

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 2, 2014. It's hard to believe that it's March already. The opening of the 2014 train season is just four weeks off. So, let's get this update going before 2014 disappears completely.

Tuesday, the Mighty MOW Weed Team spent quality time at Hood maintaining our right of way. Mike Taylor, Harry Voss, Dave Megeath, and Joe Galipeau continued the attack on the blackberry menace infesting the southern line. The goal of the day was to service the equipment and survey the results of their recent spraying efforts. Alas, machine wise, there's some work to do. But, the blackberries were withering on the vine which gave the Weedies a reason to celebrate.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, Chris Carlson, Cliff Hayes, Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Frederick Carr, and Frank Werry kept calm and carried on for another evening of MOW excitement. The crew spent a good part of the evening finishing up the "great equipment move of 2014" by restacking tons of rail. Most of this rail had been pulled out of the Rail Yards some of which was severely bent and warped. Luckily for us, Cliff is a master metal worker and got his trusty torch out on the scene making quick work of bent pieces. They will be sent to scrap and recycled, the recompense for which will benefit the Museum Foundation and our railroad as a whole.

Thursday, Frank, Heather, and Mike Harris gathered for an evening of mechanical work. First off, Frank and Mike H. replenished the distilled water in the batteries of the yellow Hyster forklift. Then the crew began the conversion of the A-6's electrical system by replacing the generator with an alternator. However, we ran into a minor stumbling block in trying to mount the thing where the generator previously was situated. A new mounting system needs to be fabricated which shouldn't be much of a problem for our skillful crew.

With the recent rains, several large lakes greeted the crew inside the Boiler Shop on Saturday morning. Harry, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Michael Florentine, Pam Tatro, Alan, Frank, Clem Meier, Chris, and Fred all patiently awaited the arrival of the sacred pink box loaded with yummy goodness. Since our moving days are behind us for the time being, we set off to complete tasks that have been on-hold for a while. First off, word came down from on-high that the east gate on the 560 Track near the interchange with the UP Main needs to be kept closed to prevent incursions of ne'er do wells into the Rail Yards and our building via the Amtrak platforms. Pam, Harry, and Heather installed highly reflective red-orange safety triangles on both sides of both gates – as well as on the west gates – in hopes that any train crew bringing in cars for Setzer will see that they are closed before they run them down. Mike F., and Clem replaced the fluid in the transmission of the Big Green Machine which has been a bit sluggish of late. Steve, Frank, Fred, and Alan headed down to our Setzer Yard to continue with the disposal of the dead ties piled down there. Fred directed the operation of loading ties into the large dumpster in a way that maximized the space available. By hand, mostly, Fred arranged the ties into neat piles inside the dumpster to utilize every nook-and-cranny. Meanwhile, Steve and Alan loaded the ties into the bucket of the loader skillfully operated by Frank. Mike F. and the Green Machine joined us down there to grab some of the bigger bridge timbers from the turntable restoration. This was heavy hard work by a dedicated crew. We proved the point, once again, that there is no need to join a gym when volunteering with the MOW Team! Lastly, Steve, Frank, and Heather moved the man-lift consist off the Business Car Track and onto the old 150 Track so that train crews can move the Audubon this week.

Back at the Shops, Chris accomplished a very important task by wiring and bringing to full operation the MOW "night-light" we've been building as an attachment to the Wisconsin generator. With 2,000 watts of light emanating from this machine, we can now bring day to night and work outside in the evenings. This is a great accomplishment that will improve our ability to work out on the line. Then, Chris and Fred managed to restore the flood-lights on the Green Machine to full operation. All in all, it was a very enlightening day at Maintenance of Way!

Now, for the week ahead. Tuesday afternoon and evening, the Team will meet as usual to work on many important projects. Thursday, the doors will roll-up at 5 o'clock. Saturday, we will start building the Whisker Track behind the Museum. Doughnuts are served at 8 o'clock a.m.

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Cliff torch-cuts scrap rail while Alan moves a ballast hopper with Big Green



Mike H. and Frank work on the alternator conversion of the A-6 motorcar



Harry, Heather, and Pam install the highly reflective safety reflectors on the east gates of the 560 Track



Chris bringing light to darkness by wiring the new MOW night-light...



Frank in charge of the front-end loader dumps a bundle of dead ties into the dumpster



Mike F. and Big Green arrive on the scene make quick work of the really big problems



Steve and Alan direct Frank in the loader to grab some extra-heavy dead ties



Steve in the loader with Frank, Alan, and Fred loading the loader



Mount Tie-imanjaro is eroding away! Mike F. on Big Green and Frank survey the progress



Frank spinning the man-lift consist complete with rails to be used for the new Whisker Track



Fiat lux... On the sixth day, Chris said, "Let there be light." And there was light...



Under the light of the new MOW sun, Chris shows how Big Green's night-lights have been restored