

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for Independence Day, 2015. Yep, your MOW Team celebrated 239 years of American Independence by correcting track defects and a gauge issues on the SSRR Mainline. Let's keep the fireworks firing by getting this update lit!

Meteorologists and TV personalities forecasted that temperatures on Tuesday would exceed those of the sunny side of Mercury. Therefore, in order to avoid any molten pools of zinc, the Mighty Weed Team commenced its activities extra early to work during the "cool" part of the day. Mike Taylor, Heather Kearns, and Dave Megeath donned their three-gallon tank back-packs to spray the equisetum invasion along the Clunie siding. Then, they headed down the Mainline to the area of MP 2.5 for more spraying fun. The Team finished this activity by 11:30 a.m. and, prudently, called it a day. Congratulations to the Weed Team for another successful adventure!

Meanwhile, it was a hot time in the ol' Erecting Shop Tuesday night. The afternoon and evening Shops crew didn't share the same prudence as the Weedies and worked like Kipling's "mad-dogs and Englishmen" in the midday sun. Nonetheless, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Scott Morrison, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, Harry Voss, Frank Werry, Heather, and Alan Hardy did lots of good stuff. Alan, Pat, Cliff, and Gene managed to get the tamper's work-head back together and installed. You may recall that last week that our operation at Miller Park came to an abrupt halt with a "bang" and "shudder" as six steel bolts suddenly sheared-off dropping the work-head to the ground. Also working on the tamper were Scott and Frank. They were trying to figure out why its drive motor has no "umph." Scott hooked up his diagnostic meters while Frank, with the maxi-brakes applied and wheels chocked, reeved-up the engine and engaged the drive motor to put a load on it. After multiple tries, Scott thinks he's figured out the problem. Heather was over in the Boiler Shop working on the Weed Team's problematic spray-rig pump engine. Mike H. was climbing around working on the new (to us) Nordberg Super B spiker. But, the Erecting Shop's metal roof and brick walls made it a Dutch oven and by 7:30 we were fully cooked. Prudence finally kicked in and we called it a night.

Thursday, Alan, Mike H. and Frank were the brave ones. They worked on the Super B spiker's spike loading system. There was a hold-up someplace as spikes would feed into the loader but would not make the transition into spiking chamber. They fiddled with it for a while and finally figured the problem. Next, Mike H. got the grease gun out and greased all the zyrk fittings, which obviously hadn't been done in years. Frank took out the garbage which was a blessing for us all. The cans were starting to overflow. Another good evening of honest work.

Friday, Chris Carlson spent his day off work in the Erecting Shop. He and Heather accomplished a myriad of projects including replacing the starter motor on the old tamper and major electrical work on the ballast regulator while Alan started painting the Super B spiker.

Independence Day celebrations in the Erecting Shop commenced at 8 a.m. with doughnuts, of course. It's an American tradition you know. There to honor America with a day of volunteer service were Pam Tatro, Alan, Clem Meier, Michael Florentine, Scott, and Frank. The Miller Park project was put on hold this week as the Team needed to address a couple of track defects identified by our trusty track inspectors. First stop: Switch 13, the South Clunie ground-throw switch. A gap had formed between the east point and the stock rail. Although not large enough for a wheel to "pick the point" it was still a defect under federal regulations. After surveying the situation and assessing what was causing the problem, Clem, Frank, Mike F., and Scott began disconnecting the connecting-rod from the east transit clip. After a bit of effort, the various components were adjusted at which point, it was put back together and tested. Our fix had worked. The switch was repaired. Next, we moved up to Mile Post 1.1 where a busted joint-bolt needed replacing. The problem was that, with thermal expansion in the joint, none of the holes matched up. Frank loosened the other three bolts. After shimmying things around a bit, Mike F. used a lining bar to line everything up. Bolt replaced. Defect Corrected. Next, we headed south to MP 2.55 where our trusty track inspectors had identified a bit of a wide gauge issue at a joint. Although not rising to the level of a legal defect, the 57-1/8th inch width exceeded our MOW Team standards. So Clem and Mike F. began digging out cribs for gauge-rods to be installed while Scott pulled spikes for four ties on either side of the joint so we could re-gauge the track. Frank and Scott got the rods clipped to the base of the rails and began the coordinated process of pulling the rails closer together. Once all was deemed satisfactory, the track was re-spiked. We observed the joint as the train twice ran through the area. Everything was holding in place as it should so, the Team declared victory and headed back to Old Sacramento.

Back in Old Sac., Steve Doris and Joann Cole with the railroad invited the Team to join our friends on the train crew for yummy Independence Day barbecue at the Crew Center. It was an outstanding lunch and the MOW Team sends its unequivocal thanks to Steve and Joann for putting the barbecue together and inviting us. It was a nice way to celebrate Independence Day with our Railroad brethren.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan was spreading "yellow fever." He spent most of the day painting the Super B spiker "MOW Team yellow." At 3:30 it was 104 degrees at the Erecting Shops so the Team wished each other Happy Independence Day and headed home.

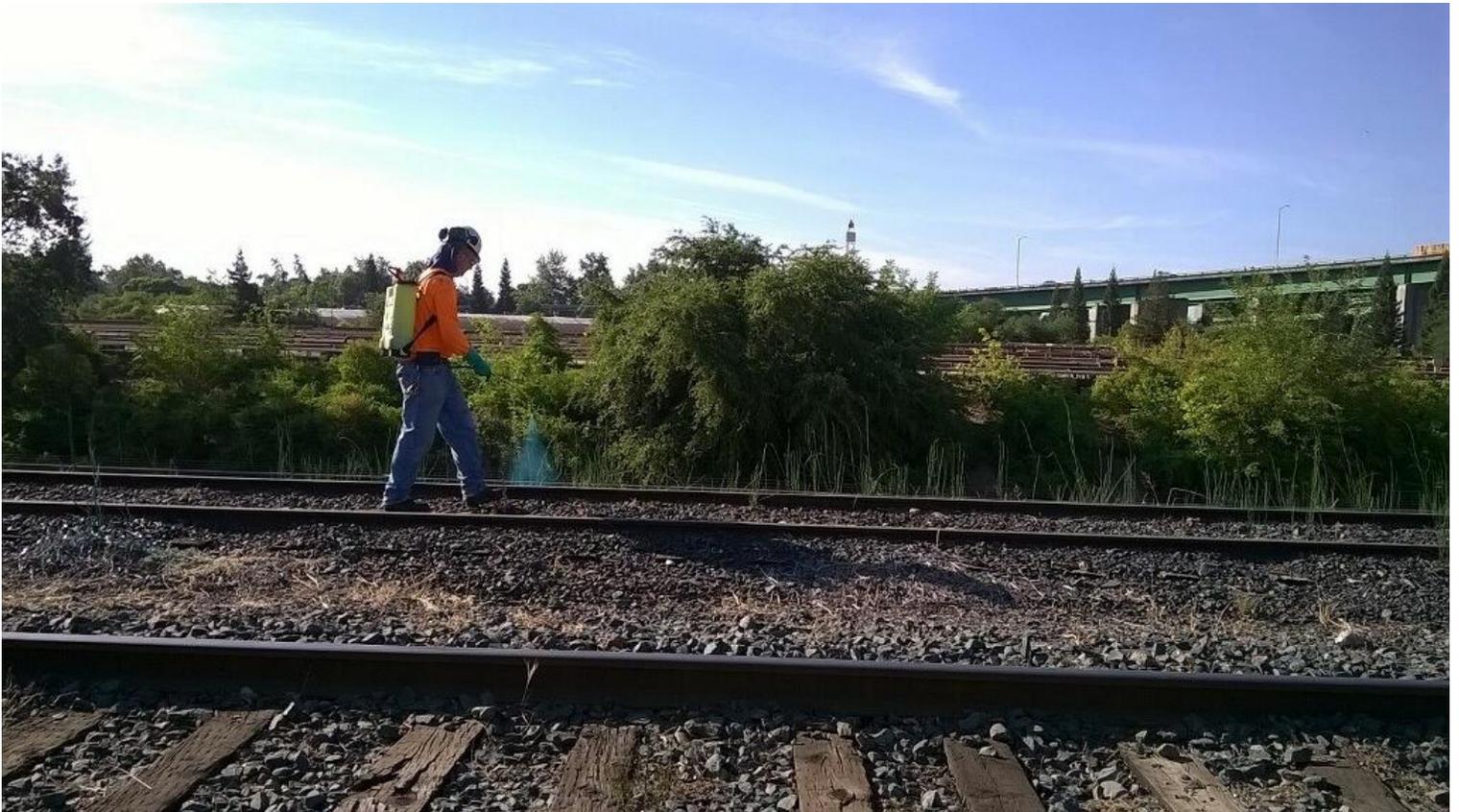
This coming week, on Tuesday, the Weed Team will commence operations at 7:30 a.m. in order to get a bit of an edge on the day. Hood is the destination. The afternoon and evening crews will gather at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, it's back to Miller Park for what we hope will be the conclusion of the project. Meet for doughnuts at 8 o'clock a.m. in the Shops. Many thanks to all the great volunteers and supporters of the MOW Team. As Pam says, "Being with people of MOW is the BEST!" Truer words have never been spoken.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



At Clunie, Dave and his mighty spray rig back-pack spell the end of the line for the evil equisetum



Dave is quite determined to liberate the siding from the equisetum's grip



Mike H. weeds his way through the jungle of hydraulic hoses on the Super B spiker



Meanwhile, at Switch 13 (South Clunie ground-throw), Frank uses a lining bar to make small adjustments to the connecting rod so that Mike F. and Clem can line up the bolt holes



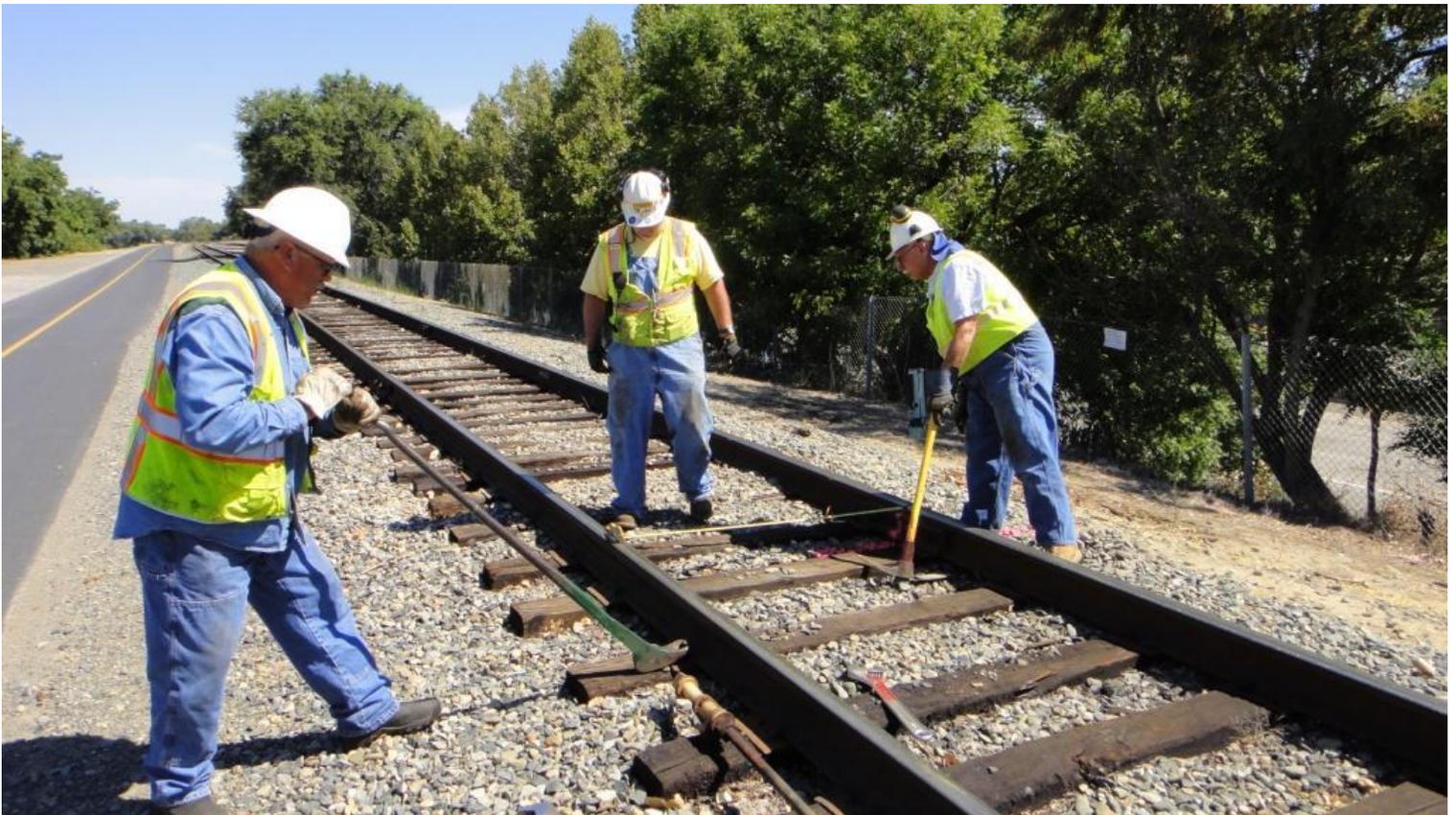
Scott uses a lining bar to adjust position of the transit clip while Frank adjusts the connecting rod. Then Clem gets the bolt in place



At Mile Post 1.1, Frank loosens the bolts in the joint so that Mike F. could use a lining bar to line-up the bolt-holes



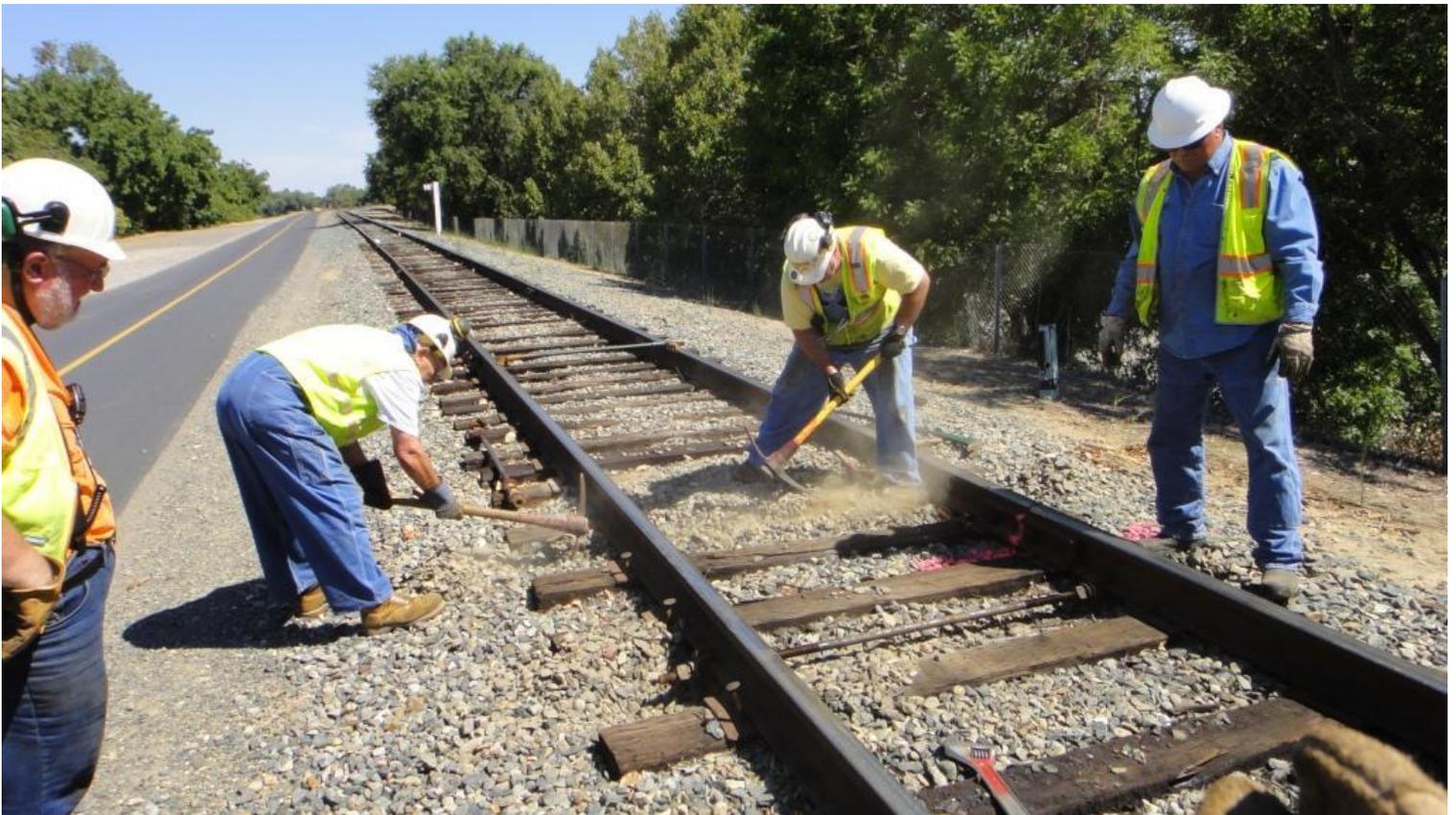
The "tool-master" Clem keeps makes sure we have the right tools right when we need them



Moving on to Mile Post 2.55, Scott pulls spikes while Mike F. and Clem check the gauge measurement



Frank and Scott place the first gauge-rod while Clem digs out a crib for a second



Clem and Mike F. dig a crib for a second gauge-rod



Mike F. gets the west clip onto the base of the rail



Here comes the train!



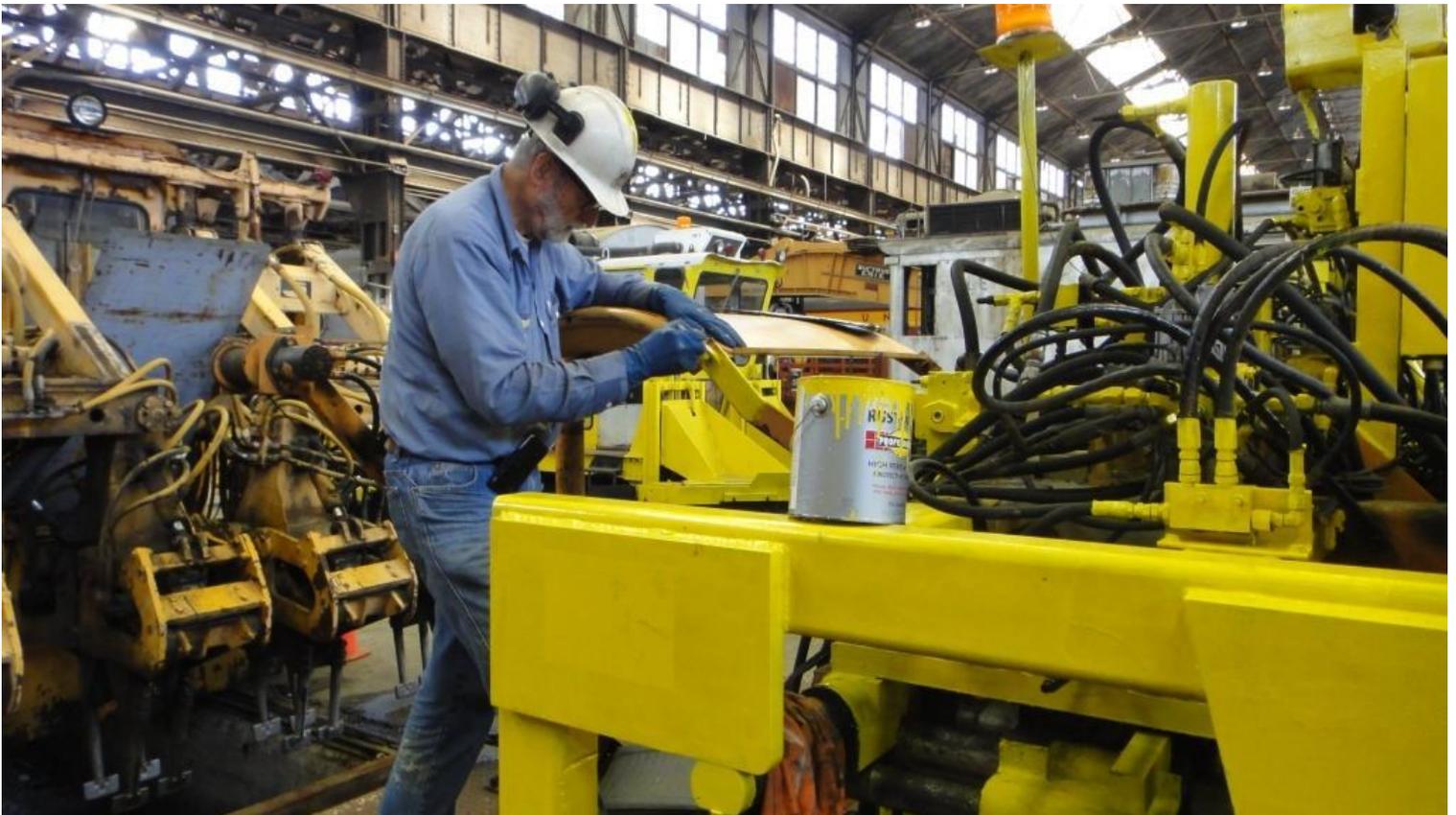
After the gauge-rods are tightened down Frank re-spike the re-gauged track



A milestone day: Scott drives his first spike – ever!



In the afternoon, attention turns to Switch 2 in the Yard. Scott holds the stand in the right position as Mike F. re-spikes the base



Yellow fever spreads in the Erecting Shop as Alan works his artistic magic on the Super B spiker