

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 7, 2014. You know, things are really rolling along quite smoothly right now for the Team. Projects are progressing and track issues are being resolved successfully on a regular basis. So, before anything gets jinxed here, let's cross our fingers and get this update underway.

The Nuisance Weed Team headed for Hood on Tuesday. Weedies Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Jeff Allen, and Heather Kearns unleashed their arsenal of field-and-brush mowers, string-trimmers, and loppers, on the unsuspecting vegetation occupying the right of way. From the looks of things, as a result of Vegetation Vigilantes' tiresome efforts, one might think this line is in service. Thanks to the Weed Team, at least we know how it will look when it actually is in service. After all, every day is one day closer to trains running at Hood.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Mike Harris, Frank Werry, Gene Peck, Harry Voss, and Chris Carlson were busy as bees on Tuesday continuing the effort of bringing all our machines to full operational status. Chris, Gene, and Pat got the tie shear back together and were ready to fill the hydraulic tank for the big test-run. Then they discovered that the gasket for the filter was the wrong size. Luckily, Heather has since acquired a new, proper-fitting gasket so the filling of the hydraulic tank will likely occur this week. Mike Harris, as EIC of the Kalamazoo (tug) rebuild, along with Frank and Harry, continued re-wiring the machine. Alan, the "Mondrian of MOW," began painting the interior of the Kalamazoo's cab. Almost single handedly, Alan has painted both the Kalamazoo and the new-old tamper – which was no easy feat considering all the "nooks and crannies" on those machines. They're looking sweet in their shiny clean coats of MOW Safety Yellow!

Thursday's Team consisted of Josh Ilac, Alan, Heather, and Frank. Josh dismantled a set hydraulic jacks that had been removed from the man-lift (from its previous existence as a tie-extractor). We want to save the hydraulic cylinders for use elsewhere and it took a concerted effort to get them apart. Great job, Josh! Frank and Heather staged for our planned Saturday operation by loading the pneumatic hand-tampers and section-gang machine into the truck. Then, they went searching for the proper sized replacement ties to use near Switch 16, the south switch at Miller Park. Loaded up, the Team would be all set to hit the road first thing Saturday morning for our big effort to upgrade the functionality of that switch.

On Saturday, Steve Nemeth, Heather, and Josh arrived extra early over in Old Sacramento to get the MOW work-train set-up and out on the line. Back at the Shops, Alan, Chris, Pam Tatro, Harry barely had time to sample the doughnuts before hustling down to the work site. After our big head-block change-out at Switch 16 two weeks ago, the switch mechanism needed some adjustment in order to get everything to function smoothly with operated. The west-point was not fitting quite snugly against the stock-rail when the switch was thrown to the siding. We evaluated the situation, diagnosed the problem, opened our big bag of tricks, and got to work. It took a little effort but, the Team managed to get all the pieces into proper alignment. It is now one of the smoothest throwing switches on our line. Then the old-old tamper was brought for some tricky work and delicate work around the switch points, transit clips, and connecting rods. With Chris's guidance from the ground and Steve's expert touch on the controls, the head-block was tamped-up and now sits level. Next we moved onto correcting a tie defect just south of the switch. We're old-hands at this tie-changing stuff and, despite the disintegration of a couple of the ties as the section gang machine pulled them, the Team had them replaced, plated, spiked, and tamped by the time the first train rolled through our working-limits. This, of course, is thanks to a fantastic crew of folks who work well together and really know what they're doing.

In the afternoon, the MOW Team participated in the *Volunteer Job Fair* at the Museum's Open House for prospective new docents. Matt Blackburn joined us as we set up a table in the Stanford Gallery, replete with the various awards the Team has earned over the years, in addition to photos and displays of our handiwork. Several attendees expressed their interest and we hope will be joining us soon. Following the Job Fair, the team headed behind the museum to remove the last remnants of the old turntable decking. Matt, Josh, and Heather loaded the planking onto the Big Green Machine under the able control of Steve who hauled them down to the dead tie pile at Setzer. Meanwhile, Clem Meier spent the day plugging-away at rebuilding the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar speeder over in the Shops. Much good was accomplished on Saturday by our very dedicated and skillful crew.

This coming week, the Weed Team is taking Tuesday off. However, Shops will be open for business starting right at 5 o'clock, if not a little before. Same thing goes for Thursday. Saturday, we'll dig into the doughnuts promptly at 8 o'clock a.m. We're going build on our progress from last week, thanks to the steadfast crew of the MOW Team!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard

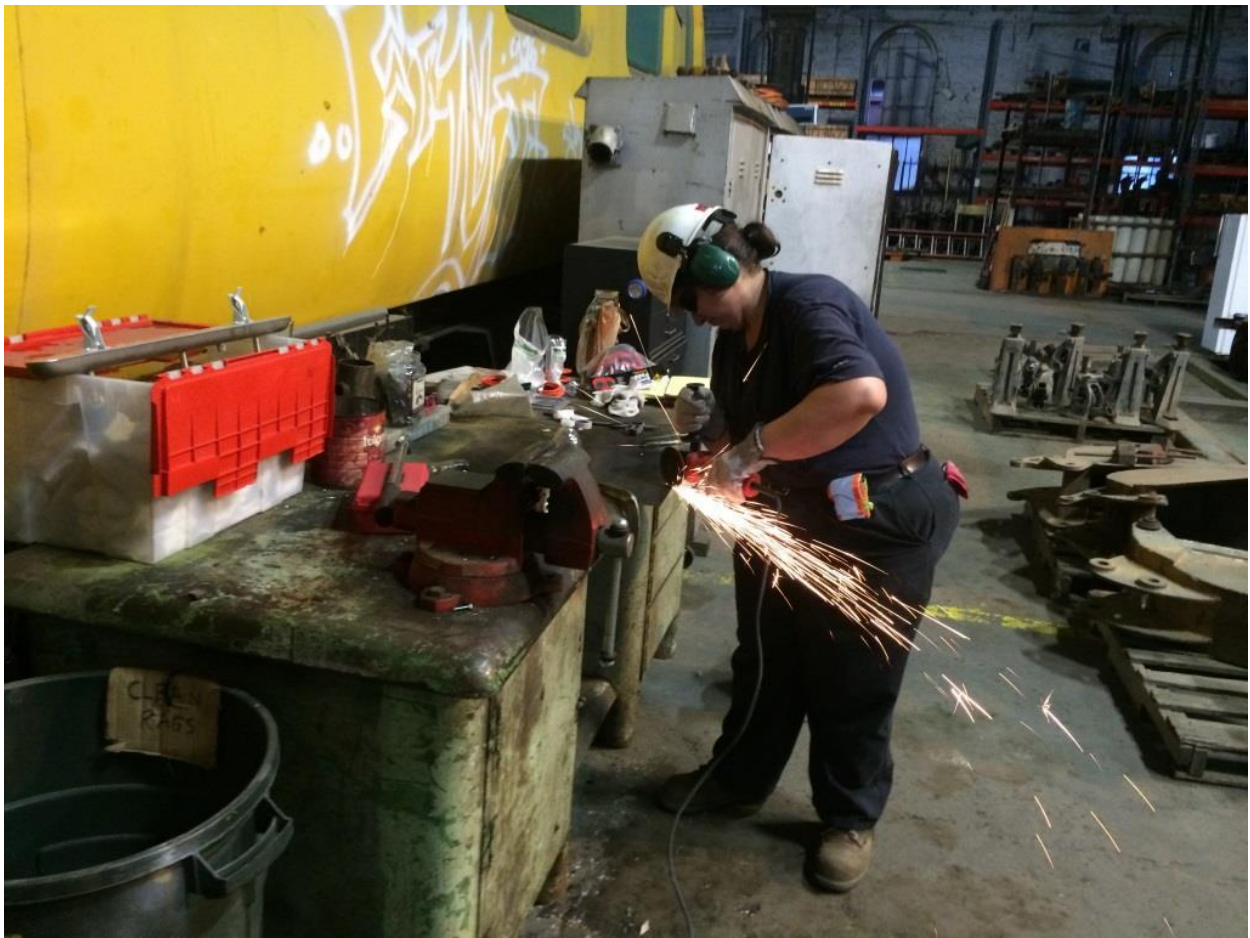


A tree at Hood attempted to eat Dave. Fortunately, the Weedies are well experienced at taming the environment...

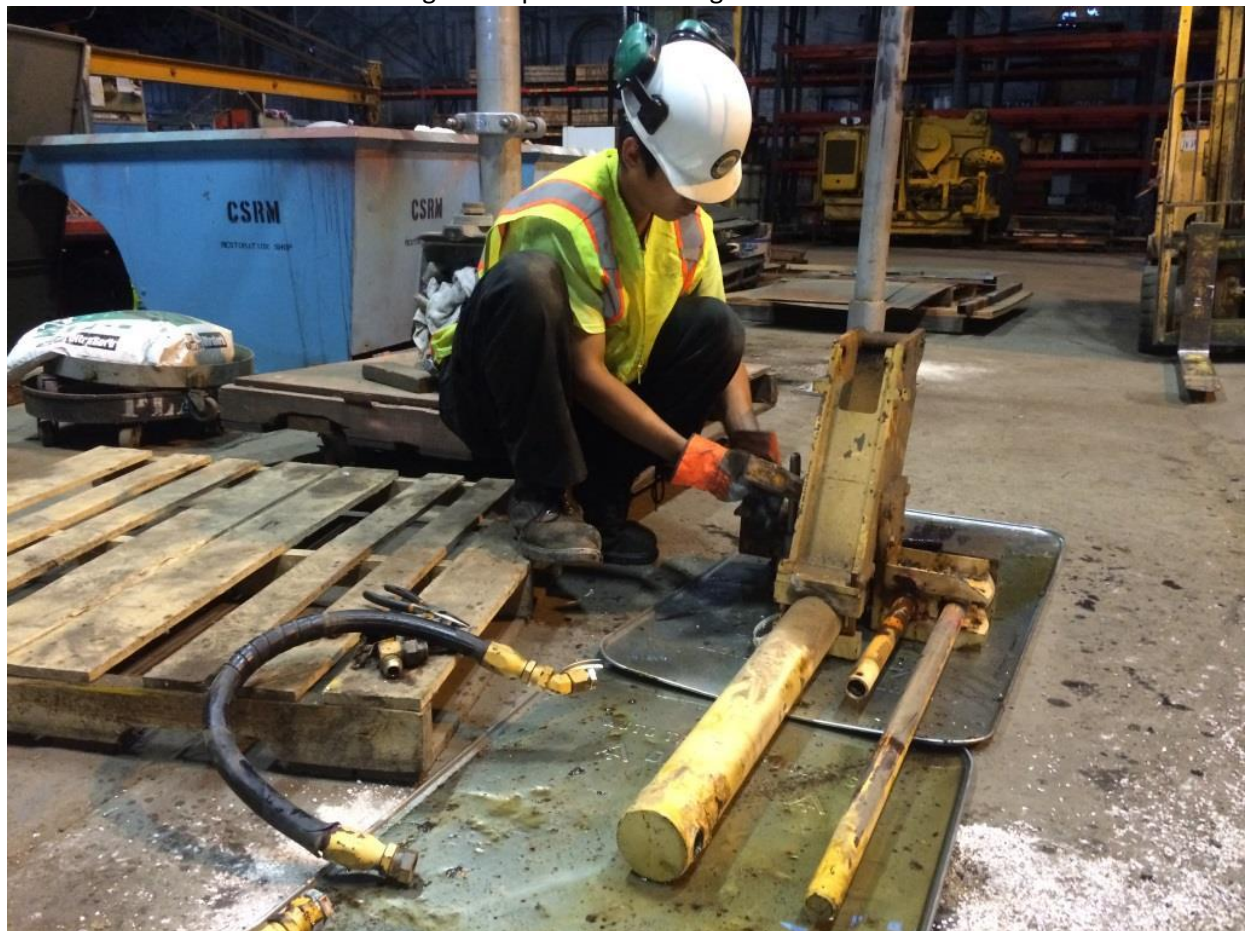


The Hood Line is lookin' awful pretty thanks to the Weed Team!





Heather crafting a new piece for the engine cover of the man-lift

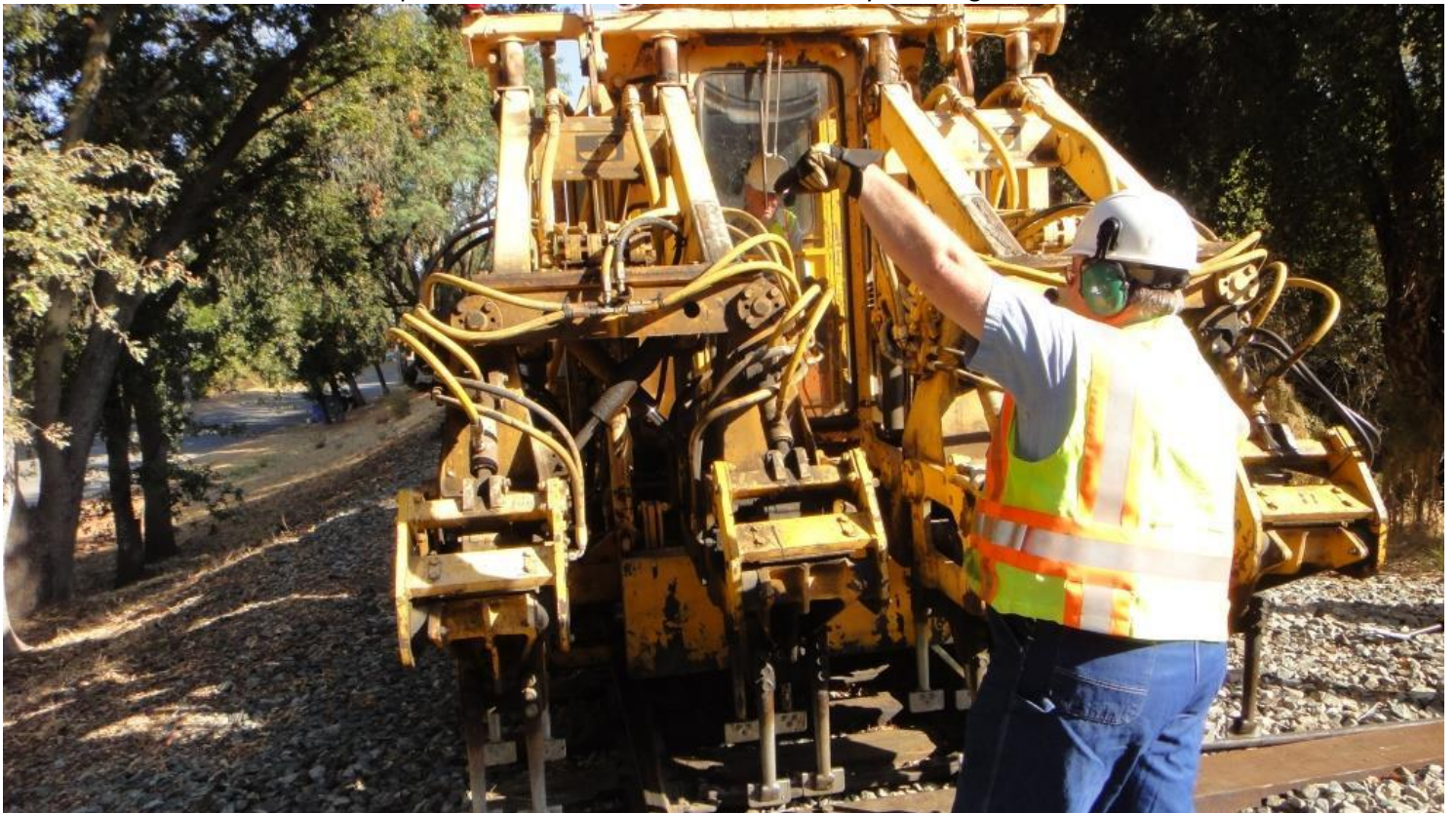


Josh dismantling one of the hydraulic jacks





The pink box arrives on scene at the Saturday morning work-site

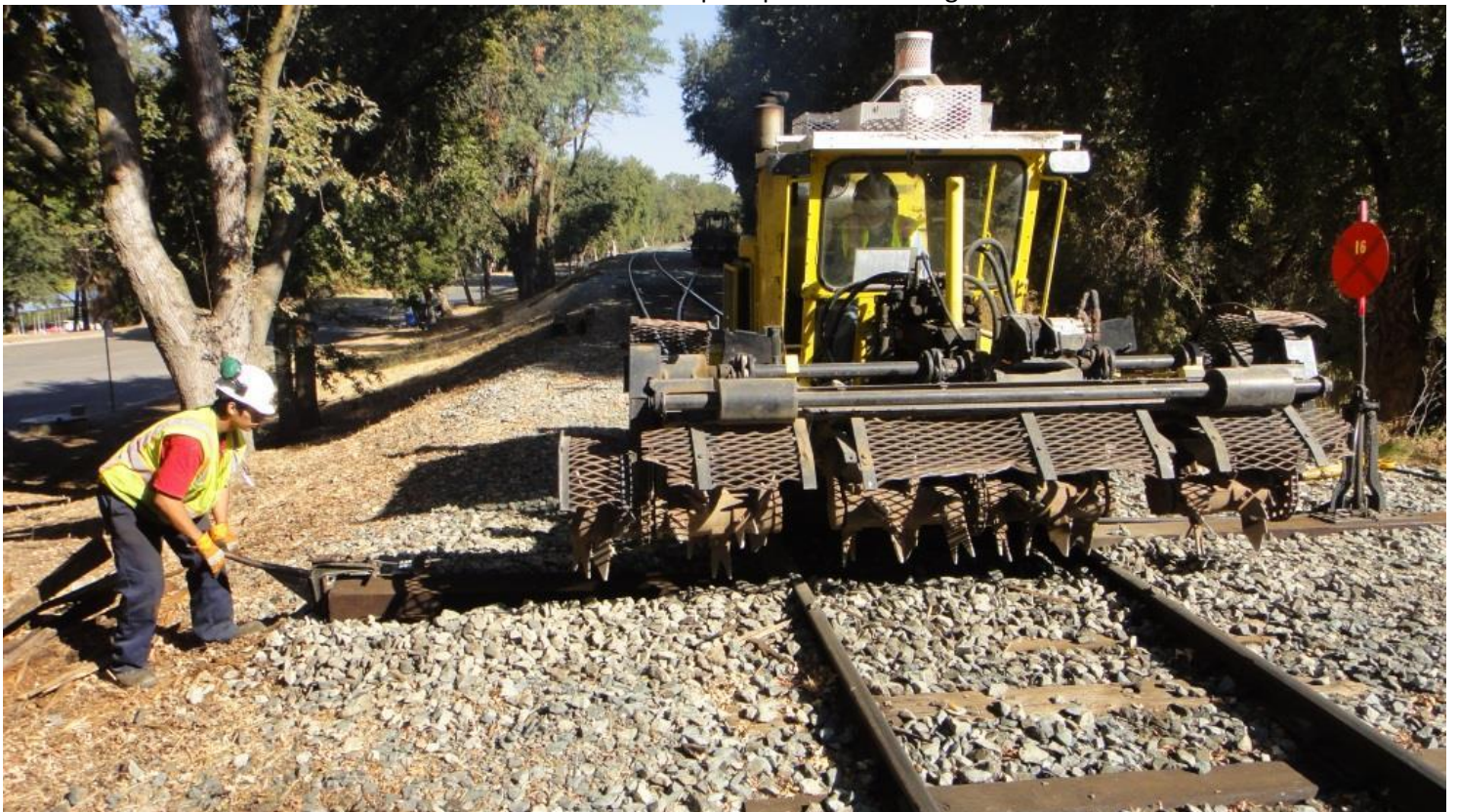


Steve at the controls of the tamper while Chris directs the delicate maneuvers needed to tamp around switch points





Pam digs out the end of the tie to help it move more freely as Chris, Harry, and Josh engage the chains on the section-gang machine in an attempt to prevent crushing it.

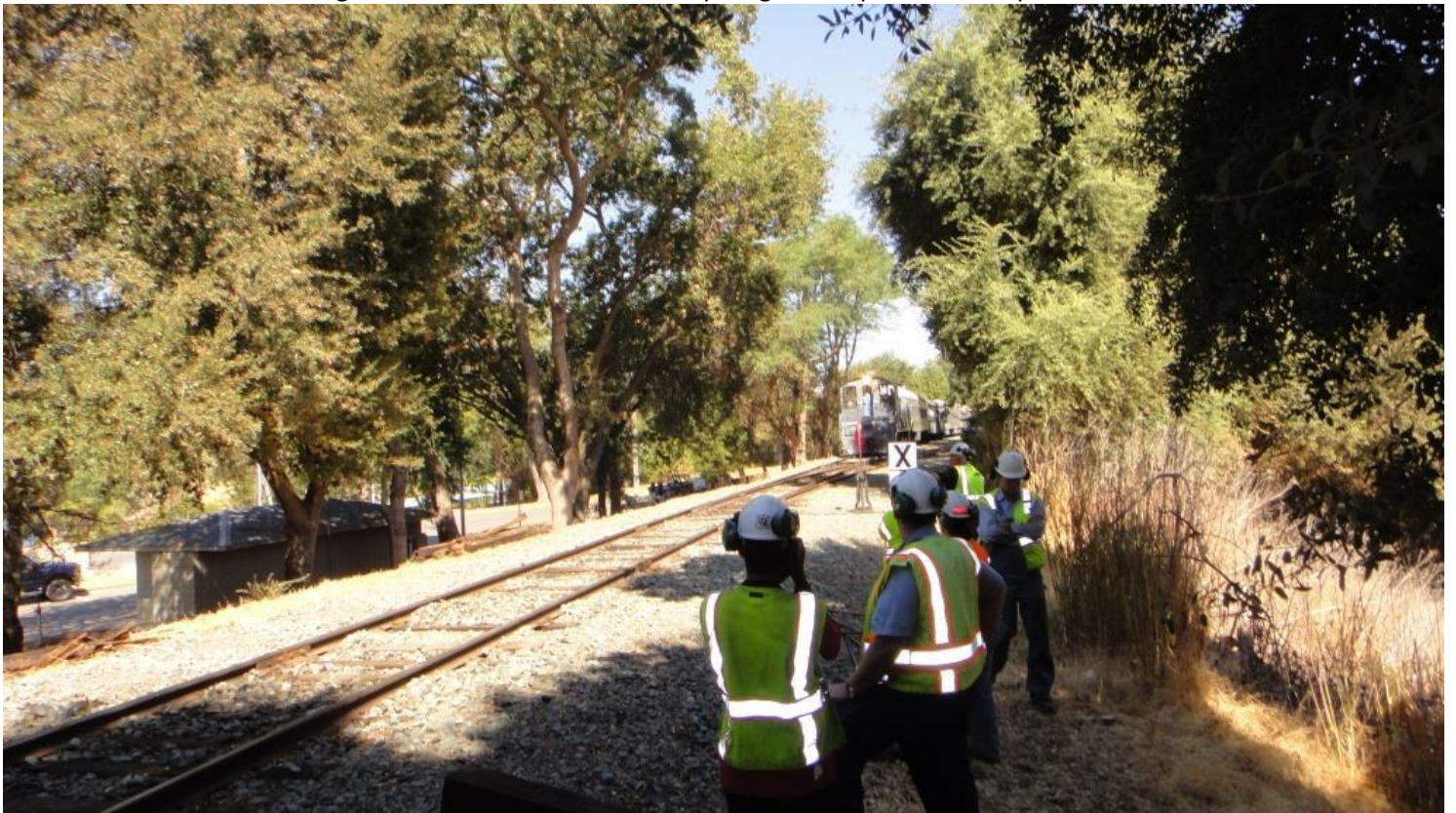


Alan in the scarifer, using the inserter function, pulls the new tie into place as Josh guides it





Steve demonstrating his world famous “windmill” spiking technique with the spike maul. He never misses.



“I hear a headlight!” Right on schedule, the 11 o’clock train passes through our work-limits





Heather and Matt recruit new volunteers at the job fair (show off all of our awards)



Steve on Big Green coordinating with Matt collecting the last of the old turntable deck refuse from behind the Museum