

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 11, 2014. We were working hard to keep things working this last week. So, let's get working on this update right away.

The Mighty Weed Team got the work week working on Tuesday as they headed down the line, chopping their way through the dense jungles of Miller Park and the Setzer Lead. Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Heather Kearns, and Josh Ilac took the man-lift and chipper out for a spin. As usual, much good work was done. However, a slight mechanical issue with a gear-box on the man-lift interfered with the proper rotation of the lift arm which truncated the Weedies' afternoon's activities.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Mike Harris, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Frank Werry, Matt Blackburn, Gene Peck, and Cliff Hayes were on hand. When the Weed Team returned and reported on the problem with the man-lift, Mike H., Mike T., and Heather headed over to Old Sacramento to determine its cause. Mike H. is a master mechanic who managed to diagnose the problem, remove the offending part, and recommend a course of action for repair. Heather has since ordered the necessary replacement parts. As such, the man-lift will be back in action relatively quickly. Fred began taking apart the bearing assemblies in the dual-drive of the tie shear. Frank, Matt, and Josh headed down the line to make further adjustments to Switches 16 and 17 – South Miller Park and North Baths. These are the switches where the head-blocks were changed recently and, as they settle, slight adjustments are necessary. Cliff worked on several welding projects for the ballast hopper car that the MOW Team is building in the Shops. Indeed, it was a good evening of great accomplishment.

Thursday, Heather, Cliff, Frank, Josh, Mike H., and Gene continued work on Shop projects. Frank and Josh replaced a leaky hydraulic cylinder from our secondary section-gang machine, which we're restoring to operation in anticipation of our big tie change out push in the weeks between Spookomotive and Polar Express. They pulled fittings and installed a restored cylinder in its place. Cliff got the deck welded onto a large flatcar that is being built in the Shops. Mike H. and Gene managed to dismantle the remaining bearing assemblies from the tie shear. New bearings will now be ordered.

Good news! On Friday, 324 brand new beautiful ties were delivered outside the Boiler Shop. Many thanks to Al DiPaolo and his crew for unloading the bundles of ties when they arrived. Unfortunately, the paperwork necessary to acquire the new machines we had hoped would be available for the big tie change-out project has yet to be processed. So instead, we will have to make do using two section-gang machines and the scarifer/insertor to pull and replace ties – certainly less efficient but, we shall persevere. In the meantime, the Team needed to make space down at Setzer for all the bad ties that are being pulled. Saturday morning, John Rexroth, Harry Voss, Fred, Frank, Heather, and Michael Florentine gathered for the weekly dispersal of doughnuts before deploying to Setzer where a large dumpster was waiting. But first, Frank, Fred, and John took the motor car and a couple of flatcars to collect the old cracked head-blocks still strewn besides the mainline. They may be cracked, but were still quite heavy. Sadly, John's thumb got caught between one of the old head-block and the deck of the flatcar which required some first aid triage. But, we sang "Pretty Kitty" to him and he felt much better.

Down at Setzer, Fred was the "load-master" and did a marvelous job of organizing the operation. The team broke apart the big pile of dead ties and loaded them into the dumpster. Fred managed the arrangement old wood in order to make maximum use of the space, which he did brilliantly. Chains were attached to the back-hoe to pull-out some of the old bridge-timbers that had come from the turntable. Harry used the "Extend-a-hoe" feature of the back-hoe to pull the wood from on top of the pile down to a place where it could be loaded into the back-hoe's bucket or onto the forks of the Green Machine. Bit by bit, the dumpster got filled to capacity. It was very heavy and very dirty work which, again, proved the old adage that there's no need to join a gym when you volunteer with Maintenance of Way. These amazing volunteers did this heavy dirty work for the benefit of the railroad. We're all fortunate to have such good folks working for the Team.

For the week ahead, the Weed Team will work on Tuesday. Although the man-lift is still out of service, they'll be clearing overgrowth south of the I-5 Bridge with pole-saws and loppers. Meet at the Old Shop at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday evenings, the Team will meet for more Shop work starting at 5 o'clock. Saturday, the Team will gather to pay homage to the doughnut gods starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Again, many thanks to all the fantastic volunteers who keep the Team working!

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike T. and Dave trim trees along the Setzer Lead

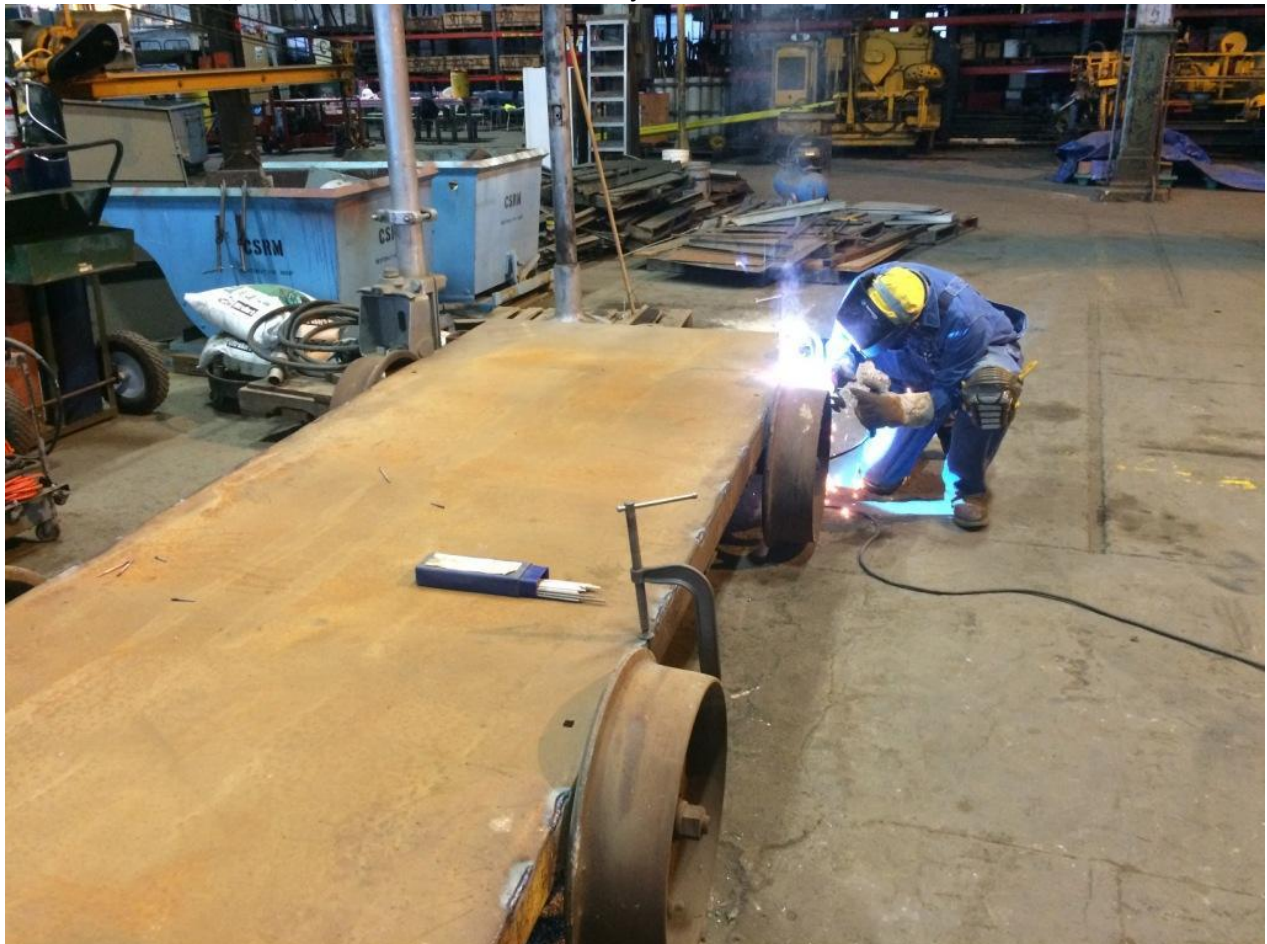


Mike T. and Mike H. work on the gear-box of the man-lift





Frank, Josh, and Matt make the final adjustment to the head-block at Switch 16



Cliff welds the deck on the MW flatcar we're restoring





Fred pulling the bearing from a gear out of the tie-shear's dual drive



Frank and Josh removing the hydraulic fitting from the squeeze cylinder of the secondary section-gang machine





324 beautiful brand new ties just delivered. Nothing beats the smell of fresh creosote in the afternoon breeze...



John, Fred, and Frank load the old head-block from Switch 16 on the flatcars





Heather at the helm of Big Green dumping dead ties into the dumpster



Happy Harry doing the big machine dance with Heather on Big Green





Harry and Frank use a chain to pull a buried bridge timber from the pile



Our Load-master Fred guides the placement of an old bridge-timber from the turntable into the dumpster. Maximizing space in the dumpster was critical and Fred was masterful in his organizational skills...





Load-master Fred beautifully arranged the placement of dead-ties into the dumpster to maximize space



Our expert back-hoe operator, Harry, uses the "Extendahoe" to pull the pile into position for the Big Green Machine to grab the ties