

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for November 9, 2014. Week in and week out, the MOW Team is the “*git-‘r done*” crew and this week was no exception. So, let’s keep up that spirit and “git” this update going.

The mighty Weed Team worked double-time this week mustering on both Tuesday and Thursday for the assault on invasive vegetation. Mike Taylor, Heather Kearns, and Dave Megeath headed out on the line to work both south of the I-5 bridge and through the Miller Park area. This is one dedicated band of volunteers as they worked 10-hour days both days keeping the line free of vegetation defects. The railroad would be inundated in overgrowth without their efforts.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops the Team was very happy to welcome a new volunteer, Scott Morrison, who graduated from the recent Docent Class. Welcoming Scott on Tuesday were Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Harry Voss, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Frederick Carr, and Gene Peck. Scott is specialist in hydraulic systems by trade so, we set him straight to work on the Tie-Shear. In no time, Scott was able to diagnose the problem with the Shear’s hydraulic system and set out a plan of action for getting it restored to operation. Scott’s expert advice is what we needed. We now know how to get this machine running again! Mike H., Gene, and Fred got the Tie-Shear’s dual drive gearbox reassembled. Cliff and Pat built and installed cages around the lights on the Kalamazoo. Heather and Harry refueled the big machines. It was a good evening filled with encouraging progress.

You all know about the Team’s activities on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and all day Saturdays. But, the work of the MOW Team is going on all week long. There are two folks in particular, Alan and Heather, who are at the Shops nearly every day doing the all the behind the scenes support work that allows the rest of us to show up and get out on the line. Alan does everything from keeping our tools and materials organized, to restoring and painting just about every piece of equipment we operate. Heather is our Quartermaster-in-Chief who keeps us supplied with everything we need to do the job. We on the MOW Team are dependent on the rarely recognized behind the scenes work they do every day for which we certainly owe our gratitude.

Thursday Fred, Heather, Frank Squire, Frank Werry, Mike H., and Alan kept up the “*git-‘r-done*” spirit. Fred, Frank S., and Mike H. managed to reinstall the reassembled gearbox on the Tie-Shear. Getting everything to line up just right took a good deal of effort. But, of course, they did it. Heather and Frank W. began the staging work for Saturday’s tie replacement operation. They loaded a bundle of 36 ties on a flatcar then fueled-up the Old Tamper as well as positioning everything on the Firing Line for quick deployment on Saturday. It was an evening of great accomplishment.

The Shops were buzzing with activity before the sun – or doughnuts – showed up on Saturday. Ed Moriarty, John Rexroth, Alan, Pam Tatro, Harry, Michael Florentine, Mike Miller, Mike T., Dave, Heather, Clem Meier, Frank W., Frank S., and Chris Carlson were raring to get started replacing the ties that we had pulled last week. Conductor Frank W. conducted our Tamper train across the UP Main. Alan fired up the Scarifer/Inserter while Ed, John, Heather, and Mike T. got the motorcar work train ready to roll. Once at the job-site, the Team split into two groups – one which went about installing ties, the other working to remove the stubborn ties we couldn’t get out last week. Mike M. and John unloaded the ties along the line. Mike F. working with Alan in the Scarifer/Inserter came along pulled them into place. For the ties being pulled, Pam, Mike M., Mike T., Ed, Clem, and Frank S. dug out the cribs on both sides of the stubborn ties while Harry used an adze to plane the tops of those that were plate-cut. Then we brought in our human tie-shear, Dave, who used a chainsaw to cut the ties into pieces that could then be lifted out more easily. Chris and John used the section-gang machine to line the ties. Plating and spiking was the biggest challenge. The rails had to be “nipped-up” in order to fit the double-shouldered plates between the ties and base of the rail. In the afternoon, plating and spiking continues. Ed and Frank W. teamed up to drive spikes with the pneumatic spiker. Then, under Chris’s direction, the tamper was brought in and all the ties were tamped to provide a level surface. By the end of the day, 31 ties had been replaced and the Team was able to lift Train Order 102, the five mile-per-hour speed restriction in the area that had been imposed in the previous week. It was amazing watching this team in action. Everyone knew what to do and got right to work. Despite our equipment woes, the MOW Team is a well-oiled machine that never fails. Certainly, it was a physically exhausting day but, the feelings of true accomplishment and camaraderie makes it all worthwhile.

For the week ahead, Tuesday and Thursday evening work commences at (or before) 5 o’clock p.m. The Weed Team will be gathering on Thursday for another adventure out on the line. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, the tie work will continue starting promptly at 8 o’clock a.m. Many thanks, indeed, to the fantastic volunteers and supporters who work to “*git-‘r done*” week in and week out. Always remember, no track, no trains.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Fred, Mike H., and Frank S. get the Tie-Shear's gearbox reinstalled



Harry fuels-up the backhoe





Mike T. teaching a tree a lesson on the south side of the I-5 bridge



John and Mike M. laying out ties along the line





Mike M. rolling a tie off the bundle

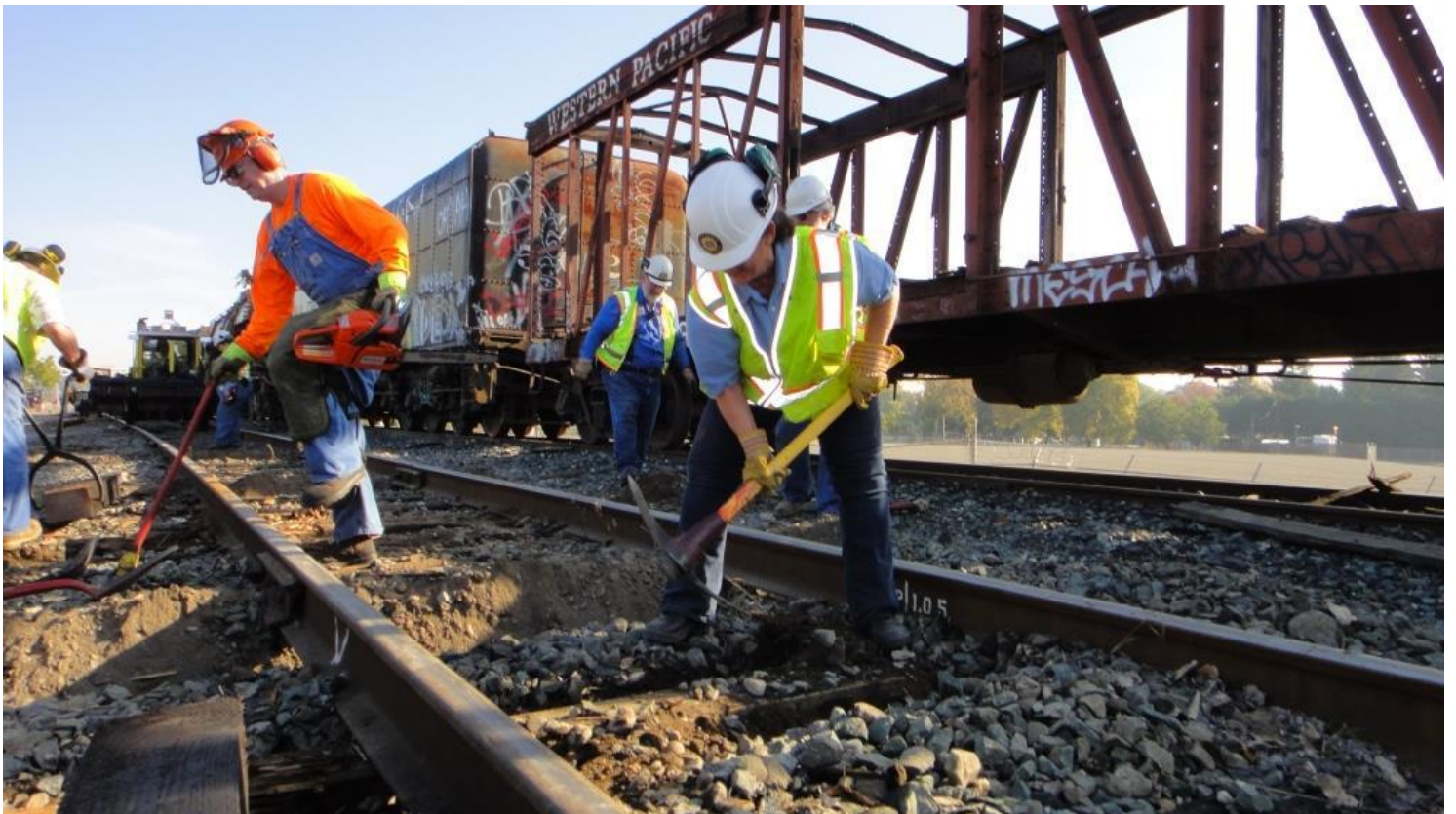


Mike F. guides the placement of a tie that Alan pulls in using the inserter function on the Sacrifer





Dave, the human tie-shear!



Pam digs out the crib of tie to be "sheared" by Dave





Mike M. and Mike T. team up to dig out a tie



Clem and Pam plate working to get a tie-plate under the base of the rail





Frank S. and Ed nip and plate



Ed nips the rail while Chris gets a plate under the base





Clem nips the tie while Frank W. uses the pneumatic spiker to drive a spike.



Chris gets in the final word by pounding in the final spike by hand