

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 27, 2018. Your MOW Team continues rolling right along, keeping up with the times and the projects on its plate. So, let's get this update rolling along, for old time's sake.

Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Michael Florentine, Matt McCracken, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, Mike Harris, and Heather Kearns got things going on Tuesday. The Team spent the evening undertaking more prep work for the construction of the new switch for a new storage track being built behind the Museum. The goal was to retrieve more sticks of 110-pound rail and additional switch-ties. Mike F. climbed aboard the Big Green Machine (Big Green) to dig through the switch-ties stockpiled to the west of the Boiler Shop to find just the right ones. Alan, Chris, and Matt worked with Mike F. Once the correct ties were located, stacked, and spotted for easy loading onto a flatcar, the Team next sought out several sticks of 110-pound rail for use on the new storage track being built. Again, with the help of Matt, Chris, Alan, and Mike H., the appropriate sticks were identified in the pile, hooked to a chain, and dragged out by Mike F. on Big Green. These sticks of rail were spotted by 560-Track in the Rail Yards where they can be loaded easily onto flatcars for the journey to Old Sacramento. Inside the Boiler Shop, Heather and Joe were conducting major surgery on the 400-gallon water tank's pump engine. They had it dismantled to the point of looking like a Meccano set turned upside down and scattered on the floor. Fortunately, Joe and Heather know exactly where each piece goes when they put it back together. Chris got the little tractor, that we've dubbed "Old Yeller," started and, along with Mike H. and Matt, got it over to Old Sacramento ready to do some roadbed prep in tight spaces near the new switch. There's no denying, your MOW Team is keeping busy!

The Mighty Weed Team again headed to Hood for more mowing down of the victims from its magical blue-brew application last month. Alas, Mike Taylor, Heather, and Ed Kottal had to endure constant problems with the DR mowers. An amazing collection of variously sized nuts, bolts, washers, and sheet metal screws are now scattered between MP 12.1 and 12.4. These DR mowers are both a God-send and a curse! Despite this setback, the Weedies still managed to mow a third of a mile. Now that's the personification of progress. Many thanks to the mighty Weedies!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Dennis Noble and Larry Lobb from the Signal Department worked with Alan on repairs to the tie-crane which wouldn't start. Once they took care of that, they moved on to adjusting the carburetor on "Old Yeller" which was running a bit rough. In the evening, Ed Kottal, Chris, Dave Wolf, Mike H., Heather, and Alan were in attendance. The evening's goal was to stage for Saturday. Mike H. took Green Machine 2 (GM2) to Old Sacramento to free up the flatcars so that they could be used to transport more switch components to the job site. Through some brilliant maneuvering, Mike H. on GM2 managed to get the long switch-ties off the flatcars. Then he retrieved the ground-throw switch machine from the truck. Dave and Ed manually shifted material from one car to another. Equipment was switched around and Chris ably served as brakeman. Then, Dave took on an electrical problem with "Old Yeller" that the Team didn't get to in the morning before the Team returned to the Shop where Alan had been pulling smaller switch parts (brackets, connecting-rods, transit-clips) from our inventories.

Alan made sure there were plenty of doughnuts on hand Saturday morning for Joe, Clem Meier, Ed, Mike Willis, Pam Tatro, Chris Machado, and Heather. Joe arrived extra early to open the Kalamazoo tug, hook the flat cars to it, and take the whole kit and caboodle over to the Shops for loading. Heather and Mike W. stayed behind at the Shops to work on resolving another new electrical malfunction with Big Green. Over in Old Sac., there was more activity going on than you could shake a stick at. First up, as it's a 110-pound switch we're building, the existing 113-pound rail, where the switch is being located, needs to be replaced. Joe and Alan used the hydraulic rail-saw to cut out one more length of 113-pound rail to be replaced by stick of 110-pound rail. Ed brought in GM2 to move the 113-pound rail out of the way and lift the stick of 110-pound rail in place. Then, Joe, Pam, and Chris dug-out a shattered tie under the new joint. Next, one of the rails installed last week needed to be replaced after one of our "eagle-eyed" trusty track inspectors spotted a vertical split head – considered a serious metallurgic defect under federal regulations. Never doubt the eagle-eyes of our track inspectors (even if they wear glasses...). Chris and Clem took joints apart on the defective rail. Then, Pam, Clem, and Joe interpreted old-fashioned track-gang "Gandy Dancing" and barred the defective rail out of the way. Mike W., Chris, Joe, Pam, and Clem placed tie-plugs in all the spike-holes. GM2 was too big to get into the tight spaces where the new new stick of rail was needed right at the convergence of the 150 and 560 Tracks. So, Chris brought the back-hoe up the track from I Street to drag a new stick of rail into point position. Joe, Mike W., and Clem got the joint-bars in place bolted up. While there, Alan had Chris use the back-hoe to place ground-throw switch machine on the head-blocks. By lunch time, the Team had removed and replaced two sticks of rail.

Following lunch, Joe, Ed, Heather, and Alan made up the afternoon crew. The plan for the afternoon was to get the two new rails gauged, plated, and spiked. Gauging was a bit tricky as the 150-Track is curved heading up the hill. Heather, Alan, Ed, and Joe used track-jacks in the horizontal position to push against each other and spread the rails to the correct 56 ½ inches apart. From the point-of-switch north, the track needed to be re-gauged as it is unnatural for it to want to curve. Jacks were placed and cranked. Plates were then placed under the rails and spiked down to hold the track in gauge. The last major job of the day was to get the very heavy armored compromise joint bars attached that join the 110-pound rail with the 113-rail. Ed and Joe took care of that. Then it was time to pack up all the tools and haul everything back to the Shops. Conductor Heather took care of the arrangements with Omaha. With the green signal indication and two-toots from the Kalamazoo's horn, Joe and Ed were off. It had been a very good day. With all the stock-rails now in place, switch-points and frog are next to be installed.

This coming week, the Team will meet on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock p.m. in the Shops. The Weed Team will deploy for Hood on Thursday starting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, work on the new switch continues at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to everyone for your dedication!

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Mike F. on Big Green grabs some switch ties



Big Green drags a stick of 110-pound rail out of the spare rail pile



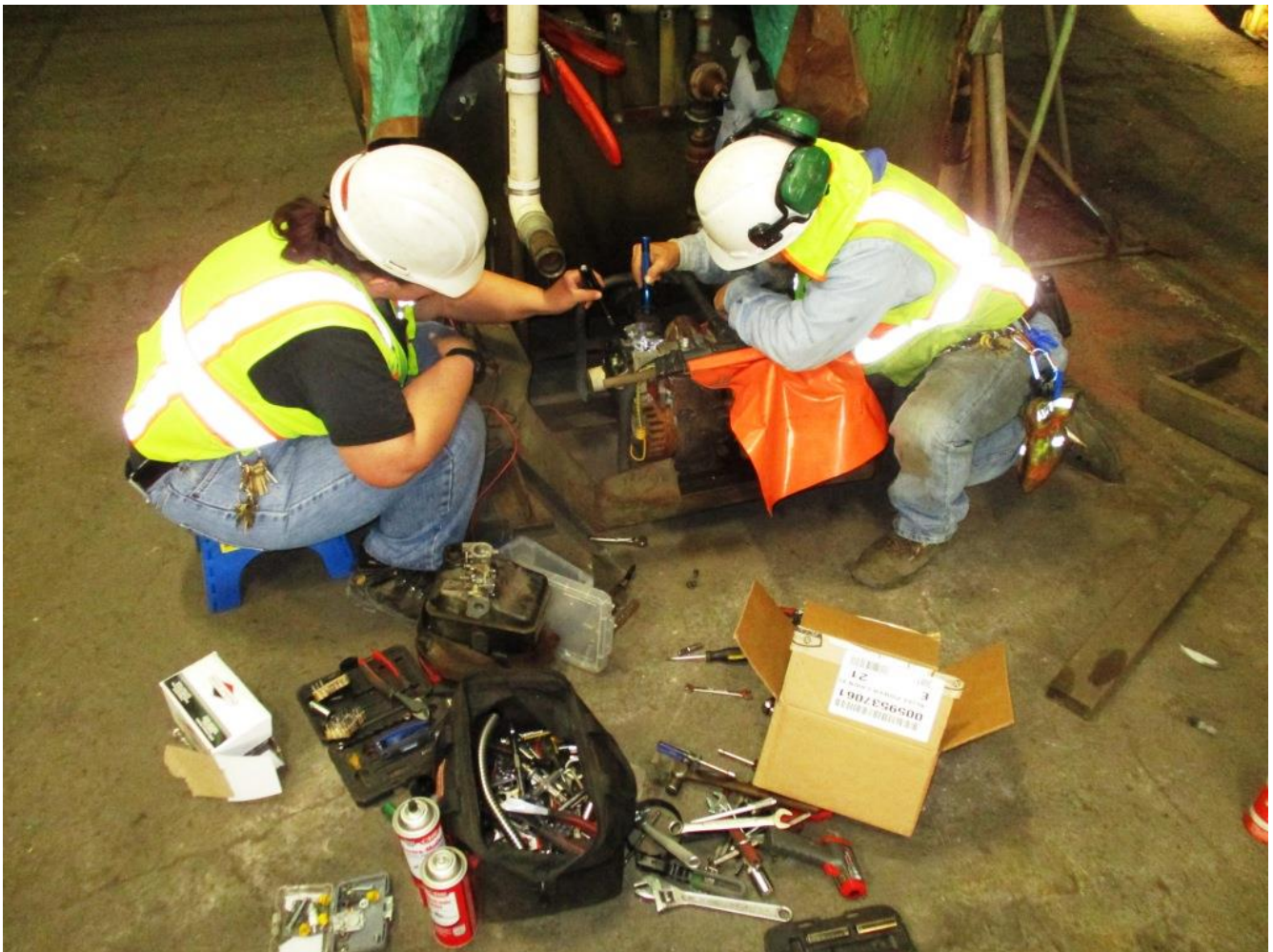


Chris gets "Old Yeller" started ready to take to Old Sac. to do some grading work on the roadbed in very tight spaces

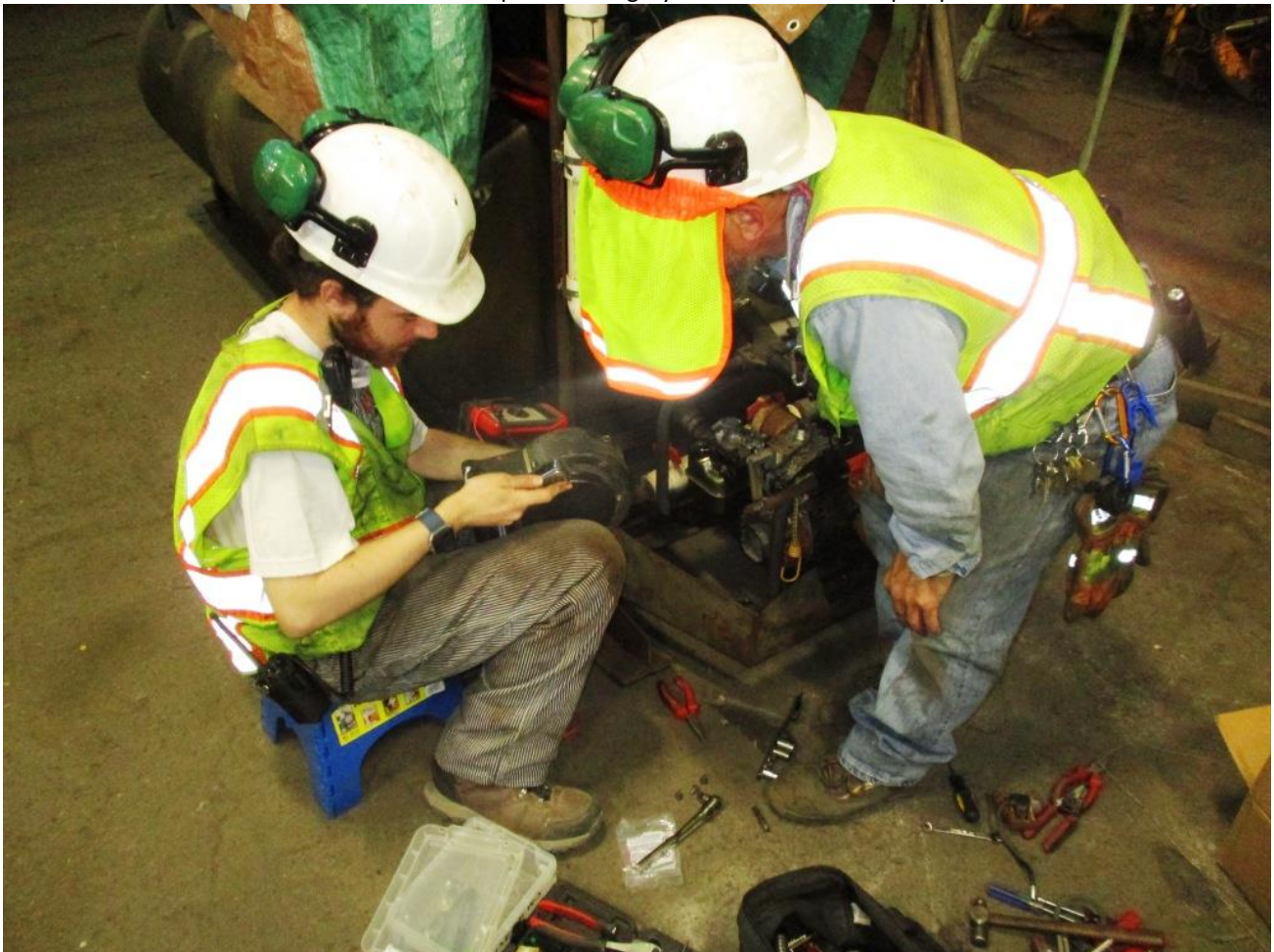


Chris and Matt fill Ol' Yeller with fuel and try to figure out why its running so rough





Heather and Joe perform surgery on the water tank's pump



Matt helped by quickly figuring out the problem was Joe's hardhat was on backwards...





Ed and Dave move equipment off one of the flatcars

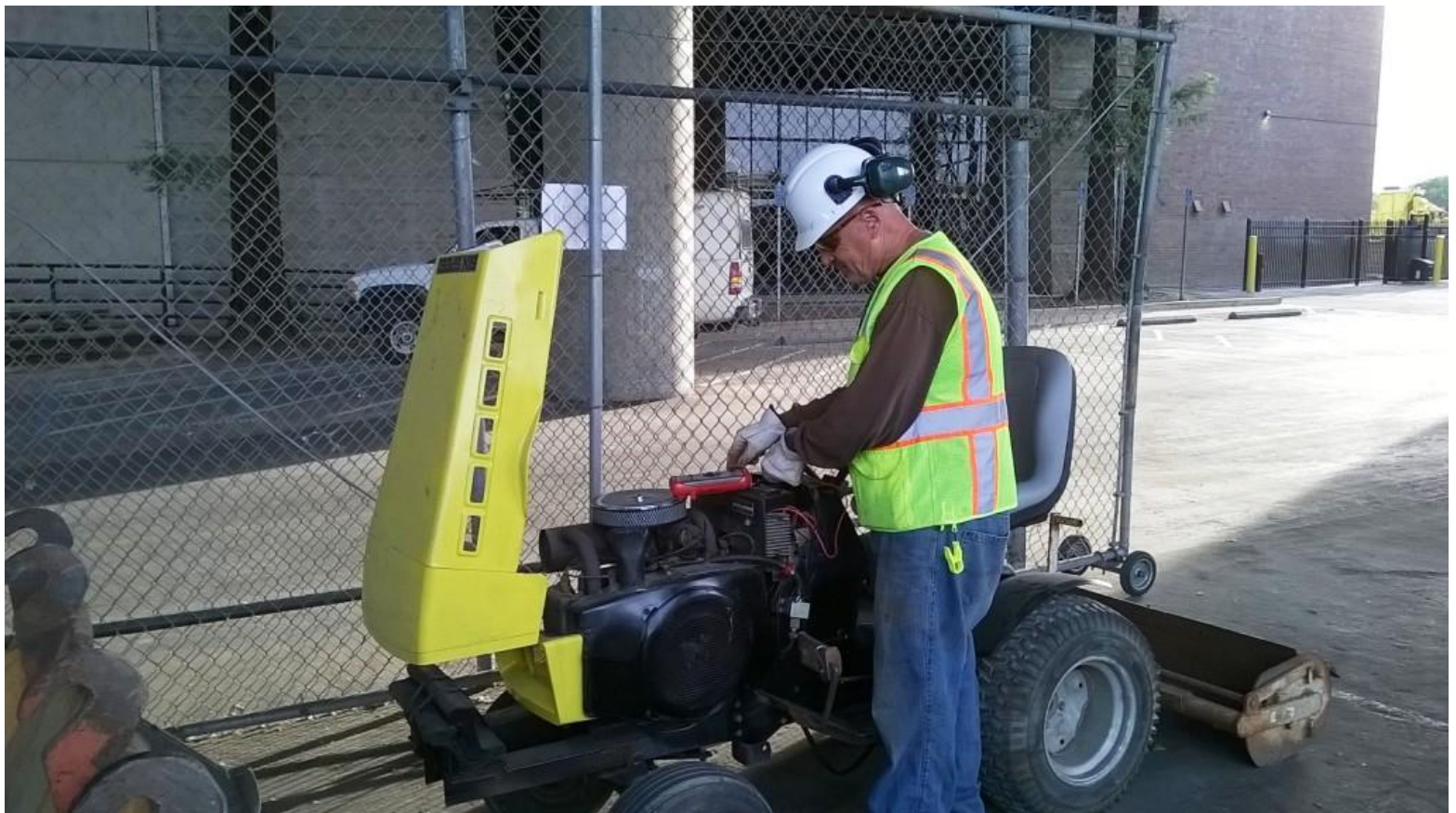


Mike H. demonstrates exactly why your MOW Team need's a "rough-terrane" forklift...



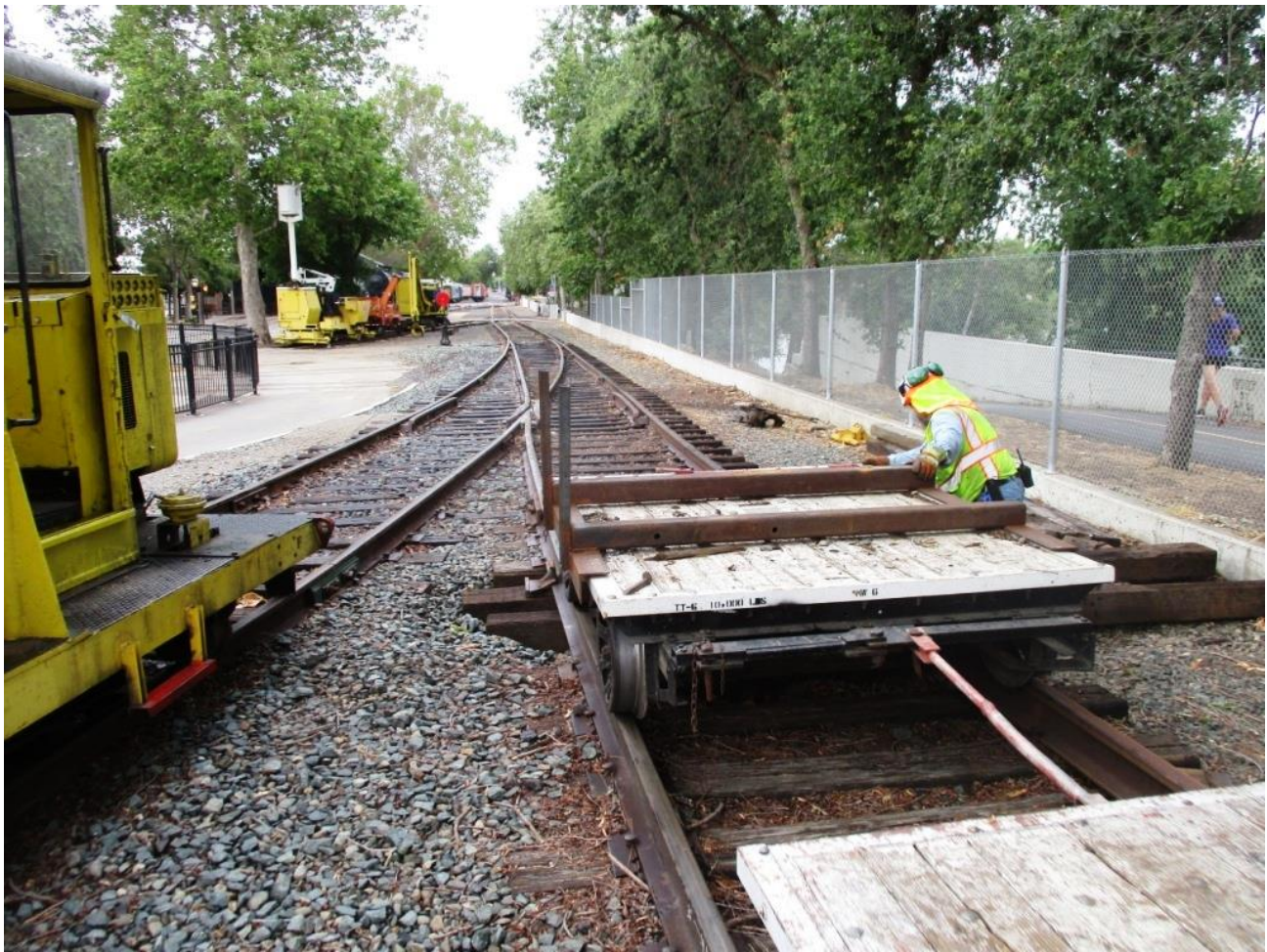


Mike H. uses GM2 to move 15-foot long ties off the flatcar



Dave hunts down the electrical problem with Old Yeller





Early morning exercise: Joe switches the flatcars around by hand so that they won't have to be shoved over the UP Main



A transfer-table full: the Kalamazoo grabs all the needed equipment MOW equipment out of the Shops



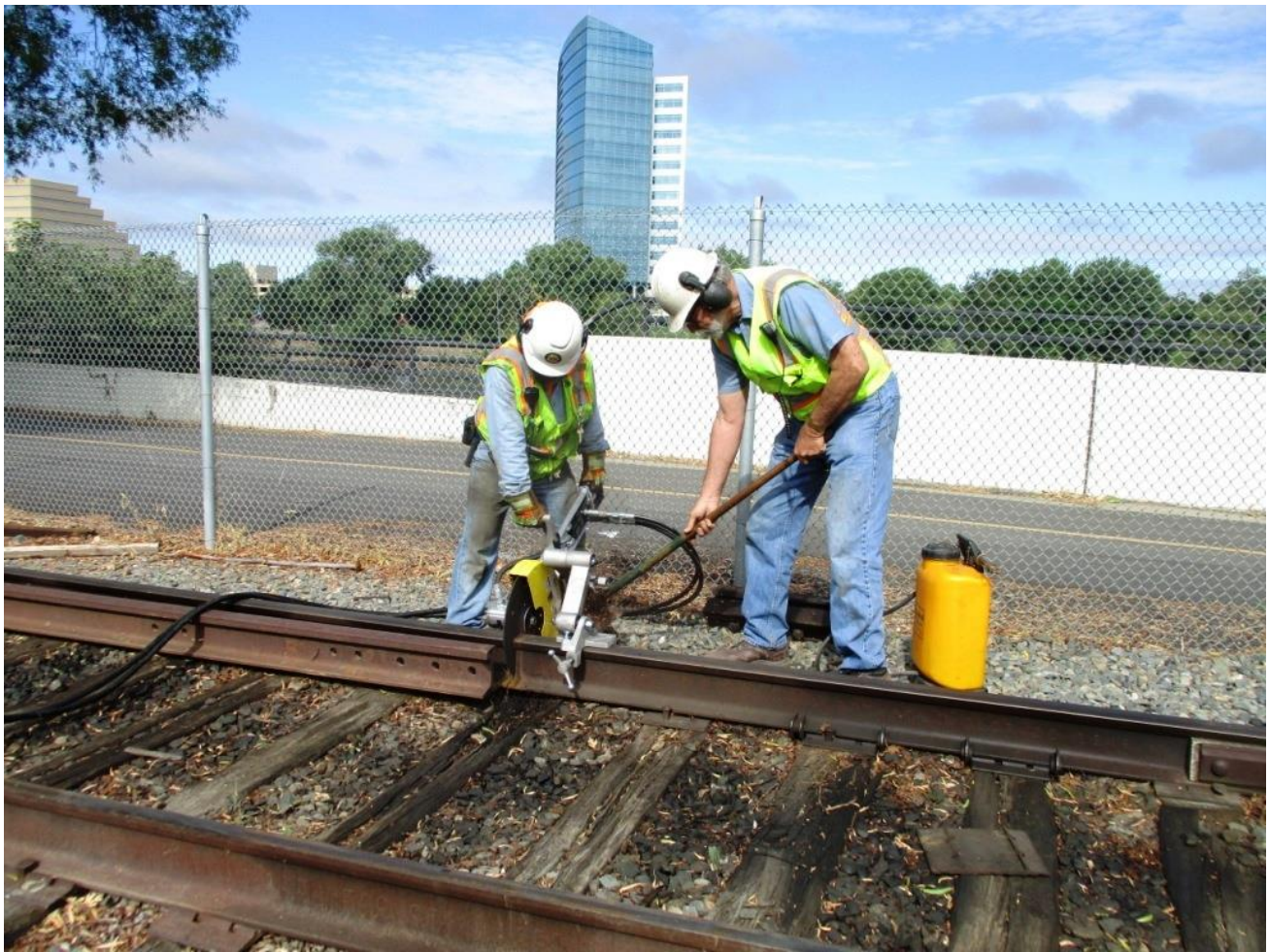


Pam digs a new tie-crib for the next switch-tie to be installed



Chris and Clem take apart the north joint of the defective rail





Further north, Joe uses the hydraulic rail-saw as Alan shields sparks with a shovel to cut out one last length of 113-pound rail



Meanwhile, the Granite Rock 10 does a blow-down on the turntable and puts on a steamy show for your MOW Team





Joe, Pam, and Chris dig out a shattered tie

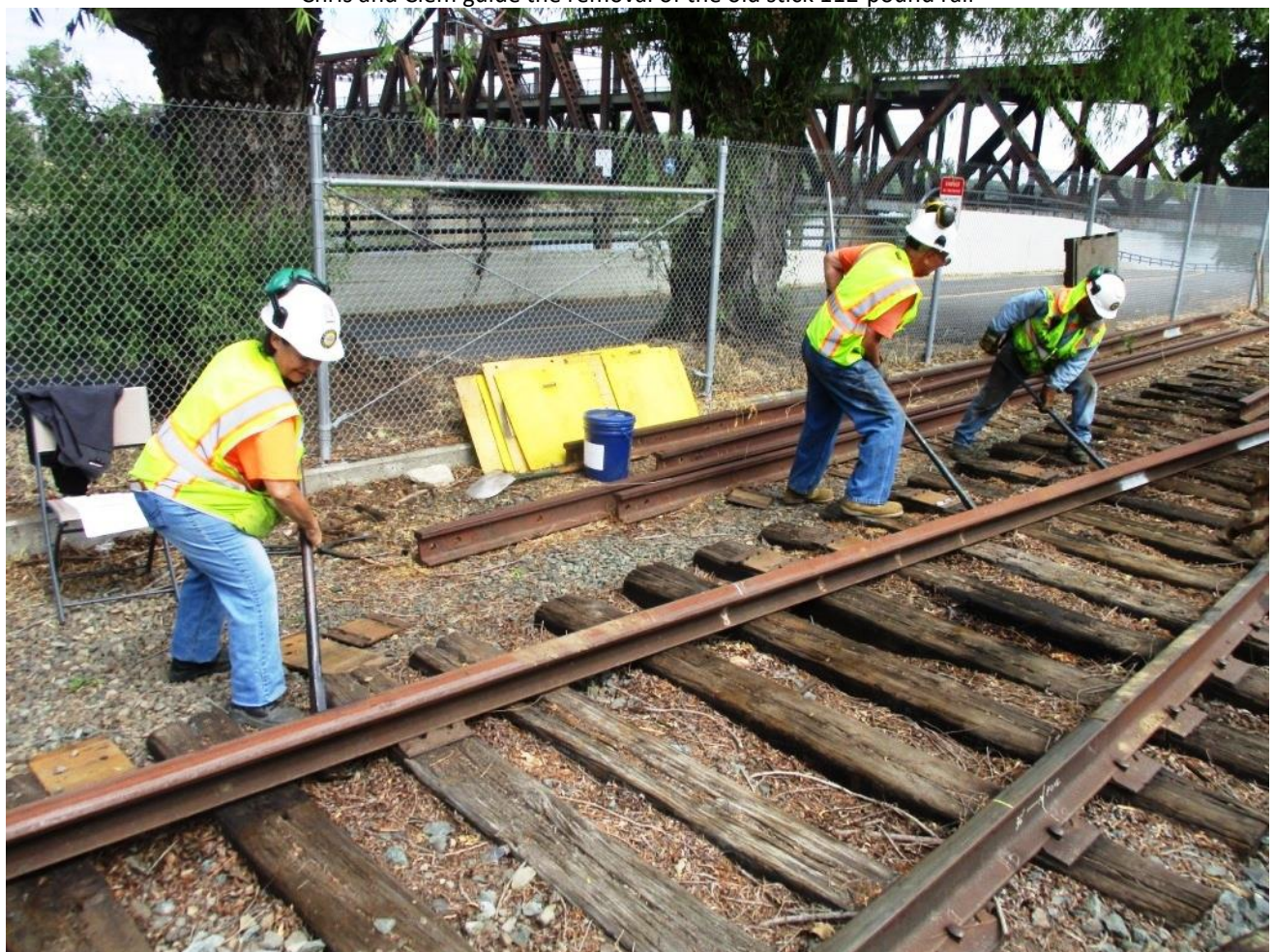


Ed on GM2 removes the cut-out stick of 113-pound rail



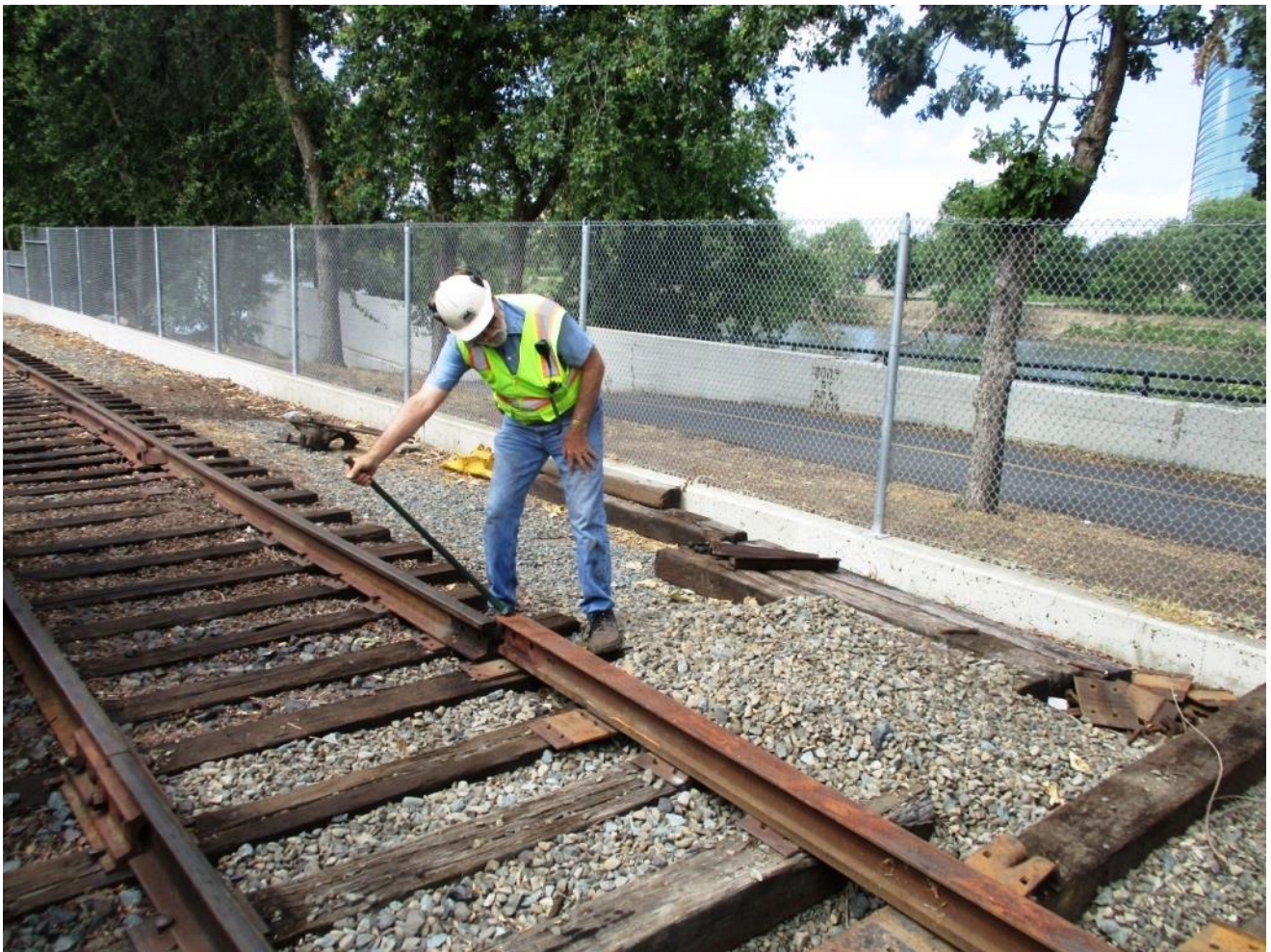


Chris and Clem guide the removal of the old stick 112-pound rail



Pam, Clem, and Joe do a little "Gandy Dancing"



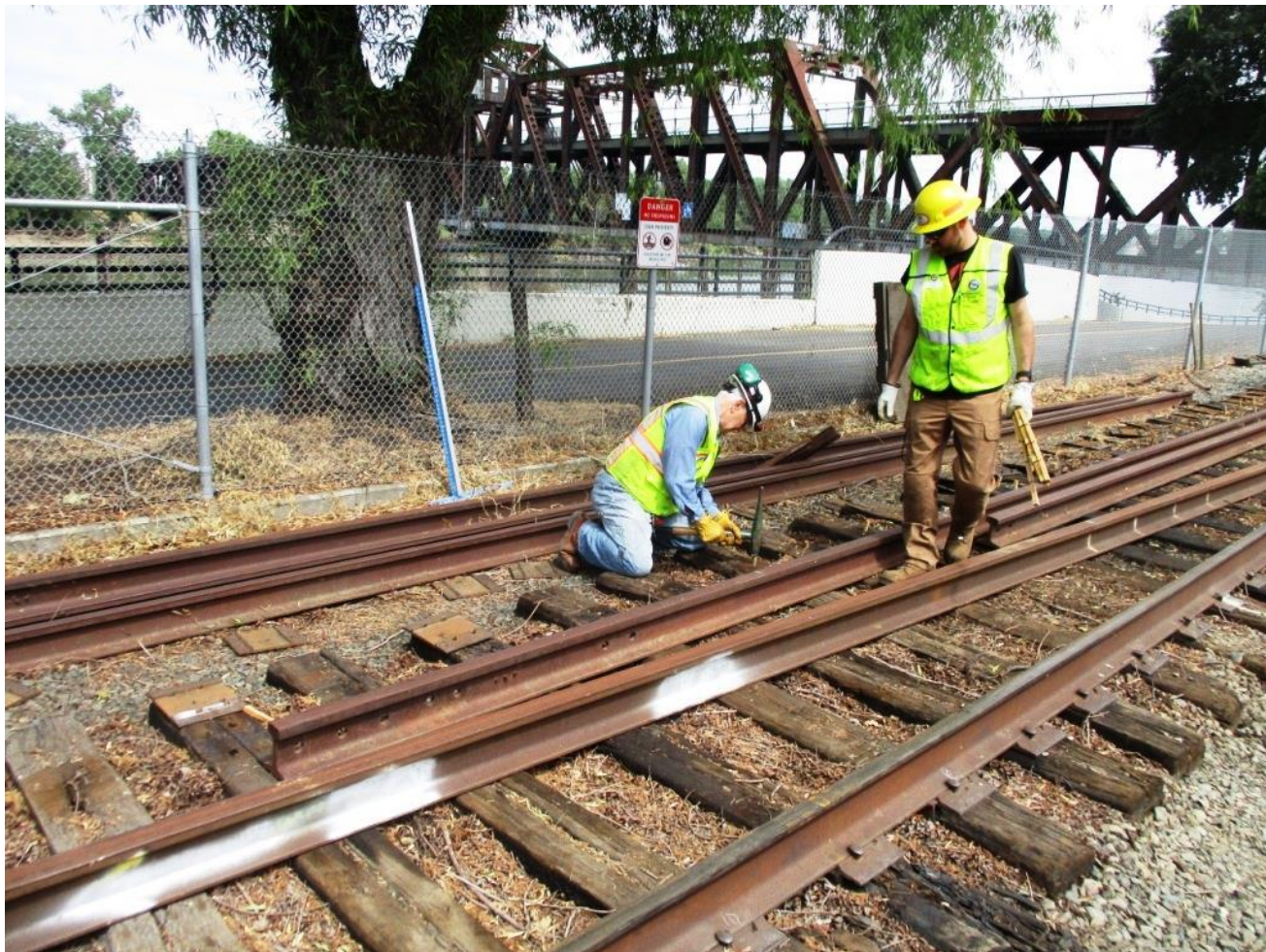


Alan uses the rail-fork to roll the defective rail out of the way

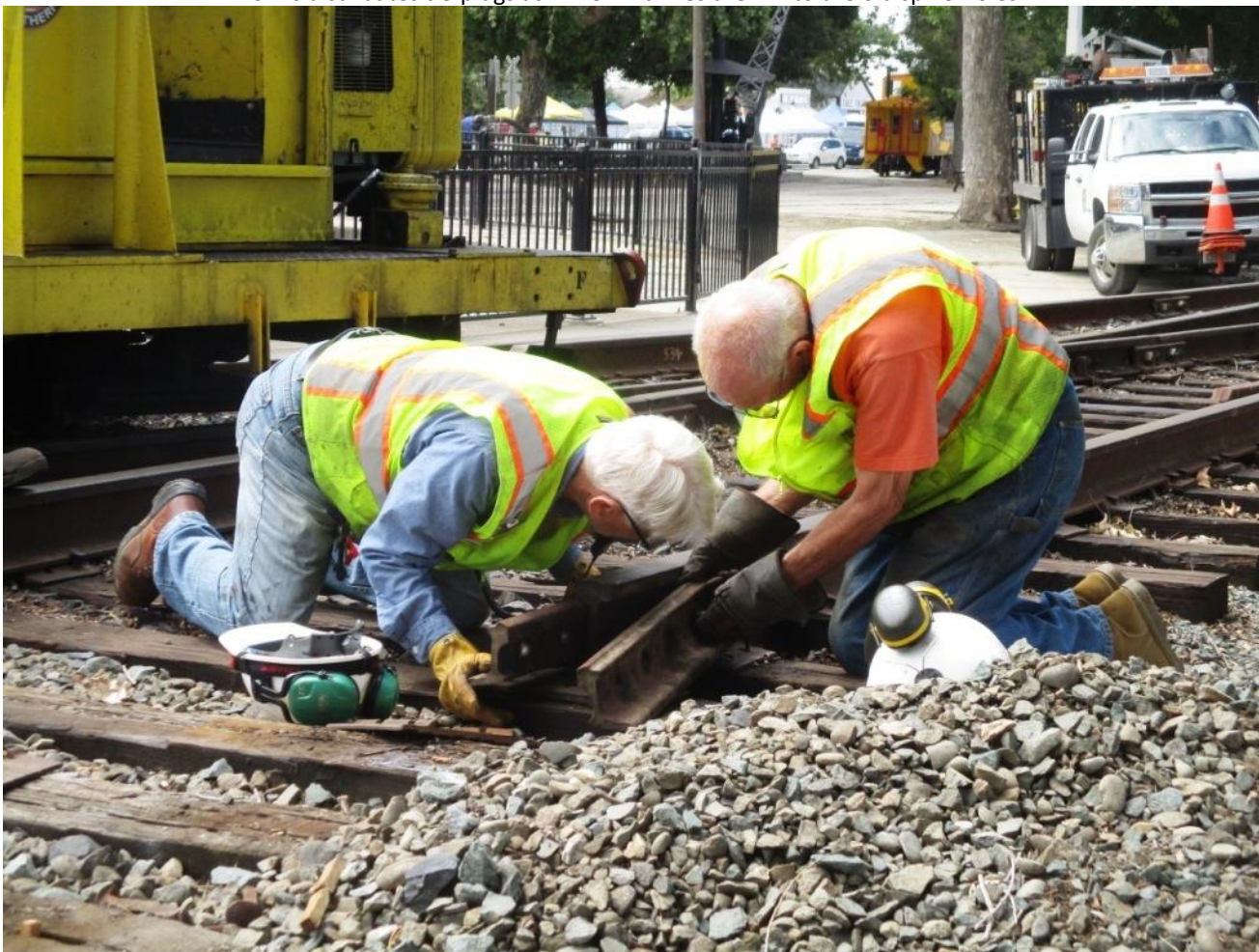


The culprit – a vertical split rail-head





Chris distributes tie-plugs as Mike W. drives them into the old spike-holes



Mike W. and Clem get the joint-bars bolted onto the rail. The spread joint-bars provide a guide for the new rail to slide into position



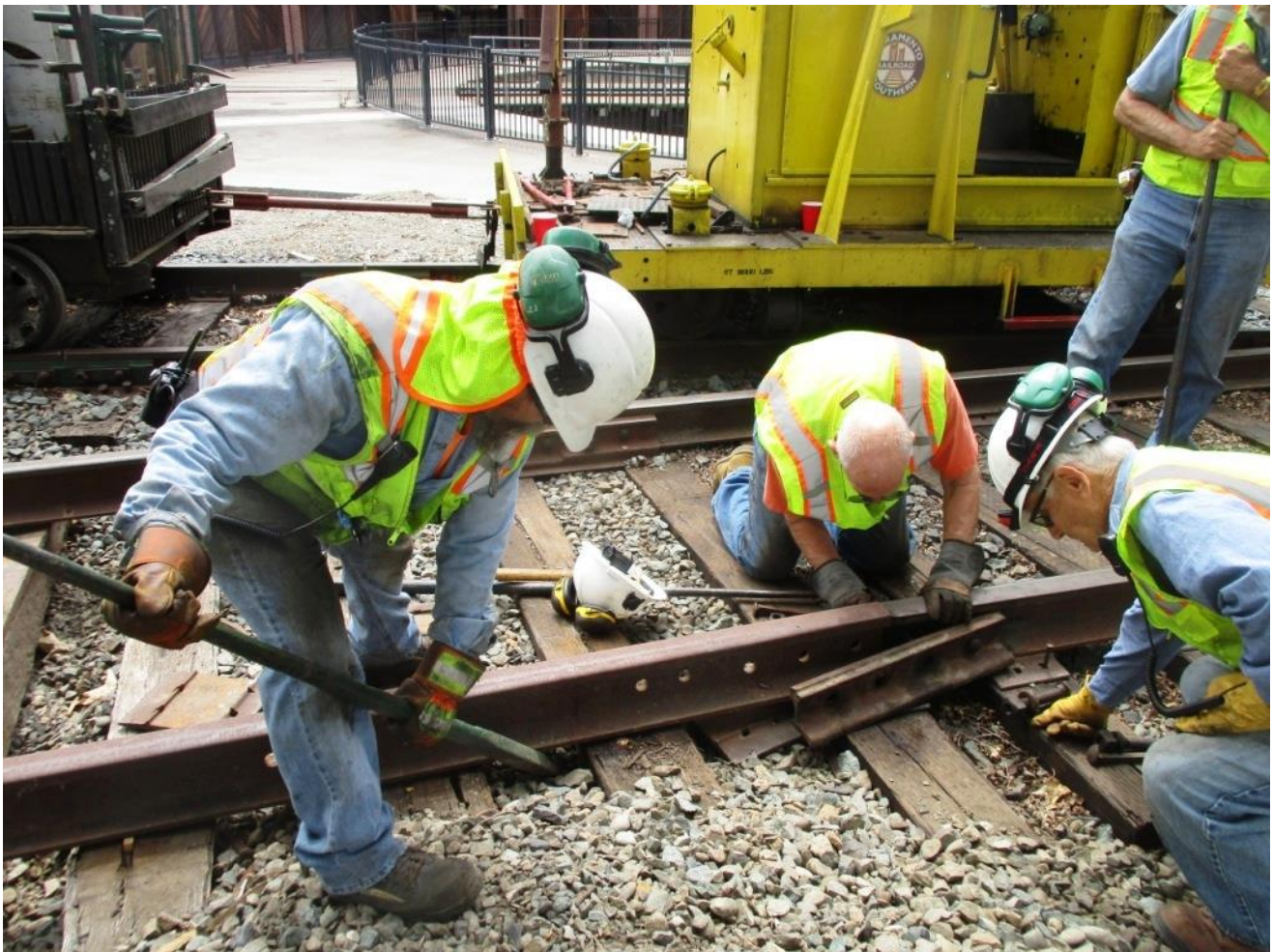


Chris on the back-hoe pulls the new rail down to where it needs to go



Alan guides the chain as Chris on the back-hoe slides the rail into position right between the spread joint-bars





Joe uses the leverage of a lining bar to help bring the rail into alignment for Clem and Mike W. bolt together



Ed and Joe tighten the bolts





Alan guides Chris on the back-hoe as the ground-throw switch machine is placed on the head-block ties



Joe and Ed tighten the bolts at the north joint





Heather shimmies the head-block ties to the correct distance from each other



Alan and Joe take precise measurements for hooking the switch rod from the machine to the connecting rod between the rails





Ed and Joe get the armored comp-joint bars attached to the track connecting the 110-pound and 113-pound rails



Ed and Joe tighten the bolts on the comp-joint





Alan checks the measurements as Heather uses track-jacks to spread the rails into the correct gauge

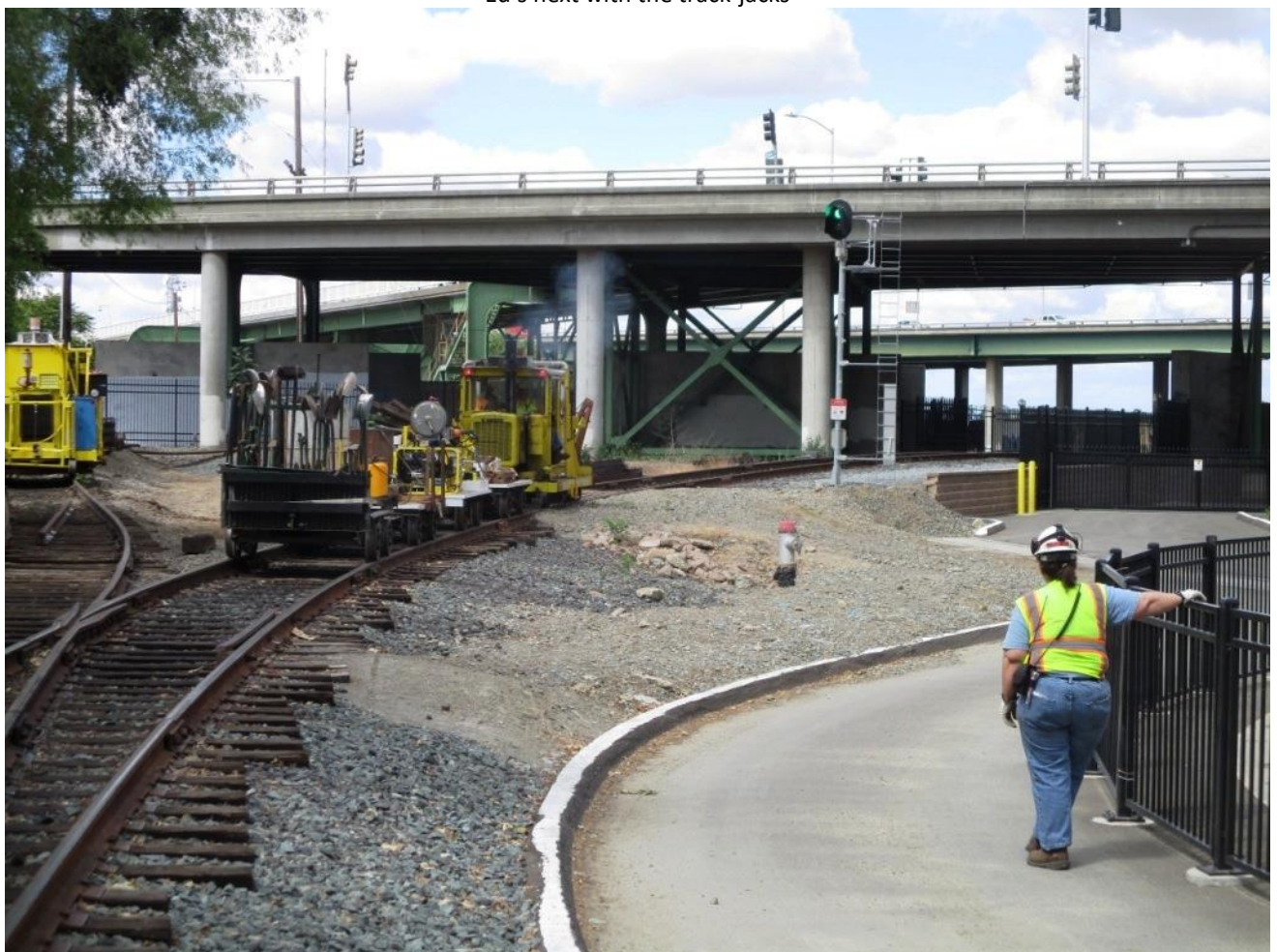


Joe now spreads the rails with track-jacks pressing up against closure rail





Ed's next with the track-jacks



Green light! Conductor Heather sends Ed, Joe, and the Kalamazoo on their way