

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 16, 2016. The first major rain of the 2016 autumn season descended this week, dampening our project work-site – but not our spirits. So, let's not dampen yours by delaying this update any longer.

It's always a great day when the Team can welcome a new member to our dynamic group. Tuesday, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Anthony Filamor, Joe Margucci, Harry Voss, Mike Harris, Heather Kearns, Alan Hardy, and Gene Peck were all on hand to welcome Matt McCracken to the MOW Team. Welcome aboard, Matt! After the official welcoming ceremony, Pat, Gene, Cliff, and Harry got right to work installing the back-hoe's new radiator which Alan had picked-up and delivered it to the Shops earlier in the evening. These guys are true experts managed to get it mostly installed. Gene sent Quartermaster-in-Chief, Heather, to the auto-parts store to procure new hoses and fittings. Over in Old Sacramento, Anthony and Joe fired-up the tamper and tamped the track to the Central Pacific Passenger Station leading into the Switch 1 turnout. Mike H. deployed the Big Green Machine to move the ballast hopper cars onto the track so that they could be taken to Old Sac. in preparation for Saturday's work. Then he and Matt opened up the Kalamazoo tug and took it over to the Rail Yards to grab the hoppers. They quickly connected up the hoppers to the tug and, within moments, got the green signal indication from Omaha for the return to Old Sac. With everything put away, the Team headed back to the Shops where Anthony, Harry, and Joe loaded cans of soda into our soda machine which Chris Carlson recently fixed. So much got done in such a short amount of time that it boggles the mind.

The mighty Weed Team spent a delightful day at Hood on Thursday. Mike Taylor, Steve Wilson, Ed Kottal, Heather, and Anthony noted the arrival of fall with the poison-oak leaves showing-off in shades of fiery-red. In the vicinity of MP 11.3, our intrepid Weedies pruned 20 trees including an ill-disciplined walnut which soon got the message to behave. Heather managed to get some good quality time with the gas-powered chainsaw on a stick. After a morning of extreme effort, the Team enjoyed a relaxing lunch by the lake before continuing on with their mission. It was a wonderful way to spend a fall day taming the bounty of nature for the cause of keeping the Hood dream alive.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Gene, Joe, and Anthony spent the evening finishing the installation of the radiator and reassembling the back-hoe. With all the connections hooked back up, they filled it with coolant, fired it up, and it ran like new. These guys went above and beyond to get this machine up and running for us to use on Saturday. Over in Old Sac., Mike T. and Heather replaced the worn "spider" gear on the man-lift. It's the gear that allows the bucket-boom to rotate – kind of important. Frank Werry, Matt, and Mike H. brought two 55-gallon drums of red-diesel to fuel the tamper, Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, and Kalamazoo tug.

Saturday started as all Saturdays should start – old-fashion, glazed, cake with sprinkles, and a maple-bar or two (for good measure). As a bonus, Matt brought super-yummy freshly-baked homemade chocolate-chip cookies. That was a treat. Thank you, Matt! Joining Matt were Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Anthony, Pam Tatro, Weston, Frank, Ed Moriarty, Heather Kearns, Mike Miller, and Chris Carlson. The Team would return to the turnout at Switch 1. Heather and Joe arrived early to get the motorcar consist out of the container. Chris took the restored back-hoe to Broadway where he met Ed M. and Weston in the Kalamazoo tug pulling the hoppers to fill them with ballast-rock. Frank brought the front-end loader to Old Sac. Anthony fired up the tamper and Joe brought the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger down to work-site. Mike M., Heather, Matt, Pam, Clem, Alan, and Anthony pulled spikes, many of which were rust-welded to the plates. Frank, in the loader, climbed up to the 150 track where the new switch ties were located. Mike M., Matt, Clem, and Anthony, using timber-tongs, moved the 14, 15, and 16-foot long hardwood ties, which, by the way, weigh upwards of 300 pounds, onto the loader's bucket for Frank to bring over to the work site. Joe, on the Jackson 125, removed the old ties in a gingerly fashion order to keep them from breaking apart as they came out. Once the ties were pulled, Pam, Anthony, Heather, Clem, Matt, and Mike M. dug-out the tie-cribs by hand (because the scarifier won't work in switches) then Joe inserted the new ones. By now, Chris, Ed M., and Weston were back from their rock-gathering exercise and got right to work placing tie-plates and setting spikes. Matt got his first experience with the pneumatic spike-driver. This process continued throughout the day. Ties were removed. New ties inserted, plated and spiked. Meanwhile, the El Dorado, which was to be used on just one train, was switched through our work-site three times. So, the Team got to put its Part 214 training into practice! Folks, we're close to being finished with this project. When we removed the concrete, what we found beneath was a near disaster. The Team had to take mitigation efforts to shore the switch up so that it could continue to stay in service while we rebuilt it. Plus, we discovered a number of issues with the original construction of the turnout, built by a contractor in the late 1970s, which we had to correct. Over the course of the past few weeks, the MOW Team has completely rebuilt the entire turnout and corrected the original contractors' mistakes. Now, the turnout at Switch 1 is safe, incredibly strong, and extremely well-built. I dare say that no contractor would have built it to the same high standards or with the quality as has this dedicated, knowledgeable, and hard-working crew of volunteers – while having to keep it in service and under traffic. Plus, having the MOW Team rebuild it saved the Foundation \$50,000! Kudos to the amazing, hard-working volunteers of the Sacramento Southern Railroad Maintenance of Way Team who strive week-in and week out to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the Team will do what it does best on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. Weed Team will convene again for an adventure south of the I-5 Bridge on the Sutterville Line. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday. Saturday, the Team will gather for doughnuts and more MOW fun at 8 o'clock a.m. We'll tackle the finishing touches on the Switch 1 turnout. A big thank you goes out to our many supporters as well as the diligent volunteers of the MOW Team.

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Pat prepares to remove the back-hoe's old radiator



Joe guides Anthony as he tamps the new ties



With signal indication showing green, Mike and Matt in the Kalamazoo pull the hopper-cars over the UP Main



Joe and Mike H. get the install the new radiator in the back-hoe



Heather on the Hyster forklift prepares to load a couple 55-gallon drums of red diesel onto the MOW truck



Matt gets his first lesson in machine operation on the Jackson 125



Heather and Mike replace the "spider" gear on the man-lift



Mike H. and Frank refuel the Jackson 125



Chris loads ballast-rock into the hopper-cars



Thumbs-up from Weston who checks to see if the car is filled to capacity



Ed and Mike M. work-loose rust-welded spikes with the spike-lifter



Matt uses a claw-bar to pull-out a rust-welded spike



Weston works to pry an old plate loose



Anthony, Pam, Matt, Clem and Mike M. help Frank gather ties with the loader



Joe pulls out a bad tie with the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger



Mike M., Matt, Joe, and Clem remove the evidence



Matt, Anthony, and Joe then dig-out the crib



Clem and Joe manhandle a new tie into position...



...The 15-foot long tie is then inserted under the rails



Mike M. and Chris bring in the next tie



Mike M. uses a little gentle persuasion to get the frog-plate under the rails



Weston and Anthony nip-up the switch-tie as Matt drive spikes with the pneumatic spike-driver



Under the protection of a "red-flag", the Team continues nipping and spiking



Anthony and Joe retrieve another 15-foot tie from the truck



Then get it inserted under the rails



The CSRM #2 and El Dorado move through our work limits