

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team Update for October 21, 2017. Well, it was another week of challenges and opportunities for your MOW Team on its road to progress. So, let's not challenge your patience by delaying the opportunity to read another MOW Team update any further.

Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Chris Howard, Anthony Filamor, DJ Mandella, Art Fluter, Kyle Blackburn, Frank Werry, Mike Harris, Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, and Chris Carlson were on hand Tuesday to start the MOW Team's week. The challenge for the evening was to rearrange the equipment on the 150 Track and unbury the rock-cars so we can start ballasting the Sutterville/Zoo Line track. Also, the Team had committed to getting the Weed Team's equipment all ship-shape and Bristol fashion which would give them with the opportunity for a quick departure on Thursday morning. Joe moved the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger off the North Turntable Lead (NTTL) to unblock the Weed Team's machines. Chris H. got the turntable lined to the NTTL. Heather fired up the man-lift and moved it onto the table. The Chipper was spun so that the chute would face south. Up on the 150, Mike H., Kyle, DJ, Frank, and Alan were opening up machines to start the big move. Of course, it wouldn't be a MOW operation without some sort of mechanical malady. The tie-crane, which was up against the rock-cars, had a dead battery. Mike H. and Alan tried "jumping" it a number of times but, it was too dead to revive. Without moving the crane, we couldn't access the rock-cars. So, there was no sense in continuing with the equipment move. DJ and Kyle pulled the battery to take it back to the Shops and put on a charger. One of the flatcars needed by the Weed Team still had seven ties on it so Art, Anthony, DJ, Joe and Kyle moved them by hand. Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Gene and Chris C. spent the evening working on the Kalamazoo's hydraulic system seeking to end its pesky leaks. Despite some frustration, forward progress was made on Tuesday evening.

The Weed Team had a very productive day on Tuesday on the Sutterville/Zoo Line. Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, Heather, Steve Wilson, and Anthony got a quick start thanks to the pre-arranged machines. With chainsaws roaring and the chipper chipping, the Weedies made a major dent in the overhead clearance issues on that line. Anthony managed the man-lift while Dave M., in the bucket, flew overhead like a purple martin in springtime slicing away at intruding limbs with his gas-powered chainsaw on a stick. Collectively, the Weedies created a mountain of organic chum and a bit of firewood. In fact, they got so much done that Mike T. declared that one more day should finish the Weedies work below the I-5 Bridge. What dedication! Many thanks to the mighty Weed Team, the unsung heroes of the Railroad!

While Chris C. attended the SSRR Management Committee meeting on Thursday evening, Heather, Chris H., DJ, Kyle, Eric Baugher, Joe, Michael Florentine, Alan, Anthony, Mike H. and Frank picked up where they left off on Tuesday with the equipment move. Now fully charged, Joe, Mike H. and Mike F. got tie-crane's battery back in place. Alan then clicked the ignition and it roared to life. So, to get things in the right order, the Jackson 125, scarifier, tie-shear, ballast regulator, a tie-laden flatcar, and tie-crane all had to move. Unfortunately, darkness was chasing the Team and, by the time the fully-loaded rock-cars were accessible, the only thing in position to grab them was the 125 which just didn't have enough oomph to shift them off their skate. It was getting too dark to try to switch things around again to grab them. Nonetheless, the machines had been re-positioned in the proper order for a quick departure on Saturday morning.

Saturday was chock-full of challenges and opportunities. But, it was no challenge for Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Bill Hastings, Dave Wolf, DJ, Mike F., Frank, and Heather to chow-down on doughnuts! The Team would return to the Sutterville/Zoo Line where 140 ties were in the ground ready to spike. Also, the tie-crane would be used to collect and dispose of dead ties strewn about the line. Mike F. piloted the motorcar pulling the work train, Joe handled the 125, and Alan spun around in the tie-crane. Our first task was to take a look at a rail-joint that we had identified a couple weeks back. Dave W. and Mike F. removed the nuts and bolts and pried off the joint-bars. To our surprise, we found that the rail, itself, was broken! When things get opened up, you never know what you'll find. The Team pondered the situation and discussed various options. The decision was made to put the joint back together so that we could get the motorcar back to the north side of it. But, to do so meant loosening the joint south of it to manipulate the placement of the rail slightly. DJ and Bill took care of that while Joe managed, through a bit of ingenuity, to shift the rail enough to get the remaining bolt-holes to line up. Then Dave W., Joe, Bill, and DJ got two joints put back together and stabilized so that our light equipment could roll over it safely. Unfortunately, this situation took up most of the morning. A broken rail constitutes a major defect and will have to be replaced before any train can go down that line. Fortunately, it's 75-pound rail, of which we have a good stockpile. But, this development did delay commencing the spiking work the Team needed to do. Meanwhile, further up the line, Heather, Clem, and Frank worked with Alan in the tie-crane picking up the dozens of dead-ties strewn about the line and taking them down to our tie-disposal site at Setzer. With the broken joint stabilized, Joe, Mike F., Bill, and Dave W. started the spiking effort in earnest. Ties were plated, spikes distributed and set, and the hydraulic spike-driver deployed. The Team took turns setting spikes, nipping the ties, and driving spikes. In the afternoon, a special train for the new Docent Class was being run. That put two trains on the Mainline. The Docent Class train was pulled by the CSRM No. 2. Engineer Ilias Athanisiou and fireman/brakeman Chuck Maley arranged for the MOW Team's work-train to follow them into the Miller Park Siding so the Spook-o-motive could pass by. This also gave the MOW Team the opportunity to meet the new docents. With Spook-o-motive having passed by, the Team followed the Docent Train back to Old Sac. where our equipment was stowed. It had been a very productive day, despite the surprise challenge, which ultimately will give us the opportunity to build a better and safer railroad.

Tuesday and Thursday, the MOW Team will commence operations in the Erecting Shop at or before 5 o'clock. Also on Thursday, the Weed Team will deploy to the Zoo Line once again. Meet at the Shops at 8:15 a.m. On Saturday, 8 o'clock a.m. is the start time for more fun on the Zoo Line. We are making progress on bringing that line back into service thanks to the dedicated volunteers of your MOW Team!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.





Joe takes out the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger as part of the “almost” big move



Brakeman Joe guides Heather in the man-lift to a joint with the chipper



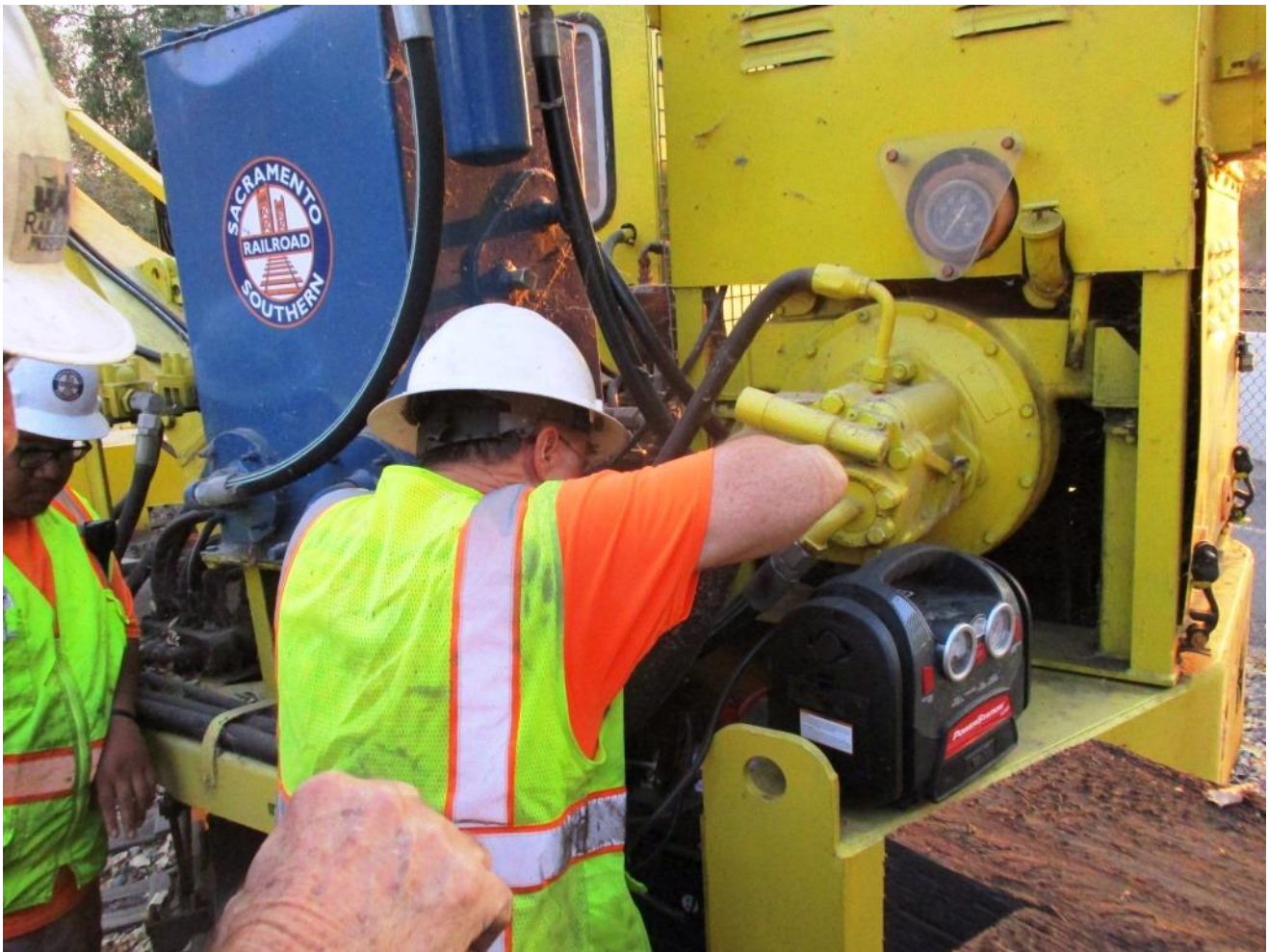


Heather moves the man-lift and chipper onto the turntable



Despite all the activity at the turntable, the Great Yellow Fleet seem stalled





Ah, that explains it. Dead battery on the tie-crane

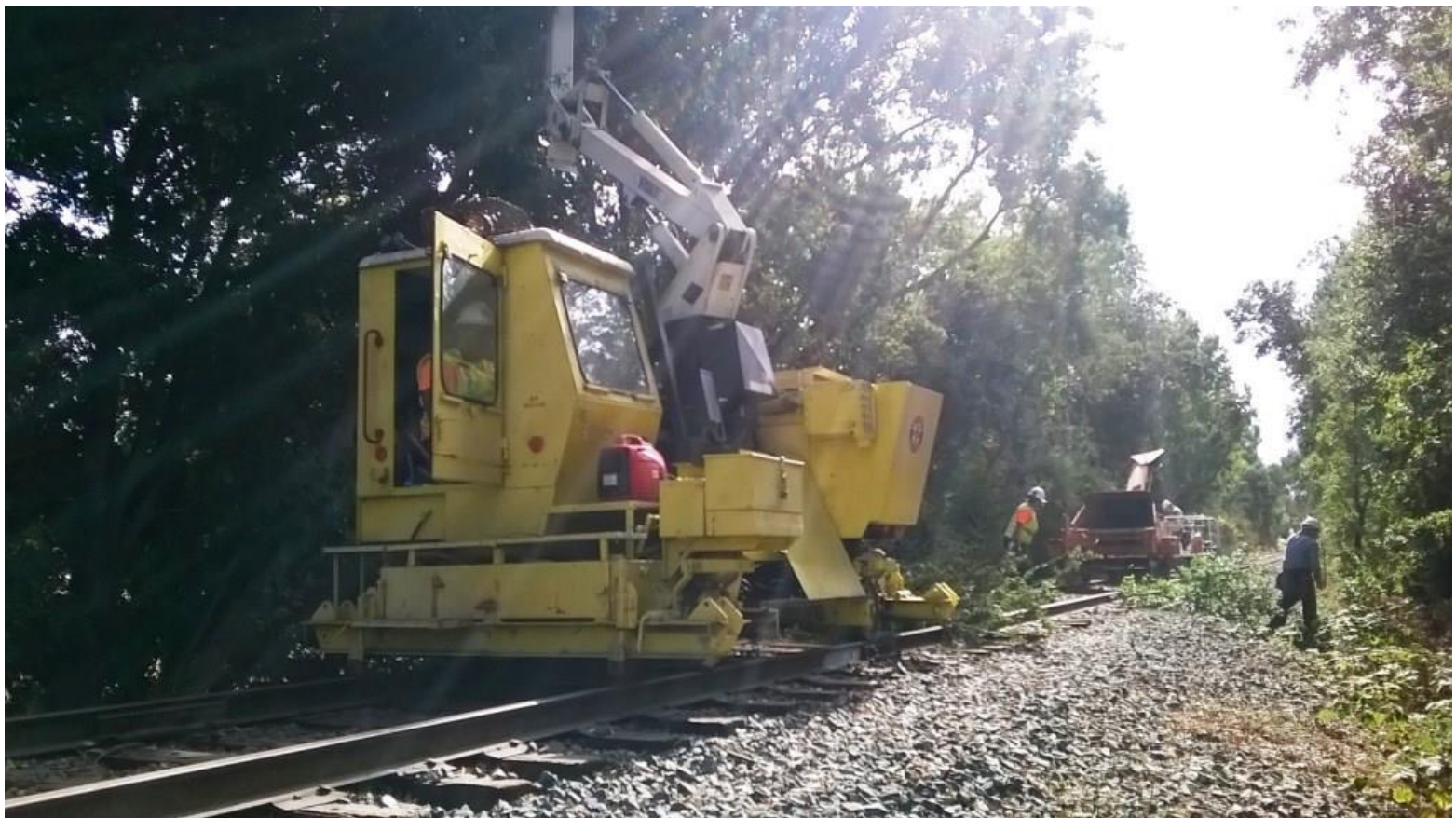


Art gets ready to carry a tie to the other flatcar





DJ and Kyle carry a tie while Joe stows the seat of the Jackson 125 for safe keeping



Anthony operates the man-lift



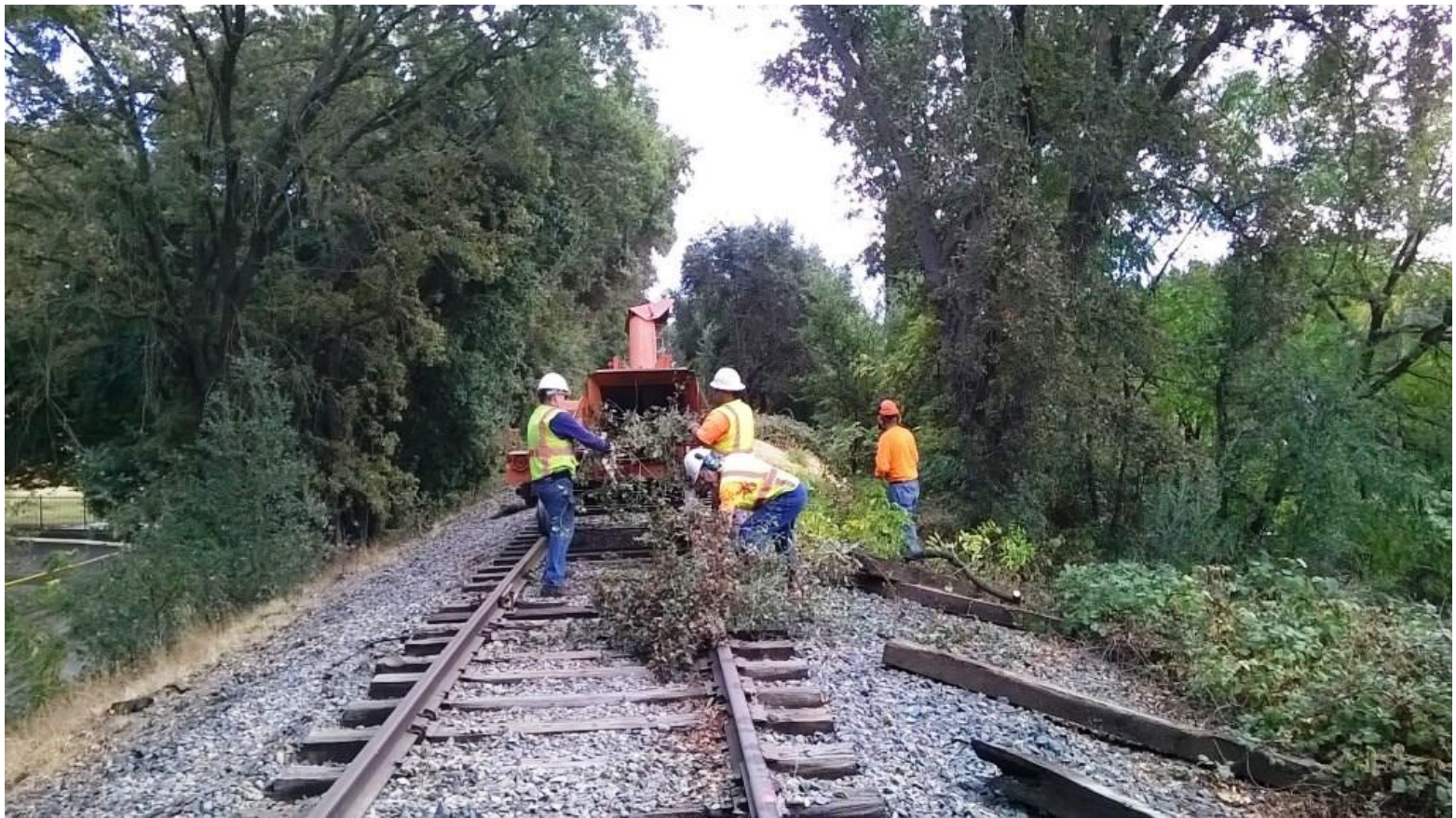


With Dave M. flying about in the trees above, Weedies Steve, Ed, and Mike T. turn the debris into mulch



Dave M. makes good use of the gas-powered chainsaw on a stick





Steve, Ed, Anthony, and Dave M. feed the gullet of the chipper



The results of the Weedies' efforts



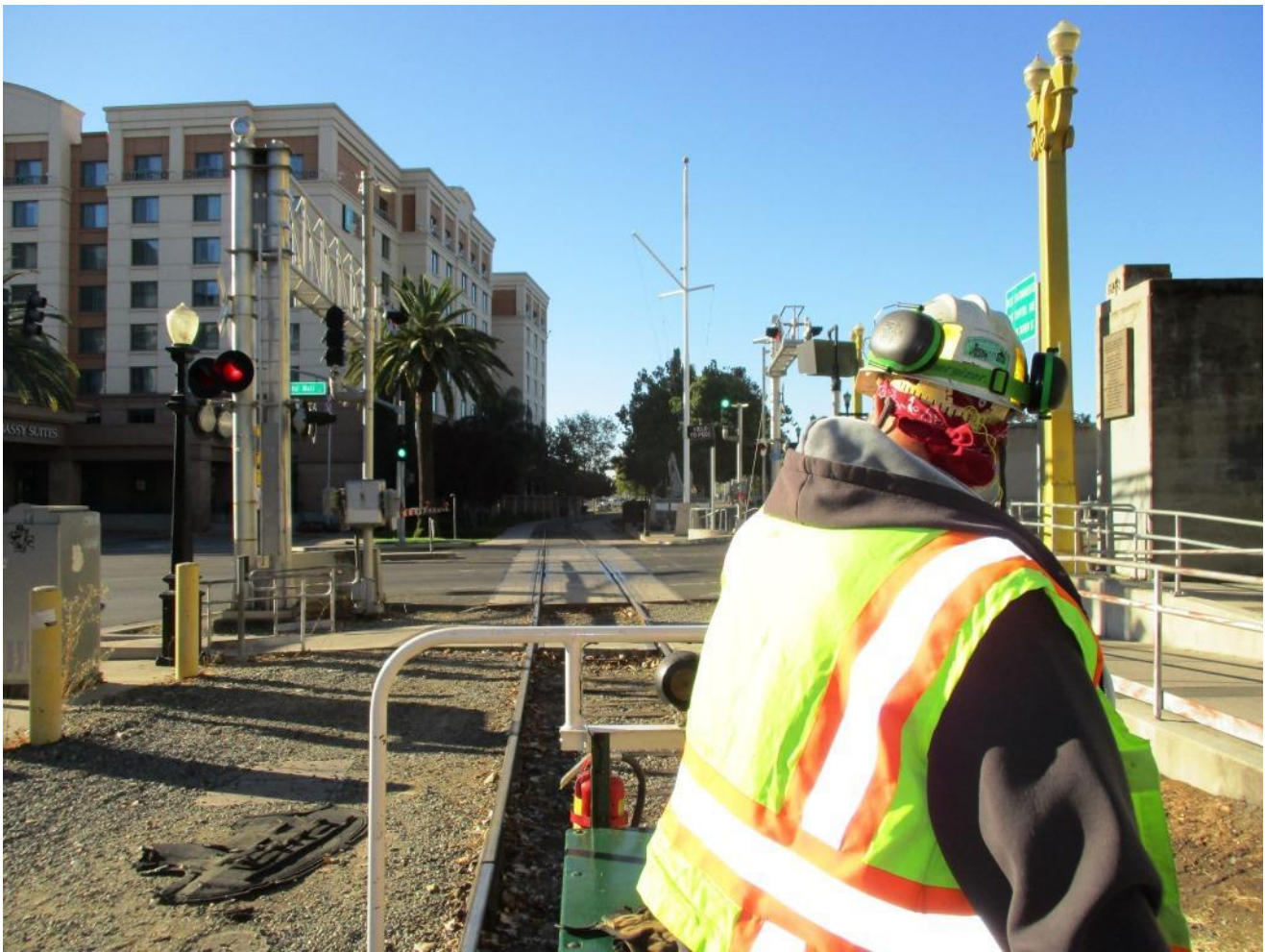


A second attempt at switching everything out is made

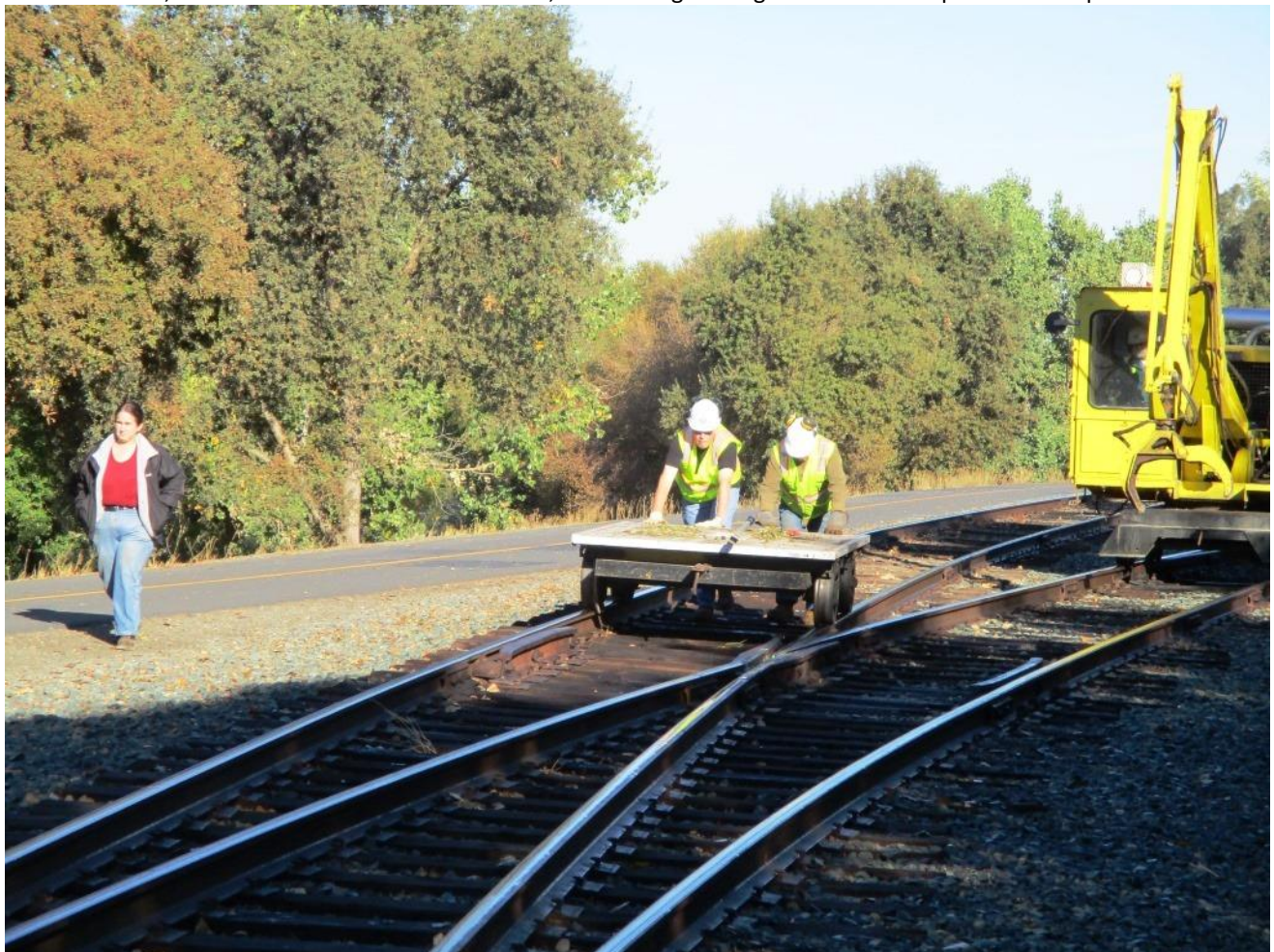


Joe, Mike H., and Mike F. get the recharged battery into the man-lift



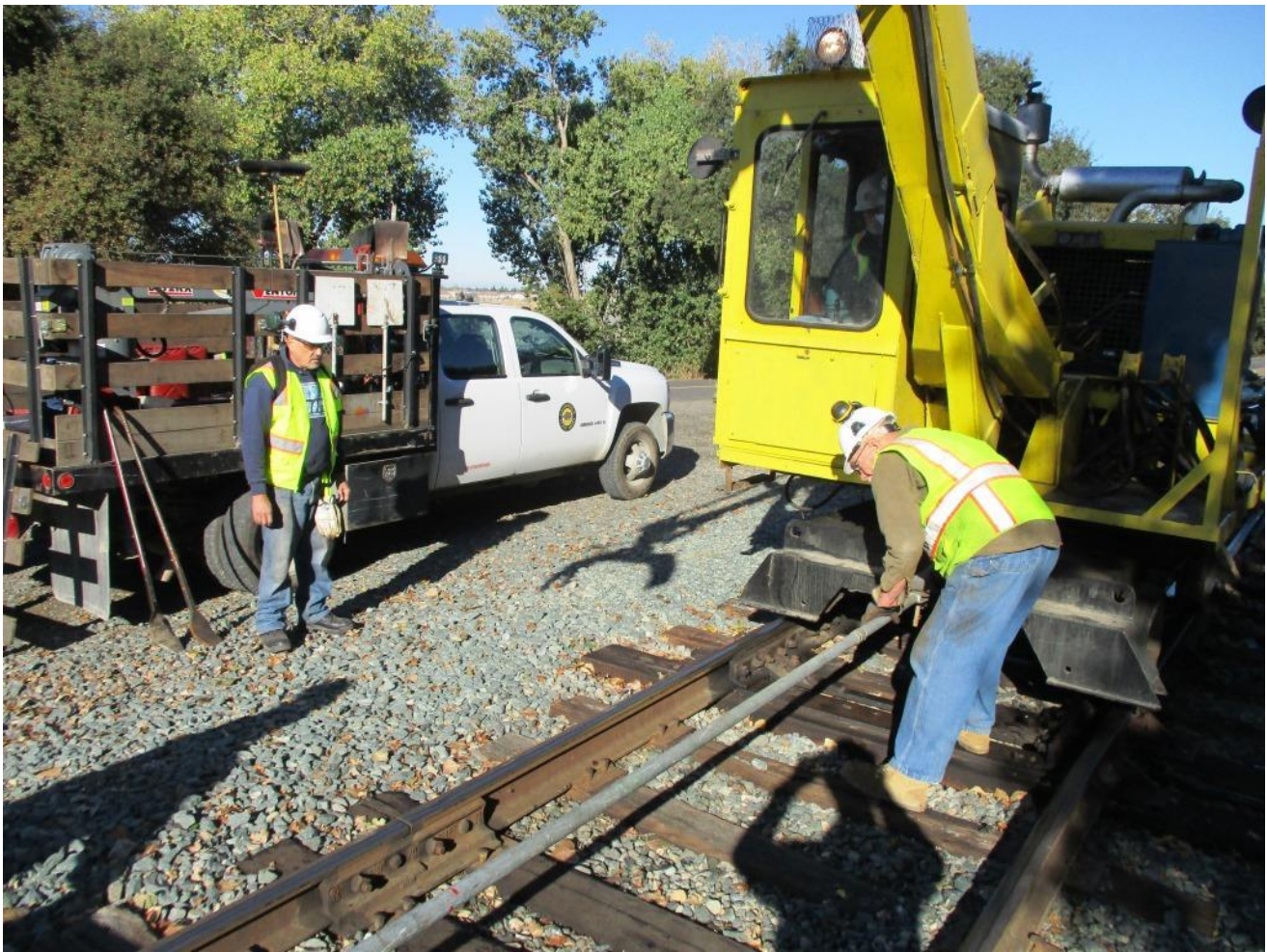


Mike F., behind the throttle of the motorcar, receives a green signal indication to proceed at Capitol Mall



Bill and Clem provide the power for the run-around at Baths



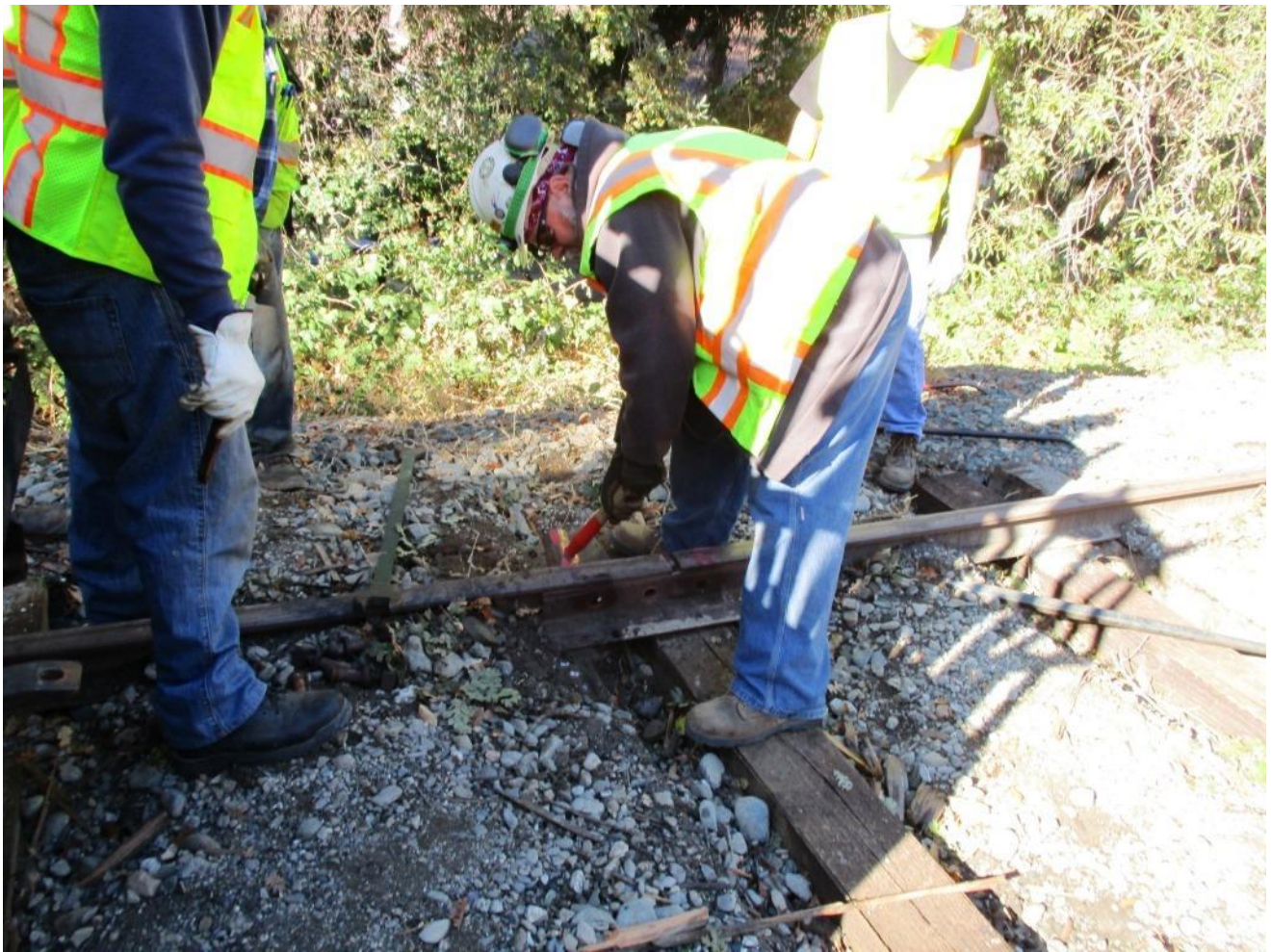


Clem connects the extra-long draw-bar between the flatcar and the tie-crane



Dave W. pulls on a track-wrench to get the nuts off the bolts holding the wonky joint together



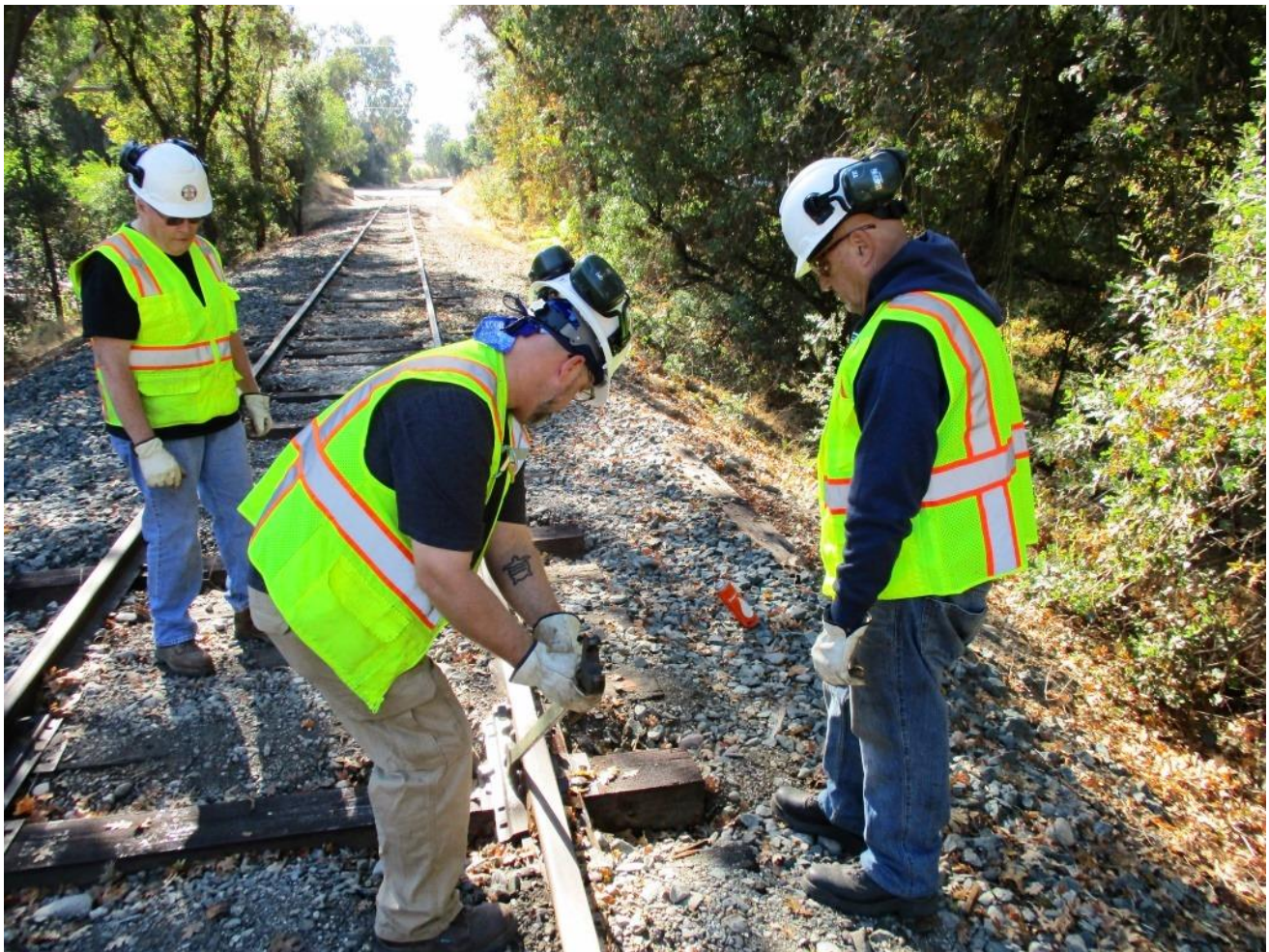


Mike F. taps the joint with a short-handled sledge to knock the bar off



Shiver me timbers!





DJ, works to loosen the joint to the south of the broken rail to give us some wiggle-room for shifting the rail slightly

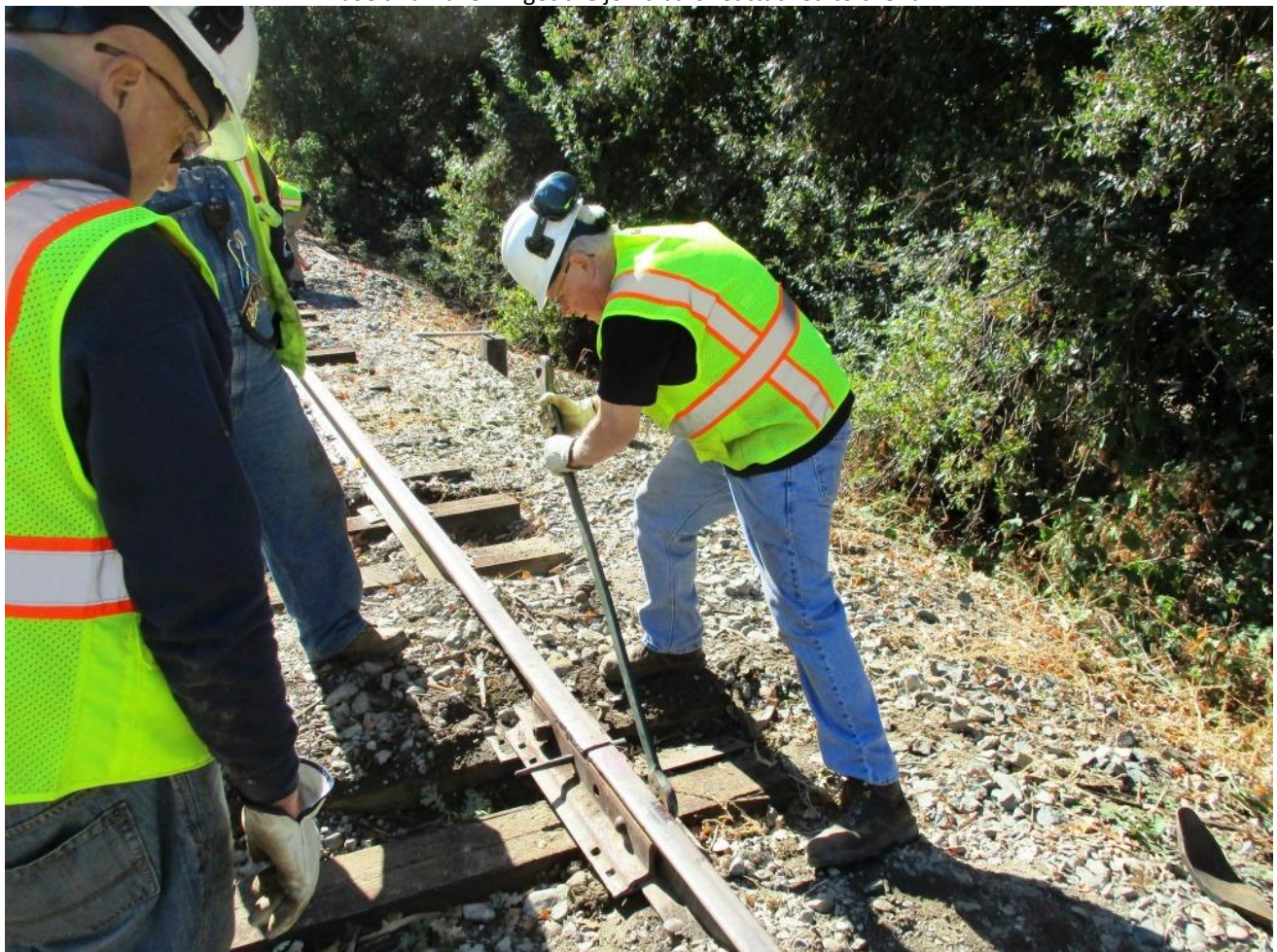


Joe gets the rail to shift into position to be bolted up again





Joe and Dave W. get the joint-bars reattached to the rail

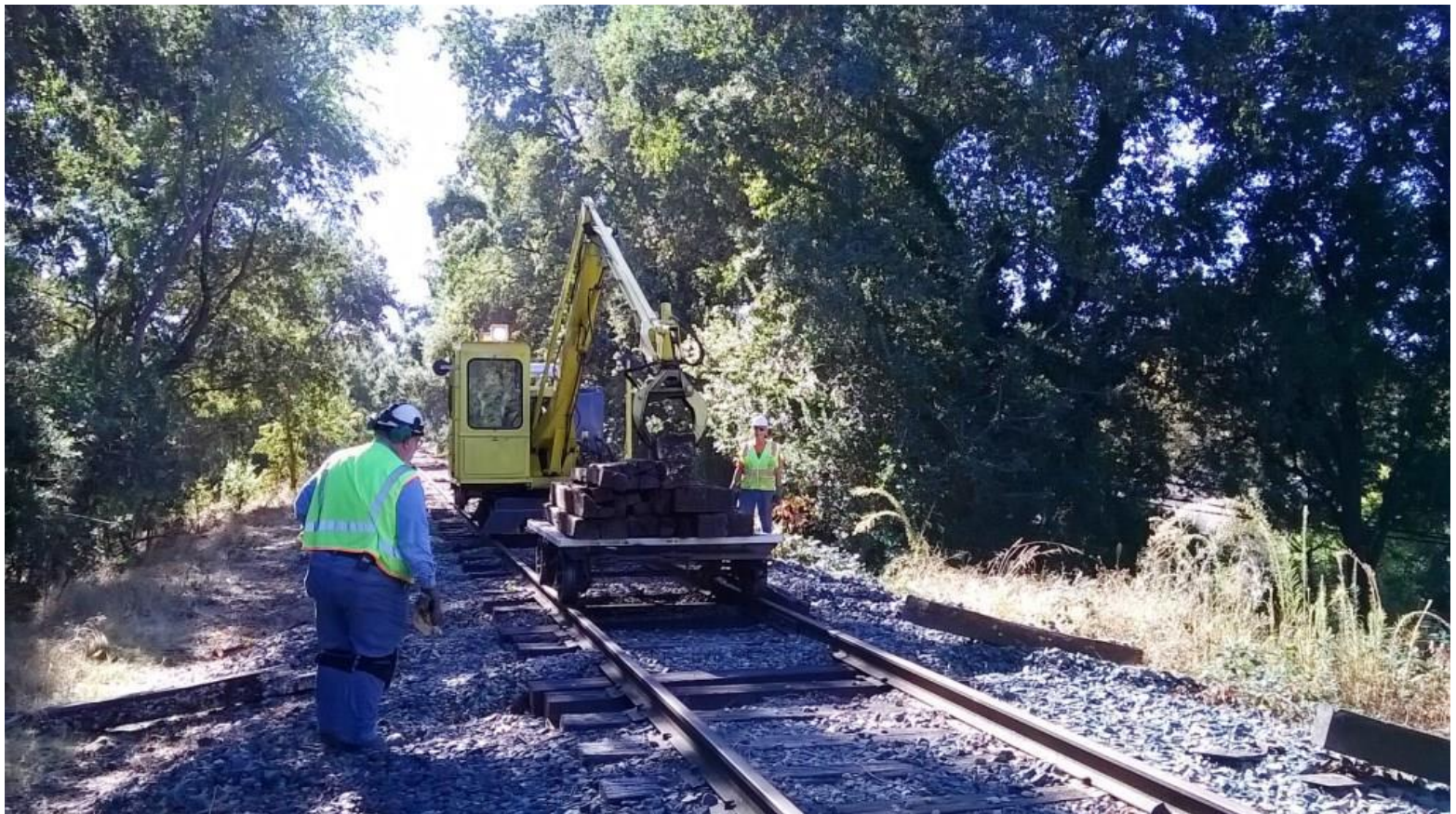


Bill tightens the bolt on the stabilized joint with the busted rail





DJ retightens the bolts on the joint immediately to the south



Meanwhile, Frank, Alan, and Clem are collecting dead ties





At Setzer, dead ties are piling up



Mike F. nips-up the rail as Joe gets a tie-plate placed





The hydraulic spike-driver is deployed



Joe nips up the rail for Alan to insert a tie-plate





Dave W. and Mike F. set and drive spikes



Mike F. drives spikes while Dave W. nips up the tie





Joe and Bill set spikes



Then Joe takes on the hydraulic spike-driver and Dave W. nips-up the tie





The CSRM No. 2 arrives at Baths pulling the Docent Training Special



Engineer Ilias exclaimed that the No. 2 handles like a sports car!





At Miller Park, the Spook-o-motive passes the MOW Team Work Train



Day is done: Mike F.'s final task is to return the flatcars to the NTTL for use by the Weedies