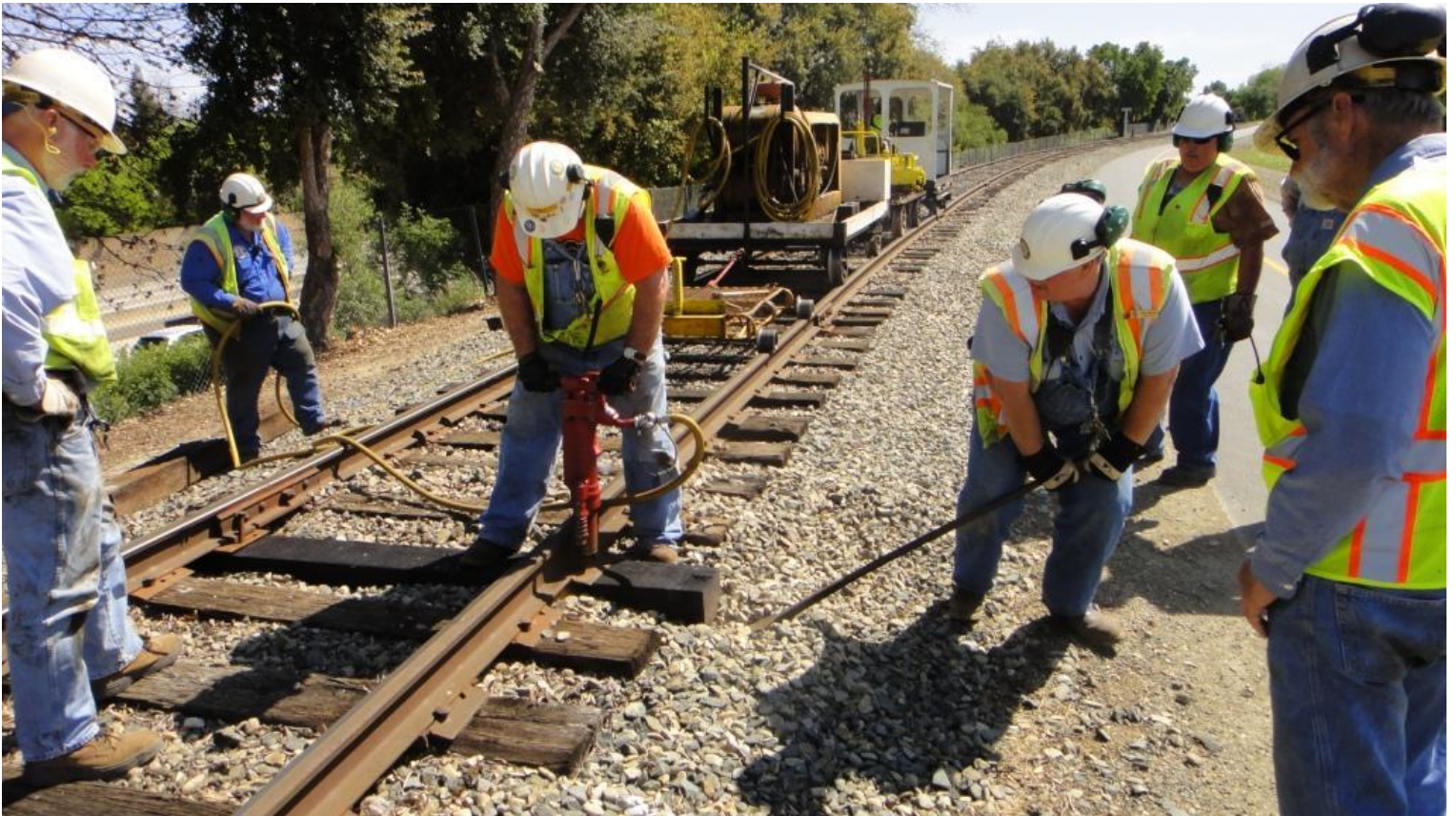
Heather and Pam fill in rock around the newly inserted ties.



The rail-lifter is deployed.



Mike M., at the controls of the rail-lifter, lifts the rail ever so slightly so that Mike F. and Josh can place tie-plates.



Of the 29 ties put in, only one had to be nipped. Mike F. spikes while Chris nips-up the tie.



Steve N. takes over at the spiker.



Mike M. drives in by hand one particularly finicky spike