

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 22, 2015. What a difference a week makes. Last week, we suffered what we perceived to be significant setbacks. This week, couldn't have been more different. In fact, for the MOW Team, it was an exceptionally positive week. So, let's keep this positivity rolling by getting this update going!

On Tuesday the mighty Weed Team finished its general weed spraying activities for spring, 2015. A tip of the hat goes to Mike Taylor, Dale Parker, Joe Galipeau, and Dave Megeath for their efforts. There were times when the Weedies experienced a bit of frustration – you know, when machines don't do what they're supposed to do. But, they persevered and got the remainder of the Mainline, Clunie Siding, and down to Sutterville Road completely sprayed. It's now just a matter of time before the green turns brown. Congratulations and many thanks to the above-and-beyond efforts of the mighty SSRR Nuisance Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, miracles were occurring. Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Frederick Carr, Scott Morrison, Matt Blackburn, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns set out to solve the mechanical setbacks. Last week, you may recall, that the scarifier- inserter suffered what was thought to be a "catastrophic engine failure." Well, to paraphrase Mark Twain, "The reports of [its] death have been greatly exaggerated." The problem was turned over to mechanical miracle maker, Gene, who is a master diesel mechanic. He and Pat began their investigation, located the problem and, by evening's end, had the machine fully functional, again. This was tremendous relief and positive step forward. Mike H. set his sights on the Kalamazoo's problems. He pulled the valve cover on the engine and found that it was operating on only two cylinders. By evening's end, he and Gene had that engine purring at full revs. Scott and Fred got the tie-shear nearly back together. Matt saddled the forklift and grabbed a 55 gallon drum of diesel to fuel the machines. The MOW Team is blessed to have such highly skilled volunteers who donate their talents to keeping this railroad rolling.

On Thursday, Gene, Alan, Heather, Cliff, Fred, Mike H., and Frank Werry were working on more miracles. Frank and Heather headed to Old Sacramento with a drum of diesel to fuel the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger and the tamper. Mike H. and Gene continued their work on the Kalamazoo's fuel line. Cliff built guards and shields for the tie-shear. Alan began his next painting project – converting the BEB-17 ballast regulator, fondly known as the *USS Sea Tiger* (because it's pink), into the *Yellow Submarine*. Lots of good work for a great cause.

Saturday, the team prepared for the final push to complete phase-one of the big tie-change out operation of 2015. Harry Voss and Chris Carlson each brought a box of doughnuts which were enjoyed by Alan, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Mike Willis, Frank Werry, Scott Morrison, Michael Florentine, and Mike Taylor. Following our briefing, the Team split into two groups: Chris, Scott, and Heather, would remain in the Shops to work on the tie-shear while everyone else, headed out onto the line. In the Shops, Team Tie-shear spent the day adjusting the pressures on the hydraulic pumps, installing new air valves, chasing down little leaks, and general trouble-shooting. By lunchtime, the tie-shear moved under its own power for the first time in nearly four years. This was a major milestone event for the entire MOW operation. In the afternoon, they got it out onto the transfer-table, moved it around a bit, did a bit more trouble-shooting, and then power-washed four years of dirt and grime off of it. This machine is now poised for deployment. Six month ago, many considered it a worthless pile of scrap. But thanks mostly to Scott, Fred, and Chris, it's now a viable part of the MOW equipment fleet.

Team-2 deployed first to Old Sacramento where Mike W., Mike T., Pam, and Clem got both motorcars and the work train set up. Conductor Frank made the necessary calls to Omaha to clear Alan in the scarifier- inserter for travel over from the Shops. Mike F. brought out the Big Green Machine to collect dead ties strewn about the line. Harry manned our trusty Chevy Truck. At the work site, the hydraulic spike puller was deployed. Alan, Mike F., and Clem ran it and pulled spikes on the 30 ties marked for removal. Pam and Mike T. dug around the ends of the ties to make it easier for the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger to grab them. Once the spikes were removed, the 125 managed to pull all 30 ties with in an hour. That machine is worth its weight in gold to our operation. The MOW Team owes the CSRM Foundation a tremendous debt of gratitude for financing it. Alan brought in the scarifier and cleared the cribs ready to receive new ties next week. Mike W. cleared the bike path of ballast rock that the scarifier threw. After lunch, the Team set and spiked 13 ties that had not been spiked in the previous week. Mike T. was engineer of the work-train while Clem and Mike F. drove the spike. It was a very good and productive day. In fact, one of the challenges we're now facing is managing our increased productivity thanks to having so many working machines out on the line. We're just not used to it. But that's a good thing and a challenge we're ready to face.

Some sad news, now. Hugh Crawford, a volunteer with the Mechanical and Restoration Shop, passed away suddenly on Friday while working on the restoration of the Granite Rock 10 locomotive. Hugh had been volunteering with the Shops for quite some time and dedicated a great deal of effort to the GR10's restoration. When the steam locomotive returns to service this season, it will be in no small part to Hugh's efforts. Hugh will be greatly missed. The MOW Team sends its sincere condolences to Hugh's family and friends.

Tuesday and Thursday, the Team will meet as usual at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time. The goal is to get 30 ties in the ground, tamped, plated, and spiked. Quit your gym membership and join the MOW Team. It will be a day of great exercise. Many thanks to all our great volunteers and supporters – especially with the Foundation – for keeping up the faith!

See you out on the line,

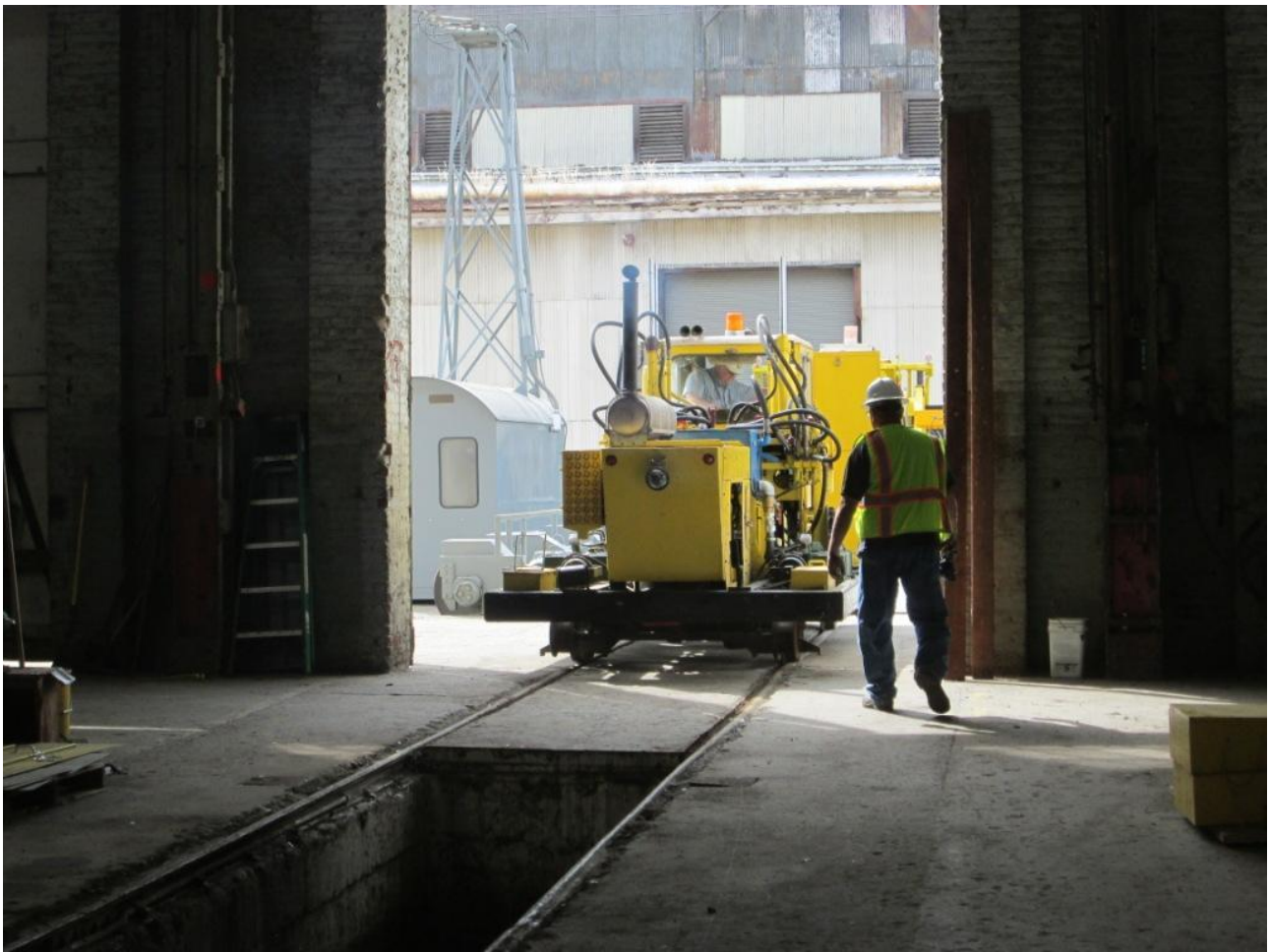
Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Joe, donning his Weed Team duds, makes some minor adjustments to the 65 gallon spray-rig.



Matt on the forklift brings a drum of diesel to fuel the big machines



It's alive! Scott and Chris move the tie-shear under its own power for the first time in four years.



Chris gives the shear a bath...



The spike-puller is deployed. Mike F. and Mike T. straighten a bent spike so that the machine can grab it while Clem pulls spikes on the opposite rail.



Mike F. operates the spike puller.



Pam digs out the ends of the ties to make it easier for the 125 to grab them.



“Bring out your dead” – ties, that is... The Jackson 125 makes quick work of tie removal



Mike T. removes rock from the ends of the ties so that the ram attachment can get low enough to shove the ties out. This is used when a tie disintegrates or breaks apart on the initial attempt to grab it.



Alan Van Gogh applies paint to a spot that needed a bit of a touch-up



Clem guides the hose, Mike F., drives the spike, and engineer Mike T moves the whole operation along



Day is done. Mike W. and Clem gather up the bits and pieces that need to return to the Shops.