

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for June 19, 2016. 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 dictionary defines "busy" as, "Actively and attentively engaged in work." That sums up the scene in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday where Gene Peck, Pat Scholzen, Alan Hardy, Joe Margucci, Anthony Filamor, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Steve Nemeth, Heather Kearns, Frank Werry, and Harry Voss were actively and attentively engaged in reattaching the wing to the ballast regulator. Cliff had completely rebuilt the pivot-arm onto which the wing attaches. Gene was the EIC of this operation and did a masterful job. Anthony was king of the forklift. Alan operated the machine inside the cab. Mike H., Steve, Pat, Cliff, and Harry were the muscle – and the minds because, as issues arose, they figured them out. Folks, this was quite an intricate operation, lifting and positioning a multi-ton, unwieldy steel apparatus onto a tube (pivot-arm) that resisted pivoting. Figuring it out involved a bit of trial-and-error. But, to make a long story short, under Gene's patient, calm, cool, and collected direction, the Team worked together to get the piece in place. Unfortunately, after the wing was successfully re-installed, a problem arose with one of the hydraulic cylinders. The only way to remove it was to pull the wing back off. But, the good news was that we knew how to get it back in place once the cylinder issue was addressed. Meanwhile, over in the Boiler Shop, Joe and Heather worked on the wacky wiring of the tire-mounted air compressor. Indeed, the MOW Team personified the definition of "busy" on Tuesday.

So, Thursday, Alan, Anthony, Frederick Carr, Joe, Cliff, Gene, Frank, Mike H., and Heather picked up where they had left off. By Thursday evening, the cylinder issue had been resolved. Gene, again, directed the operation. Anthony was back on the fork-lift raising the wing into position. Mike H., Fred, Alan, and Cliff guided and cajoled into position. With Tuesday's experience, it was a relatively straight forward operation and soon, the wing was installed, hooked-up to all its cylinders, and air-lines attached. Meanwhile, over in Old Sacramento, Heather, Frank, Joe, and Anthony serviced the A-6 motorcar over in the container which needed fuel and oil. Then, they headed out on the line. Their task was to identify and mark a couple dozen dirty rotten ties at Clunie for removal and replacement on Saturday. Our trusty track inspectors had noted the deterioration of ties in the area to the point where they needed to be changed-out. As Frank is one of our trusty track inspectors, he knew exactly which ones had to go. With ties marked, the Team on Saturday could get started upon arrival.

Saturday started off with a bit of a crisis – a doughnut crisis. The planned procurement thereof ran into a snag, so an emergency run to the doughnut shop became top priority. Fortunately for Harry, Alan, Clem Meier, Joe, Ed Kottal, Michael Florentine, Anthony, Heather, Mike Willis, and Chris Carlson, the pink box was in place by 8 o'clock – and there was much rejoicing (yaaaaaaaay!). Sugared-up, the Team headed to Old Sacramento to deploy the tamper, scarifier, Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, and MOW work-train. After having to jump a dead-battery on the 125, the MOW Team parade headed out of Old Sac. and down the line. At Clunie, Clem, Anthony, Mike F., Ed, and Joe got started right away pulling spikes on marked ties and digging-out around their ends so that the Jackson 125, under Chris's nimble control, could grab them. As the splinters of former ties came out, Joe, Mike F., and Harry would move the debris out of the way and drop new ties while lining them up next to the now empty tie-cribs. Heather brought in the scarifier-inserter and began digging out the tie-cribs. As there is so little rock at Clunie, the dirt was flying. This was a good day for the Team to train folks on the operation of machines. Under Heather's tutelage, Ed got to spend quality time in the scarifier digging out cribs and pulling in new ties. On the 125, Joe got his first shot at grabbing and pulling out rotten ties. The problem was that some of these ties were so rotten that they would disintegrate as they were pulled. So, the machine was spun-around and 125's shoving-ram was deployed which allows the machine to push ties out rather than pull. Once they were shoved out far enough, the machine would be spun-around again to grab a more meaty part of the tie. By train-time, about 20 ties were out of the ground. The Team moved the equipment onto the siding and greeted the Granite Rock No. 10 as it passed through our working limits. Before lunchtime, additional ties were pulled and new ones inserted. This Team was "cookin' with Crisco!"

At lunch time, Ed, Joe, and Heather stuck around and continued working. They worked diligently plating the ties that had been inserted and started setting spikes. Because it's 132-pound rail at Clunie (big-stuff) the tie-plates were extra thick. So, in order to get them between the base of the rail and the top of the tie, Joe and Ed used a track-jack to lift the rails just enough to insert a plate. As the ties were plated, Heather set spikes. When the rest of the Team got back from lunch, it was all hands on deck for spiking. Mike F., Mike W., Anthony, and Chris all traded off driving spikes with the pneumatic spike-driver. This thing weighs over 60 pounds and can wear an operator out rather quickly. With the regulator out of service, Heather and Mike W. shifted rock with shovels to make sure there was some around each tie for Mike F. in the tamper to tamp. By day's end, the Team had actively and attentively engaged in replacing 24 ties – all while two trains per hour were rolling through our working limits. But, the cooperation, communication, and mutual respect by the Operating Crew and MOW Team made for a smooth operation. Proud of their accomplishment, the Team packed-up and headed back to town. A special shout-out and thanks to DSLE Jeremy Levish for his help during the big put-away. It turned out to be an excellent day of significant progress with an amazing crew. Joe, Mike W., Ed, Mike F., Heather, Chris, Clem, Alan, and Anthony were tireless in their efforts to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the MOW Team will, again be actively and attentively engaged in great things. Tuesday and Thursday, the roll-up doors at the Erecting Shop will be rolled-up at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, doughnut crises notwithstanding, the Team will gather at 8 o'clock a.m. for more MOW fun. Many thanks to one and all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard



Mike H. and Steve hook up a chain and a come-along to the lift cylinder of the regulator



Mike H. uses the hydraulic come-along to pull the lift cylinder rod out





With the lift-cylinder now attached to the pivot arm, Mike H. installs the extender cylinder

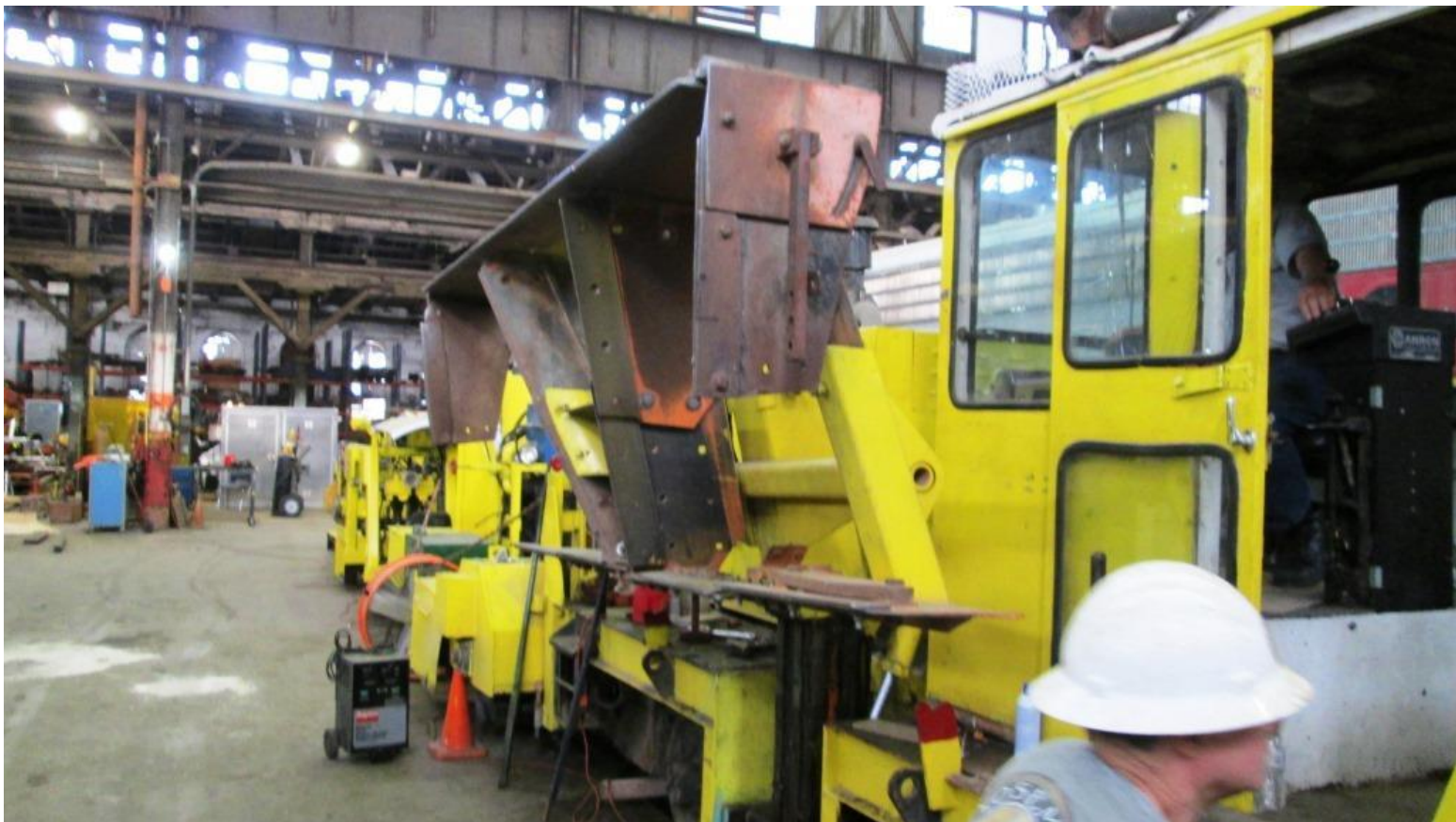


Anthony on the forklift wheels the wing into position...



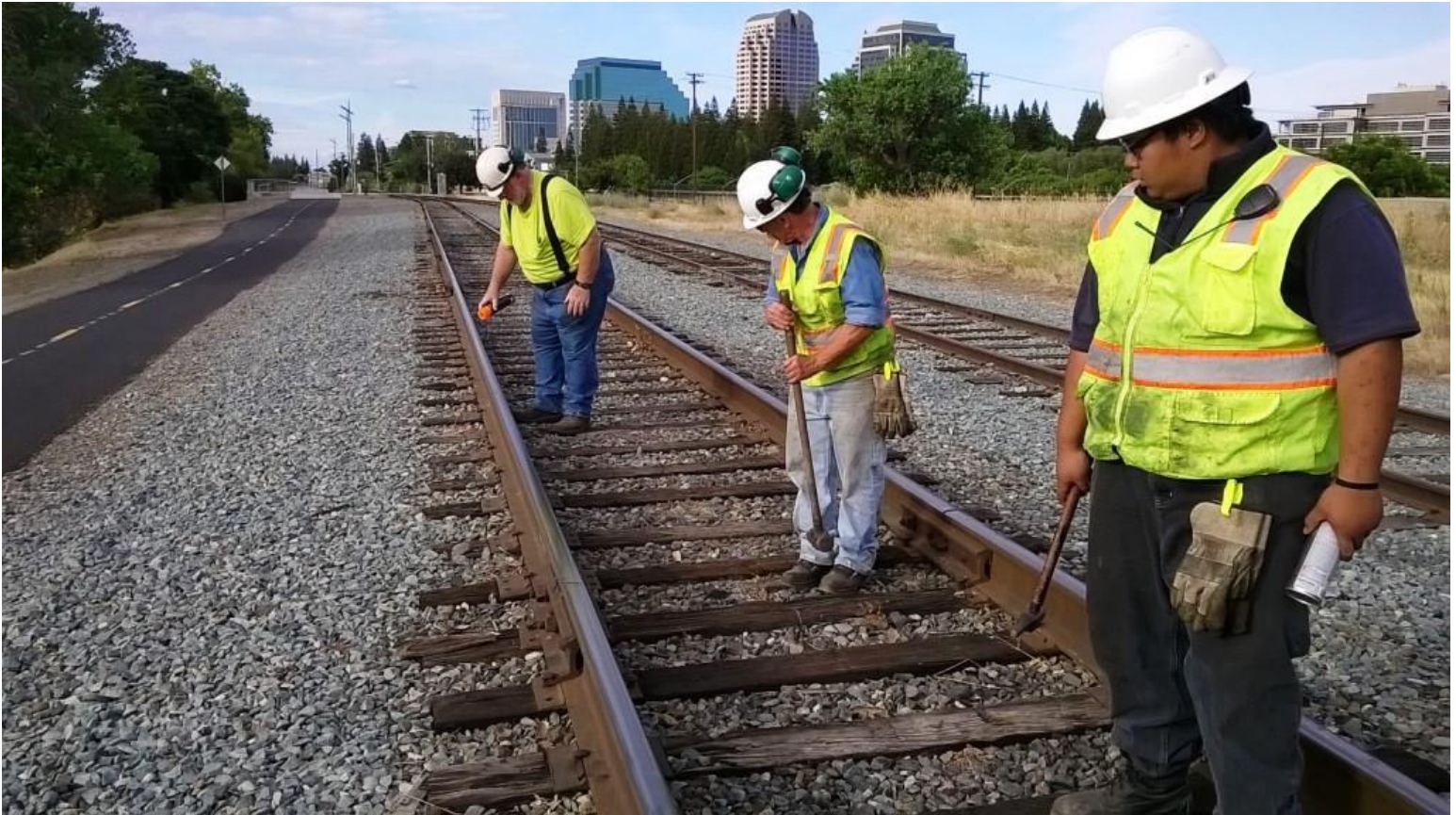


...And maneuvers to line it up with the pivot arm



The wing reattached





Out on the line, Frank, Joe, and Anthony test the solidity of ties and mark those that are bad



Clem tests the handle on the mattocks





Mike F. and Anthony pull spikes



Joe and Chris spin the Jackson 125 in order to use the ram-arm





Chris uses the ram to shove a tie out



Joe and Mike F. dig around the end of the tie so that that the ram will be able to push up against the tie squarely





Clem digs out the other side in order to give space for the old tie to be removed without it turning to splinters

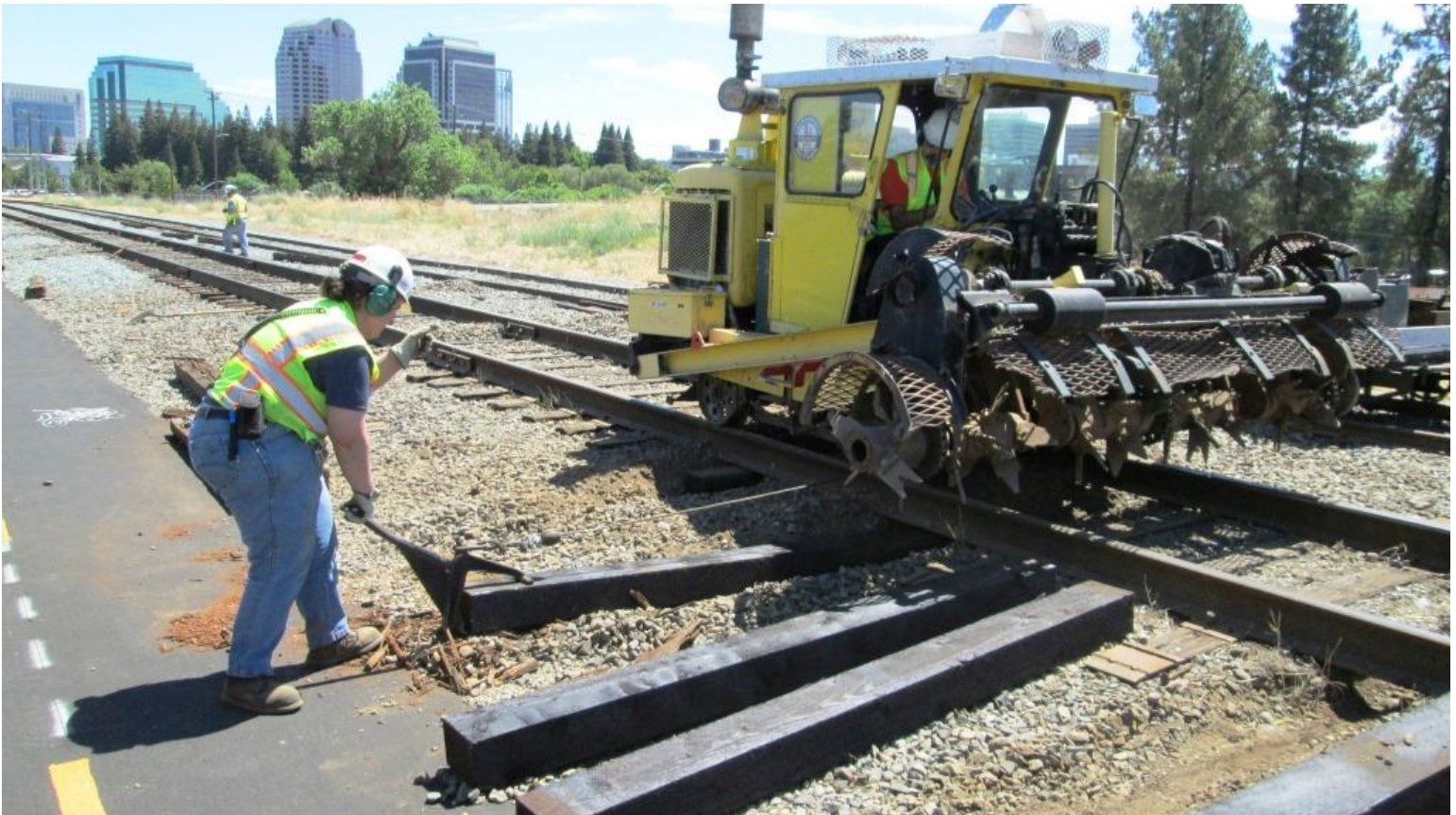


Mike F. digs some more around the ram-end of the tie...





...As Mike W. clears rock away from the tie's direction of travel



Heather gives Ed in the scarifier direction to pull the new tie in





Joe on the 125 carefully shimmies-out a tie before it crumbles to dust



It's train time! As the Granite Rock No. 10 passes through the MOW Team's working limits





During lunch, Heather, Ed, and Joe continue working by jacking-up the rail to insert tie-plates



After lunch, Joe catches a ride back to town in the Granite Rock No. 10





The last few ties are inserted



Mike guides a tie as Heather as Heather in the scarifier pulls it into place





Time to nip and spike



Chris nips-up the tie as Mike W. uses the pneumatic spike-driver to drive a spike





Heather fills in gaps in the rock



Ed stands ready with the nipper as Mike W. guide the air hose as Chris drives spikes





Mike F. stands on the deck of the tamper ready to fire it up for action



Tamping was the final act of the day. Chris directs Mike F. in the tamper as Mike W. actuates the squeeze mechanism