

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 29, 2018. Indeed, your MOW Team keeps right on truckin', week after week. So, let's keep this truck on the road and get this update started right now.

Tuesday, Michael Florentine and Alan Hardy arrived extra early to begin gathering components to start laying out a new switch behind the Museum off the 150 Track. The plan is to build a second track between the 150 Track and the 560 Interchange Track on which the MOW Team can store its equipment. Joining them a little later was Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Chris Howard, Dave Wolf, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, Jack Shrive, and Heather Kearns. Heather took Joe, Dave, Chris, Mike, and Jack over to Old Sacramento to retrieve the Kalamazoo tug which was experiencing a transmission issue. As this machine is essential to our operation, it had to come over to the Shops on Tuesday. The tamper was used to pull the tug over to the Shops. Mike handled the tamper while Chris and Jack took care of the switching. Conductor Heather made the arrangements for the transit from Old Sac. to the Shops with the UP Dispatcher in Omaha. Once at the Shops, the Dave, Jack, Mike, and Chris pushed the Kalamazoo into Bay 4. Immediately, Joe and Jack descended into the pit and pulled the plug on the transmission. Dark sludge, rather than clear hydraulic fluid, drained out. Yep, they had found the problem. The Team returned the tamper to Old Sac. and called it a night.

The mighty Weed Team gathered on Thursday to check the condition of Hood Line three weeks after completing its weed-spraying regime. Weedies Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Steve Wilson, and Ed Kottal determined that the area they sprayed is mainly dead but, some persistent green remains. Nevertheless, considering how it looked three weeks ago, the Team agreed that the current condition is quite agreeable. In addition, the Weedies were able to mow one-half mile of dead stems along the line. The volunteers of Weed Team do a remarkable job!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Ed joined Alan, Chris, Joe, Frank Werry, Jack, and Heather for an evening of MOW fun. The goal for the evening was to get the Kalamazoo running again and back to Old Sacramento. With the sludge completely drained from the transmission, Joe and Ed refilled it with fresh hydraulic fluid. They started it up, put it in "drive," and it moved! Yea! Heather hopped aboard the Big Green Machine (1) and grabbed a bundle of fresh ties from our supply at the north end of the Erecting Shop. In the process, she found that Big Green was acting a bit sluggish. So, once she got the ties staged in a position for quick loading on Saturday morning, she began fiddling around with the fuel lines only to discover that the water separator was not separating water. Yep, water in the fuel. It had been sitting under a hole in the roof of the Boiler Shop for too long. In the meantime, Jack, Joe, Ed, Chris, and Frank were returning the now working-better-than-ever Kalamazoo to Old Sacramento. Conductor Frank arranged a quick transit of the UP Main. As Jack had been key in its return to service (taking a "sludge-bath" in the process), we felt it was fitting to give him a chance to run the thing. So, we used the move as a training opportunity and he did a great job. Back at the Shops, the Team discussed the plan for Saturday before heading off into the night.

Another Saturday featuring your extremely dedicated MOW Team started with Joe arriving extra early to get the Kalamazoo and the work-train consist out of the Passenger Station and poised for departure. Joe had to undertake some complicated switching maneuvers because the dead A-5 motorcar was blocking the way (long story) and needed to be moved. Then, the whole consist had to be turned on the turntable – twice – in order to get the Kalamazoo on the right end of the consist. With that done early, Joe saved the Team tremendous time in its efforts to get out of town. So, it was only fair that Alan, Chris, Bill Hastings, Clem Meier, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Pam Tatro, Ed, Frank, and Jack saved the best doughnut for Joe. The Team was heading back to the Bridge over Highway 5 to bring that track up to snuff. Bill was engineer of the Kalamazoo pulling the work-train. Joe took the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, Alan handled the scarifier-inserter, and Steve ran the tamper which was followed by the tie-shear. On the bridge, Clem and Pam started things off by removing rail-anchors around the ties to be removed. Bill and Alan got the extension-rotor attached to the scarifier. Chris and Pam deployed the hydraulic spike puller and pulled spikes. Further north, Clem, Frank, Steve, and Joe used the 125 to jack-up the rails slightly to insert tie-plates on the ties installed last week. Then, with Ed and Heather's help, they set spikes. As soon as they were done pulling spikes, Chris, Pam, Clem, and Bill switched over to driving the set spikes with the hydraulic spike driver. Next, the tie-shear came in and began slicing away at ties like the proverbial "hot-knife through butter." The tie-shear is simply amazing (when it works). Frank acted as guide on the ground as visibility from the cab is near nonexistent. As the shear sliced ties up, Steve, Joe, Chris, and Bill came along behind and picked up the tie debris and loaded it on a flat car. Then, Alan brought in the scarifier and dug fresh cribs for the new ties. Following behind the scarifier, Ed, Steve, Bill, and Chris, dropped new ties from the bundle and lined them up for insertion. Joe followed with the Jackson 125 and worked his magic to insert all the ties. Joe's an expert at running this machine and can get it to do things it wasn't necessarily designed to do – like insert ties at an angle, level them, and then straighten them out. This assembly line process continued throughout the day as the Team worked to bring the bridge track up to federal Class 2 standards. The last act of the day was to get the tie-debris to Setzer for disposal. Bill, Heather, Chris, and Ed took care of that. We are very pleased with our progress on the bridge. The confined area on the bridge required the Team to adjust its tie-changing practices. Ties are eight-feet in length and there's only 6 ½ feet of clearance between the rails and the bridge walls. But, this amazing Team has figured how to deal with this limitation. If one didn't know better, one might conclude that these amazing volunteers were professional railroaders and did this for a living.

This coming week, the Weed Team will be gathering for a journey to Hood on Tuesday for more mowing of dead weeds and a general sprucing up of the track. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. In the evening on Tuesday and Thursday, the Team will gather in its usual place at or before 5 o'clock. It's likely we'll head to the Bridge and spike some ties. Saturday, we'll assemble for doughnuts and finish up tie-replacement on the bridge. Meet at the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to all the dedicated folks of the MOW Team for your hard work and service.

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard



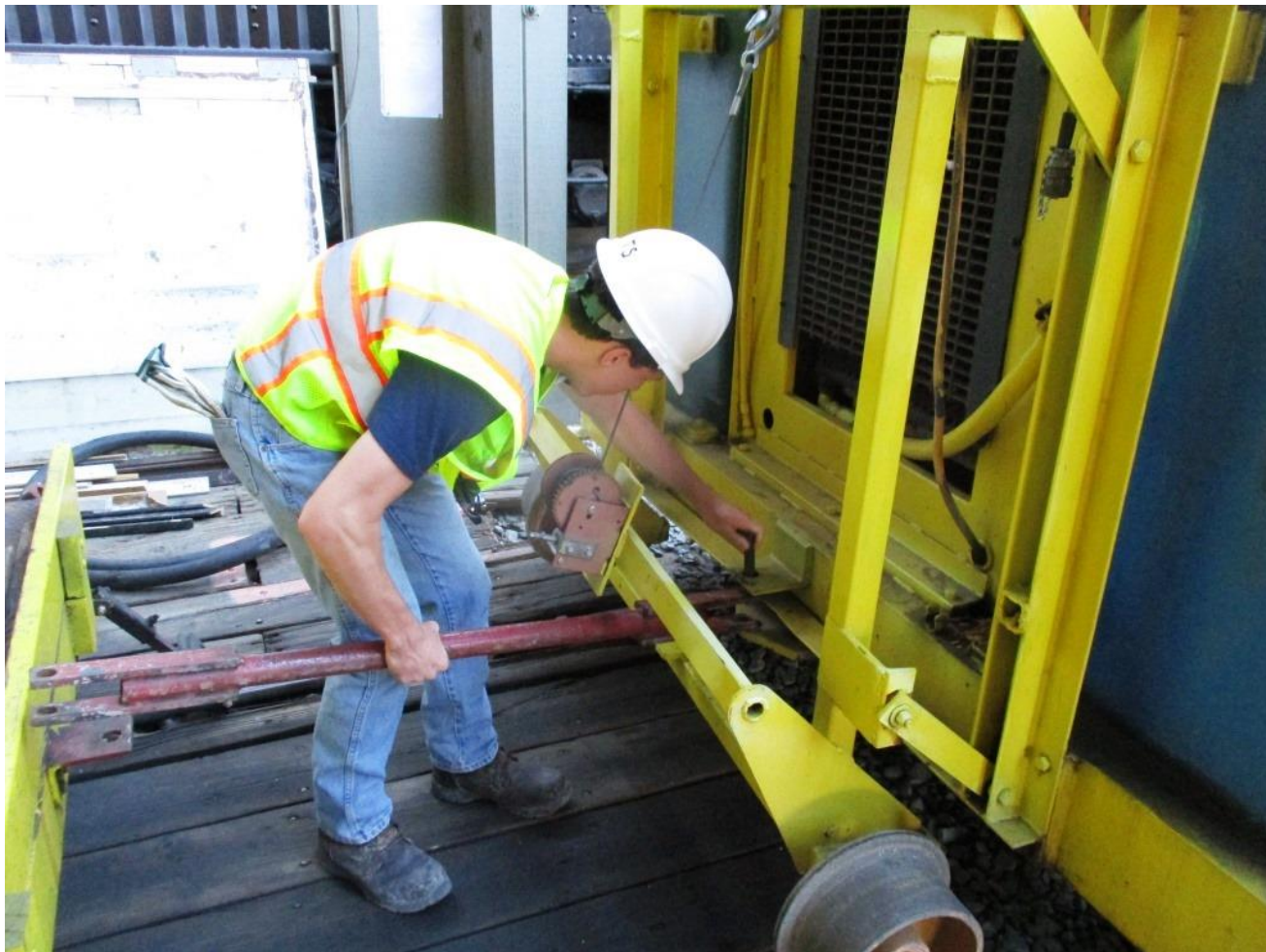


Mike T. mowing-down the victims of the Weed Team's spraying efforts at Hood

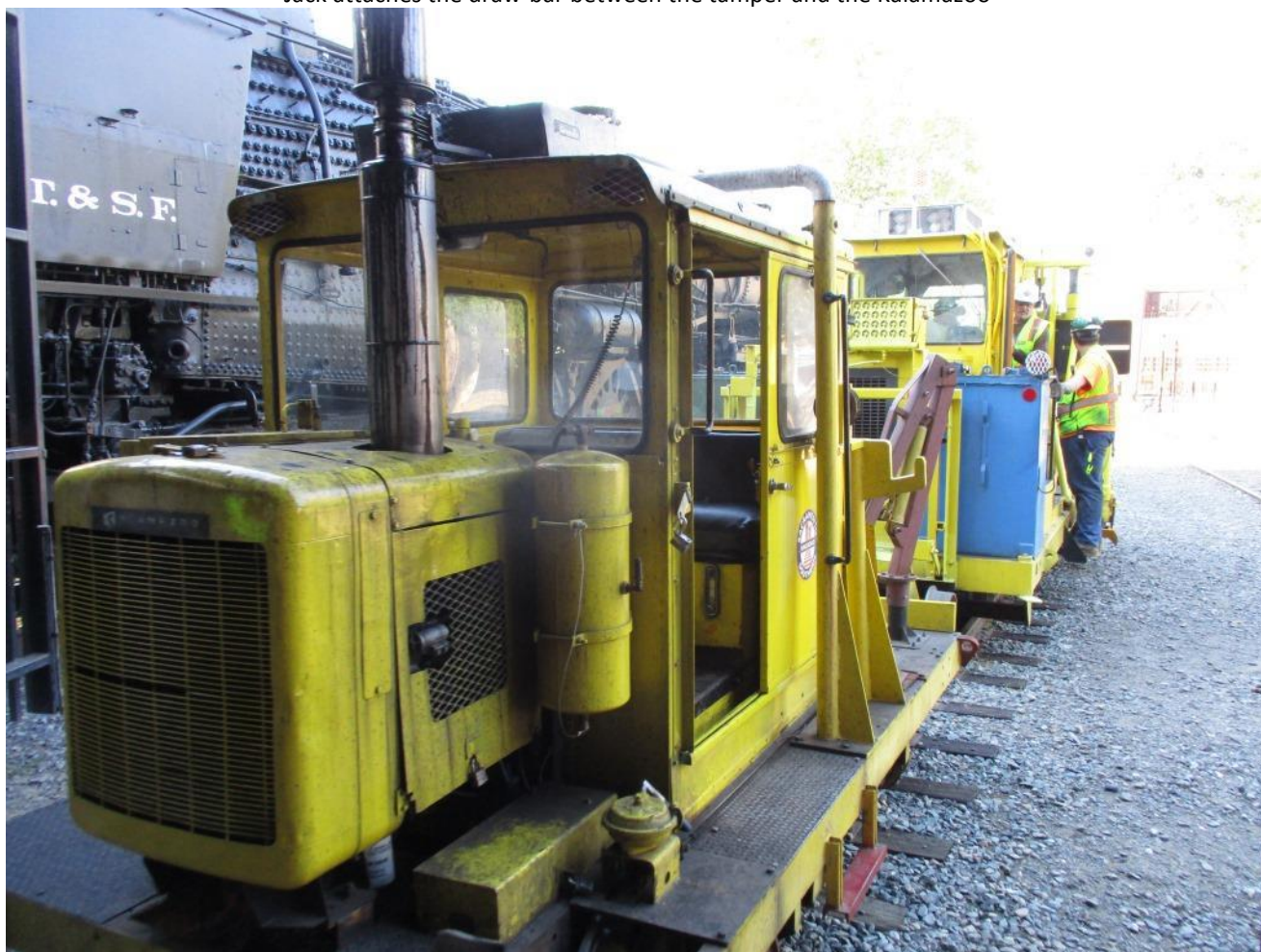


Chris switching the tamper, which is being used to tow the Kalamazoo back to the Shops





Jack attaches the draw-bar between the tamper and the Kalamazoo



Mike F. at the helm of the tamper pulls the Kalamazoo out of the Passenger Station



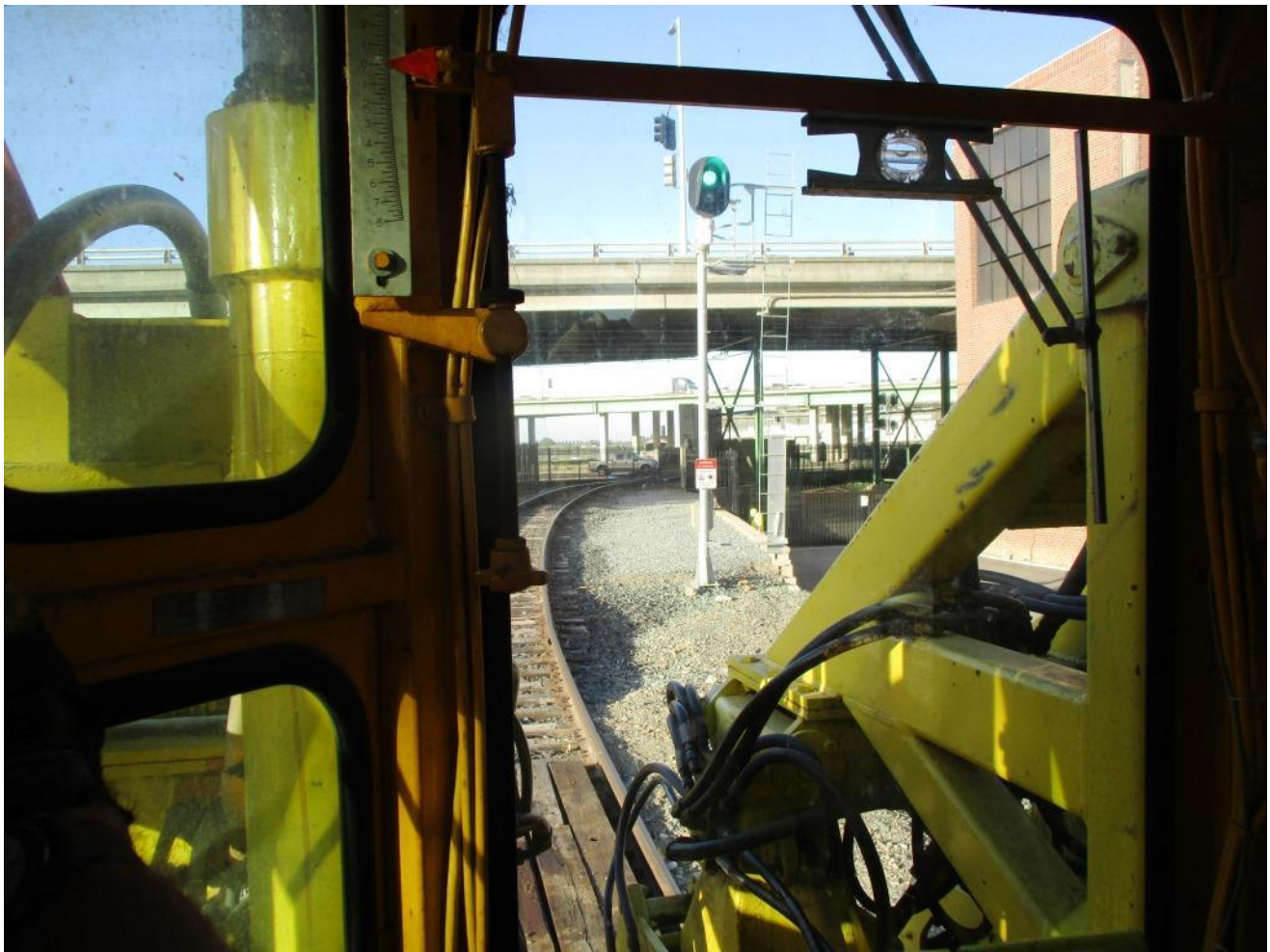


Chris and Jack handle the switching as the Tamper and Kalamazoo move onto the South Turntable Lead



Mike F. in the tamper pulls the malfunctioning Kalamazoo onto the 560 Interchange Track





Green signal indication from Omaha means Go! GO! GOOOOOOOO!!!!



Jack, Dave, Mike F., and Chris push the Kalamazoo into the Erecting Shop





In the “pit of despair” under the Kalamazoo, Jack and Joe drain the sludge from the transmission (drenching Jack in the process)



With all the sludge gone, Ed and Joe fill the transmission with fresh hydraulic fluid





Heather grabs a bundle of fresh ties with the Big Green Machine...



Heather figured out why the Big Green Machine was so sluggish – water in the fuel





After returning to Old Sacramento, Jack pilots the Kalamazoo into the Passenger Station

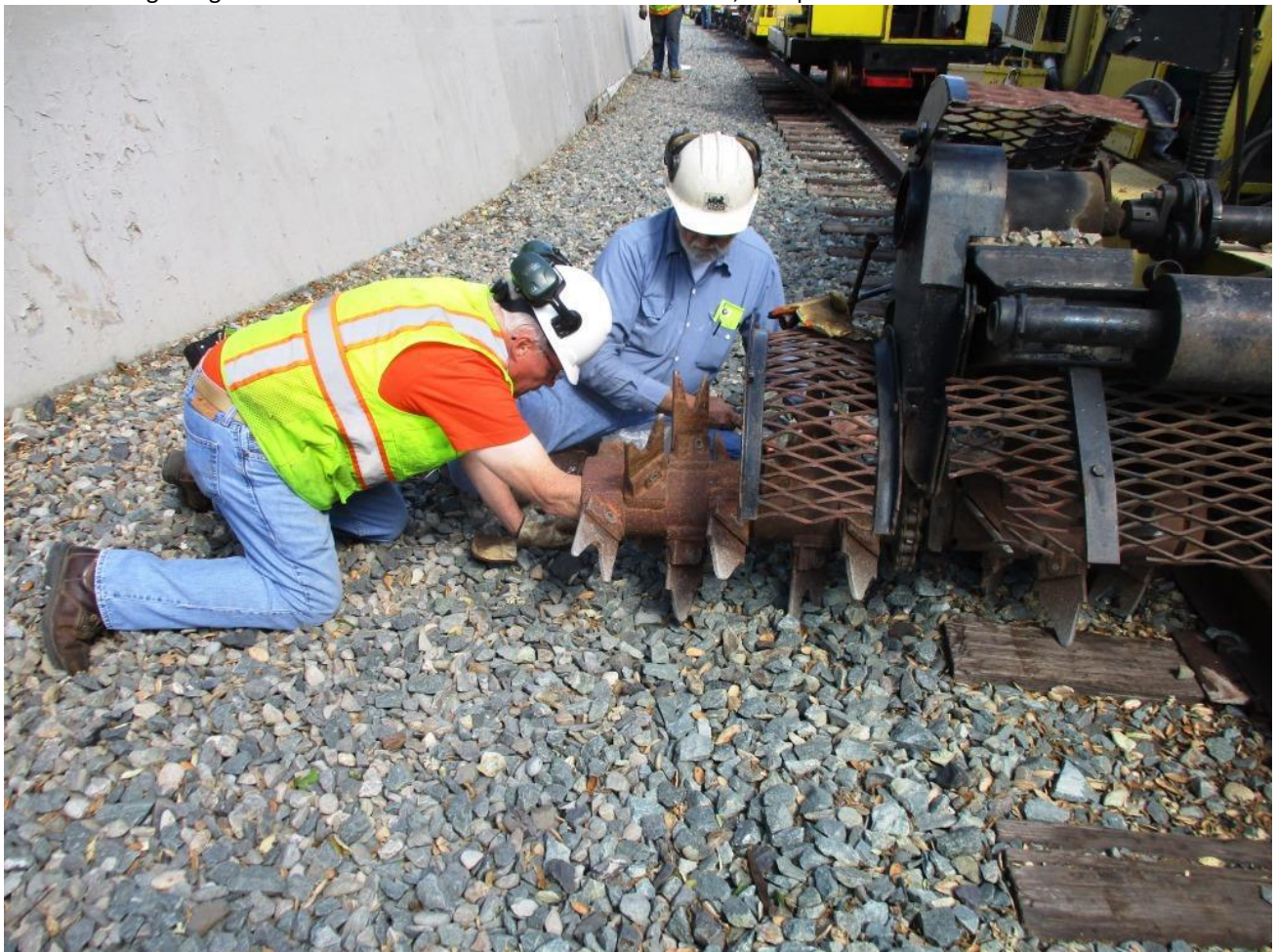


Joe switches out the A-5 motorcar from the MOW work-train consist early Saturday morning





After getting the Kalamazoo on the correct end of the consist, Joe spins the work-train for a second time



At the south end of the bridge, Bill and Alan attach the extension-rotor to the scarifier



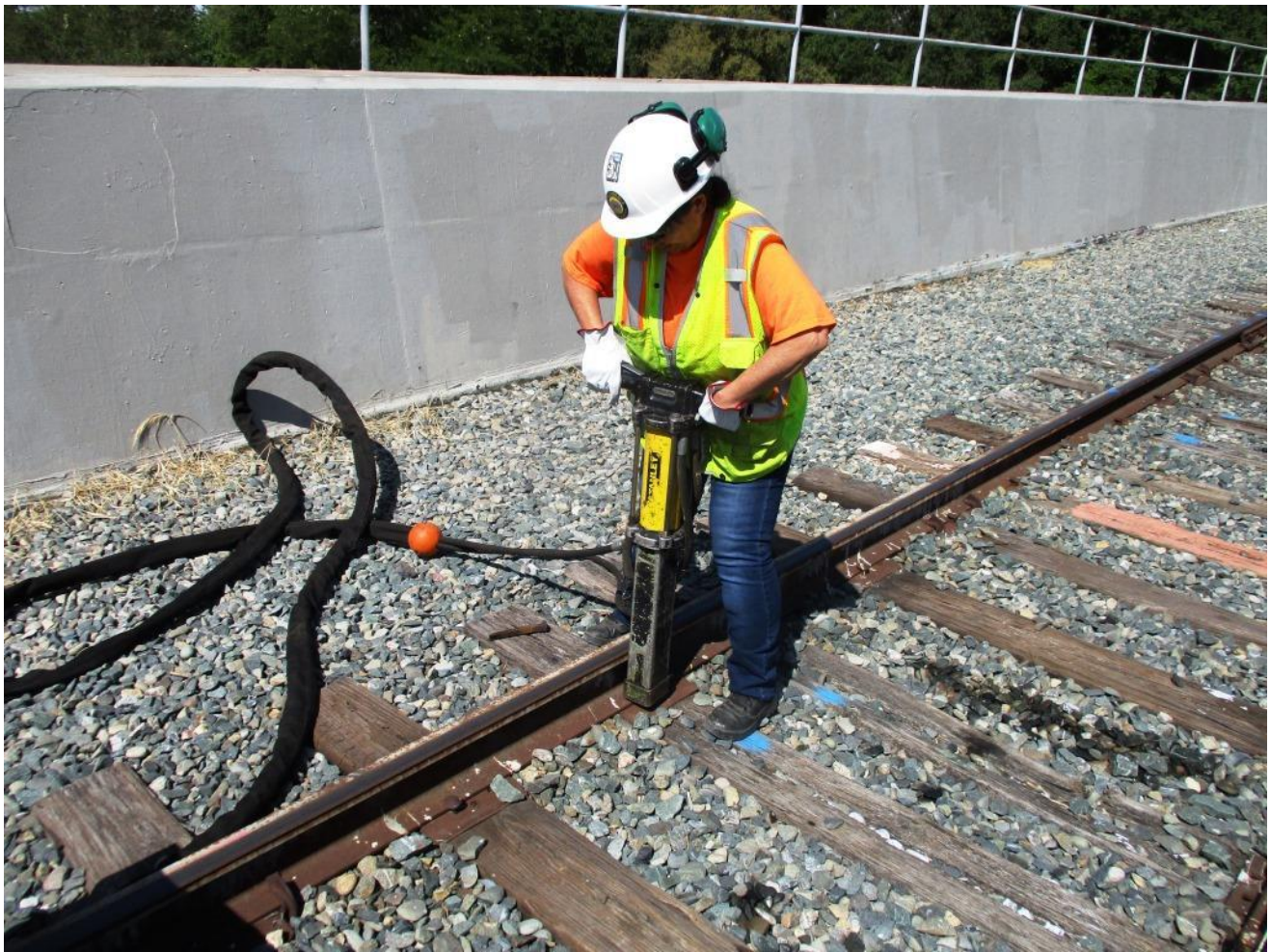


Joe uses the 125's track-jacks to lift the rail slightly for Frank and Clem to insert tie-plates



Chris deploys the hydraulic spike puller





Pam pulls spikes with the hydraulic spike puller



For spikes that were too close to joint bolts for the hydraulic puller to grab, Chris uses the tried and true method of removing them





Ed sets spikes as Heather fills in holes in the ballast



Frank takes a turn on the 125 as Steve and Joe insert tie-plates



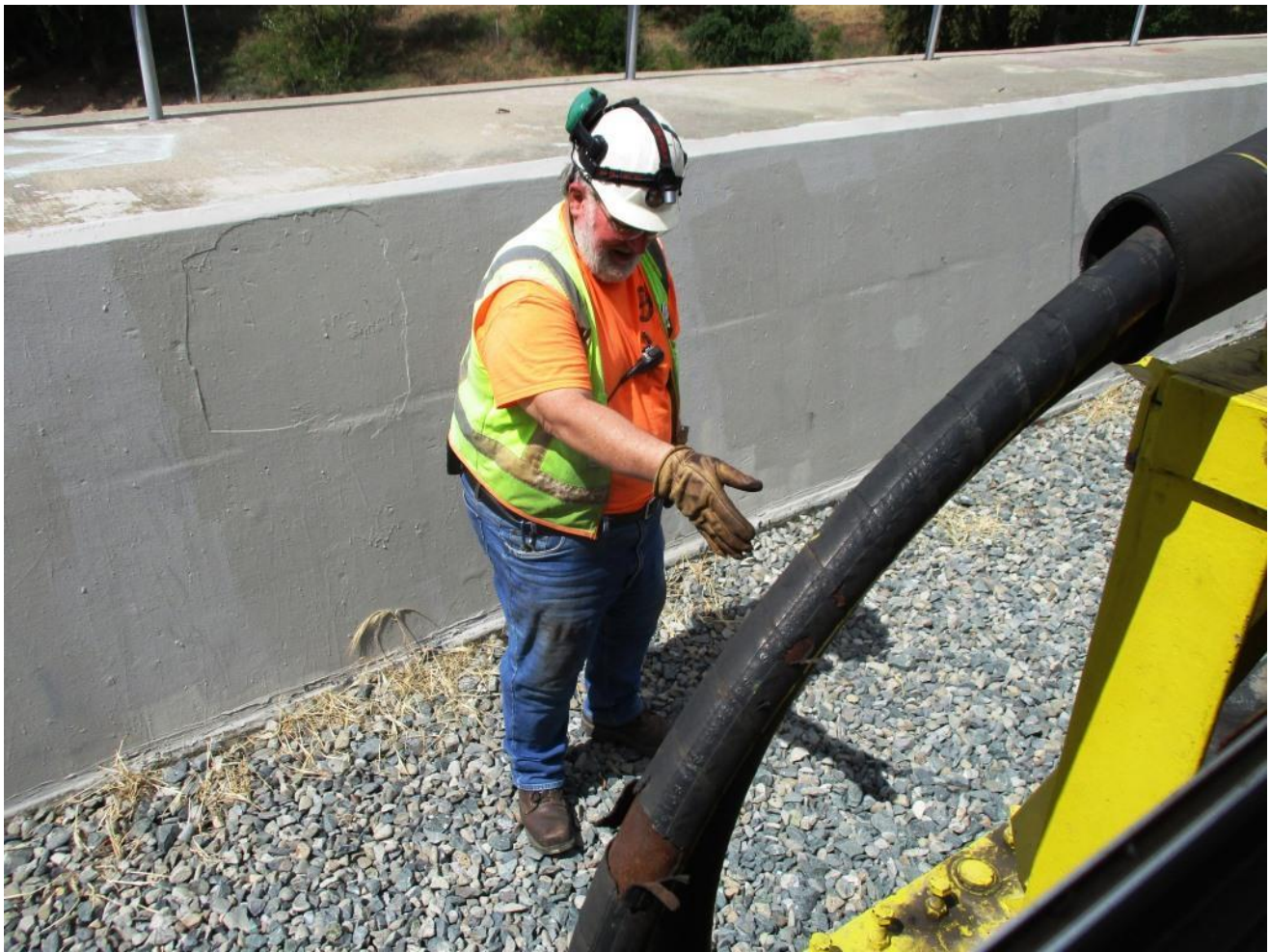


From one end of the bridge to the other, the MOW Team works on bringing the track up to federal Class 2 standards



Bring in the tie-shear! With spikes pulled, the tie-shear now slices its way through the nasty old ties





Frank guides the tie-shear to the optimal position over the top of a rotten old tie



In its wake, the tie-shear leaves nothing but splintered debris which Steve clears away from the track





Evidence of the tie-shear's destructive power! Dead ties everywhere for Chris, Bill, and Joe to clear away



Bill brings the Kalamazoo back into position for the disbursement of brand new fresh ties





Ties fly off o the pile as Ed and Steve drop new ties next to the now empty tie-cribs



Another action shot of ties flying





Bill loads dead-tie debris on the flatcar



Steve, Ed, and Chris pile more dead-tie debris on the flatcar





Joe maneuvers the position of the new tie going in to make sure it is on the straight and level



Joe used the inserting ram to move ballast about in order to provide a level surface





Heather keeps a careful eye on the train as it approaches our red-flag (and MOW regular Weston Snyder who was brakeman on Saturday)



Joe manipulates the insertion ram on the 125 to prevent the ties from “submarining” as the wall forces them to be placed at an angle





Joe employs the rarely used scarifier function on the 125 to provide a little more depth under the rails at this tie-crib



With all the ties inserted, Steve brings the tamper in to tamp the ties flush with the rails





Down at Setzer, Chris, Bill, and Ed dispose of the dead-tie debris



Time to head back to Old Sacramento. Just waiting for that darned train to get out of the way!