

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for January 26, 2014. We rode the “progress express” this week (without hot chocolate) progressing towards a better railroad. So, let’s not stand in the way of progress and get this update rolling.

The mighty MOW Weed Team was in the weeds on Tuesday attacking things down on the Hood Line that dare to encroach on our right of way. Staff Captain Dave Megeath took command as EIC for the day with Joe Gallipeau in tow. At Hood, the Team inspected, serviced, and tested the spray-rig that’s housed down there. Then they headed north the end of the line at the trestle stopping along the way to harass overhanging twiggage and chase and turkeys or squirrels that dared to cross their path. All in all, a very progressive day. The Weed Team continues to keep our Hood dreams alive.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, Mike Harris, Chris Carlson, and Heather Kearns progressed towards great accomplishment. Alan began fitting-out the cab of the new-old tamper with mirrors, lighting controls, and storage canisters. Pat and Gene fixed a fuel-leak in the engine of the ol’ bucket o’ bolts regulator. Fred cleaned out the auxiliary diesel tank. Heather continued on the never-ending task of getting the dirt and muck that blows in the building back outside. Frank, Mike H., and Alan began the process of scrapping the ol’ bucket o’ bolts. Now that we have the newer and much better machine, we’ve begun to dismantle the old ballast regulator which is redundant to our needs. The demolition is being undertaken with care in order to retain valuable materials for re-use. We estimate that it is more than 60 years old and many of the bolts that needed unbolting had not been turned since it was manufactured in the 1950s. But, the team managed to break-up the broom hood and haul it off to our “bone-yard” outside.

Thursday, Heather, Mike H., Frank, and Alan showed up to continue the fun of cutting up the old regulator. The progress on Thursday was amazing. The remainder of the broom assembly was removed, as well as both wings of the machine. This progress exceeded our expectations. A little blood, sweat, and tears were expended – well, mostly blood – in this effort but by evening’s end, we all felt very accomplished.

Saturday was another busy day around the Shops. There was a little early morning panic when the doughnuts didn’t show up at their regular time but, Clem Meier, Heather, Mike H., Alan, Steve Nemeth, Michael Florentine, and John Rexroth were quite relieved when Chris walked in with the sacred pink box. The crew split into two teams. Chris, Steve, Mike F., and John headed down the line to continue our annual servicing of switches. Alan, Clem, Heather, and Mike H. stayed and the Shops to work on completing the south-door cross-over. Chris and the crew managed to adjust, oil, and grease Switches 13 through 20. So, brakemen, here’s your one warning: there’s lots of grease up in the switch mechanisms. Some of it has migrated onto the handles and locks. Switch grease is super-goey stuff and hard to clean. Wear gloves. Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan and his crew managed to complete the cross-over project on the south end of the building.

In the afternoon, the crew went hog-wild on taking apart the broom support apparatus on the old regulator, which was a difficult task requiring the use of a cutting-torch. Steve kindly volunteered to do one of those necessary but unpopular tasks of taking out the garbage. So, as EIC of the garbage, he managed to remove mountains of trash to the dumpsters outside. For this, Steve received two gold stars! By 5 o’clock, everyone was very pleased with the overall progress we’ve made on many fronts and called it a day. Many thanks to our incredible team for your dedicated efforts.

A bit of very good news: Steve Mathias, our most valuable machine, is home from the hospital after undergoing surgery to remove a rather nasty tumor on his brain. He is doing quite well and improving every day. This is best progress of the week and we look forward to Steve’s return out on the line!

Progress will continue this coming week as the as the mighty vegetation vigilantes, our Weed Team, will be heading to Hood for more de-twigging of the line. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. In the afternoon and evening on Tuesday, the Shops crew will be meeting as usual. The same goes for Thursday – meet up at 5 o’clock. Saturday, minus any doughnut crises, we’ll gather in the Shops at 8 o’clock a.m. for another day of MOW fun. As it’s Free Museum Day, we’ll be avoiding Old Sacramento and perhaps heading down the line. In any event, we promise lots of progress. Again, many thanks to all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Joe throwing the switch to the container track at Hood



The trestle on the Hood Line.



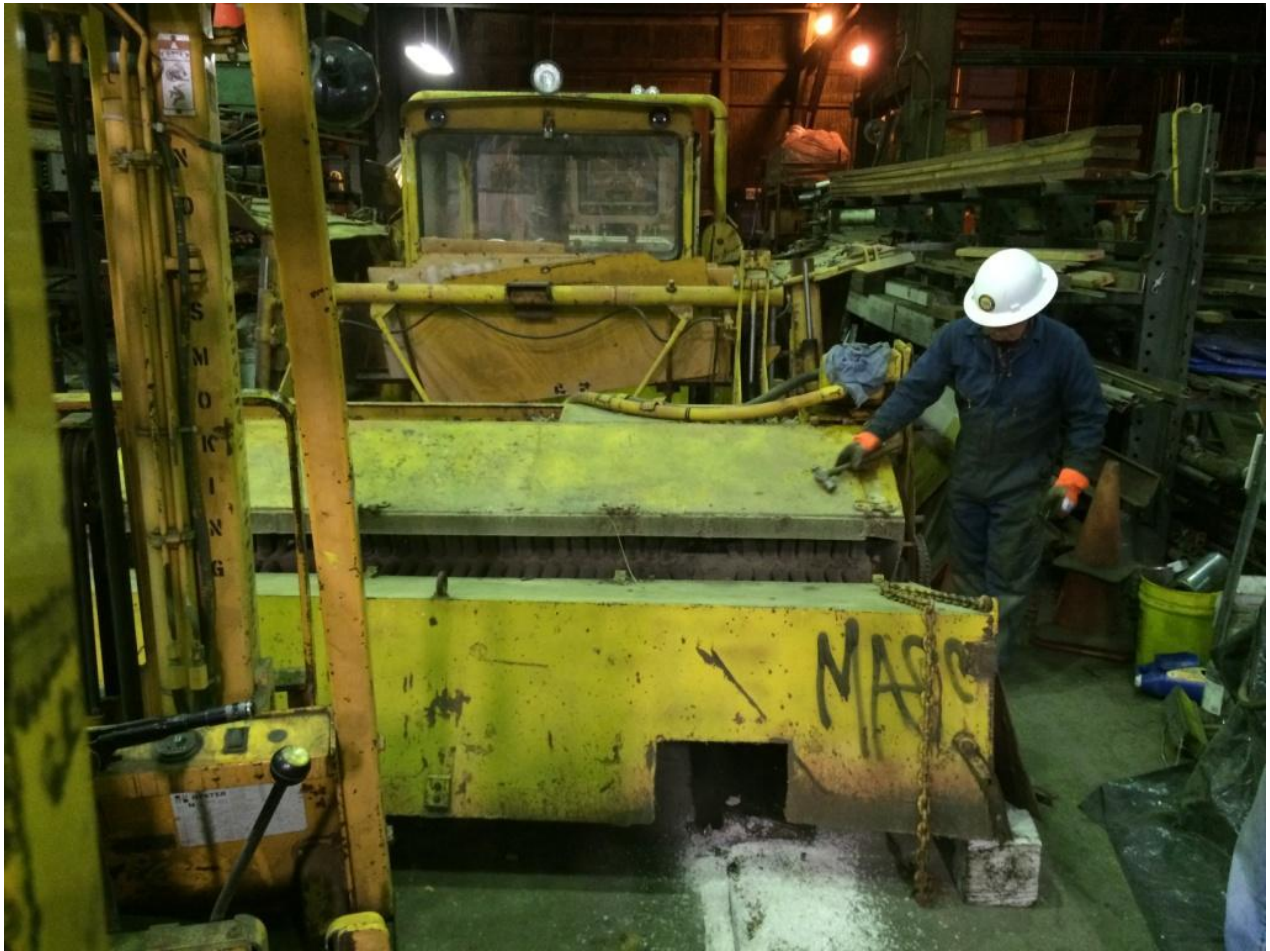


Gene and Pat correct a fuel leak



Fred works on cleaning out the diesel tank





Mike H. pounds out the last pin holding the broom-hood in place

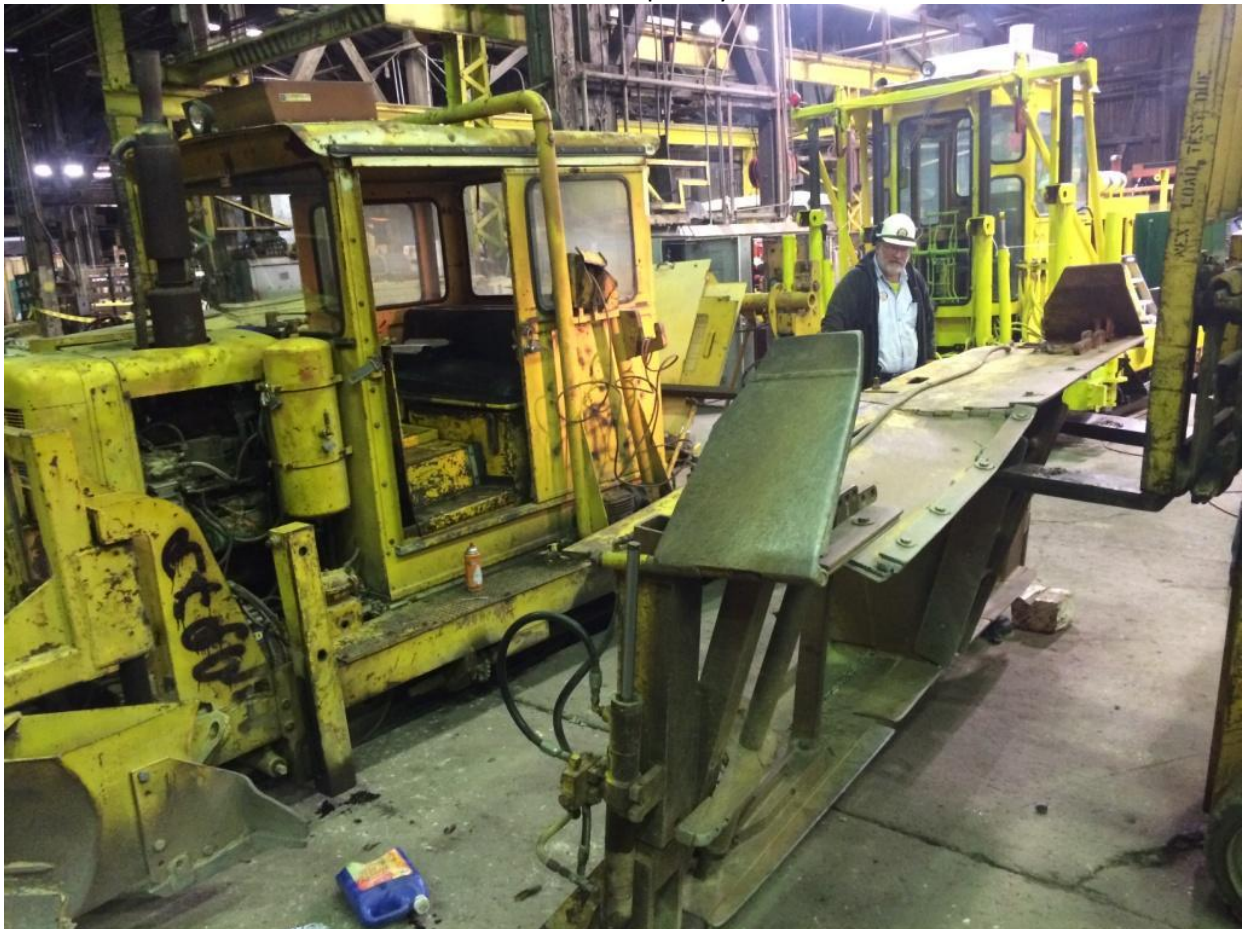


Mike and Alan set up to remove the broom





Mike H. and Frank sweep away the broom...

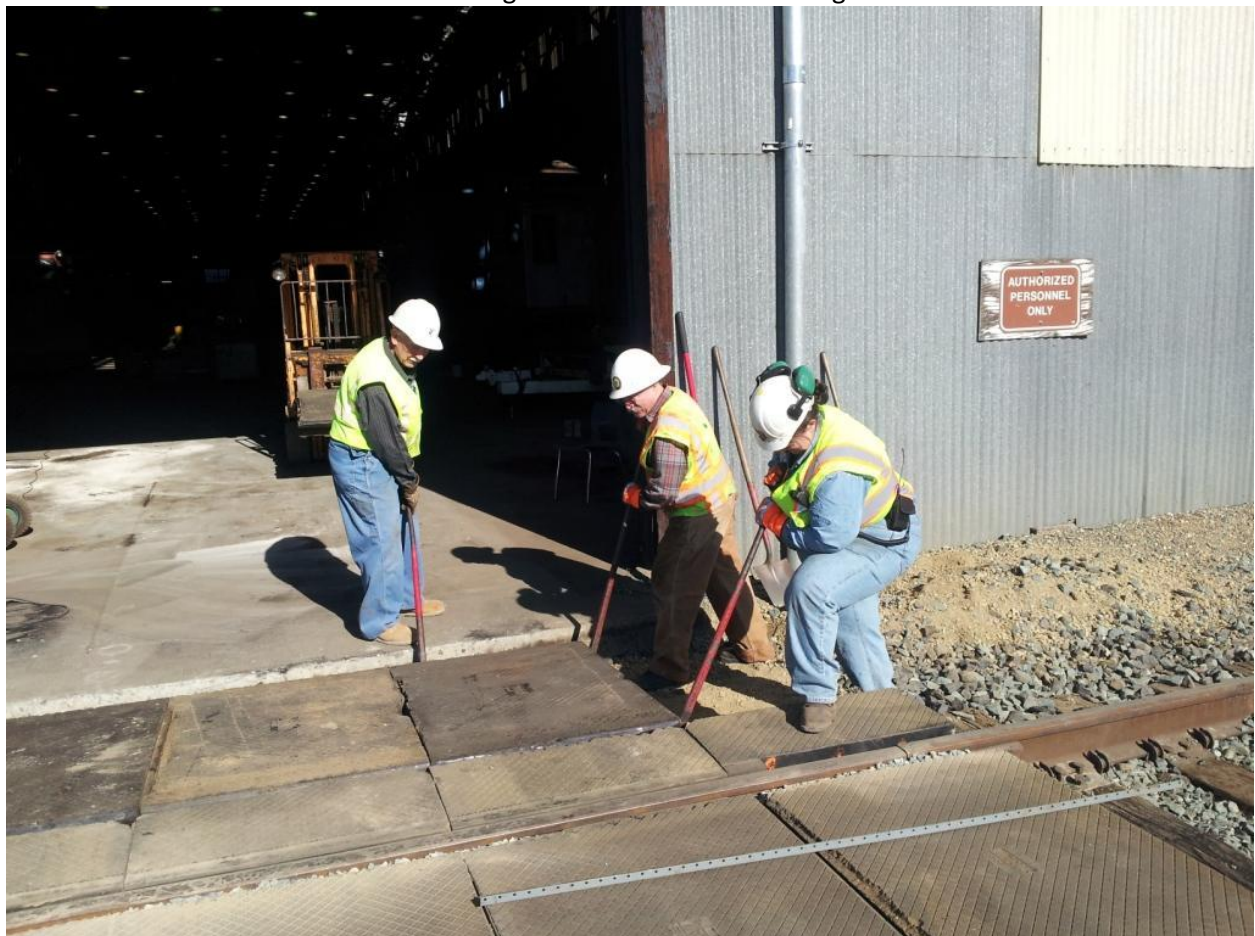


The port-side wing is removed





And so goes the starboard side wing



Clem, Mike H., and Heather move the crossover panels into place





Alan and Clem make the necessary adjustments



Meanwhile, later in the afternoon, work continues scrapping the regulator. Alan sets the beast on fire...

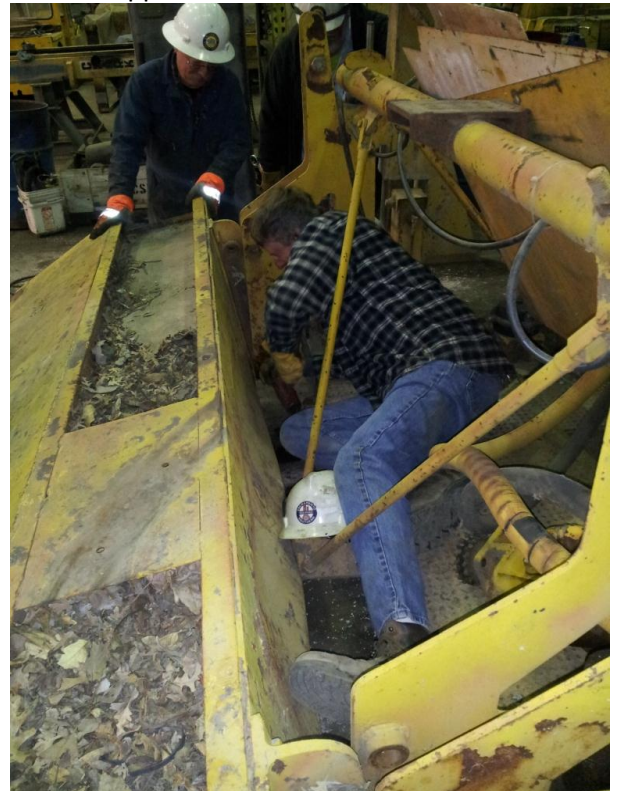




John, Steve, and Mike H. cut away the broom support bracket.



Fiat Lux



By popular demand...