

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 16, 2014. Hmm, what's that white puffy stuff? Could it be steam? Yes, steam is returning to the California State Railroad Museum with the restoration of the Granite Rock No. 10. In anticipation of steam's big return to our line, this week, your MOW Team began construction of the Whisker Track/Firing Line just behind the Museum. So hold on to your hardhats and don your safety-vests as we fire-up this important update!

The MOW Team's week started on Tuesday with Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Alan Hardy, Harry Voss, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, and Mike Harris populating the Boiler Shop. Fred disassembled the carburetor of the Weed Team's Briggs and Stratton engine for the spray-rig at Hood. Harry V. and Frank reinstalled the right duty-tires on the dump-truck. The inner duty had gone flat which Heather got repaired. Mike H. spent the evening working on deciphering the Kalamazoo's (the old regulator/tug) hydraulic lines which is like working on a puzzle without a picture. Frank and Harry then installed the new folding step on the back of our trusty Chevy Truck so that we'll no longer have to use the hitch or gate as a ladder. Lots of good work by a great crew of volunteers!

Mike H., Fred, John Chandler, Gene, Heather, and Alan made-up Thursday evening's crew which started off with a demonstration of the new light-plant that Chris Carlson built for our night-time activities out on the line. That thing gives off the light of ten-thousand suns! Needless to say, all were quite impressed. Meanwhile, Alan and Mike H. focused their efforts on the Kalamazoo's set-off motors. Fred got the Briggs and Stratton running. Gene, John, and Heather worked on getting our Onan generator running again. Alas, the Onan will require more work. But, it was a good effort nonetheless.

Saturday promised to be a two pink-box day. Fortunately two pink-boxes greeted Clem Meier, Michael Florentine, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Alan, Kent Ransom, Frank, Harry V., Mike Taylor, Fred, Pam Tatro, and Chris. All doughnuttied-up, the Team was briefed on its mission: build the new segment of track behind the Museum that will be used as the firing line for the once and future steam locomotive. Harry Gobler, our Road Foreman of Civil Engineering, who designed and surveyed the new Whisker Track, met us behind the Museum. With Big Green in Steve's capable hands, Heather and Mike F. rolled the ties from the bundles off the forks in desired positions. Frank and Kent then set each tie a precise 22 inches off center distance from each other. Pam placed the tie-plates. Then Mike F. ascended Big Green and brought in the first stick of rail. It was tricky maneuvering around a 1,170 pound, 39 foot long steel rail hanging from the forks in this confined space – a testament to the skill of our volunteers. The base of the rail needed to be precisely 15½" from the end of the tie which required a bit of cajoling and levering with lining-bars, nippers, and track jacks. Frank, Steve, Pam, Clem, and Kent set spikes and Heather came in with the pneumatic spiker and pounded them into place. Then, Mike F. took the Green Machine for a ride on the turntable with the track-lifter attachment to lift the panel up and onto the concrete lip of the turntable pit. By lunch, we had the first panel complete. We amazed ourselves by how quickly we got the thing put together!

Following lunch, the Team got right to work on the second panel. We had this process down now. Ties were laid out, properly distanced, plates placed. Steve at the controls of Big Green brought the two sticks of rail over which were bolted to completed panel, then gauged and spiked-down. By the end of the day, two-thirds of the Whisker Track was complete. Everyone on the crew was tired as this was very hard physical labor. But, we were all pleased with the progress and felt good about our tangible accomplishment that will be well used by our railroad crews for years to come.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Mike T. spent the day on mission to eradicate the pesky plant invasion all around the Shops complex. The transfer table and Shops-side turntable got a good chemical bath which should take care of the problem.

Assuredly, the week ahead will be just as exciting. Tuesday, the Team will meet as usual in the afternoon and evening. Thursday, our start time is 5 o'clock sharp. Saturday, we will continue with the construction of the Whisker Track. The ballast-rock will arrive this week. We will finish the final panel of track, connect it all together, jack it, ballast it, line it, then tamp it. At that point the area will be ready for paving. It promises to be another triumphant day for your MOW Team as we endeavor to make steam a reality on the Sacramento Southern Railroad once again. It is an honor and privilege to work with such tremendous and dedicated volunteers. Indeed, your MOW Team put the "rail" in "railroad."

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Be careful what you say, Harry...



Fred gets the Briggs and Stratton to start on the first pull





With Big Green piloted by Steve, Mike F. and Heather roll ties off the forks



Harry G. guides the precision placement of ties by Frank, Steve, and Kent





Chris and Steve place the first stick of rail with Mike F. on Big Green



Kent and Alan making precise measurements





Heather drives the first spike of the new Whisker Track!



Frank and Pam gauge and plate the west rail





Oops! "He did it!" says Mike F. "No, he did it!" says Steve. Now that's team work...



Now that the first panel is complete, we use the track lifter to lift the track up onto the concrete base of the turntable pit





With the first segment of track complete, Steve in Big Green brings over the first rail for the second panel



Mike F. bolts the rails together





With both rails now in place, properly spaced, and plated, Chris nips the ties while Steve spikes



At day's end, it's starting to look like a real railroad track