

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 9 2016. Always moving forward down the road of progress –that’s your MOW personified – except for these updates which take a look back. So, let’s look back at your MOW Team’s week of progress right now.

“All hands on deck!” was the call on Tuesday evening as Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Joe Margucci, Cliff Hayes, Anthony Filamor, Weston Snyder, Mike Harris, and Alan Hardy commenced repairs on the severely ill back-hoe. You may recall that, last week, the back-hoe had a catastrophic radiator failure en-route to Old Sacramento. So, Tuesday’s priority was to pull the radiator to send it out for rebuild or replacement. Pat assumed the role of overall supervisor of the project and Gene directed Anthony and Weston as they contorted themselves to dismantle the engine compartment. After removing what seemed like half the machine’s front end, the radiator lifted out. As soon as a replacement radiator can be procured, the back-hoe will be up and running again. The evening was still young but a journey to Old Sacramento was not advisable. Tuesday night was the grand opening spectacular celebration concert at Sacramento’s beautiful brand new downtown Domus Aurea. With all the road-closures and projected traffic nightmare, Joe, Anthony, and Weston decided to stay close to home and sort switch-ties, instead. They located the number and lengths needed to finish the Switch 1 turnout rebuild and loaded them onto the flatcar. These are very heavy hardwood ties and even with the assistance of the Big Green Machine, it was quite a workout for the team. By evening’s end, ties had been sorted and loaded ready for a quick departure on Saturday morning.

The Mighty Weed Team’s dynamic duo, Mike Taylor and Ed Kottal, spent the day at Hood where significant progress was made. Tobacco bush stems were pulled. Tree limbs that might interfere with the spray boom or the motor car were removed from several trees. As Mike says, “The garden needs constant tending,” and your mighty Weed Team is doing a masterful job taming the jungles along the Hood Line.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, with the festivities at the Kings’ new Golden Palace complete, Anthony, Weston, Joe, Mike H. Frank Werry, and Heather were free to venture over to Old Sacramento. The ties used to form a retaining wall around the switch machine at Switch 2 (House Track) had become dislodged. The soil-cement around the switch machine was collapsing into the switch mechanism. So, Anthony, Weston, Joe, Mike H., and Frank, headed over to fix the situation. Joe, Frank, and Mike H. began digging out around the switch-stand and removing the dirt that had collapsed in while Anthony removed debris from the switch components. Then, Frank and Weston brought over a tie to hold back the dirt. Mike T. and Heather joined the party to help digging. Soon, another tie was brought in to shore-up the west side. This will help keep the switch from getting buried. It was a great success. Then the Team headed back to the Shops to stage equipment and tools for our Saturday adventure. It was good evening on the road to progress.

A big crew showed up Saturday morning and Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Harry Voss, Ed, Mike Miller, Al Utzig, John Rexroth, Weston, Frank, Jose Gomez, and Chris Carlson all expected to find ample doughnuts waiting for them. They were not disappointed. Back to Old Sac. and the turnout rebuild at Switch 1 was the order of the day. Replacing switch-ties is quite different from standard track-ties. They have to stretch under two converging tracks. Unique plates and components need to be removed and then put-back together – kind of like a puzzle. Plus, they require up to 12 spikes per tie. So, Steve climbed aboard Big Green, Al took out the front-end loader, Harry the truck, Ed piloted the Kalamazoo pulling the flatcar of ties, and Joe fired-up the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. Over in Old Sac., the motorcar pulled-out the compressor and the jackhammers deployed. More soil cement needed breaking up to the west of the turnout in order to remove old ties and insert new ones. With 15 and 16 foot ties to insert, an area 15-feet to the west of the track had to be dug down below the level of the ties in order to slide them under the rails. After John and Steve cut up the soil-cement with the jackhammers, Steve climbed up on Big Green to use the forks to rip-open the ground so that Al in the loader could come in and scoop it all up. Meanwhile, Heather, Mike M., Clem, John, Steve, Ed, and Harry pulled spikes and removed tie-plates. Then Joe brought in the 125 and pulled out the first four ties of the day. Clem, Mike, Heather, Weston, Al, Chris, and John then acted as human scarifiers and dug-out the tie-cribs. Jose, Weston, John, and Steve used timber-tongs to grab a 200+ pound tie and placed it for Joe to insert with the 125. Once the ties were under all the tracks, Clem, Weston, John, Mike, and Joe placed plates and set spikes. The pneumatic spike drive was fired-up and the ties were spiked down. Then the Team continued up the line pulling spikes, pulling ties, digging out the cribs, bringing ties over, and inserting new ties. One tie, when pulled, was discovered to have a tree-root growing right down the length of it. Ed, of Weed Team fame, quickly disconnected the root with an ax. As the ties went in the ground and were spiked-up, Weston would remove the gauge-rods that we had installed in previous weeks to hold everything together as ties were pulled. With a total of 15 new ties in the ground, Steve fired up the tamper and began the difficult and intricate process of tamping-up a turnout. With all the converging rails, tamping a turnout requires an expert’s touch. Luckily, Steve was at the controls. Once tamped, the CSRM No. 2 passed over the turnout en-route to the turntable. With all the new, solid, hardwood ties, the turnout is solid. There was no deflection. The Team should be able to finish with tie-replacement next week. Then, the turnout will be ballasted and turned over to State Parks for new concrete to cover it over again. Indeed, the Switch 1 turnout rebuild personifies the MOW Team’s mission of building a better railroad.

This coming week, the Tuesday and Thursday crews will gather in the Erecting Shop at or before 5 o’clock p.m. The Weed Team intends another journey to the jungles of Hood. Meet at the Shops at Shops at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, the Team will endeavor to complete principle construction on the Switch 1 project. Doughnuts: 8 o’clock a.m. sharp. Many thanks, as always, to the great folks of the MOW Team!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Anthony works to disconnect the shroud over the engine compartment of the back-hoe



Anthony and Weston remove the front end of the back-hoe





The back-hoe sans radiator and engine shroud



Anthony and Joe positon 14-foot ties onto the flat-car





Anthony on Big Green moving lengthy ties



Frank, Mike H., Joe, and Weston clearing out the fallen dirt around the Switch 2 switch-stand





Weston and Frank bring the retaining tie over to the pit around Switch 2



Heather and Mike T. join Frank and Joe playing in the dirt





Jedi Master Harry instructs Padawan Weston in the finer arts of adding diesel to the compressor



Mike M. and Clem jack-up the east rail just enough to relieve downward pressure on the tie to be removed





Alan guides Ed in the Kalamazoo shoving the switch-tie laden fiat car



John kicks some dust up when breaking up the soil-cement with the jackhammer





Weston and Mike M. make their way through the smoke-screen with an 11-foot tie



Weston, Al, Clem, Mike M., and Chris are the human scarifiers





Chris provides Joe on the 125 with a little guidance from the ground as he pulls switch ties under the rails



While Joe continues to insert new ties, Steve on Big Green is guided by Alan as he uses the forks to scour the ground





Then Alan guides Al in the front-end loader scoops up the debris



Mike M. driving a spike with the pneumatic spike-driver





Clem nips the east rail as Weston sets spikes. John sets spike on the west side while Mike M. gets ready to drive them into the ties



Clem nips-up the tie as Mike M. drives the spike





Heather takes out her frustrations by beating the soil-cement into submission



Weston removes a gauge-rod as Joe, Steve, and Mike M. back-fill around the newly inserted tie





Ed uses his finely honed Weedie skills by taking an ax to a tree root growing right down the middle of an old tie



John and Jose roll a 14-foot tie off the flatcar





Round 2 and Jose, Weston, John, and Steve bring in a heavy 14-foot long hardwood tie



Then, they get it lined up for insertion under the rails





Joe and Weston nip-up the tie as Steve drives the spikes



Chris gives Al in the loader some guidance in trying to cut away as much dirt from around the ties as possible





Mike M., John, Frank, Al, and Ed make the Herculean effort to move this massive timber



Joe pulls another three ties under the rails





Steve nips the tie as Jose drives a spike



Steve in the tamper expertly maneuvers the work-heads around the converging rails