

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 21, 2016. Your MOW Team was busy as beavers this week beavering away at all those things on the railroad that need taking care of. So, let's take care of business right here and now by getting this update underway.

It was an early call-time on Tuesday for Heather Kearns and our good friend and senior conductor on the railroad, Chuck Maley. Chuck volunteered to serve as conductor so that engineer Heather could get the fully-repaired man-lift back over the UP Main to Old Sacramento for the Weed Team to use on Thursday. Of course, it was a flawless operation. Many thanks to Chuck for his valuable help on this project! Soon thereafter, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Anthony Filamor, Joe Margucci, Frank Werry, Mike Harris, and Gene Peck were all in their places with bright shining faces for another evening of MOW fun. Cliff took his welding equipment out to the north end of the Boiler Shop to cut away the flange-guards on the Firing Line Track. In order for the new track to connect up to the Firing Line, new bolt-holes need to be drilled. But, the existing rails had flange-guards which needed to be cut away. With Anthony's and Alan's assistance, Cliff fired-up his torch and quickly cut them away. Joe, Mike H., Frank, and Heather headed over to Old Sac. to retrieve the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar and bench-car as well as the Kalamazoo tug. Now that there was room in the Erecting Shop, both were being brought over for repair work. The Kalamazoo is getting a new air-compressor. A good deal of shuffling occurred in order to get the vehicles in the right position but soon, both were ensconced in Bay 4 of the Erecting Shop. Another flawless operation by your MOW Team!

With nary a bird in sight, the Mighty Weed Team convened Thursday for what proved a toasty but successful day. Chairman Mike Taylor, gavelled the proceedings to order as Heather, Dave Megeath, Steve Wilson, Ed Kottal, and Frank all responded "present" when the roll was called. The Team headed south of the I-5 Bridge to fight their way through jungle-like conditions on the Sutterville Line. Heather piloted the man-lift as Dave flew about in the bucket slicing and dicing through everything within reach. The Weedies cut through the overhanging canopy that had defied them for several months and, in the process, generated a rather substantial pile of green debris to chip which Frank, Steve, and Ed handled quite adroitly. The green menace, years in the making, has been utterly defeated. There is now a clear view of Sutterville Road from the north end of the ballpark. Three cheers for the Mighty Weed Team and its magnificent victory over the green foe!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan, Anthony, Weston Snyder, and Jose Gomez, joined Frank and Heather for some good ol' fashion track-work. A jiggly-joint to the north of the stub switch had caught the attention of our trusty track inspectors. The joint has been buried in soil-cement for decades. So, Jose, Anthony, Joe, and Weston got right to work digging it out. Upon inspection, it was determined all the bolts were intact but, two were the wrong size. The Team used various wrenches but nothing quite fit and not enough torque could be generated using a crescent as the bolts were rust-welded tight. To be continued. The opportunity was taken to clean-out the stub-switch and test it.

Saturdays are synonymous with doughnuts and there were plenty on hand for Chris Carlson, Heather, Alan, Clem Meier, Ed, Joe, Jose, Taka Blackburn, Mike Miller, Harry Voss, Frank, Michael Florentine, Andrew Storck, Anthony, and John Rexroth. Work on the new Firing Line track was the order of the day. The plan was to jack-up the south side of the track and dig out from under it. The roadbed was not level and the south rail was about three-inches higher than the north. Special track-leveling tools – a.k.a. garden hoes – were employed for this task. Also, ties would be inserted both on the east and west ends, then plated and spiked. Earlier in the week, our Quartermaster in Chief Heather had procured a pop-up canopy to provide some shade for the crew. So, with Mike F. on Big Green, Frank in the loader, Harry on the back-hoe, and the "party-tent" set up, the Team got to work. Andrew, Mike M, Jose, Heather, and Joe set jacks and lifted the track. Taka and Alan deployed the hoes. Joe, Frank, Anthony and Chris joined in with shovels. Meanwhile, Mike F. scooped up ties with Big Green and delivered them to Clem, Ed, Jose, and Andrew who took on the task of getting ties in place at the west end. Further east, Joe, Mike M., Frank, Anthony, Alan, and Taka worked to line-up the next track-panel to be bolted in place. A little ol' fashion track-gang "Gandy-dancing" was needed to line things up. Doing the two-step, Anthony, Alan, and Taka danced the track into position.

With the digging done, the jacks were dropped and the track was level (more-or-less). Ballasting will correct any remaining imperfections. The Team then focused on getting ties in the east-end. With the section-gang machine on the fritz, we had to do it the old fashioned way – by hand. Jacks were used again to raise the rails so ties could be slid beneath. Andrew, Joe, Ed, and Jose became masters of the tie-tongs. Chris climbed on the back-hoe to pull all the dirt away that we had dug out. Ballasting the track was next on the agenda. Mike F. put the bucket on Big Green. He, Frank in the loader, and Chris on the back-hoe began a rock-parade and brought in ballast from our rock pile under the freeway. Alan guided the ballasting. Heather, Joe, Jose, and Andrew picked-up shovels and spread the rock about. This Team was working like a well-oiled machine! It was hard to keep track of everything going on. Ed then hopped on the back-hoe and brought the air compressor over. Next came the plating and spiking phase. Mike F. and Joe shared pneumatic spike-driving duties as Heather and Mike M. nipped the ties. But, the allure of the party tent was calling – especially, as temperatures on that hard-pan dirt peaked at 97 degrees. So the Team packed-up their tools and the party tent and returned to the Shops. This phase of the Firing Line Track is nearly complete. A little more ballast and just a few more ties to plate and spike. Then, we'll be back out on the SSRR Mainline working to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the MOW Team will continue its good works on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, the Team will gather at 8 o'clock a.m. To this fantastic Team of volunteers, thank you very much for your enthusiastic dedication!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.

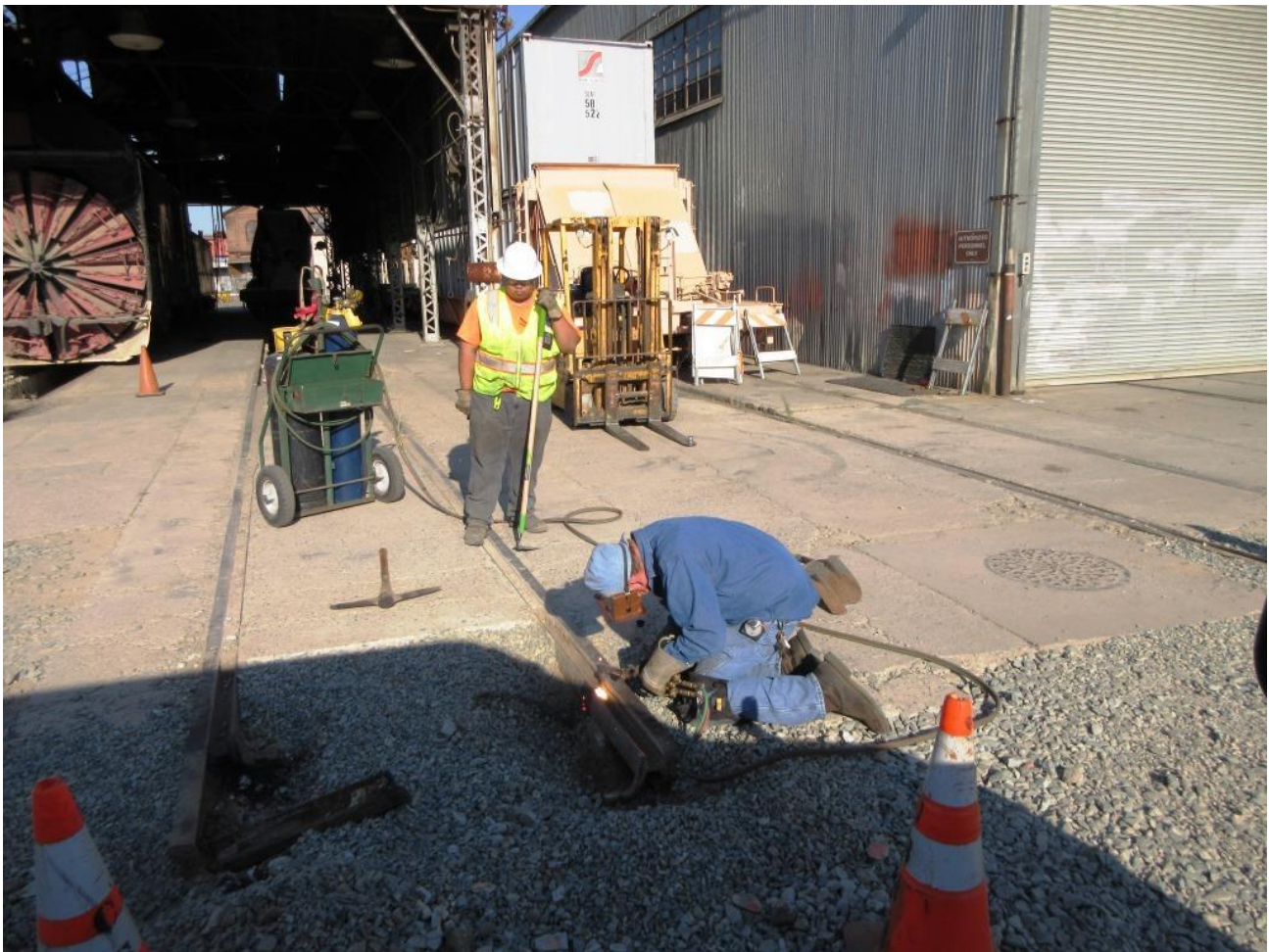


Conductor Chuck concludes successful negotiations with Omaha as Engineer Heather awaits a green signal indication



Alan and Cliff dig-out around the rails of the Firing Line Track to make room for cutting away the flange-guards





Anthony assists Cliff as he begins to torch-away the flange-guard



Cliff cuts the flange-guard off the rail to make room for drilling bolt-holes





Mike H. pilots the Kalamazoo tug over to the Shops



"We have exclusive track occupancy." The Weed Team gets its job-briefing from Chairman Mike T.





*Flying high now... Dave takes on the green menace from the bucket of the man-lift*



*Steve, Ed, and Frank pulverize the retreating enemy*





Weston, Jose, and Joe take on the jiggly-joint near the stub-switch



After servicing it, Weston tests the stub-switch





Mike M. and Heather jack the track



Alan and Taka use specially designed railroad dirt-moving tools





With the track levitating, Andrew, Taka, and Mike M. remove soil



Ed and Clem get ties ready for Mike F. on Big Green to gather





*Dig ye tarriers, dig...* Mike M., Anthony, Taka, and Joe are bound and determined to get this track level



With the section-gang machine on the fritz, Andrew, Ed, Clem, and Jose interpret ol' fashion railroadin' as a live-action section-gang





Chris gives Quartermaster in Chief Heather with a present that he found on a recent trip to Oregon: spouts for our jerry-cans

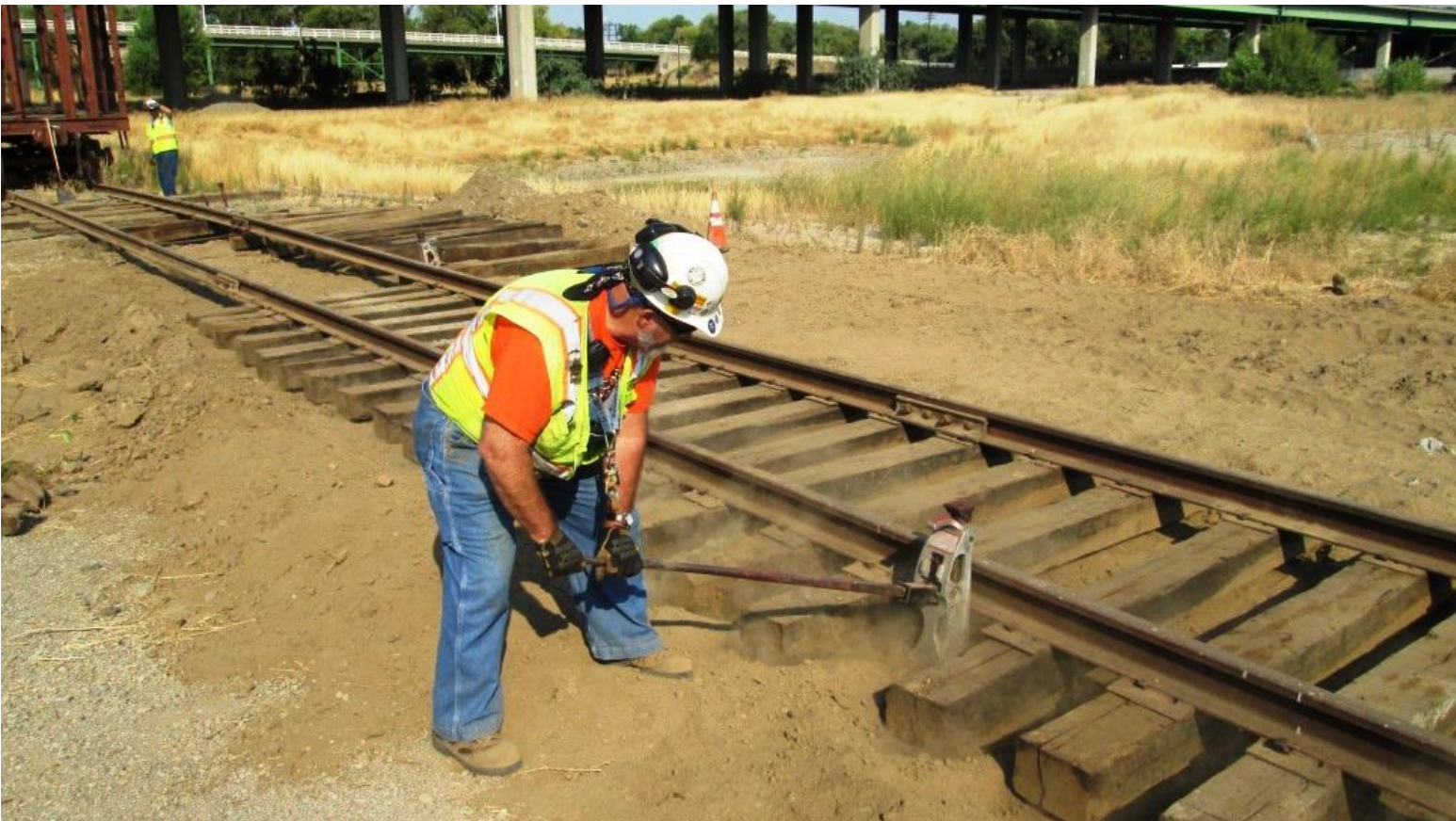


But soon, it's back to work...





Recently, Sacramento was voted the fourth "hippest" city in the U.S. The new MOW party tent is credited for that prestigious ranking...



Mike F. drops a jack after the track has been dug out





Frank checks the cross-level. "Spot on!" he declares



"Missed it by that much..." Frank and Joe contemplate the mismatch at the joint with the next panel of track...





...So Anthony, Alan, and Taka interpret some ol' fashion railroad track-gang action with a little Gandy Dancing...

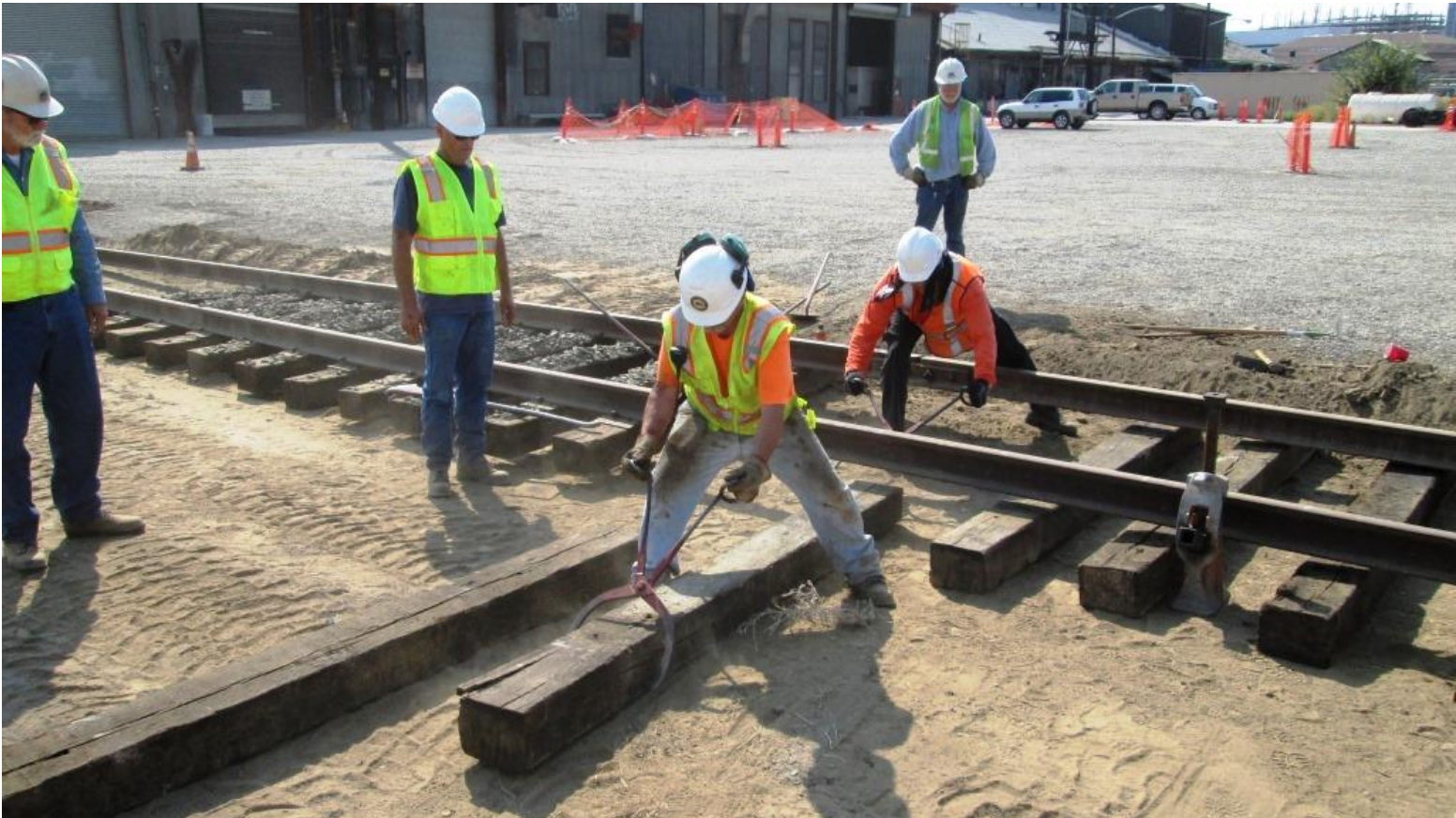


With the dancing done, everything is now in alignment. Joe, Ed, and Mike M. bolt the rails together





Andrew rolls ties off the forks of Big Green to position them for filling in the gap



The human section-gang machine: Joe and Jose slide new ties into place





Frank bring in the first load of ballast rock



Anthony and Joe set spikes as Heather nips-up the tie





Chris uses the back-hoe as a grader



Jose and Andrew spread rock





Chris in the back-hoe joins the rock-parade



Mike M. nips as Mike F. spikes





Team nipping: Heather and Mike M. nip-up the ties into which Mike F. and Joe are driving spikes



Anthony, Ed, and Mike F. deploy the rail-lifter for plating ties





Mike F. nips-up the tie into which Joe is driving spikes



Hey, it's starting to look like a rail railroad track