

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for February 18, 2018. At MOW, we're always moving forward. Except when we're not. But, this week definitely was a forward moving week. So, let's move forward with this update before forward momentum stops.

Tuesday started early for Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, and Harry Gobbler. They headed to the area between the 150 and 560 Tracks to survey for service connections which were buried with spoils from the J and K Streets crossings rebuilds by the contractor. Harry is our official surveyor and was able to triangulate on the location of the water and electrical connections installed up there when the 560 Track was built in 2012. Back at the Shops, Mike Taylor, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Chris Howard, Chris Carlson, Mike Harris, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, and Heather got things moving forward on a couple big projects. Mike T. continues to work on rehabbing the Weed Team's equipment. Gene and Pat brought the Big Green Machine over to the Erecting Shop to make crucial adjustments to its engine. Chris C. and Chris H. replaced a hydraulic hose on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. Then, they filled the hydraulic tank with fresh hydraulic fluid. Joe, Mike H., and Cliff formulated a plan creating securing devices for the 125's turntable and jacking-ram. Federal regulation requires that such apparatuses must be secured against accidental deployment and, while the machine is in the Shops, we've decided to retrofit for federal compliance. They discussed various options and developed a simple yet ingenious plan. Cliff did the welding and now the 125 conforms to federal standards.

It was too windy for the mighty Weed Team to spray weeds on Thursday so, Mike Taylor, Steve Wilson, and Ed Kottal came up with alternative arrangement. They would, instead, return to the Hood Line cut oak trees encroaching on the right-of-way that were under six feet tall. Once again, Ed was able to demonstrate that expert skills at wielding a chainsaw. Following their efforts at taming the jungle, the Weedies returned to the container to prep the spray-rig against freeze damage. With sub-freezing temps forecast for next week, the ball valves were opened and drained. No question, Thursday was a productive day for the valiant volunteers of the mighty Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan, Chris H., Kyle Blackburn, Chris C., Harry Voss, Joe, Mike H., and Heather kept the forward momentum moving forward. Prepping for Saturday's return to Mainline maintenance, Harry, Alan, Mike H., Chris C., and Joe got the hydraulic power unit and tools loaded on a flatcar. Chris H. headed to Old Sacramento to make repairs to the retractable red-flag at MP 0.3. Mike H. climbed on Green Machine 2 (GM2) and secured a dumpster into which weeks, if not months, of empty pink-boxes could be relocated. It's always sad to say goodbye. Then, he grabbed a bundle of ties from the strategic tie reserve at the north end of the Erecting Shop and, with Kyle and Chris H.'s help, placed it in a strategic position at the south end of the Boiler Shop for quick deployment on Saturday morning. Joe worked on adjusting the brakes on the 125. Heather worked on the 400-gallon water-tank's gas engine. Despite the effort put into its repair, it appears that the issues are quite serious if not terminal issues (thanks to the Boiler Shop's leaky roof). Indeed, it was an evening of forward progress.

Joe arrived before doughnuts on Saturday and headed to Old Sacramento to retrieve the Kalamazoo and two flatcars. Steve Nemeth, Alan, and Bill Hastings, were waiting at the south end of the Boiler Shop with GM2 to load a bundle of new ties on the flatcar for transport to the job site. It was now time for the briefing and luckily, Chris C. had arrived with the doughnuts as had Taka Blackburn who brought a second pink box filled with bao-buns to commemorate Chinese New Year. What a treat for Chris H., John Rexroth, Bev Ratzlaff, Pam Tatro, Kyle Blackburn, Art Fluter, Frank Werry, and Heather! The Team would return to its main mission of maintaining to revenue line by changing out nasty old rotten ties infesting our line. We start at Baths and head north. The Jackson 125, Kalamazoo, and tie-crane would head south along with the truck and the crew. At Baths, Chris C. marked the bad ties destined for removal. Bev and Kyle used the Hydraulic spike-puller to remove the spikes. Joe pulled the ties out with the 125. John, Art, Kyle, Pam, and Bill came along and dug out the cribs to make space for the new ties being inserted. Some of the ties disintegrated as the 125 tried to pull them out. Bill, Chris C., Steve, Kyle, and Bev nipped the rails and dug around the ties to loosen the grip of the ground on them. But, in the end, Steve and Joe had to spin the machine and employ the 125's shoving-ram to push them out. Chris H., in the Kalamazoo, moved in now shoving the flatcar with the new ties, and Chris C., Taka, and Kyle dropped new ties off the bundle. Joe on the 125 then pulled them under the rails. Saturday was also a good day to train folks on the operation of the 125. First up was Heather and, under Professor Joe's tutelage, she quickly got the feel for the machine and continued pulling old ties out. Meanwhile, Alan followed behind in the tie-crane and picked up the old rotten ties and placed them on the other flatcar. After loading it to capacity, then took them to Setzer where he deposited them in the dead tie pile. At the job site, Bill, Art, Bev, and Heather nipped the rails, placed the tie-plates and set spikes. Chris C., who needs no training, took over on the 125 and very quickly inserted the remaining ties. Kyle, Taka, Steve, Bill, and Art deployed the hydraulic spike-driver and drove home all the set spikes. The Team worked like a well-oiled machine out there. They all knew exactly what to do and did it with little direction. If one didn't know better, one might think that these amazing, dedicated volunteers were a professional track-gang who did this kind of work every day. There's no question. Together, they are building a better railroad!

It's that time of year again. Pursuant to federal law, every year, we must provide roadway worker safety training to the Team. Well, this coming **Wednesday, February 21st, at 6 o'clock p.m.** the ever exciting and thrill-packed **Part 214 "Roadway Worker Safety Training"** seminar will be held in the **Museum's East Theater**. If you can't make this training, it will be repeated on Saturday, March 3rd at 9 o'clock a.m. in the East Theater. Please remember to bring your white safety manual binder. If you don't have a binder, one will be provided. We'll see you there!

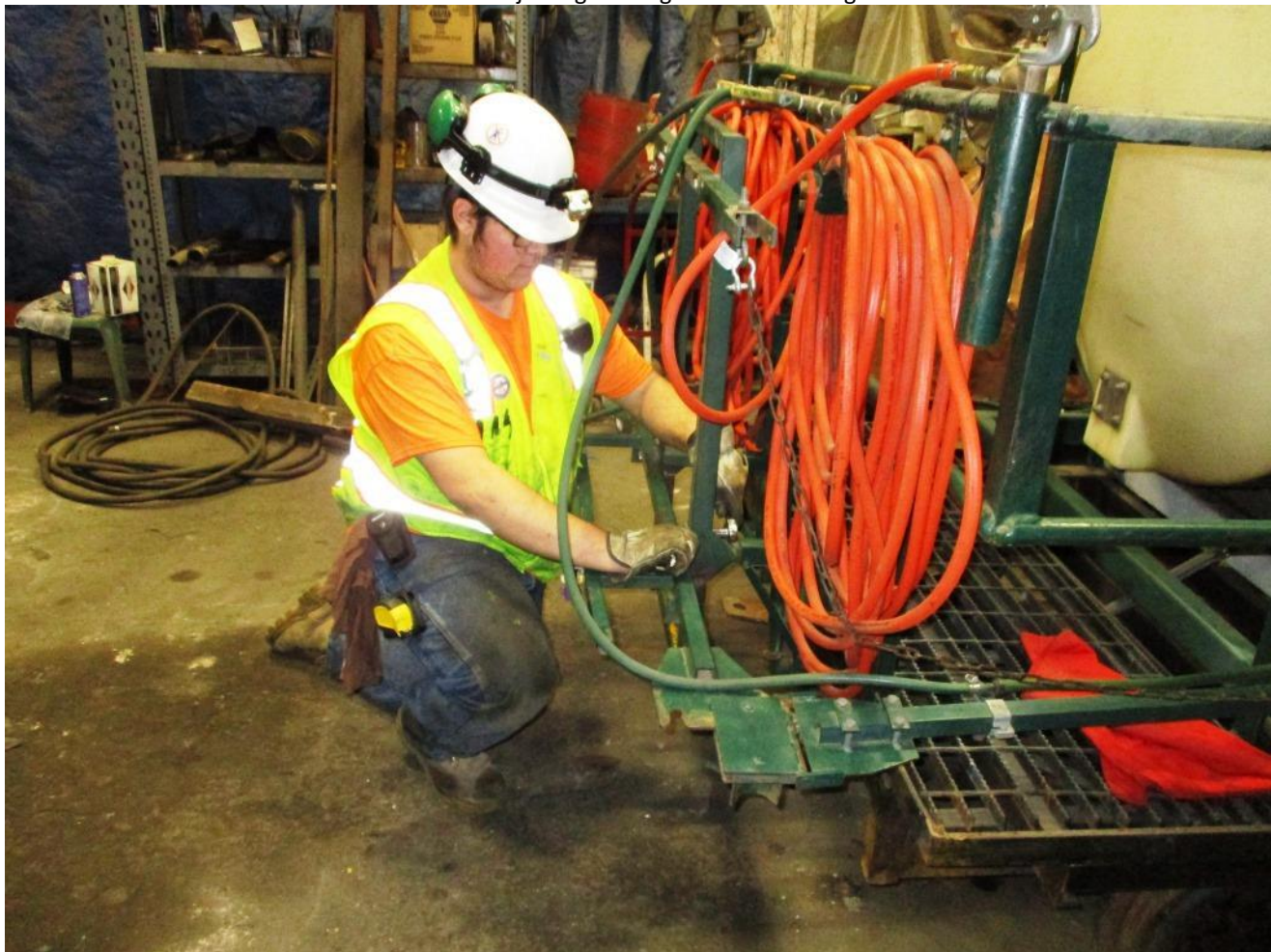
This coming week, the MOW Team will get together on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. The Weed Team will gather for more defoliation fun on Thursday starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Saturday, more MOW fun starts promptly at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks to all!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Gene and Pat work on adjusting the engine-idle of the Big Green Machine



Chris H. reinstalls the nozzle-bracket on the Weed Team's spray-rig



Cliff and Mike H. devise a plan for securing the Jackson 125's jacking-ram and turntable



Cliff welds the securing system on the 125's jacking-ram



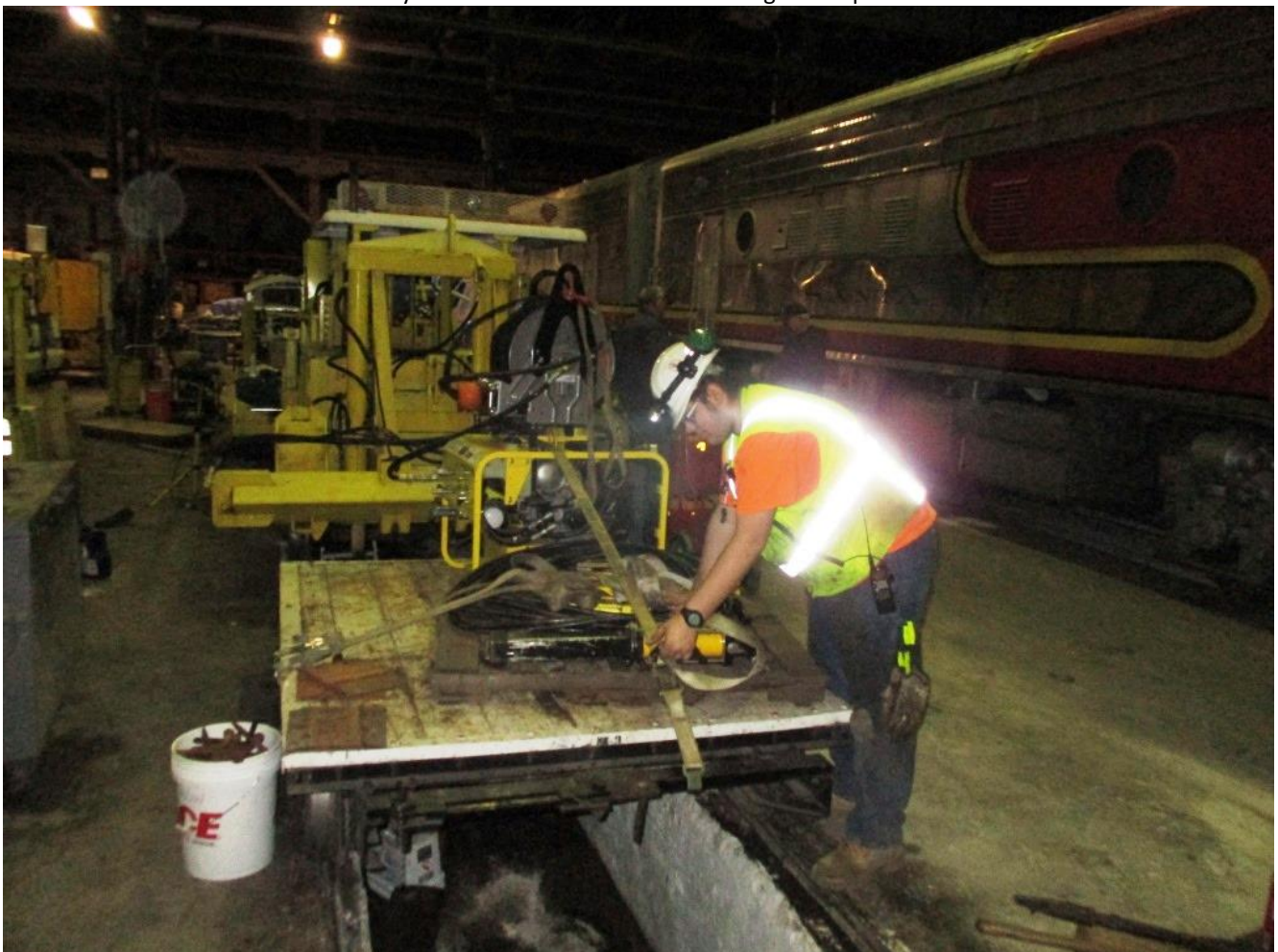
Harry on the forklift brings a flatcar, guided by Kyle, into the Erection Shop onto which the hydraulic power unit and tools will be loaded



Kyle and Chris H. dispose of the accumulation of rubbish from the Erecting Shop



It's always so sad to see the end come to a glorious pink-box...



Chris H. secures the hydraulic power unit and hydraulic tools to a flatcar



Mike H. on GM2 transfers rubbish to the big dumpster outside the Boiler Shop



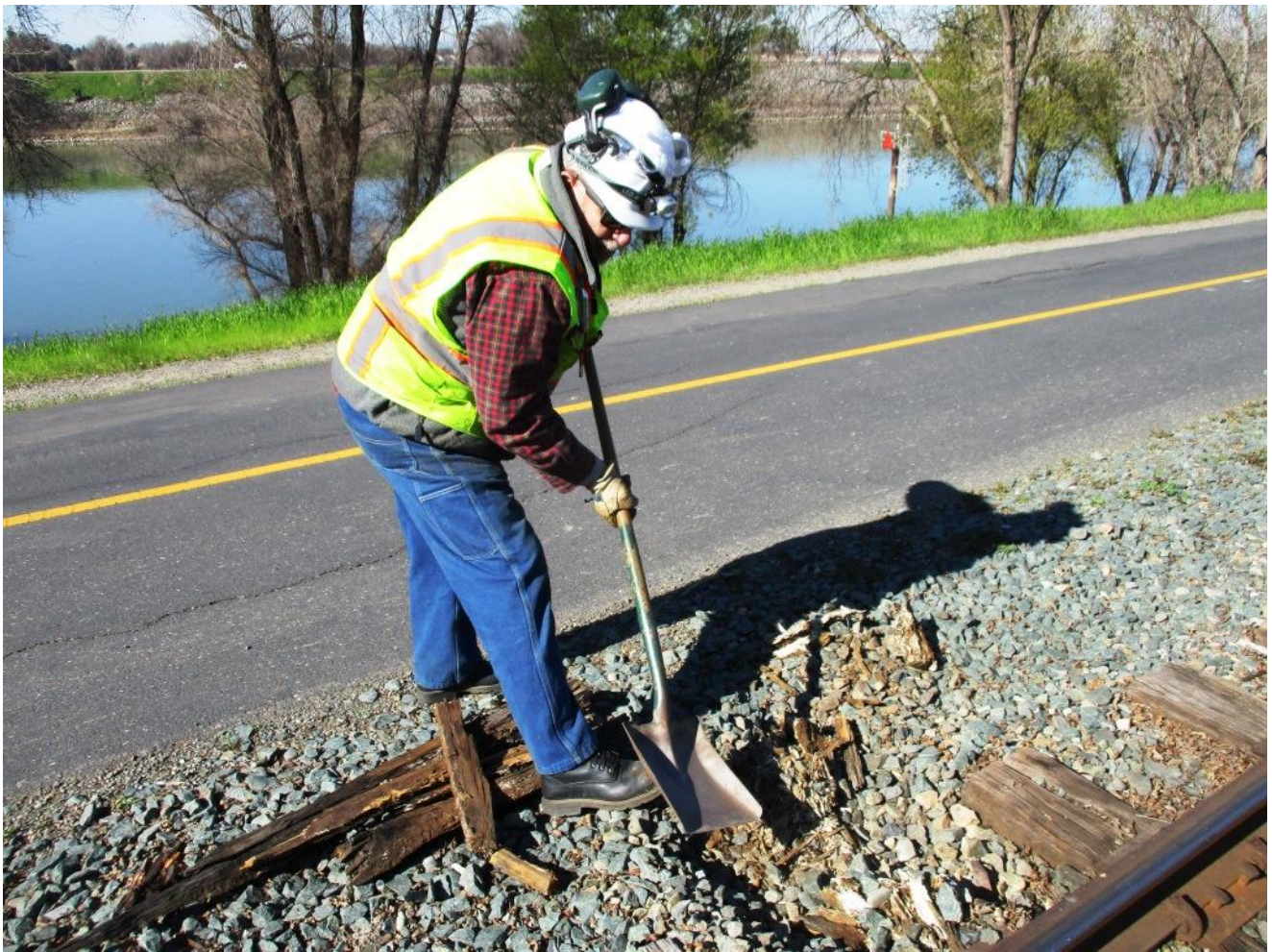
Mike H. then grabs a bundle of ties from the Strategic Tie Reserve for use on Saturday



Steve on GM2 loads a bundle of ties onto a flatcar with Alan and Bill guiding



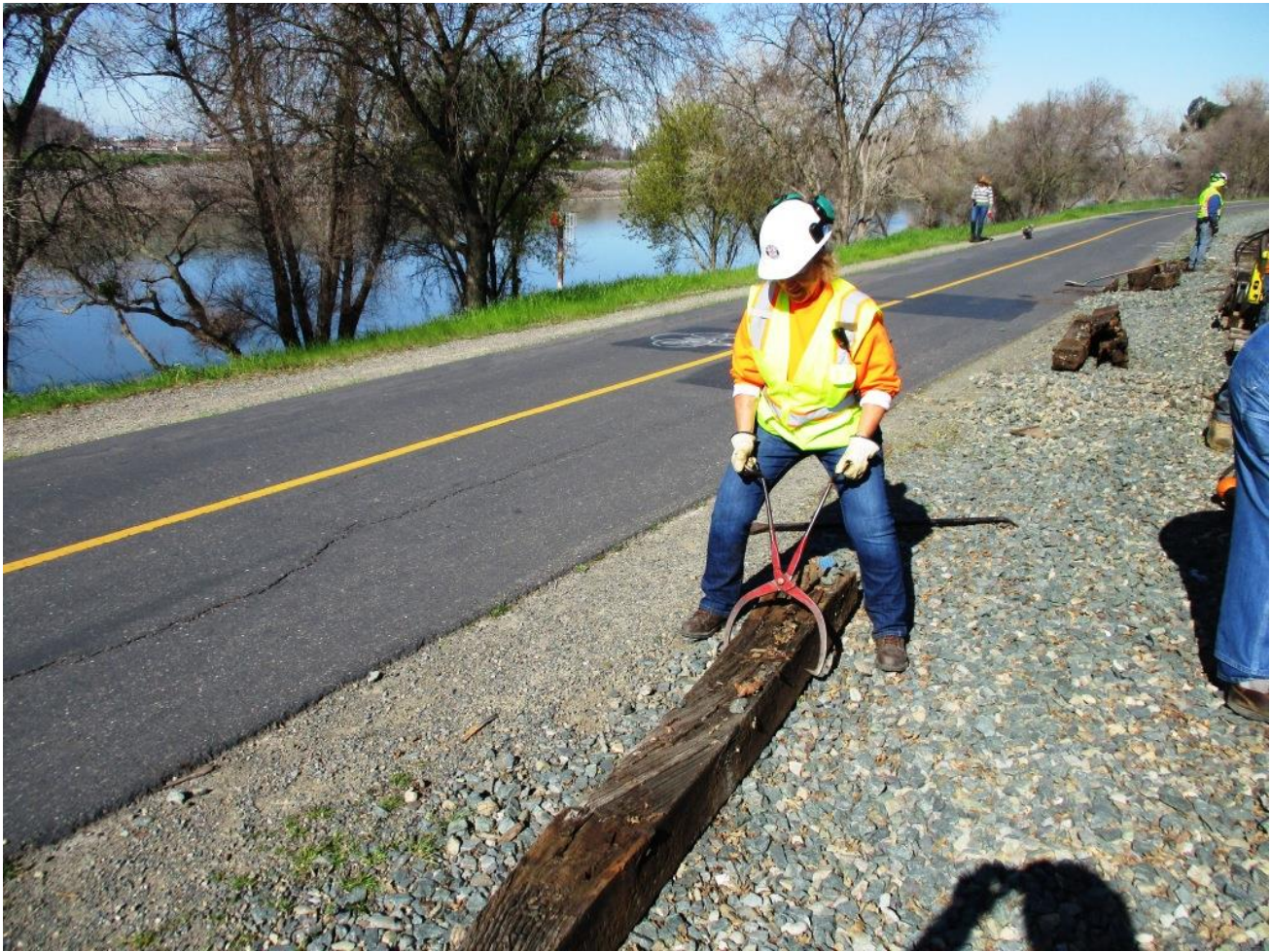
Joe and John get started pulling ties at Baths



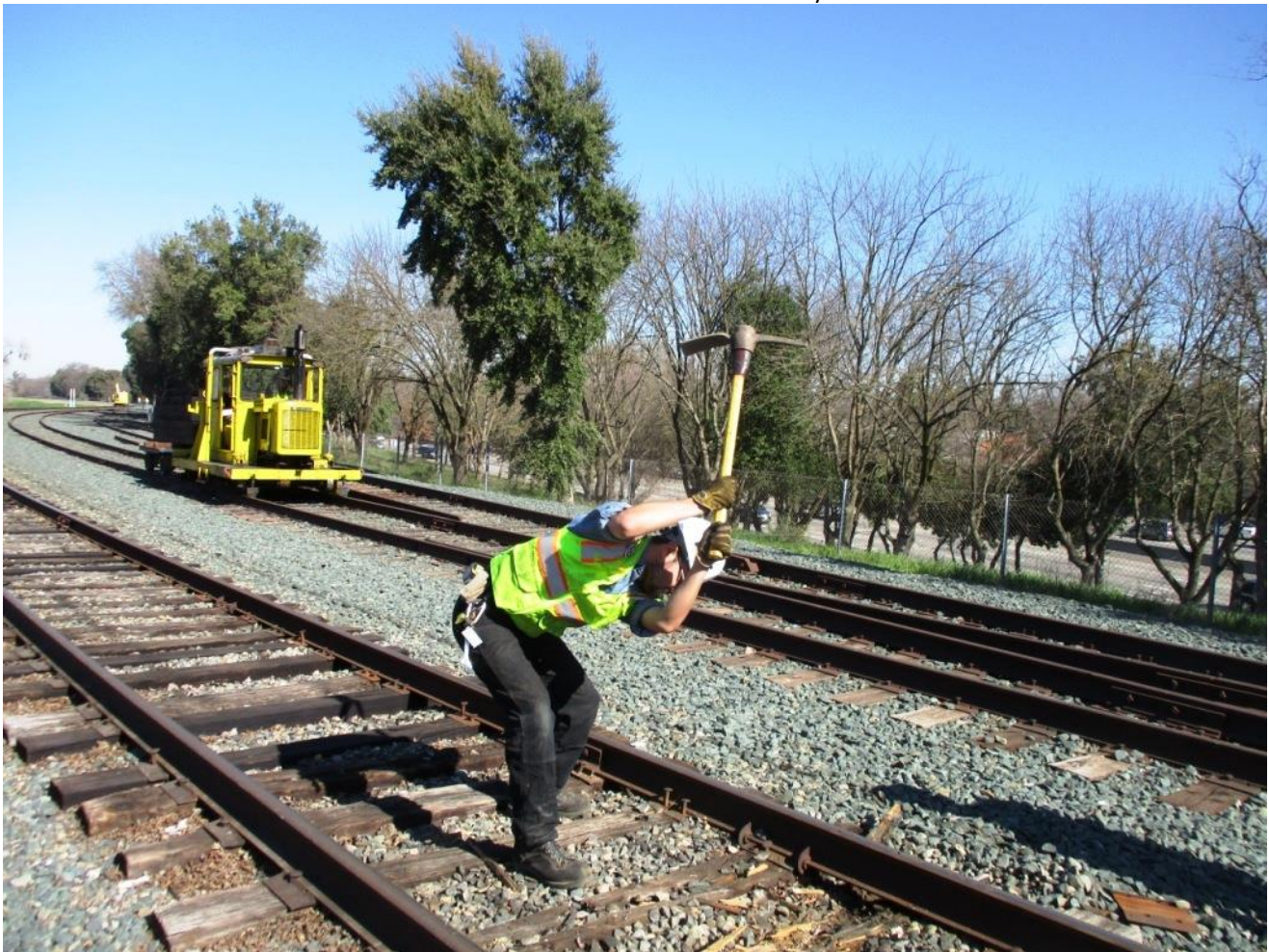
Art clears out an empty tie-crib



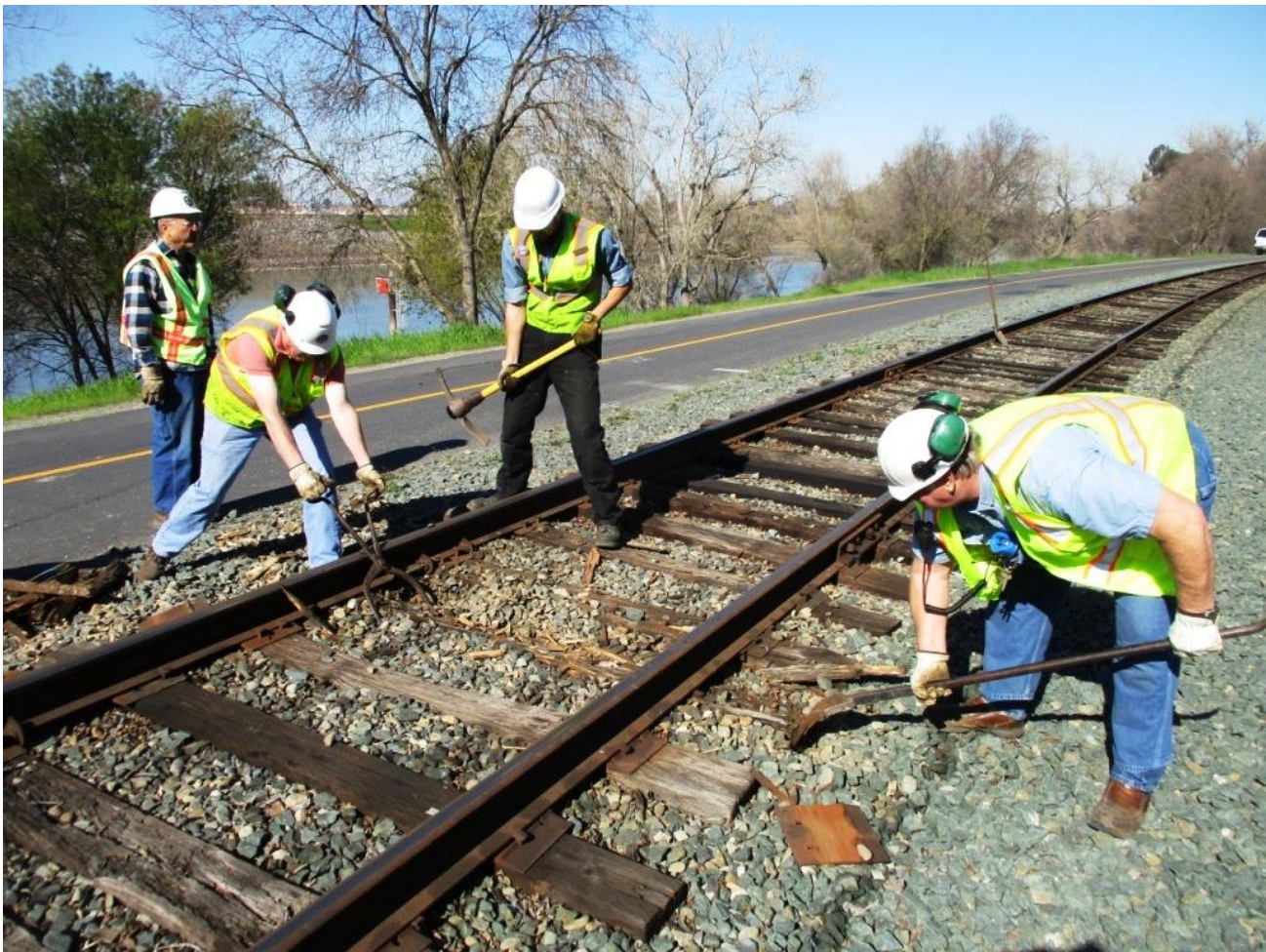
Chris C. pulls a spike with the hydraulic spike-puller as John demonstrates his famous, "I am Batman!" stance



Bev moves a dead tie out of the way



Kyle tries to break-up a dead tie that shattered when the 125 tried to pull it



Chris C. uses a nipper-bar to push the tie while Bill pulls it with tie-tongs



Bev pulls spikes with the hydraulic spike-puller



Professor Joe gives Heather a lesson on the operation of the Jackson 125



Chris C. and Taka drop new ties from the new tie bundle



Heather does a great job pulling ties with the 125



Steve and Bill move a dead tie out of the way



Alan brings in the tie-crane to remove the dead ties



Bev digs debris out from an empty tie-crib



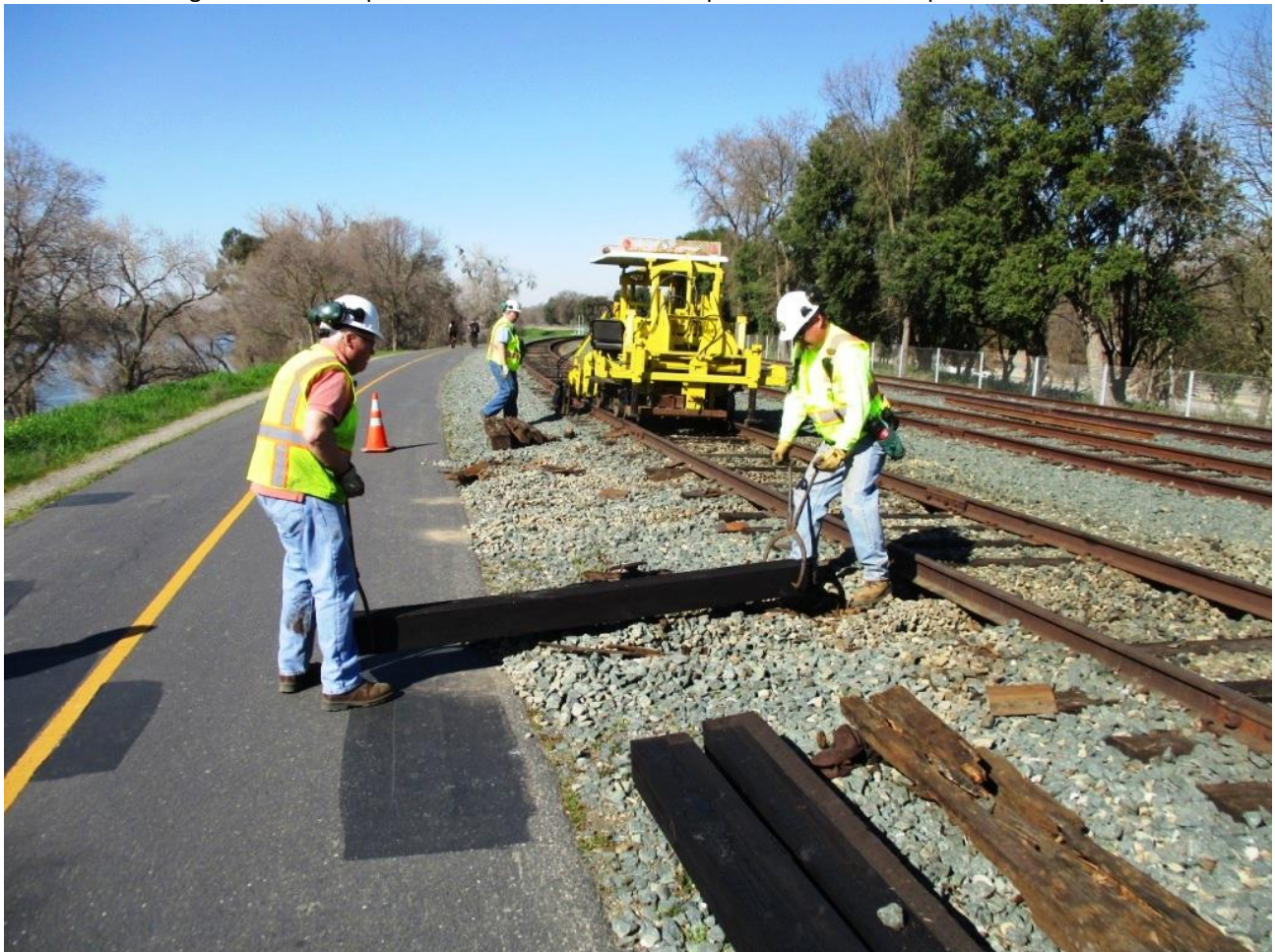
Taka and Joe adjust the load of dead-ties on the flatcar



Steve and Joe spin the Jackson 125 in order to employ the shoving-ram



The shoving-ram is used to push out those ties that broke apart when the attempt was made to pull them



Bill and Taka get a new tie into position for insertion...



...Then place it under the base of the rail where the 125 can grab it and pull it in



Chris C. takes on the 125 and pulls in the new ties



Using the 125's rail jacking system, Chris C. lifts the rail as Heather inserts a tie plate



Taka drives spikes with the hydraulic spike driver as Kyle and Art nip-up the ties



Bev monitors the hydraulic lines as Steve drives spikes and Art nips-up the tie



Chris C. on the 125 jacks-up the rails so that Heather and Joe can insert tie-plates



Kyle nips-up the tie as Steve drives spikes



Heather uses a shovel to move ballast around and fill in any holes