

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for January 10, 2016. It was the first full week back to a normal schedule for 2016 and, if the rest of the year is like this week, it promises to be a good one – as does this update so, let's get it started.

Tuesday was a chilly night in the Erecting Shop. Happily for Pat Scholzen, Heather Kearns, Cliff Hayes, Alan Hardy, Frederick Carr, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, and Mike Harris, there's a warm patio heater to gather around. The Weed Team has acquired a new engine and pump for its 65-gallon spray-rig. But, mounting brackets for it have to be reconfigured to fit the new engine and pump. That's where Cliff comes in. He's a master of the metallic arts and is rebuilding the entire apparatus. Last Saturday, the rail-mounted air-compressor was brought over to the Shops after developing several problems, including a fuel leak. Heather and Fred took on this project and determined that the leak is coming from the fuel pump. Mike H., a professional engineer by trade, has taken on the role of the Railroad's bridge inspector. As we have a number of bridges, including the turntable, transfer-table, and I-5 (amongst others), Mike H. has developed an inspection program and documentation pursuant to 49 CFR Part 237. It's another of those things that goes on behind the scene that keeps the railroad rolling.

On Thursday, Mike Taylor and Dave Megeath took the Weed Team to Hood. They spent the day down there mowing, trimming, and surveying the work that has been done and still needs to be done to fend-off the green invasion. Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Fred, Frank, Mike H., and Alan fired-up the patio heater. Our trusty Chevy Truck was not so trusty on Thursday. The battery was well and dead. After multiple attempts to "jump-it" failed, Mike H. and Frank decided that invasive surgery was necessary. The terminals were rather corroded and wet. They removed the old terminals on the cables and replaced them then cleaned-off all the seemingly excessive corrosion. Then, they hooked up a battery charger and by the end of the evening, the Chevy Truck could once again be designated as "trusty."

A dozen doughnuts for a dozen MOW Team members meant no leftovers on Saturday. Alan, Chris Carlson, Clem Meier, Chris Machado, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Frank, Harry Voss, Steve Wilson, Michael Florentine, and Jose Gomez cleared out the pink box in record time. The day's best development was the triumphant return of Pamela Tatro to the MOW Team ranks following knee surgery. Welcome back, Pam! Saturday was the Railroad's annual General Meeting (at which MOW presented), the crew photo, and "First Train of the Year." So, the Team would remain in Old Sacramento. First, the turntable beckoned where a number of deck bolts had become loose. Steve W., Chris C., and Alan scurried beneath it torquing the bolts tight. The turntable pit was a mess – filled with dead, wet, mucky leaves. As the SSRR Crew Photo would be taken on the turntable, Clem, Steve N., Mike F., and Harry took on the task of cleaning it up. Heather, Frank, and Chris M. donned huff-and-puff machines and blew leaves out of switches while Pam swept-out Switch 1. Once everything was neat, tight, and tidy, the Team set out to correct two defects identified by our trusty track inspectors at Switch 7. First, a gap existed between the east switch-point and the stock-rail. The "Carlson Tool," which looks like a giant can-opener, was used to reshape the switch-stand which had become distorted from years of operation. Mike F. connected the Carlson Tool to the stand and with Steve W. and Chris M.'s help, twisted it back into position. This forced the east point firmly against the stock-rail. Defect corrected. On the other side, the west switch-point was sitting about three-quarters of an inch above the head of the stock-rail. Cross-level measurements indicated that the west rail was three-quarters of an inch lower than the east causing the switch point to be too high. Track jacks were employed south of the switch to raise the west rail. The head-block (the 15-foot long tie under the switch stand) had to be jacked-up, as well. This brought the point even with the rail-head. Steve N. fired-up the tamper to tamp the switch to its new level. It's a delicate business tamping around all those switch components and Alan provided guidance from the ground. The tamper's work-head could not extend out far enough to tamp the length of the head-block, so Frank, Clem, Chris M., and Steve W. used lining bars to hand-tamp under the switch stand. This jacking and tamping had to be repeated a couple of times but, finally the new level held. Defect corrected. By now, it was time to join the rest of the SSRR Crew at the freshly cleaned turntable for the annual crew photo. But first, the Museum's official photographer, Jeff Allen, suggested a special MOW Team crew photo of our own (see below). Many thanks to Jeff! Following the photo shoot, the SSRR crew departed on the First Train of the Year.

After lunch, the Team returned to Switch 7. All that jacking and tamping had left many holes around the switch which could be trip-hazards. Mike F. got the front-end loader started and scooped up a bucket-full of fine-rock to fill in the holes. Frank, Jose, Chris C., Steve N. and Steve W. shoveled and raked the rock around the switch smooth. Just as we were finishing up, the train returned to town. As the 2008 needed to be put away, the Team requested engineer Ilias Athanisiou, fireman Joe Mikula, and brakeman Kevin Hecteman to run the engine over the newly adjusted switch a couple times to help it settle. After each pass, we'd stop the engine and had it sit while the Team inspected the switch. It held up well. Many thanks to Ilias, Joe, and Kevin for their help – and patience. Meanwhile back at the Shops, Harry, our small engine expert, started up many of our track machines that hadn't be run in a while. Chris C. and Steve W. worked on the derrick for a while but it wouldn't start. Then Jose took a crack at it and, on his first pull of the cord, the crane fired to life. With that, we shut down the Shops and went home. Thus another successful day came to a close with many projects completed by a great group of volunteers.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather as usual on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday's doughnuts will be ready and waiting at 8 o'clock a.m. We'll begin staging to for our big off-season project of up-sizing the rails between Front Street and Switch 14 (North Miller) from 75 lb. to 110 lb. rail. It should prove an interesting project to say the least. We will be able to demonstrate the old adage, "No tracks, no trains." Many thanks to everyone for your continued dedication and support!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Cliff works on reconfiguring the 65-gallon spray-rig's engine and pump mount while Fred and Heather discuss the compressor



Fred diagnoses the cause of the pesky fuel leak on the rail-mounted air-compressor



Mike T. surveys the good works of the Weed Team at Hood



Mike H. and Frank replace the battery terminals on the trusty Chevy Truck. Fred provides the light



Best news of the week! Pam is back!



Steve W. tightens down the deck-bolts under the turntable



Clem takes on the organic debris that collected in the turntable pit



Heather and Chris M. fire up the huff-and-puff machines



And, they're off...



Steve N. and Chris C., clean up the turntable pit for the SSRR Crew Photo



Harry and Chris C. survey the progress while Mike F. and Clem clear debris from the west side of the pit



Pam clears leaf debris from the points at Switch 1



On to the next project. Mike F. uses the "Carlson Tool" to make adjustments to the stand at Switch 7



Chris M. and Steve W. add a bit of "umph" to switch stand adjustment



A cross-level measurement showed that the west rail was $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch below the east. Chris M. jacks-up the west rail



Now Chris M. digs out a space for a jack to be placed to jack-up the head-block



Chris M. and Steve W. hand-tamp the elevated head-block



Bring in the tamper! Steve N. operates the tamper as Alan provides guidance from the ground



Steve W., Chris M. and Frank hand-tamp the head-block as Steve N. in the tamper tamps around the switch components



The crew continues hand-tamping the head-block where the tamper's work-head can't reach



Time for the annual SSRR Crew Photo and the MOW Team is front-and-center in the pit that they've just cleaned out



Back at Switch 7, Frank, Jose, Chris C., Steve N. and Steve W. fill in all the holes with fine rock brought over by Mike F. in the front-end loader



To help settle the raised switch, the SSRR 2008 rolls over it several times



Back at the Shops, with one pull, Jose is able to start the derrick-crane



Harry's hardhat flew off his head as he pulled cord on the bolt-machine



Your 2016 SSRR MOW Team! Many thanks to Jeff Allen for taking this extra-special crew photo