

Greetings!

This is your MOW Team update for March 26, 2017. The 2017 train season begins next week and your MOW Team is busy making sure everything out on the line is ship-shape and Bristol fashion (as Eric Peak would say). So, before the ship sinks, let's get this update started.

Tuesday started early for the Weed Team's, Mike Taylor, who needed to get equipment in order for an inspection from the regulatory gurus. Then he was joined by Ed Kottal and Cliff Hayes who helped get the 500-gallon spray-rig situated for its journey over to Old Sacramento. Thursday is the opening of weed spraying season on the SSRR Mainline. Then Cliff used his mighty welding torch to make repairs to a field and brush mower. As the evening rolled around, Pat Scholzen, Matt McCracken, Kevin Hecteman, Michael Florentine, Gene Peck, Heather Kearns, and Frank Werry joined the fun. While Frank and Mike T. got the spray-rig spotted on the 560 Track, Heather, Mike F., Matt, Kevin, and Ed headed over to Old Sac. to make room in the container and get the Kalamazoo tug fired-up to pull the spray-rig over the UP Main. Mike F. pulled everything out of the container with the A-6. A flatcar was switched-out of and hooked to the Kalamazoo piloted by Matt. Conductor Kevin toned-up UP Dispatcher 62 in Omaha and arranged for a speedy crossing. At the Shops side, Frank and Mike T. hooked the spray-rig to the Kalamazoo while Green Machine 2 (GM2) lifted the flatcar from the rails. Conductor Kevin convened a summit with the UP dispatcher for our return trip to Old Sac. With everything secure, the Team returned to the Shops where the clarion call of "quittin' time, USA!" was sounded. It was a good evening of great progress. And, it was good to have Kevin back with the Team!

Weed spraying season started on Thursday. It's always a big day for the Mighty Weed Team when they can head out on the line with 500-gallons of blue brew to disseminate. Mike T., Heather, Ed, Steve Wilson, and Dave Megeath donned their white Tyvek suits and headed down the line dousing every speck of cellular chlorophyll in the leafy invaders with blue-brew. After the massive rainfall this year, the green occupation of the SSRR Mainline – especially through Oleander Alley, South Miller Park, and the Setzer Lead – was quite complete. Now, all that revolting green will turn to a crispy brown and wither away as the blue-brew is absorbed into the plant. As they headed down to the Sutterville Line, three flat cars spotted on the I-5 Bridge had to be moved. So, the Weedies want to send a special "shout-out" and thanks to Michelle White, switch crew conductor, and her crew for moving the flat cars. Also, to Art Knowles Interpretative Handcar Program foreman and Frank who helped facilitate the Team's move past the handcar folks. They ensured the Weed Team's success!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Weston Snyder, Matt, Joe Margucci, and Heather were all in their places with bright shiny faces. Staging for Saturday was the plan for the evening. Matt and Weston found a 55-gallon drum of diesel and set up the pump. Joe drove out the back-hoe for a "fill-'er-up." GM2 was topped-off, as well. Then several jerry-cans were filled. Heather went to work on fixing the front-end loader. She made progress but, more work is needed. Next, GM2 put the flatcar back on the track and then loaded a bundle of 40 ties onto it. Weston, Joe, and Matt chained it down. Matt lined the transfer table with the lead-track, pushed the flatcar onto it, and sent it north. The flatcar needed to go behind the regulator so, Joe got it started and moved out onto the transfer table, where it was move to an adjacent track to pick up the flatcar. With everything now put away, the Team called it a night pleased with the good deeds that got done.

A bright pink box greeted Chris Carlson, Alan Hardy, Joe, Heather, Matt, Clem Meier, Mike F., Ed, Harry Voss, Bev Ratzlaff, and Anthony Filamor as they arrived at the Shops on Saturday for a big day out on the line. The consuming of doughnuts signals the completion of the briefing and the crew headed to Old Sac. to fire-up machines. Ed took the ballast regulator, Chris the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, Mike F. the Tamper, Alan the scarifier-inserter, and Matt the A-6 motorcar work-train. Changing-out rotten ties between Clunie and Broadway was the action plan as we scrambled to complete the track-work in the area before trains begin running next Saturday. Bev and Clem started by pulling spikes then digging around the tie-ends to make it easier for the 125 to grab. Matt deployed new ties by dropping them off the flatcar at each location. Chris brought in the 125 and gingerly pulled each marked tie out from under the rails. Harry grabbed the old ties to move them out of the way. Matt and Mike F. positioned new ties at each empty tie-crib and Alan, in the scarifier, pulled them in. Bev and Anthony deployed the shoving-ram on the 125 to push those ties out that had shattered ends and couldn't be grabbed. Meanwhile, Team Signals Captain, Dale Parker, arrived to remove the Broadway grade-crossing warning system from service so that we could work within the north approach. Joe and Heather nipped the rails and inserted tie plates. Then they, Along with Mike F., set spikes. Ed, Heather, and Joe fired-up the air-compressor and, using the 60-pound pneumatic spike driver, drove spikes. Chris continued pushing and pulling old ties out and soon we had exhausted our 40-tie supply. Mike F. then brought in the tamper and tamped all the new ties making sure that everything was firm and stable. Everything was going great out there except it seemed that time had sped-up and soon, we were faced with the need to pack everything up and put it away. Paul Helman, from the Signal Department, showed up to re-activate the Broadway system just as the Team was ready to head back to Old Sacramento and the Shops. A significant amount of good work got done on Saturday thanks to the incredible dedication of your hard-working MOW Team. But, we're not finished. Your dedicated MOW Team will be back out on the line for a special **Friday** edition of Maintenance of Way later this week, many using vacation time to build a better railroad. Now that's dedication!

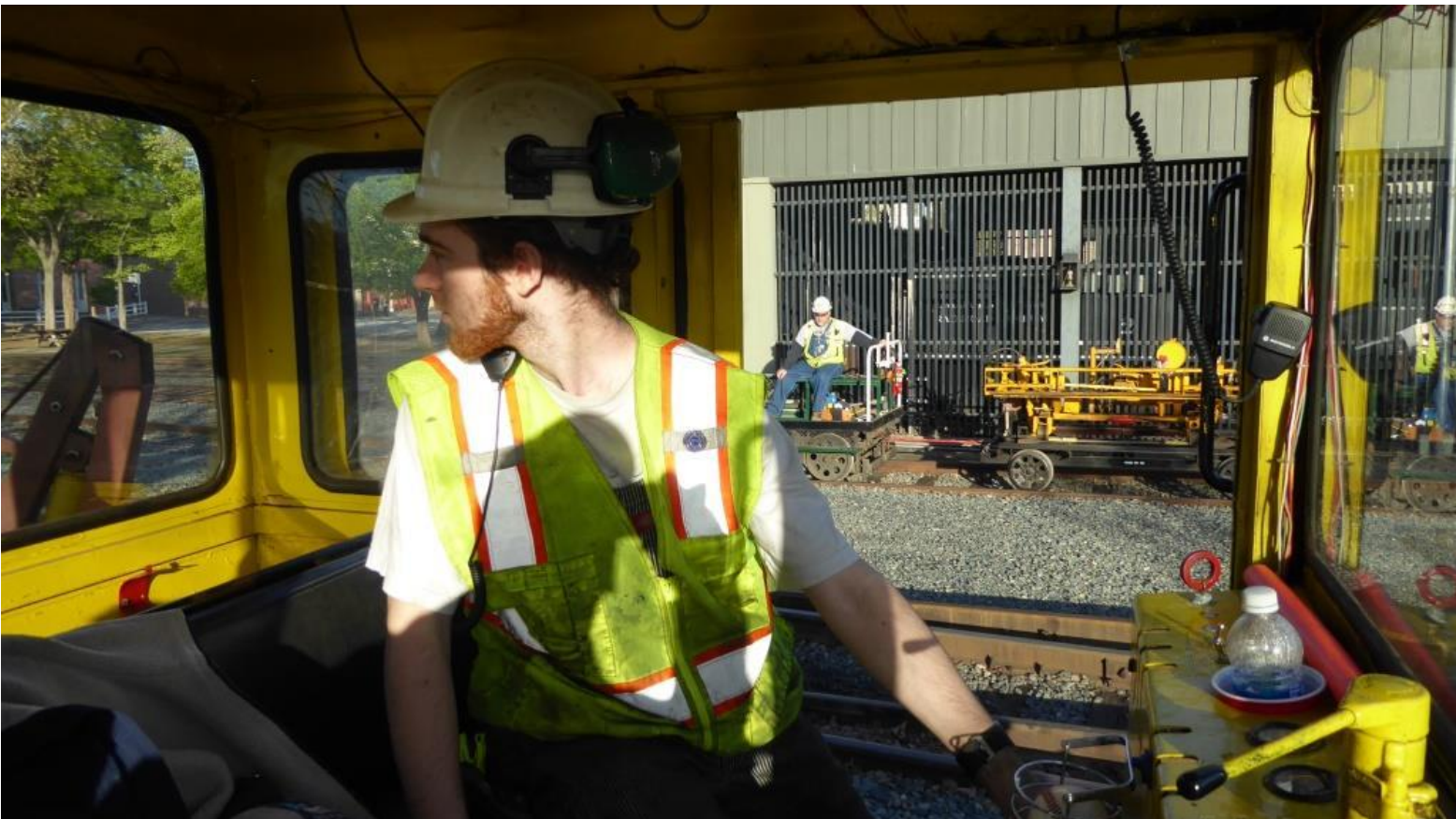
Yes, you heard right. In addition to the regular Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday MOW Team gatherings, the Team will be working to complete the Clunie to Broadway project on **Friday**. The call time for **Friday** (and Saturday) is 8 o'clock a.m. in the Erecting Shop. That will provide two opportunities for doughnuts this week. You won't want to miss out! In addition, the Mighty Weed Team will be headed to Hood on Thursday. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. The MOW Team sends a special thanks to the SSRR Signal Department and, Dale, Paul, and Jim Coviello in particular, for their outstanding efforts on our behalf as we've worked within the Broadway circuit.

See you out on the line (this Friday!)

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Matt in the Kalamazoo takes signals from Ed (getting good practice for being a student-brakeman)



Two trains passing in the night: Matt at the controls of the Kalamazoo while Mike F. pilots the motorcar consist on the House Track



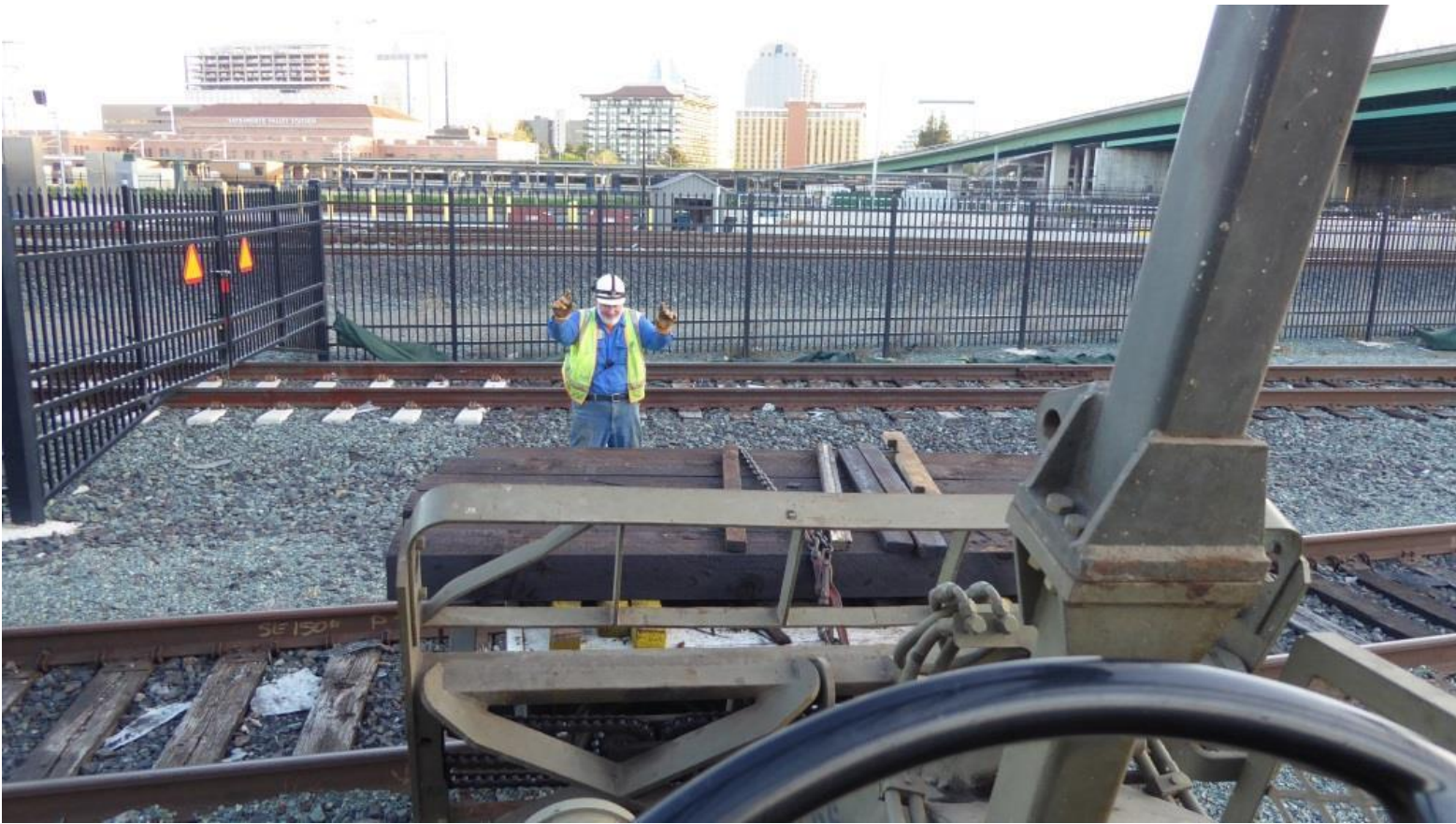


Conductor Kevin "toning-up" the Dispatcher in Omaha for permission to cross



With permission granted, Ed, Matt, and Kevin go on green signal indication





Frank gives signals to GM2 as the flatcar is lifted off the rails



With the spray-rig hooked to the Kalamazoo, Conductor Kevin again secures a green light and off they go!





Over in Old Sac., Heather keeps a close eye on brakeman-in-training Ed as the spry-rig moves in for a hook with the A-6



After Ed made a nice smooth hook the spray-rig, he secures a "red-zone" from A-6 engineer Mike F. before attaching the draw-bar





On Thursday morning, the Weed Team sets up for the big day of spraying blue-brew out on the line



The Weedies' spray-rig consist on the Clunie Siding as the 2008 passes by on the Main





Mike guides the spraying of blue-brew along the bike-path just north of the Pioneer Bridge



At Miller Park, the Weedies spray along the Setzer Lead





Matt and Weston have electric personalities...



"Fill 'er up!" Joe brings in the back-hoe for a fill-up as Green Machine 2 waits its turn



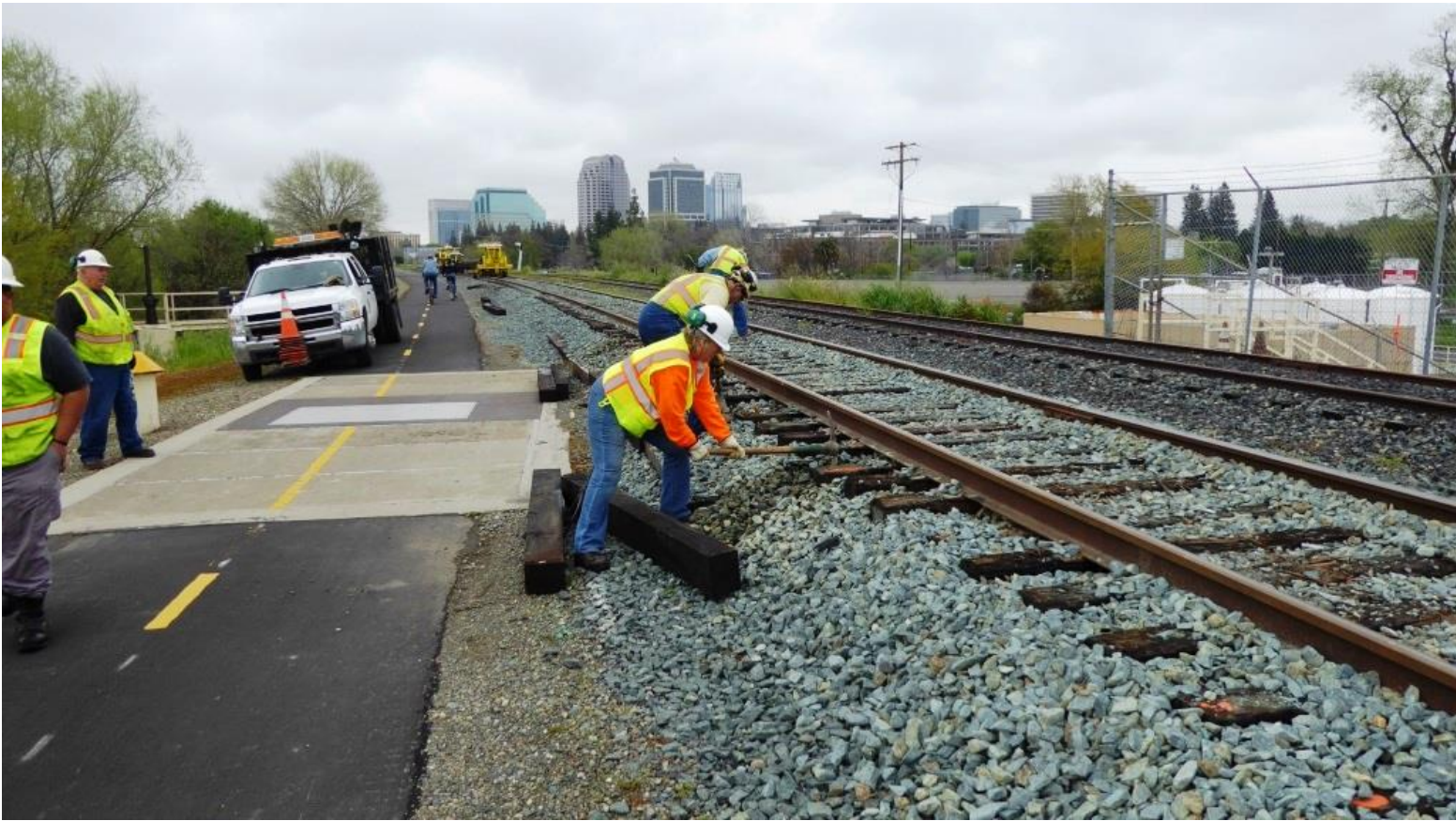


Joe fills the back-hoe with red-diesel. Turns out to be a “self-service” station...



Matt drops a new tie off the flatcar



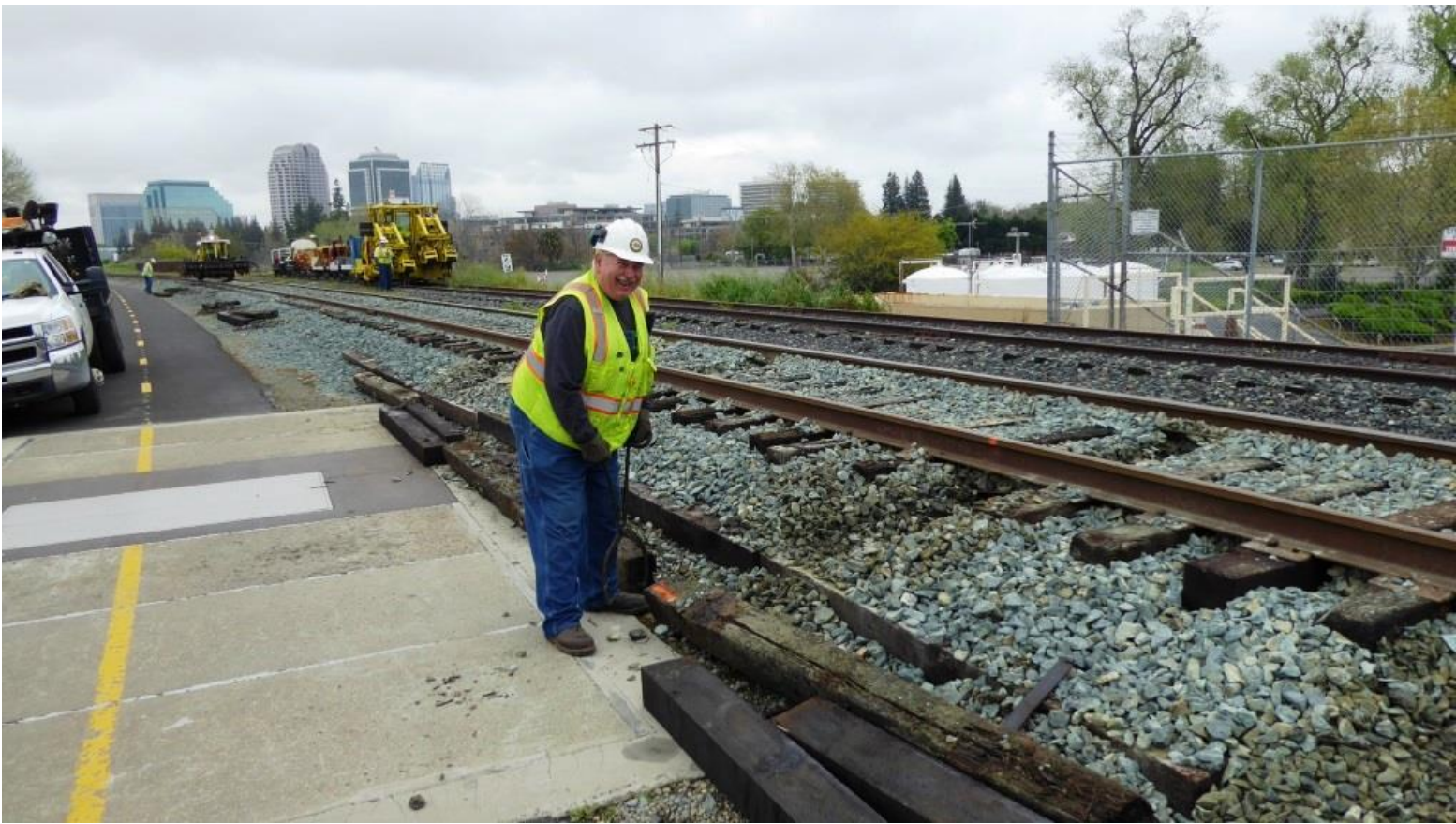


Bev and Mike F. clear rock around tie-ends



Chris, on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, pulls an old rotten tie out...



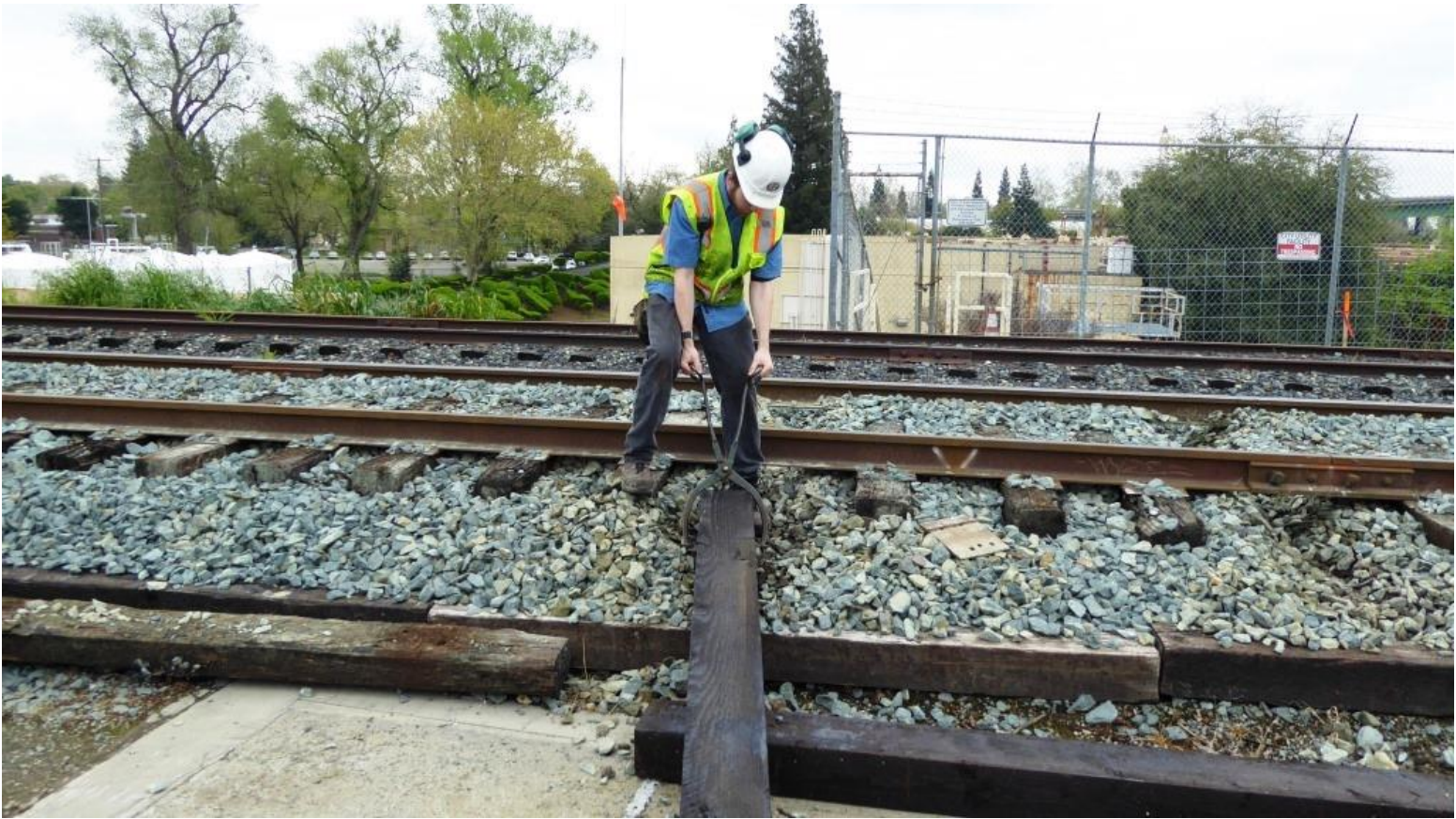


...which Harry then grabs with tie-tongs and gets it out of the way



Alan in the scarifier-inserter pulls a new tie under the rails as guided by Mike F.





Matt positions a new tie for insertion



Bev and Anthony get the ram-attachment set up on the Jackson 125 for Chris to push a couple ties out





Chris and Anthony take the 125 for a spin...



Clem fills rock in around the ties





Joe and Mike F. place tie-plates and set spikes



Heather nips-up the tie as Mike F. sets spikes





Chris nips-up a tie as Mike F. sets spikes



Harry adds oil to the scarifier-inserter





Heather drives spikes with the pneumatic spike driver as Joe digs under the end of a tie so that the nipper-bar can get beneath it



Ed nips-up the tie as Joe re-sets a spike that fell out. Heather stands by with the spiker





Joe gives Heather a break and drives a few spikes



Mike F. brings in the tamper and tamps the new ties





Signals Paul waves to Alan in the scarifier as he clears the circuit



Heading home: at the end of the day, the scarifier and regulator return to the Shops over the UP Main