

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for June 17, 2018. The Team was busy, busy, busy this week both in the Shops and out on the line. Of course, great deeds were accomplished. So, let's keep the accomplishment going by getting this update underway right now.

The MOW week started early for Mike Taylor on Tuesday who spent the day servicing the Weed Team's equipment. He changed the oil and filter on the massive new field-and-brush mower, a.k.a. "Billy". Then, he took the backpack weed sprayer out and sprayed around the container at Hood. The evening crew consisted of Pat Scholzen, Joe Margucci, Mike Harris, Kyle Blackburn, Jack Shrive, Cliff Hayes, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns. Cliff is designing security shields for the rail-mounted spiker which is completely open and vulnerable to the Goths and Vandals who marauder about Old Sacramento. Goths and Vandals "tagged" two switches at Clunie covering their targets with graffiti. Jack, Kyle, and Joe set off to respond to this unprovoked attack. After trying to decipher the hieroglyphics splattered on the targets, Joe used Goof-Off graffiti remover and erased all evidence of the defacement. While there, Joe and Kyle decided that this was a good time to initiate Jack to the Team by handing him switch-grease bucket. Greasing a switch is MOW Team's unofficial official initiation. After slathering grease on all the switch-plates – and himself – with great aplomb, Joe and Kyle certified that Jack had passed the "test." At Switch 12, a battalion of wasps had moved into the switch-stand. So, Jack and Kyle quickly repossessed it with a little wasp spray. In Old Sac., Mike H. and Heather spend the evening conducting triage on Green Machine 2 (GM2). You will recall that, a couple Saturdays ago, GM2 went kablooey on us. After a bit of work, Heather and Mike H. managed to nurse GM2 back to the Shops. There's no argument, the Team accomplished many great things on Tuesday.

It was another early call time for Mike T. on Thursday as he, Heather, and Ed Kottal convened the Weed Team for more eradication at Hood. Joining our venerable Weedies was State Parks' official ornithologist, Dan the Birdman, to conduct a bird census along the Hood Line. The Weedies tried out their brand new hedge-clippers-on-a-stick and experimented with "on the fly" cutting by attaching it to the side of motorcar trailer and slowly moving down the track. With this latest addition to the Weed Team's arsenal, they were able to clear another three-tenths of a mile bringing their mowing total to 2.1 miles this season. Also, the weeds Mike T. sprayed around the container on Tuesday were wilting, already. At day's end, Mike T. declared that it was a successful day at Hood. You'll find no argument here!

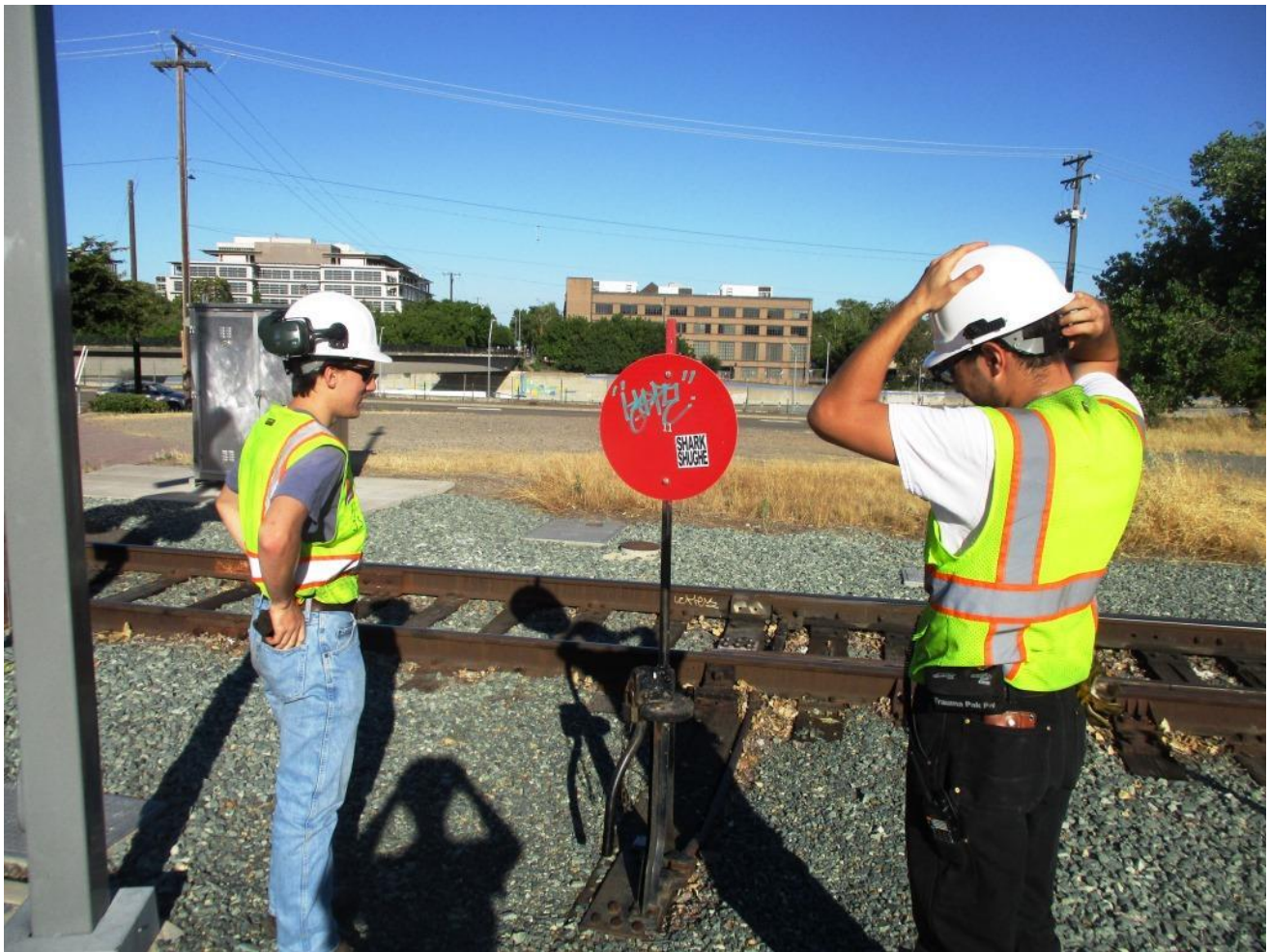
Meanwhile back at the Shops, Joe, Kyle, Jack, and Mike H. joined Heather and Ed. It was all hands on deck to fix the Big Green Machine's (Big Green) transmission malaise. With GM2 out of service needing serious repair work and, as the state took away our front-end loader, getting Big Green working was the priority. Otherwise, the new switch project behind the Museum would come to a dead halt. So, our "miracle workers" Mike H. and Joe took on this task. They manage to get it over to the Erecting Shop and situate it over a pit. Joe and Mike H. then descended into the "pit of despair" under Big Green and began working their magic. As some "dirty work" needed doing, Kyle and Jack were recruited to help. Soon it looked like a "party in the pit!" To make a long story short, after a couple of hours, the "miracle mechanics" managed to mend Big Green. Then, Mike H. carefully backed it away from the pit and put it through its paces to make sure it was working properly. Indeed, another great accomplishment for your MOW Team! Also on Thursday, Ed brought his drone and flew it around the Erecting Shop producing some outstanding photos of the building and your MOW Team at work. Make sure and check them out.

Saturday morning, the doughnuts were in the building and deployed before Alan Hardy, Joe, Michael Florentine, Steve Nemeth, Clem Meier, Bill Hastings, Pam Tatro, Ed, and Heather got there. As such, there was no excuse for delay so, the Team got right to work. Saturday, the switch we're building behind the Museum would start looking like a switch as the plan was to get the extra-long switch ties put in under rails where the frog will go. Heather was EIC for the day. Mike F. was like a kid at Christmas when he was told Big Green was fully functional again. Excitedly, he climbed aboard and took it over to the job site and started moving switch-ties about with great enthusiasm. Pam and Joe got the Kalamazoo tug, pulling the MOW work-train, out of the Central Pacific Passenger Station. Bill and Steve opened up the tamper and ballast regulator which needed to be moved in order to gain access to the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger and scarifier-inserter, both of which were needed for the day's work. With the equipment all in place, Clem and Bill pulled spikes. Steve, Pam, and Alan worked with Mike F. on Big Green to grab a stick of 110-pound rail that, eventually, will be used as the stock-rail for the diverging track. Ed brought the back-hoe to the work site and moved dirt about to fill in holes where the switch-points will be installed. Joe got the 125 in position and began extracting the old eight-foot ties. Steve, Alan, Pam, Clem, and Heather positioned the nine, 10, 12, and 13-foot ties for insertion. Not only are switch-ties extra-long, they're extra thick and weigh a ton (figuratively) making them difficult to handle. This did cause some frustration. But, as the members of this Team has proved over and over again, they're up to the challenge and soon, they had the ties where they needed to be for Joe on the 125 to draw them under the rails. Joe is an unquestioned expert at operating the 125 and managed to maneuver, shimmy, and coax each tie into its proper position. Seriously folks, watching a true expert operate a machine, and getting it to exceed its expectations, is a joy in itself. Joe's efforts with the 125 saved a tremendous amount of back-breaking work that otherwise would have had to be done by hand. Unfortunately, we did have a casualty. The power-steering line on the back-hoe blew. So, Ed, Heather, and Alan carefully coerced it back to the Shops. By day's end, Heather proclaimed that, "It's starting to look like a switch!" Indeed, it turned out to be an excellent day of significant progress and accomplishment with an amazing crew. Joe, Ed, Mike F., Heather, Clem, Alan, Steve, Pam, and Bill were tireless in their efforts to build a better railroad.

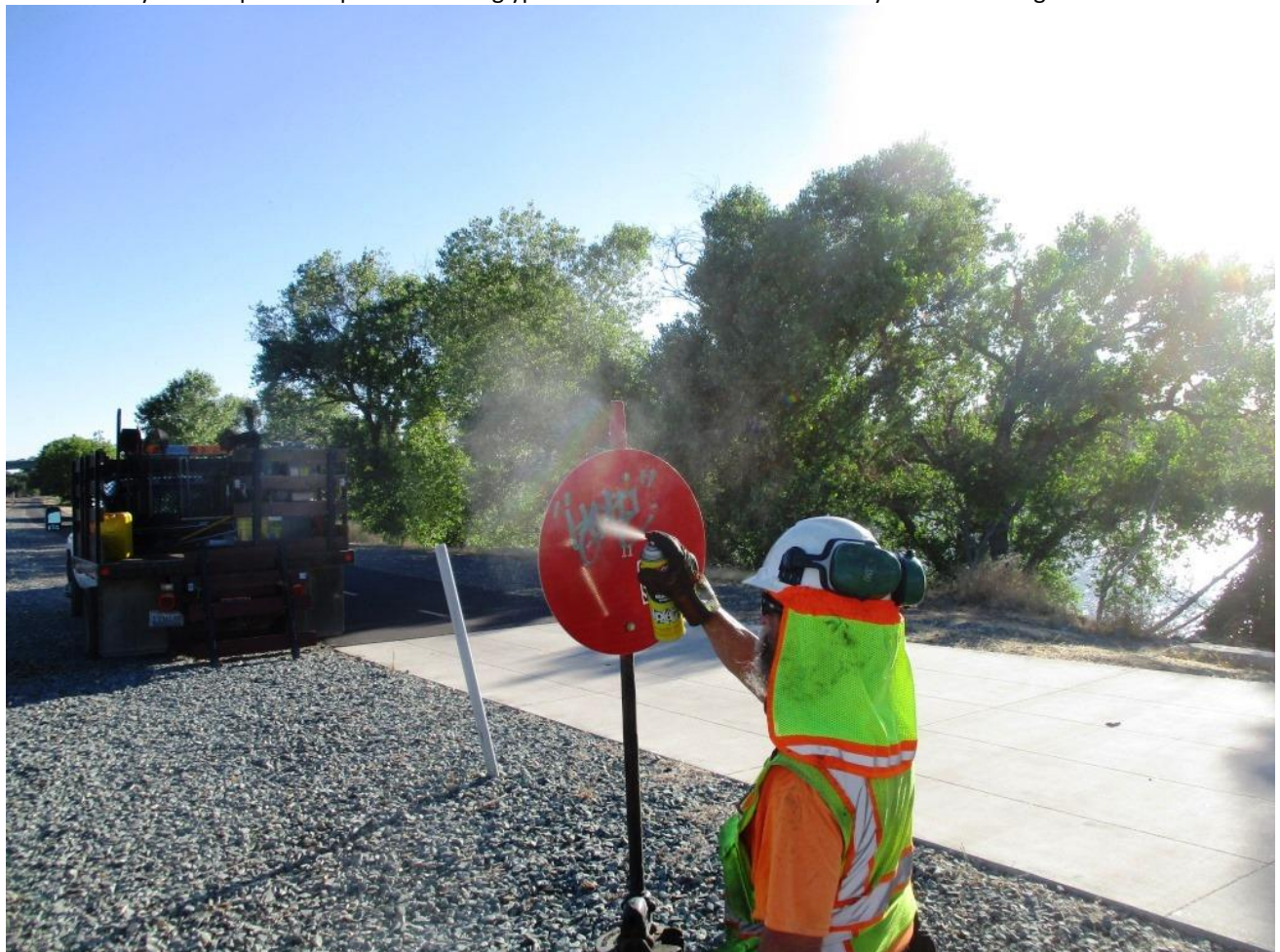
This coming week, the MOW Team will meet at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday and Thursday. The mighty Weed Team will, once again, head down to Hood on Thursday. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. More MOW fun and progress on the new switch will continue next Saturday commencing at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks ever so much to everyone for your tremendous dedication.

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Jack and Kyle attempt to decipher the hieroglyphics emblazoned on Switch 11 by the marauding Vandals and Goths



Joe "goof-offs" the mark of the miscreants



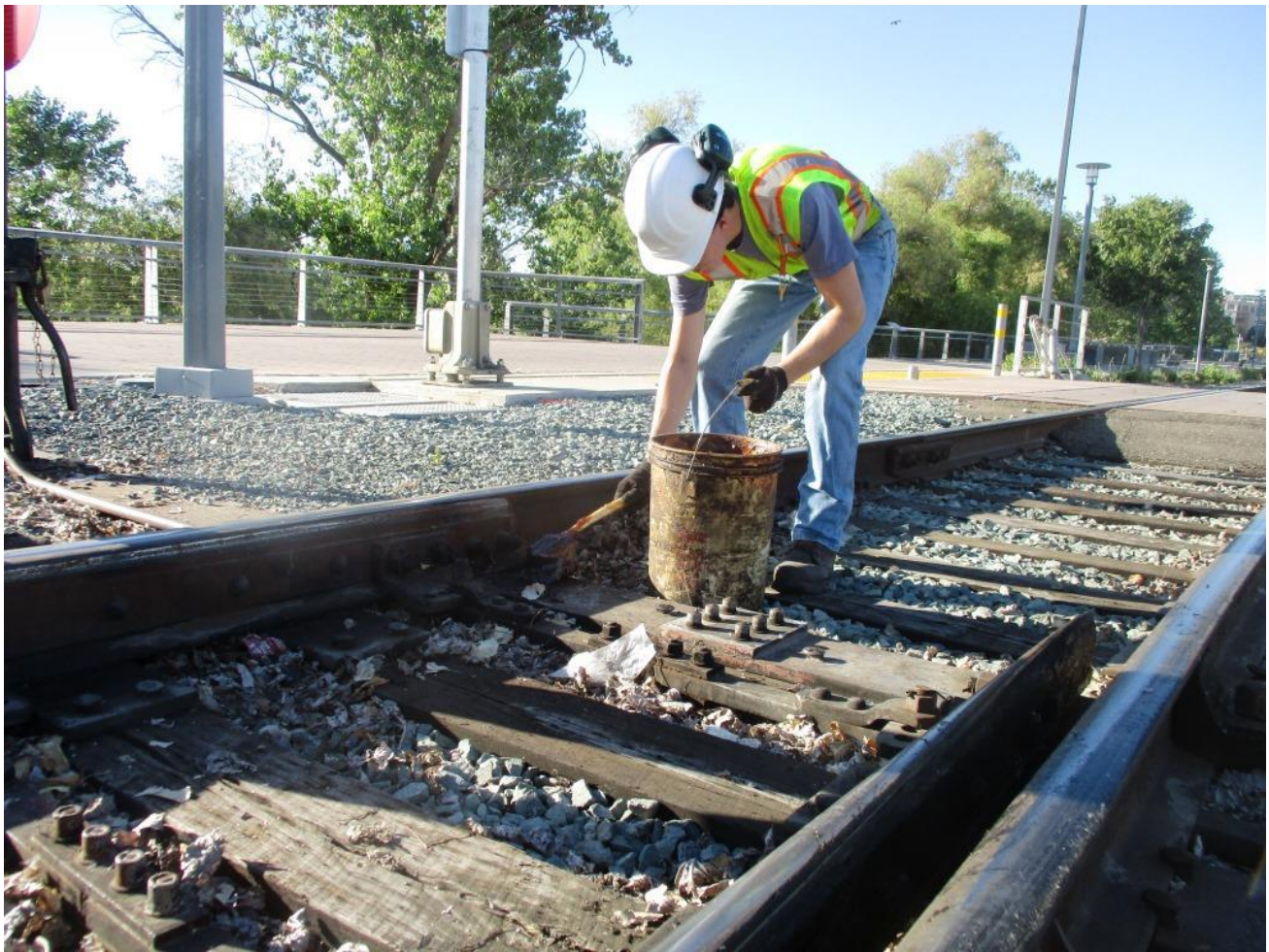


Jack shows what a clean switch target looks like

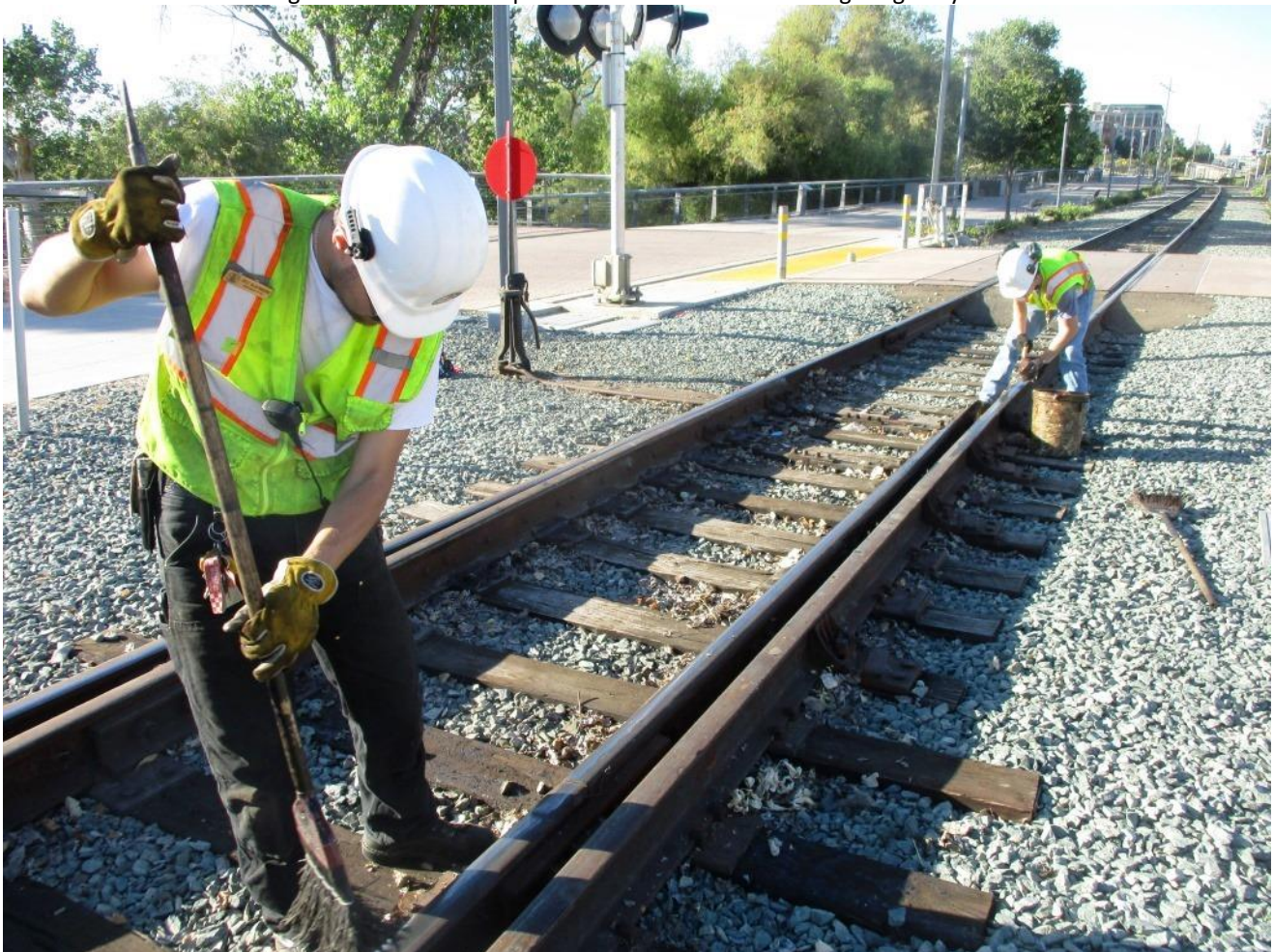


Kyle and Joe clean debris from between the switch-point and stock rail





Jack slathers grease on the switch-plates at Switch 11 thus fulfilling his greasy initiation ritual



Kyle sweeps away old, dry, caked-on, gritty grease as Jack applies fresh grease to the switch





Ready, aim, FIRE! Jack coerces the wasps to find new accommodations



With the switch stand free of wasps, Kyle erases all evidence of vandalism at Switch 12





Dan the Bird Man counts birds while Mike T. uses the hedge-trimmer-on-a-stick to cut weeds along the track at Hood



Mike T. experiments with "cutting-on-the-fly" using the new hedge-trimmer-on-a-stick



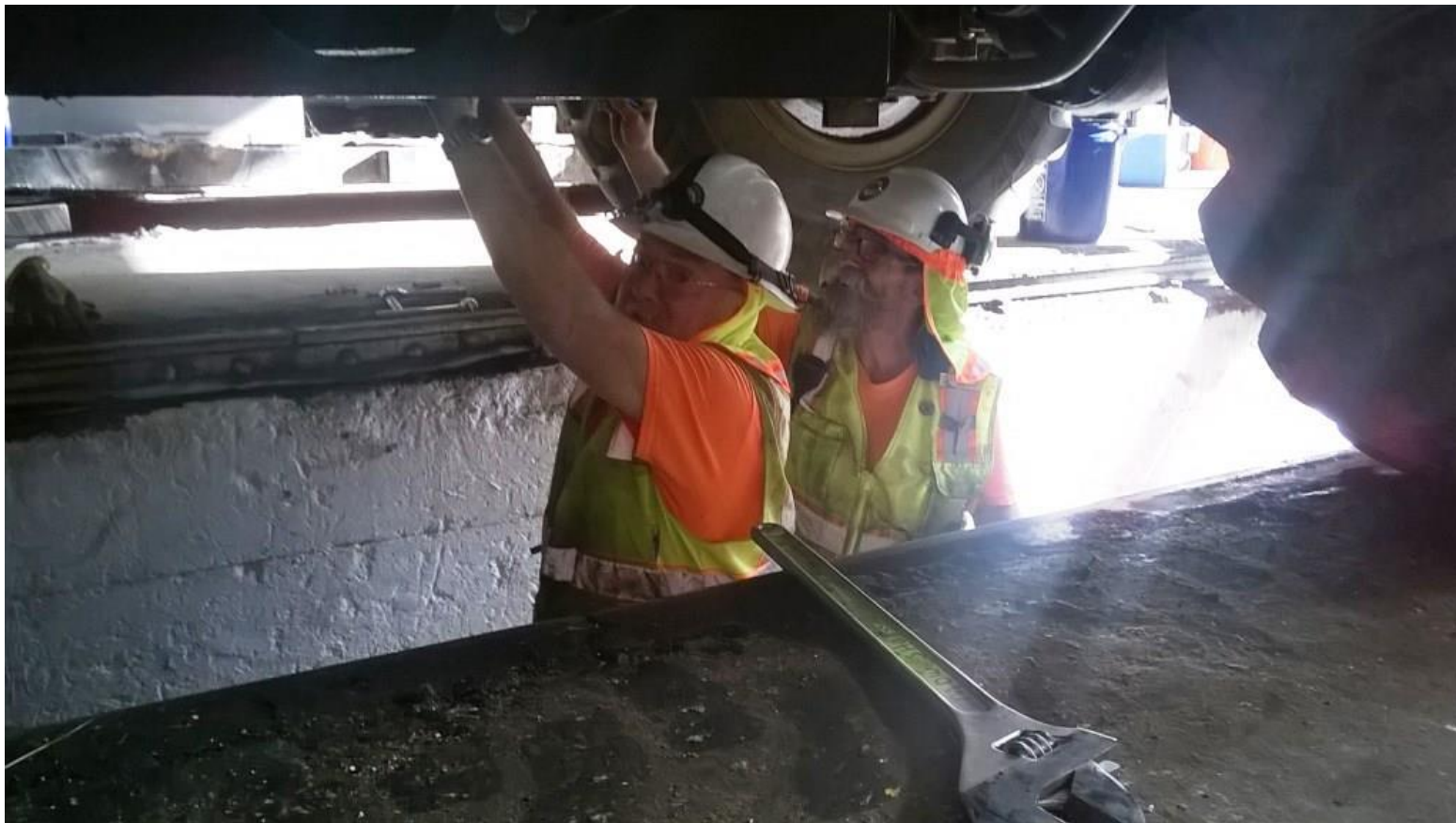


Joe and Mike H. use the transfer table to bring Big Green to the Erecting Shop

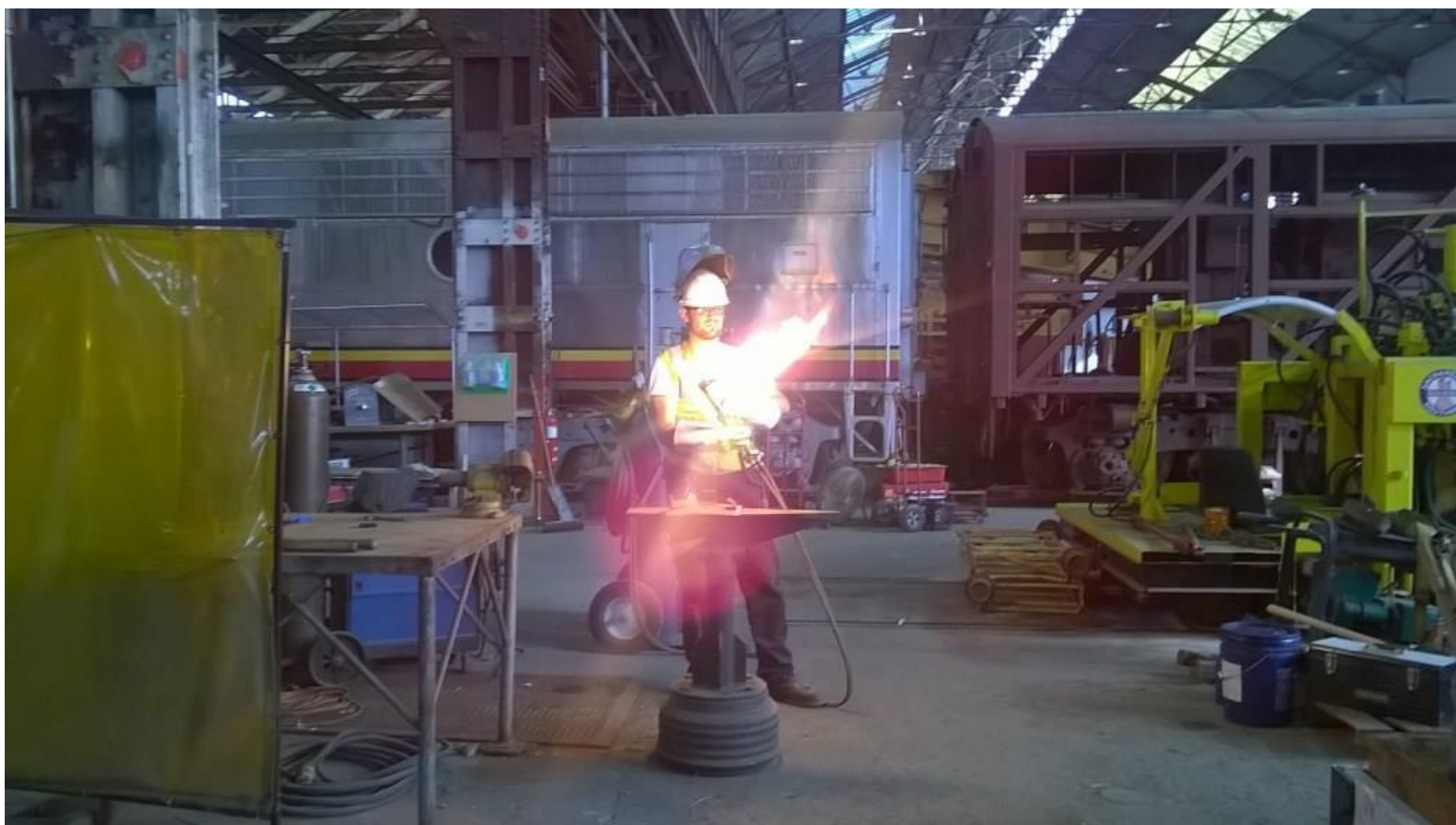


Joe guides Mike H. on Big Green as he carefully drives it over the pit



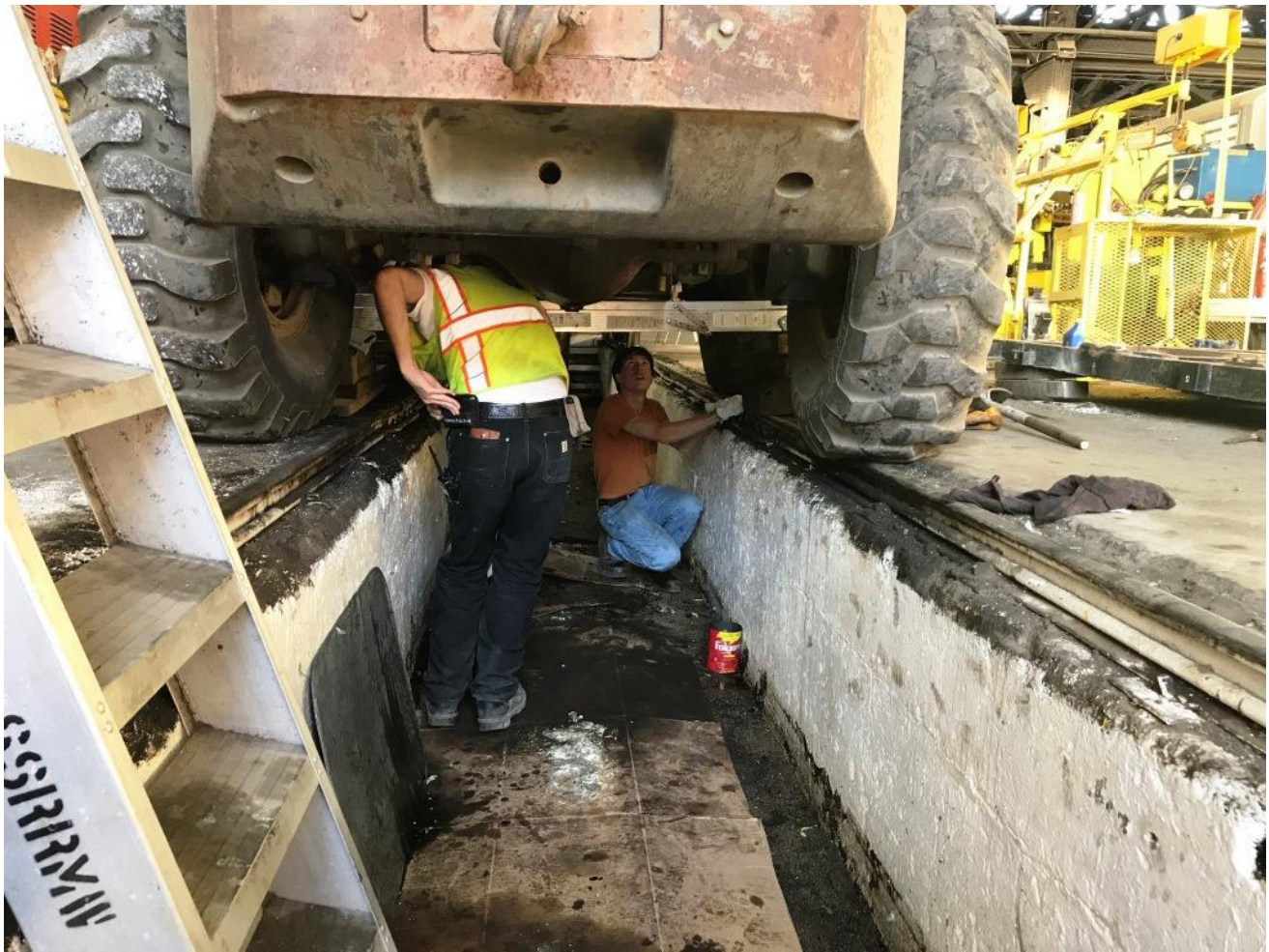


Miracle workers Mike H. and Joe take on Big Green's transmission



Kyle sparks up the torch to make modifications to part removed from Big Green



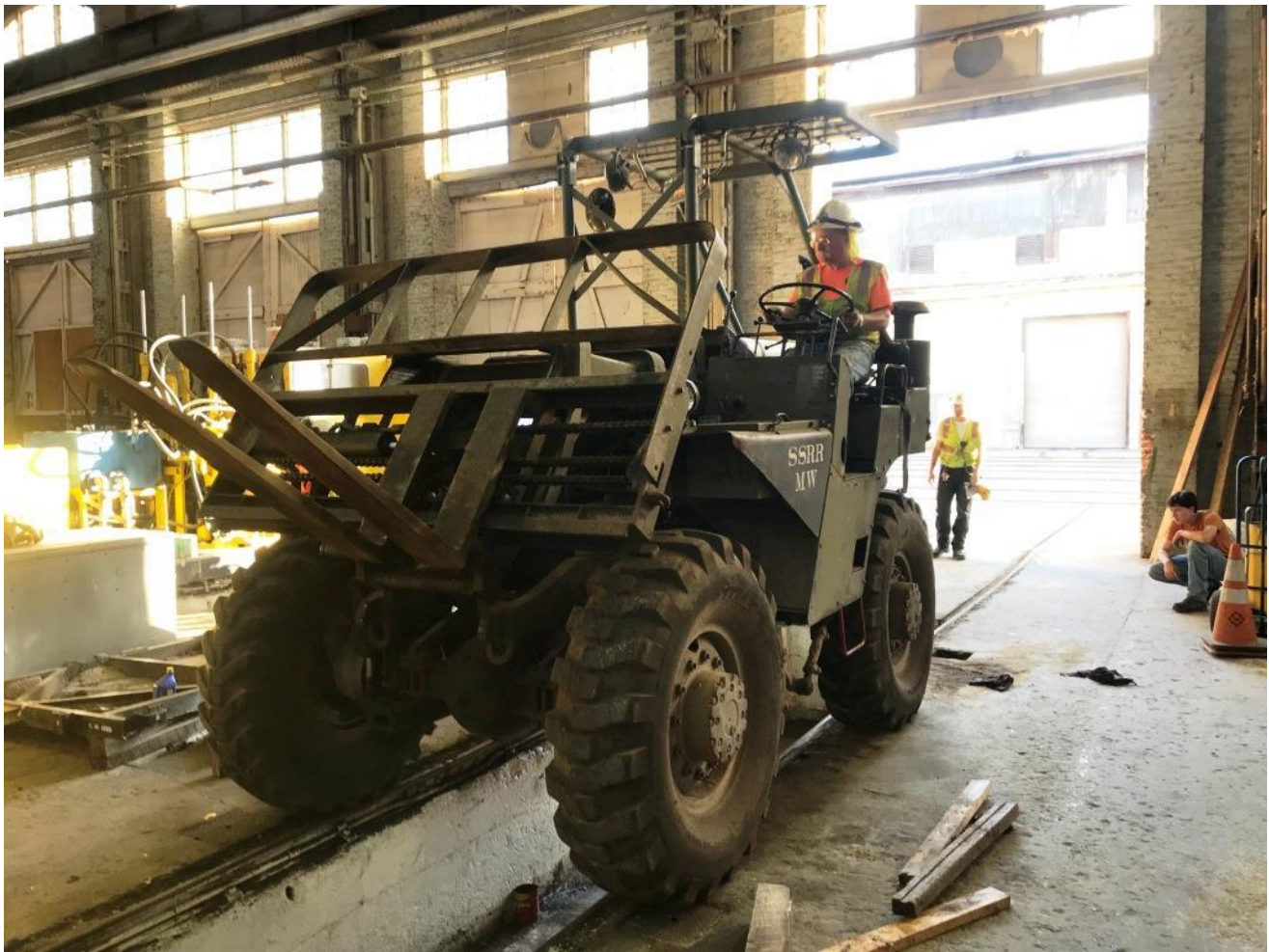


Kyle and Jack are invited to the party in the pit of despair



Joe works from the side of the machine with Kyle and Jack beneath





With the miracles performed, Mike H. carefully backs Big Green away from the pit



Mike H. takes Big Green out for a test drive





Big Green viewed from Ed's drone



The view from high above the Erecting Shop





Pam pilots the Kalamazoo tug pulling the MOW work-train

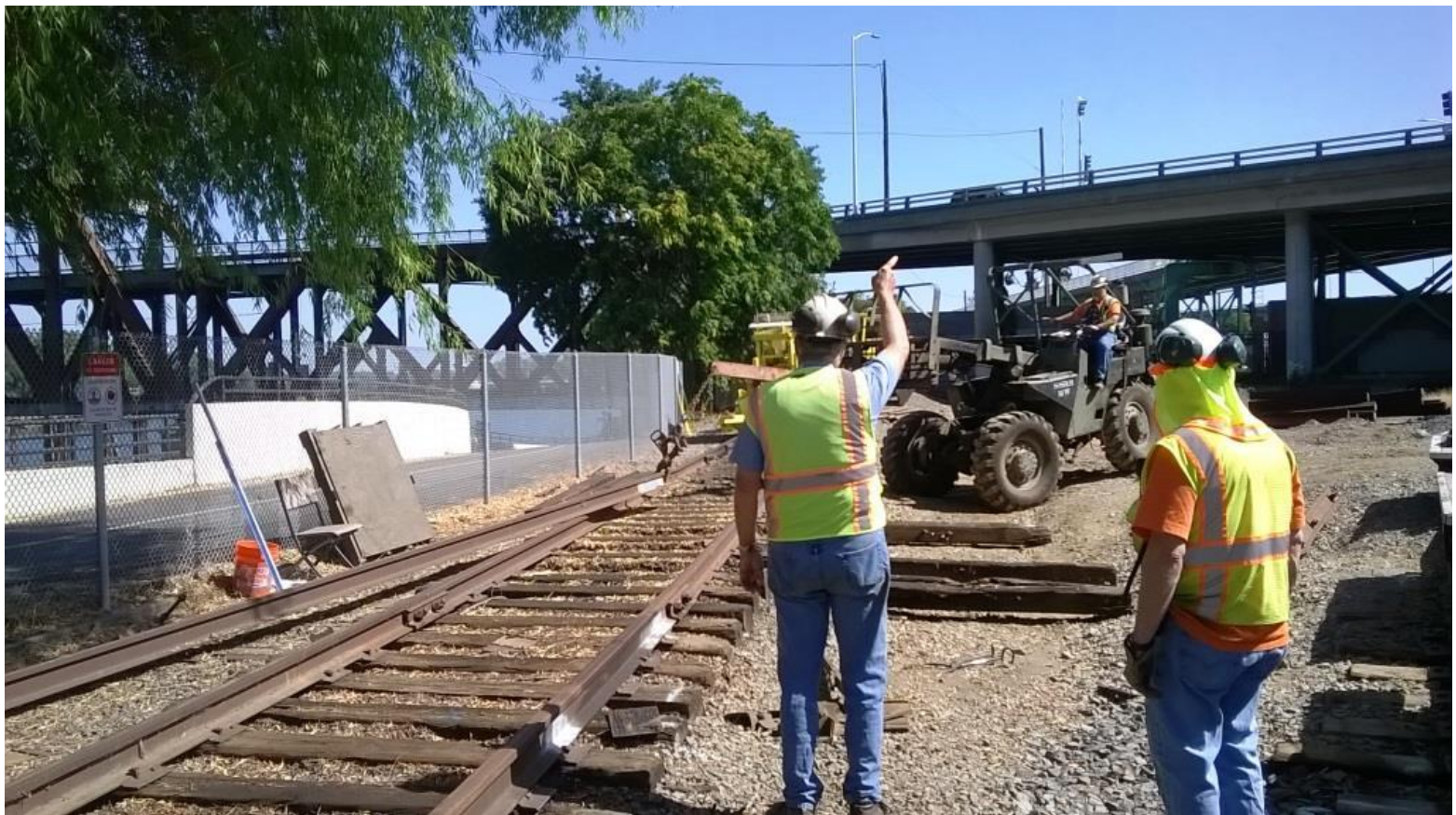


The MOW work-train is spotted on the 560-Track





Mike F. on Big Green arrives on site



Alan directs the moving of the rail that will become the diverging track stock rail





Bill, Clem, and Steve roll the rail upright

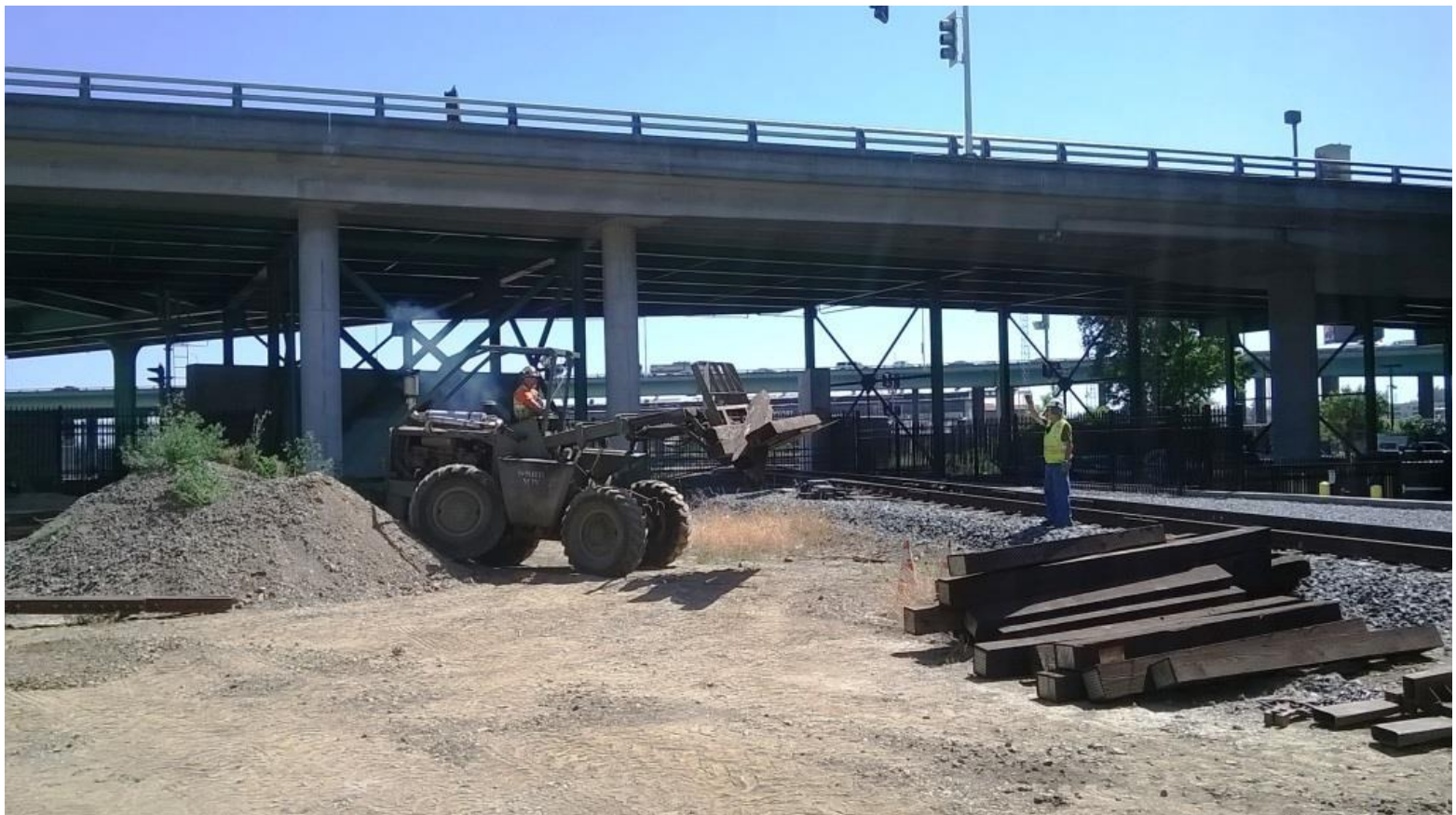


Alan keeps a keen eye on Joe and the 125 as ties are pulled



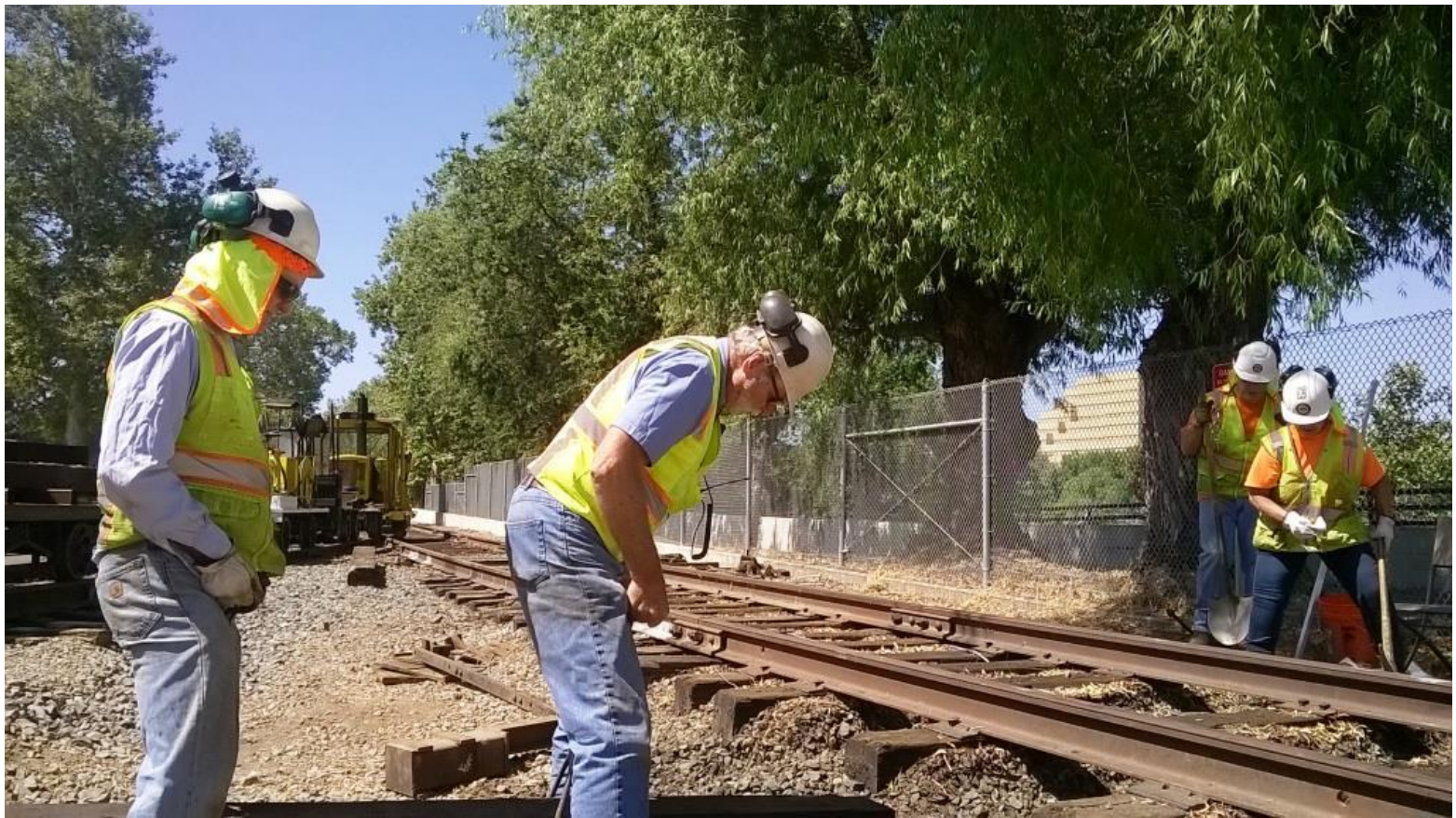


Mike F. on Big Green and Ed start moving long-ties into position



Mike F. on Big Green moves long-ties as guided by Ed on the ground



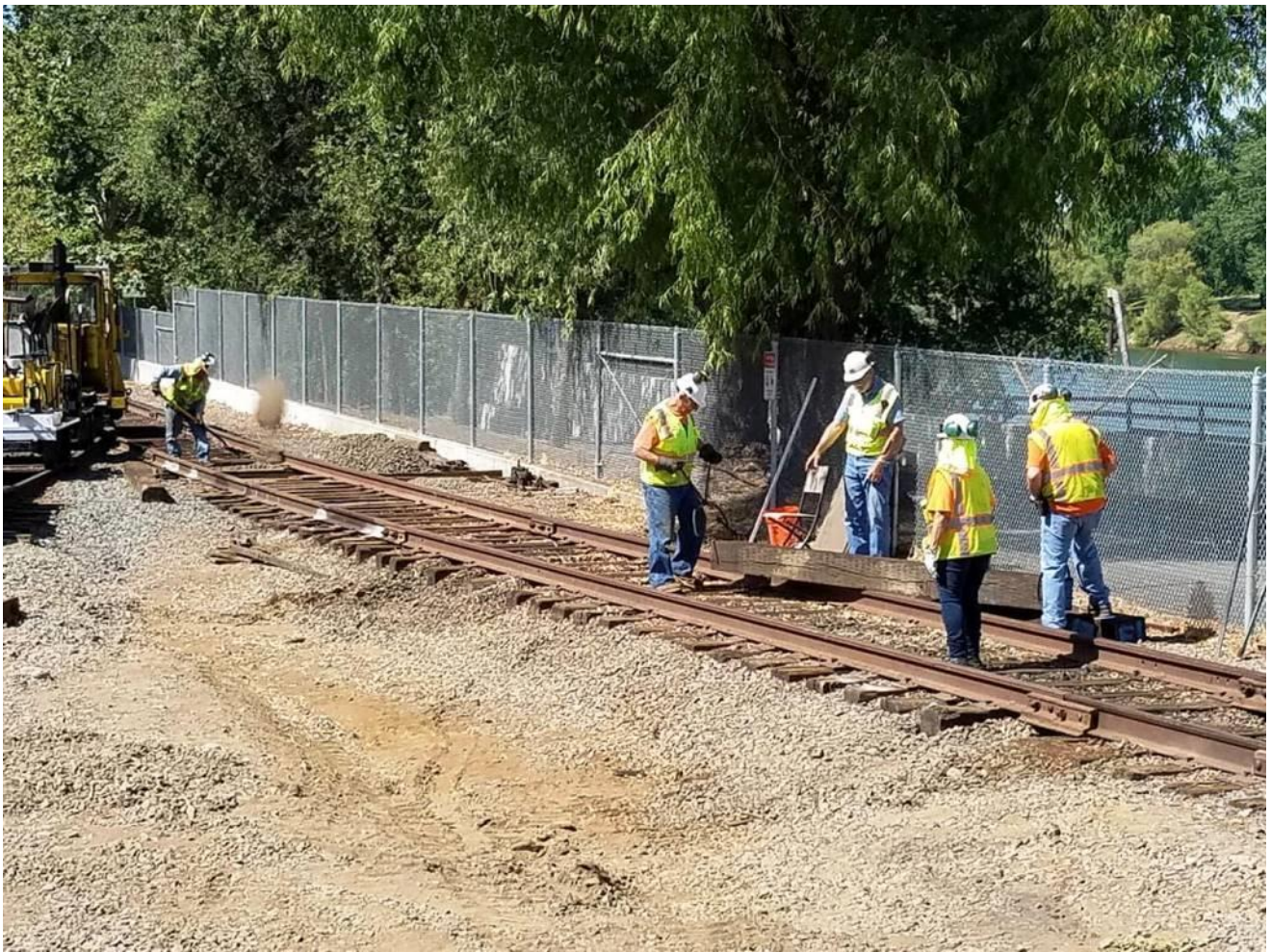


Steve and Alan line up an extra-long tie as Bill and Pam dig out the crib



Steve and Alan take on the awkward task of moving a 13-foot tie





Clem, Alan, Pam, and Bill line up ties



Now, that's I call an active work site





Alan contemplates the placement of the ties as Joe draws them under the rails



The Team works with the Jackson 125 as it pulls-in the extra-long ties





Mike F. and Steve watch to make sure the new tie gets spaced properly

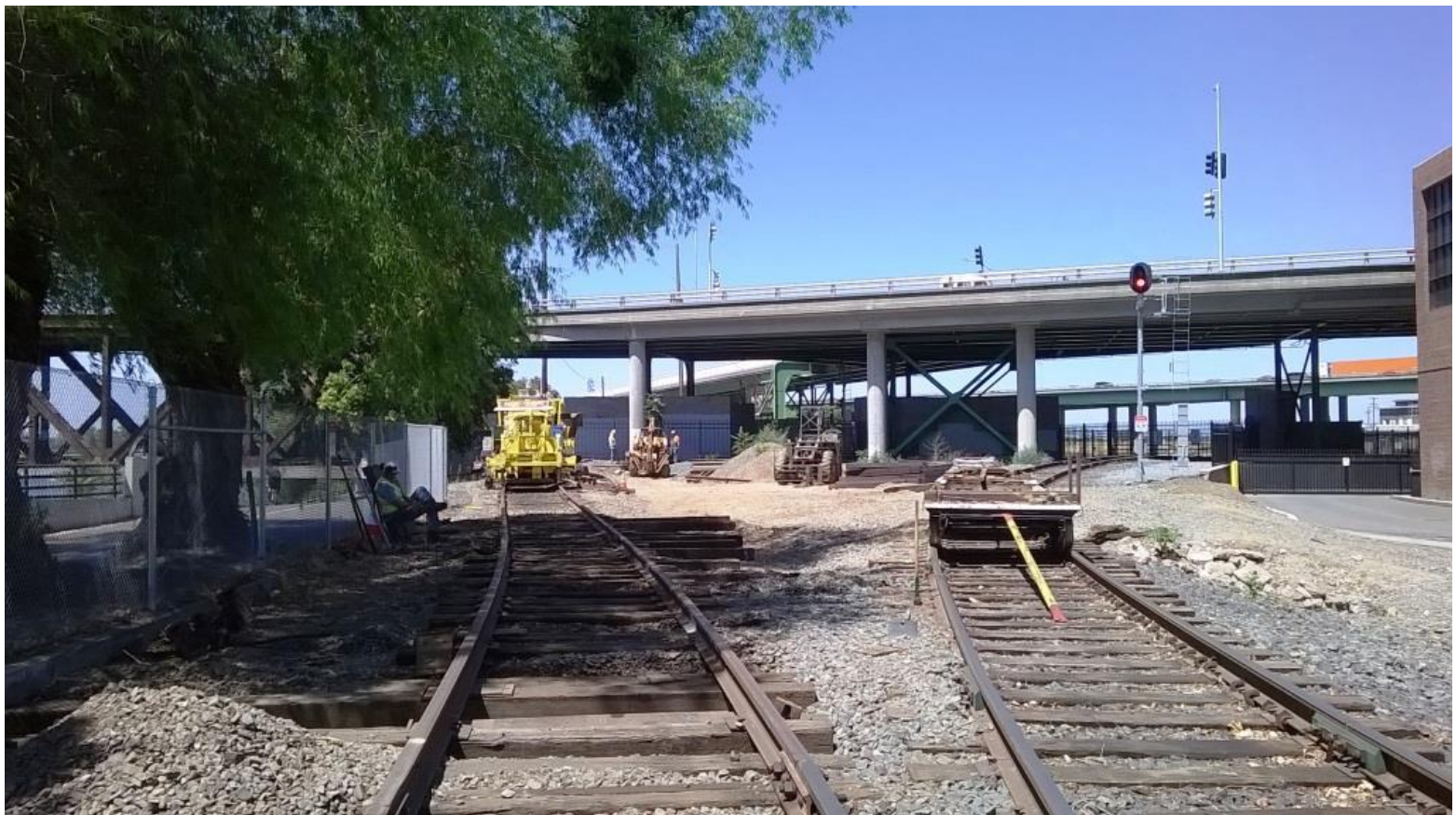


Using the timber tong attachment, Ed moves these heavy ties with Bill and Mike F.'s help





Alan declares that the job is done and it's time to put the 125 away



As Heather says, it's starting to look like a switch!