

Bonjour!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 6, 2013. By popular demand, photos of MOW Team are available in this update. So, grab a doughnut, sit back and enjoy this week's installment of your MOW Team at work!

Environmental mitigation is about to begin over in our materials yard to the north-west of the Boiler Shop which means all the track accoutrements we store there needs to be moved. So, on Tuesday, Chris Carlson, Alan Hardy, Frank Werry and Heather Kearns worked on moving all our track materials to a new location. During the track realignment last year, thanks to the UP, we were able to gather several piles of hardwood oak ties and rail components, including switch parts, which were stored in our materials yard. Meanwhile, inside the Boiler Shop, Harry Voss, who is an expert at repairing and rebuilding small engines, worked on fixing the rail-saw which won't start.

Wednesday, the MOW Team's miracle worker, Leonard Jones, once again made miracles happen. We have several sections of panel track stored in materials yard that needed to be relocated or dismantled (which we did not want to have to do). So Leonard fired up "Simba," the Shop's 36,000 pound fork-lift, to move the sections of panel-track to a new location. When we moved these sections into our yard last year, both Green Machines, working in concert, were necessary to lift one section of panel track (see attached photo). With Simba, Leonard was able to move two sections at a time! This saved us a tremendous amount of work and effort. These panel track sections will be used for the new extension from the 560 Track over to the turntable in the Rail Yards. Since only one of our Green Machines is operational right now, without Leonard's help, we'd be stuck. As his reward, Leonard was authorized to take *three* doughnuts from the sacred pink box. Many thanks, indeed, to Leonard for performing yet another miracle on our behalf!

Materials relocation continued on Thursday. Chris, on Big Green, demonstrated his operational skill by lifting a 50-foot long switch-point segment and negotiated it around the I-5 overpass pillars. It was quite a show as the switch point segments were longer than the distance between the freeway supports. Chris weaved them around the pillars with such precision that those watching couldn't help but be impressed. Also on Thursday, Frank, Dave Megeath, and Heather moved the tamper and scarifer off the old 150 Track. These valuable machines were victims of vandals who shot out the mirrors, lights, and some the exposed windows with a pellet-gun or perhaps a .22 caliber. The damage to the machines was significant so we needed to get them out of there. We now refer to the Track 150 as the "shooting gallery."

Saturday, your MOW Team set out to correct a narrow-gauge issue around Mile Post 2.6 south identified by your trusty track inspectors. Heather, Chris, Alan, Frank, Harry, "Grandpa" John Rexroth, and Clem Meier gathered around the sacred pink box to discuss the plan for correcting this defect. After the doughnuts were consumed and our plan formulated, we headed down the line. This is an issue we've addressed repeatedly in this area and finally decided it was necessary to pull all the spikes on several lengths of rail along the west rail in order to re-gauge the track. To insure that we remain compliant with federal regulation, we installed several gauge-bars throughout the area. In the afternoon, we brought in the tamper to stabilize the track and tamp up the west rail in particular. Following our work on the gauge issue, Harry and Chris undertook several repairs to the tamper. They installed a new starter motor as the solenoid was acting up, and diagnosed a hydraulic leak in one of the hoses to the starboard work-head. Thanks to Chris and Harry, the tamper, our "old reliable," will continue its important work on the line. Repaired, re-gauged, and re-spiked, we finished in time for the sold-out special "Ales to Rails" train to leave the depot without delay and travel down an improved track.

The week ahead only promises to be better. Tuesday, the crew will meet in the afternoon and evening for more MOW fun. Thursday, we'll meet at 5 o'clock in the Boiler Shop as usual. Saturday, we'll enjoy doughnuts before heading out on the line. "Spook-o-motive" starts on Saturday, as well. So come on out and ride the train, which is made possible by the hard work and dedication of your MOW Team. Always remember, no track, no train. Again, thanks so much to all our dedicated volunteers.

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.

P.S. Did I mention that there were pictures? Check them out in the attachment – thanks to Heather and Alan...



Leonard on Simba moving our panel track



For perspective, here's an historic photo of both Green Machines moving a section of panel track from October, 2012.



Chris on Big Green moving rail



Chris on Big Green lifts the extra-long switch points



Saturday's crew, "Grandpa" John, Clem, Chris, Harry, and Frank setting gauge rods



Clem, Frank, and Chris install a gauge rod



Chris uses the pneumatic spiker while Frank "nips" the track



Chris guides the tamper's actions in raising the west rail