

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 9, 2014. Another week is behind us, the expansion of the universe continues to accelerate, and your MOW Team has been busy out there on the line and keeping our Railroad on track. But, before all that dark matter out there causes the universe to collapse back upon itself, let's get this update going.

Tuesday, Dave Megeath temporarily took command of the Mighty MOW Weed Team and set course for Hood along with Joe Galipeau on a quest to retrieve malfunctioning weed-killing machines for servicing in the Shops. Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Frederick Carr immediately set to work on repairing the Weed Team's Briggs and Stratton engine for their spray-rig at Hood while Heather Kearns took on repairs to one of the weed-eaters. Alan Hardy spent the evening moving equipment from the Boiler Shop over to the Erecting Shop. Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Frank Werry, and Gene Peck, at the behest of our trusty track inspectors, whose inspection motor-car was malfunctioning, climbed into the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck and headed over to Old Sacramento to make the necessary repairs. This was a critical task as federal law requires two track inspections per week. So, it follows that, no motorcar, no inspections. No inspections, no trains. Fortunately for all of us, Pat, Cliff, Frank, and Gene were successful – as if there was ever any question. It was an evening of great accomplishments.

Mike Harris joined Frank and Heather on Thursday for an evening of MOW fun. Mike led the crew down on the line using the gauge measuring machine. We measured the track gauge along the entire length of track between Mile Posts 2.5 and 2.8. Measuring the gauge over lengths of track is something we do periodically in order to make sure that everything is ship-shape and Bristol fashion out on our line – especially considering the regular operating season is just three weeks off.

Saturday, a small but happy crew gathered for a double-ration of doughnuts and a day of good work out on the line. It was a pleasure for Heather, Harry Voss, Michael Florentine, John Rexroth, and Chris Carlson, to welcome Kent Ransom back to our ranks! First task was to get the new ballast regulator, affectionately known as the "*USS Sea Tiger*," ready for its maiden voyage across the double-diamond and onto the SSRR Mainline. Conductors Ed Moriarty and Frank stopped by prior to the annual brakeman recertification class to conduct the *Sea Tiger* across. While Heather and Harry set off to acquire the necessary components to repair of several of our machines, the rest of us headed over to the turntable for some diagnostic work. The locking mechanism, known as the "dogs," keeps binding up on the rails while train crews try to open and set them. After a thorough investigation, we discovered that there are several reasons for this problem. We've determined a course of action, and on Tuesday evening, we'll begin mitigating the obstruction. Yep, this is your MOW Team at work.

In the afternoon, the crew set a southerly course in the old-old tamper, scarifer/insertor, and ballast regulator on a mission to "hijack" the Docent Class special train. We stopped the train on its northbound run just south of Switch 11 (north Clunie) and rustled the class from the comfort of their coach in order to introduce our program to them and demonstrate what we do. Members of the class were very engaging and seemed genuinely interested in joining the MOW Team. I predict you'll be seeing some new names listed in these updates very soon. With our presentation complete, we removed our red-flag and sent the train on its way back to Old Sacramento. Following the demonstration we deployed the plows, wings, and broom of the *Sea Tiger* for its maiden voyage working on our track. Needless to say, with Chris at the helm, the new ballast regulator performed brilliantly. It's nice to have a piece of machinery that works and actually does what is expected of it.

Speaking of new equipment, soon we hope to be acquiring another new piece of equipment – well, new for us: a *Jackson 125 Tie Exchanger*. Just for kicks, and so you can see how fantastic it will be for us to have this new machine, here is a link to a video of our friends at the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista using a very similar piece of equipment: <http://youtu.be/EVhtOQuPdfc>. With this machine, the WRM MOW Team was able to change-out 140 ties in one day. As you can imagine, we're very excited at the prospect at improved mechanization of our operation (and help save our backs)!

Now, onto the week ahead. As expected, on Tuesday, the Team will gather at the Shops in the afternoon and evening, which thanks to daylight savings time, we'll be able to address issues with the "dogs." Thursday, the crew will meet at 5 o'clock. Saturday morning, the sacred pink boxes will be unsealed at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to all of our incredible volunteers and supporters. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. Always remember, no track, no trains.

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



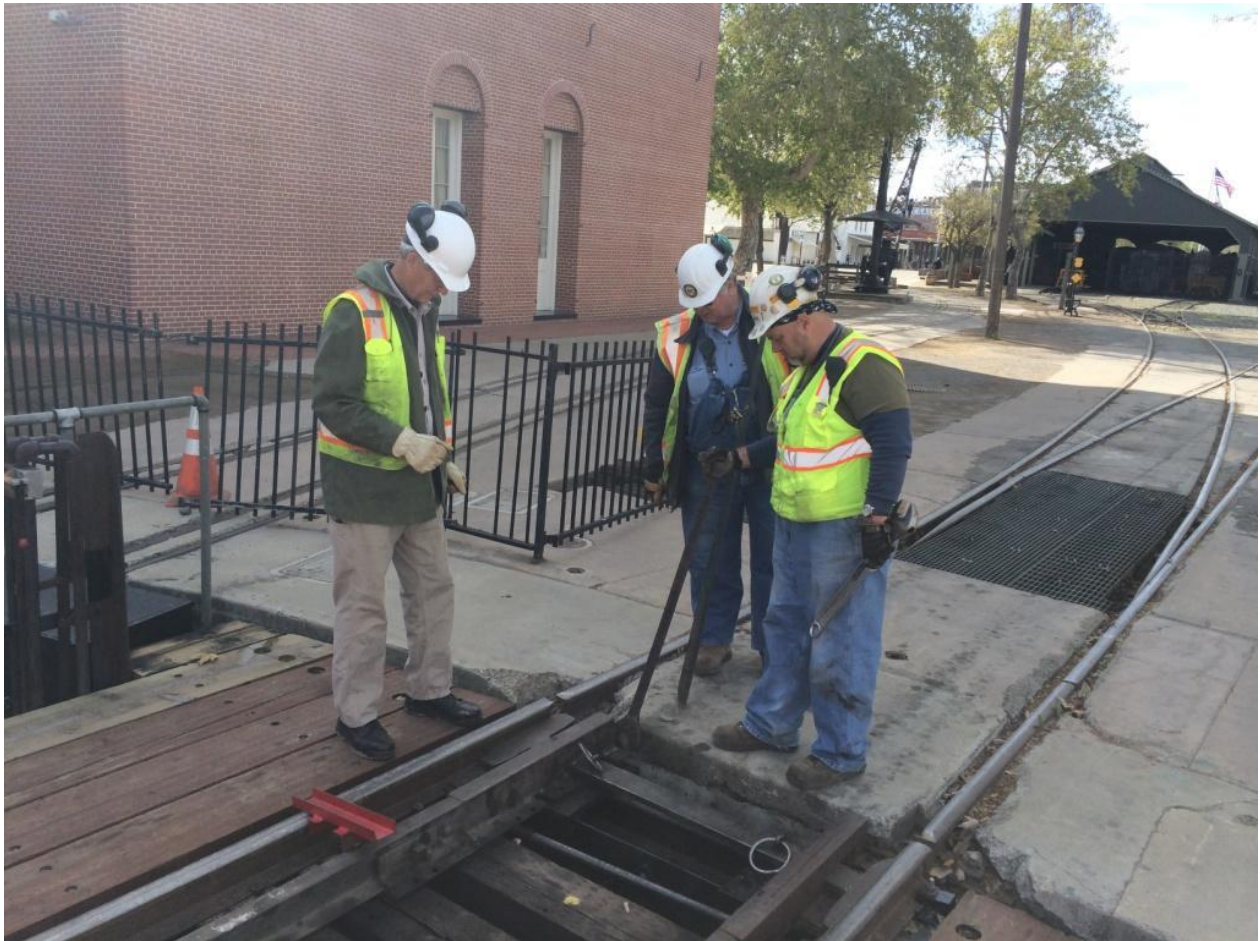


Mike H. uses the gauge-measurer to measure the track's gauge near MP 2.6



The ballast regulator makes its first appearance in Old Sacramento





Kent, Chris, and Mike F. diagnose the issues with the “dogs”



John “Batman” Rexroth arrives on scene!





A MOW Team parade!



Batman waits on the old-old tamper for the Docent Class Special to arrive





After class, the plow is deployed...



...And next, the wing takes flight...





...And finally, the broom sweeps-up.



Why we've Christened the new regulator as "Sea Tiger"...