

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 1, 2018. No foolin' here. Your MOW Team kept the progress rolling on this last weekend before the start of the SSRR 2018 operating season. So, let's not run past any red-flags by delaying this update any further.

Mike Harris, Dave Wolf, Frank Werry, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Mike Taylor, Jack Shrive, Matt Blackburn, and Heather Kearns gathered on Tuesday set-up the mighty Weed Team for its big push to spray the remainder of the Excursion Railroad. The goal was to get the 500-gallon spray-rig over to Old Sacramento and to put together the Weed Team's train. But, that meant a good deal of switching would be needed to get the Weed Team's equipment in the right order. Dave used the forklift to pull the spray-rig out of storage. He lifted and moved it to the through track of the Boiler Shop which connects to the transfer table. Dave and Heather got it to the south end of the building where Mike H., Matt, and Jack were waiting with the Kalamazoo. Conductor Frank conducted them across the UP Main. In Old Sac., Frank used the A-5 motorcar to move the two flatcars with ties on them to a position where the propane forklift could lift ties off the flatcars. The Weedies would need two flatcars for their operation. Next, the tie-shear needed to be moved out of the Central Pacific Passenger Station (CPPS). Mike H. moved it up to the 150 Track. Everything got arranged in the proper order and was ready for the Weed Team to deploy on Thursday.

Weed Team members Mike T., Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, Steve Wilson, David Haskell, and Heather gathered in Old Sac. at 7:30 a.m. on Thursday. The Weedies filled the 500-gallon spray-rig from the water spout at the turntable and mixed-up their magical blue-brew. The leafy-green invaders will soon retreat well beyond the boundaries of our right-of way now that they've been saturated with this captivating concoction. After a very long day, the Weedies proclaimed victory as the weed spraying of the entire Excursion Railroad is finally finished. Folks, the Weed Team doesn't just "wing it" out there. They are highly trained and certified annually by Sacramento County to apply these chemicals. This is the exact same training and certification a professional operation undergoes. The Railroad is fortunate to have such a fine group of highly trained individuals donating their skills to keep our Railroad free of vegetation defects. Many thanks to the mighty Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, three Mikes were on hand! Michael Florentine, Mike H., Mike T., joined Frank, Joe Margucci, Jack, and Heather for some Thursday evening MOW fun. The machines in Old Sac. were thirsty. They needed fuel. Because of the protest going on downtown that closed off all the streets leading to Old Sac., the Team decided to bring the machines over to the Shops for fueling rather than taking the fuel to them. Mike F. hopped on Green Machine 2 (GM2) and grabbed two 55-gallon drums of red-diesel and spotted them next to the Transfer Table Lead. In Old Sac., Mike H. took out the tie-shear while Joe and Jack moved the Jackson 125. Along with the tamper, the three machines were lined up on the 560 Track where conductor Frank got them across the UP Main. "Fill 'er up!" was called as the machines pulled up to the 55-gallon drums. Once fully fed, the machines were returned to Old Sacramento. Mike F. on GM2 put the empty drums away then grabbed a bundle of new ties which he and Heather chained to the forks. So, everything was ready for a quick departure on Saturday morning!

Joe, Ed, Harry Voss, Mike F., and Heather had plenty of doughnuts waiting for them on Saturday morning as they arrived at the Shops. Despite being few in number, Heather, Mike F., Harry, Ed, and Joe were determined to change out as many ties as humanly possible on this last Saturday of unfettered access to the SSRR Mainline prior to the start of the 2018 operating season. Heather was EIC and arranged the movement of equipment in Old Sac. Joe handled the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. Ed piloted the Kalamazoo pulling the hydraulic power units. Heather took out the Tamper. With new ties already loaded on GM2, Mike F. headed straight for Baths followed by Harry in the truck. A particularly nasty nest of bad ties at about Mile Post 2.7 was the target. Joe and Mike F. pulled spikes by hand because the hydraulic power unit was acting up. Next, the 125 was brought in to pull out the nasty nest of ties. Some of the ties simply disintegrated as the 125 tried to pull them. So Joe and Ed, who never give up – or let a shattered tie defeat them – dug it out by hand which was not an easy undertaking. Once the bulk of the tie-debris was removed, the 125's scarifier function was used to create a new tie-crib. Mike F. on GM2 set down the bundle of new ties in order to pick up all the dead-ties littering the bike-path. Ed, Joe, and Heather all helped shimmy them onto the forks. They were placed in a pile out of the way. Then Mike grabbed the bundle of new ties and, at each empty tie-crib, Ed and Joe rolled one off the bundle. With the new ties deployed, Mike F. headed to Setzer with all the dead-ties to deposit in the dead-tie pile down there.

Following lunch, Heather, Joe, and Ed lined the new ties up for insertion. In came the 125 to pull the new ties under the rails. As each new tie was inserted, the 125's track-jacks were used to lift the rails just enough to insert tie-plates between the tie the base of the rail. Once the ties inserted and plated, Heather fired-up the tamper and tamped all them to compact the rock beneath them. Then, she headed up the line to continue tamping low-joints between MP 2.7 and MP 2.1. This section of track contains lots of undersized sticks of rail – rails that are 10, 15, 20-feet in length, all jumbled up, rather than the standard 39-foot lengths. That combined with several low-joints in the area makes the train wobble a bit through this segment of track. While Heather was tamping low joints, Joe, Ed, and Mike F. set spikes at all the new ties. Then, another attempt at getting the hydraulic power unit working was made so that they could use the hydraulic spike-driver rather than drive them by hand. Alas, the attempt was futile. So, EIC Heather declared that it was time to pack it in. The Team loaded up and headed back to Old Sacramento. Despite some challenges, it was a very successful day for we few, we happy few, we band of *MOW* brothers and *sisters*.

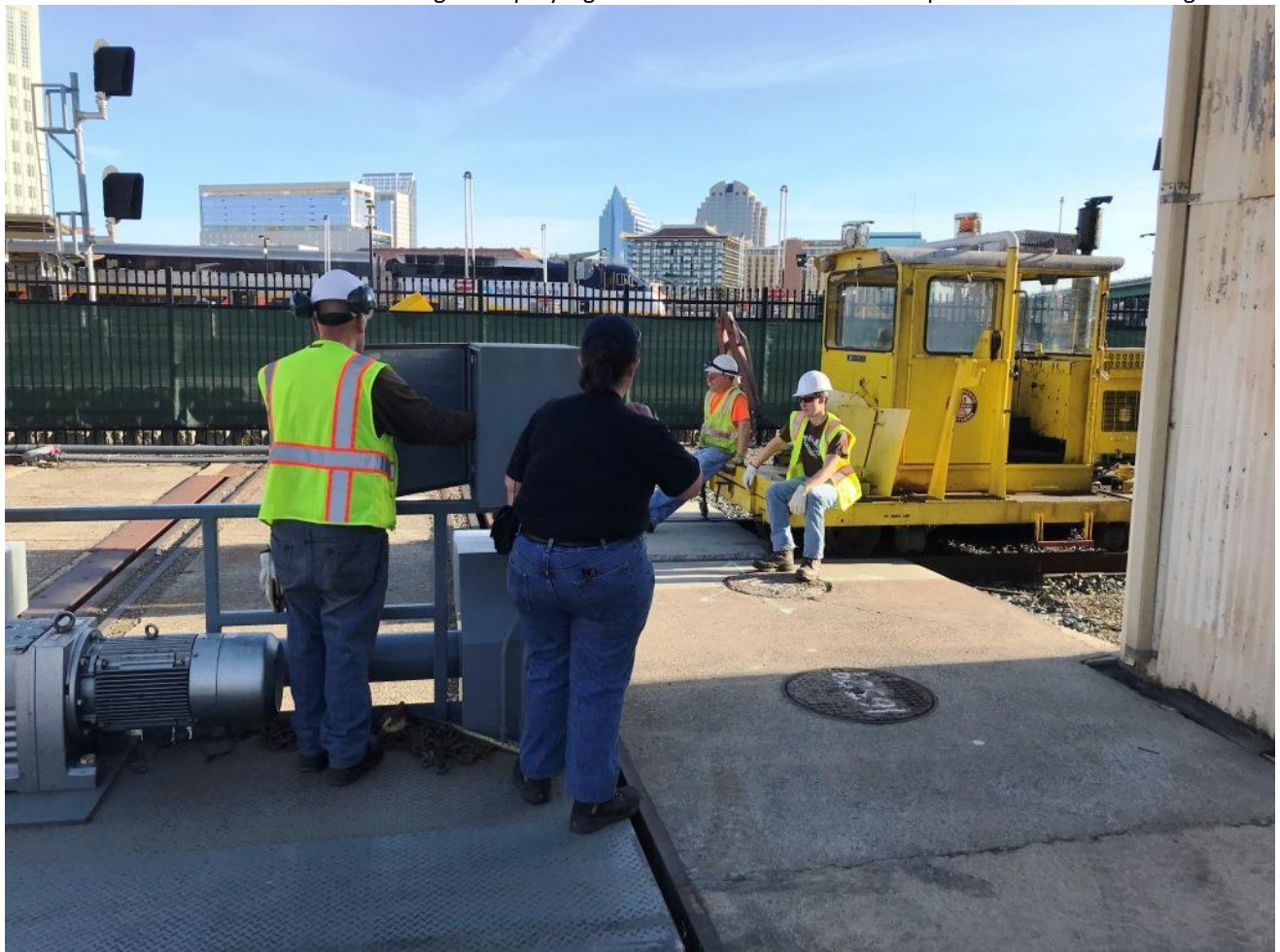
This coming week, the MOW Team will meet at the Shops starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. Thursday, the Weed Team will continue its weed eradication efforts, this time at Hood. Meet at the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. Saturday, the MOW Team will commence activities at 8 o'clock a.m., this time, under the protection of train orders. To all who dedicate their time and talents to the MOW Team, thank you so very much!

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



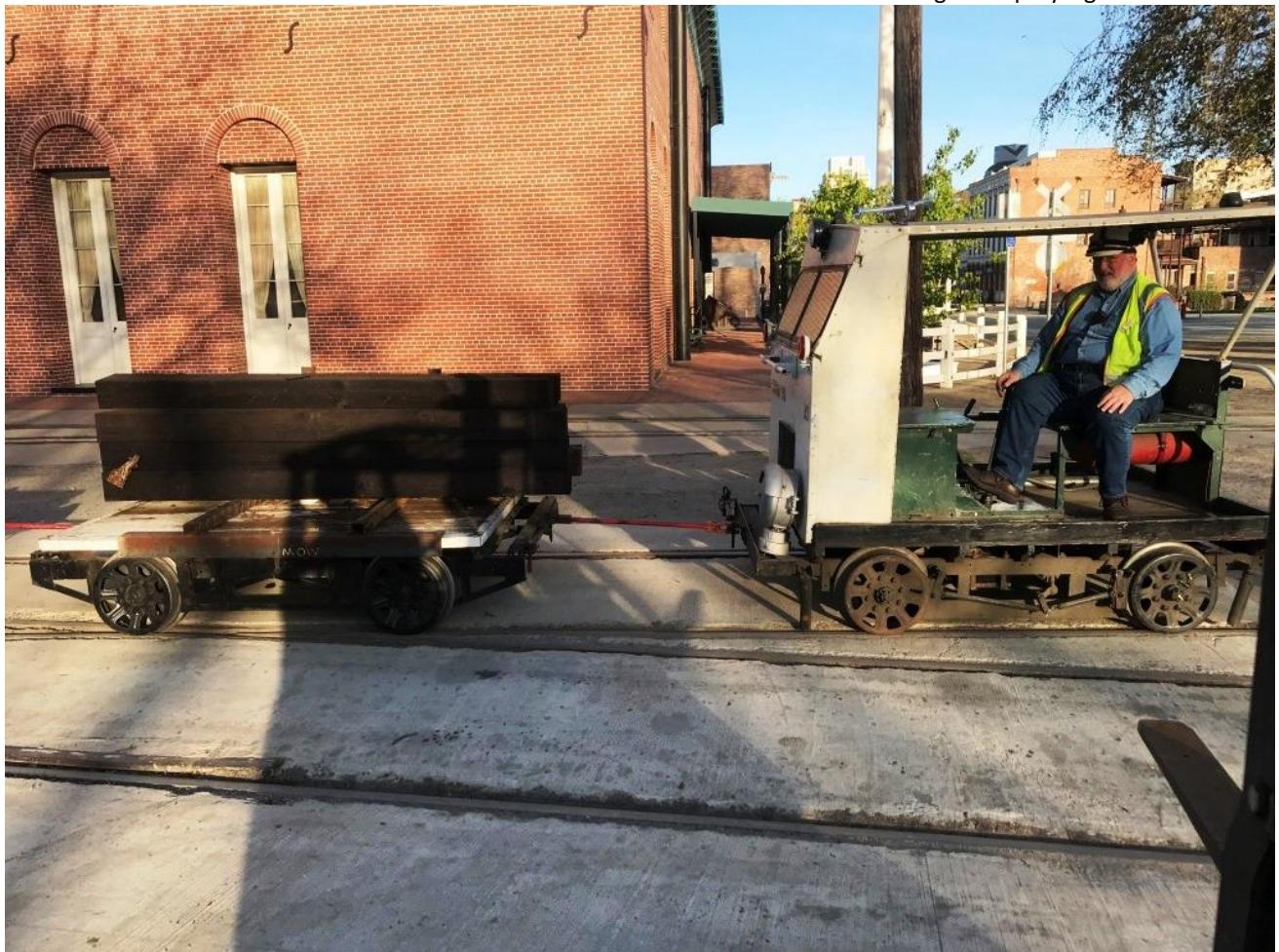
Dave and Heather move the 500-gallon spray-rig on the transfer table to meet up with the Kalamazoo tug



Mike H., Jack, and the Kalamazoo are ready and waiting to pull the spray-rig over to Old Sacramento



Matt and Jack in the Kalamazoo arrive in Old Sacramento with the 500-gallon spray-rig



Frank moves the flat cars out of the CPPS with the A-5 motorcar



As the propane forklift moves ties off the flatcar, Matt repositions a wayward tie that started to roll-off



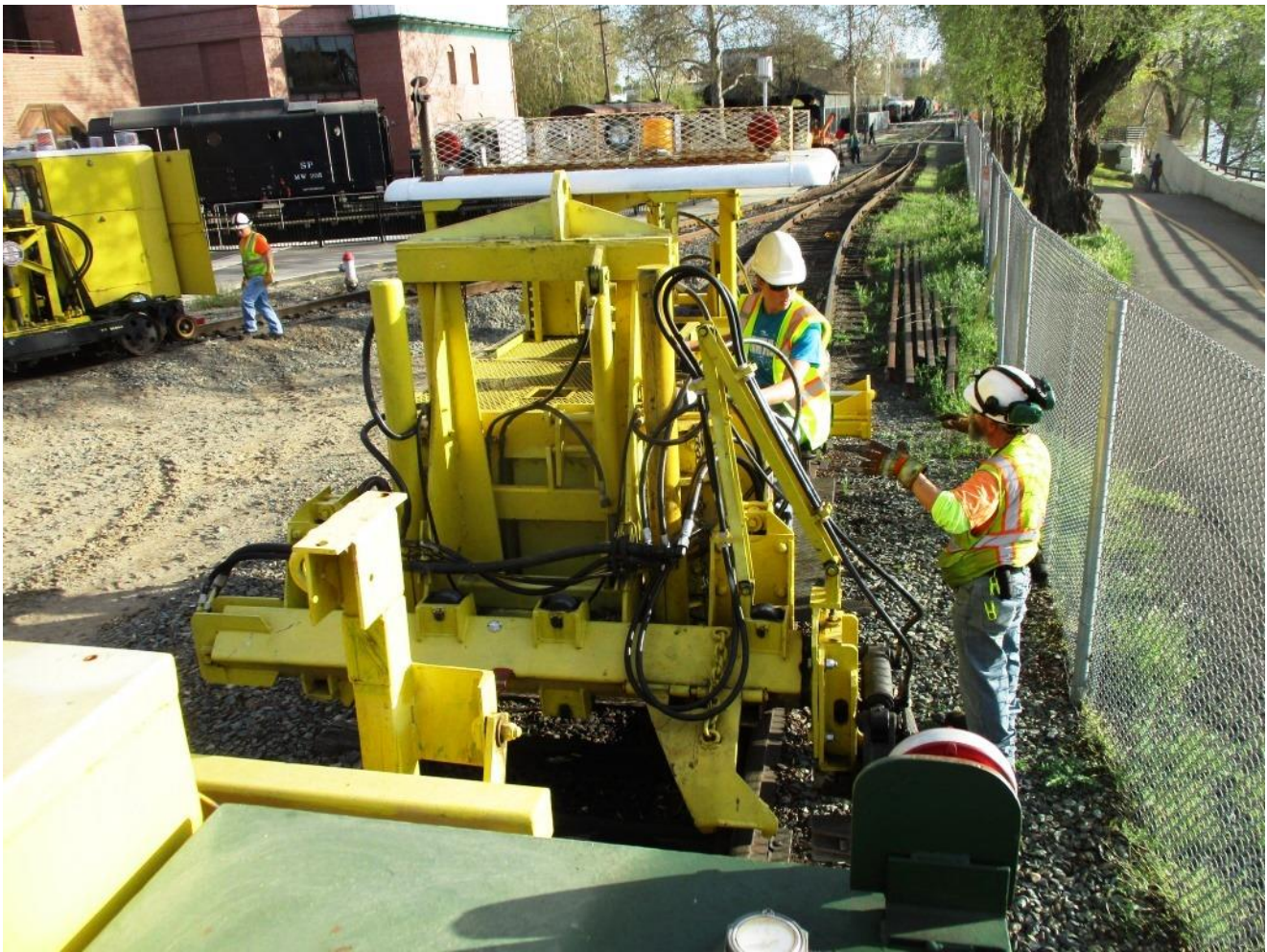
Mike H. switches out the tie-sher



A rare Thursday night convocation: three Mikes!



Mike H. in the tie-sher lines up and ready to roll into the filling station



Jack and Joe prepare to move the Jackson 125



Joe, Mike F., and Mike H. set-up the fueling pump



Mike H. fuels the tamper



Next at pump number one is Jack on the Jackson



While the fueled-up equipment is returned to Old Sac., Mike F. and Heather grab and chain-down a bundle of new ties



Jack takes the yellow Hyster forklift back inside after stowing the empty fuel drums





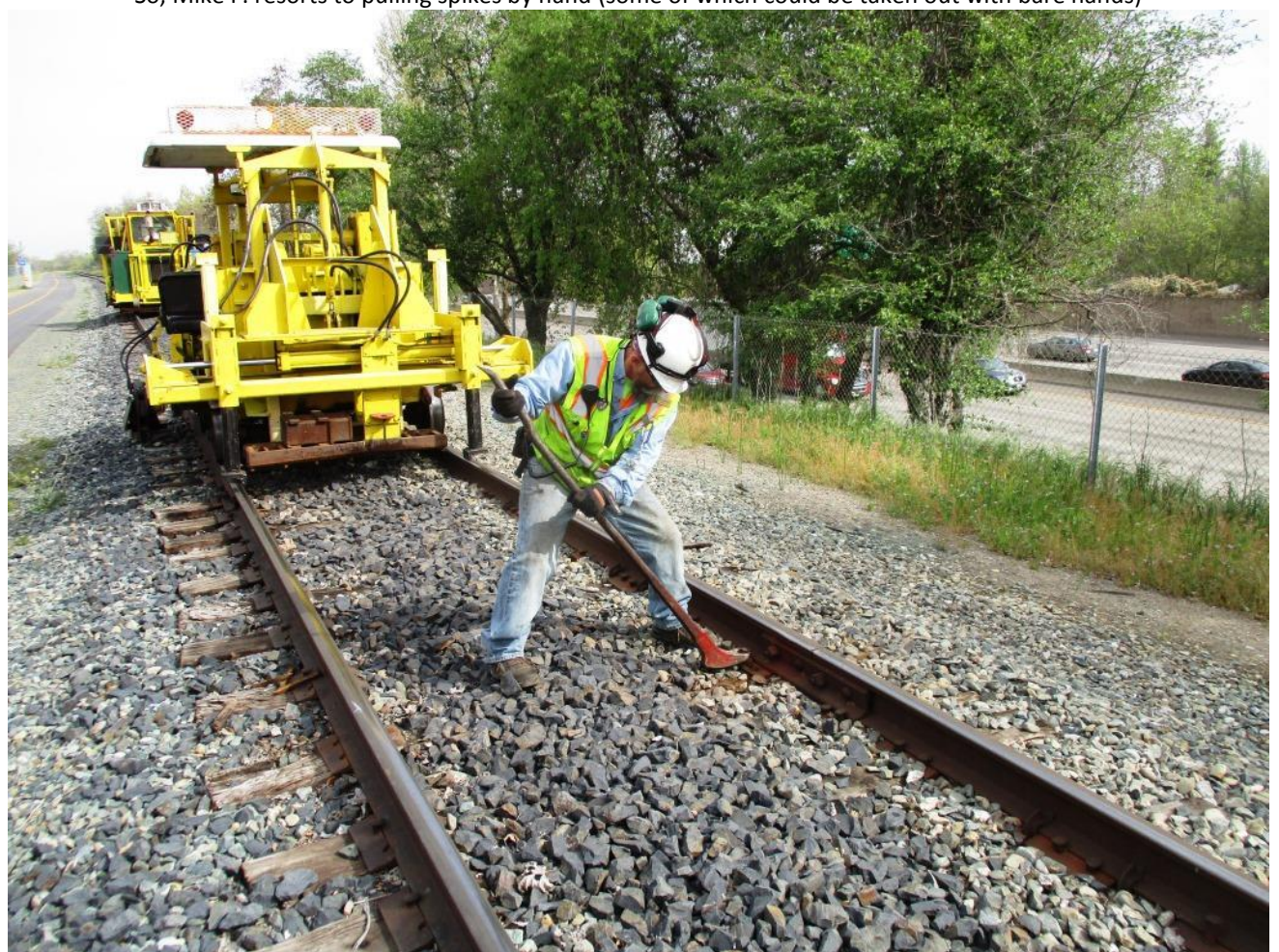
Saturday, down on the line, Ed adds fuel to the hydraulic power unit



Mike F., Joe, and Ed attempt to set up the hydraulic spike puller but, soon discover, something's not quite right



So, Mike F. resorts to pulling spikes by hand (some of which could be taken out with bare hands)



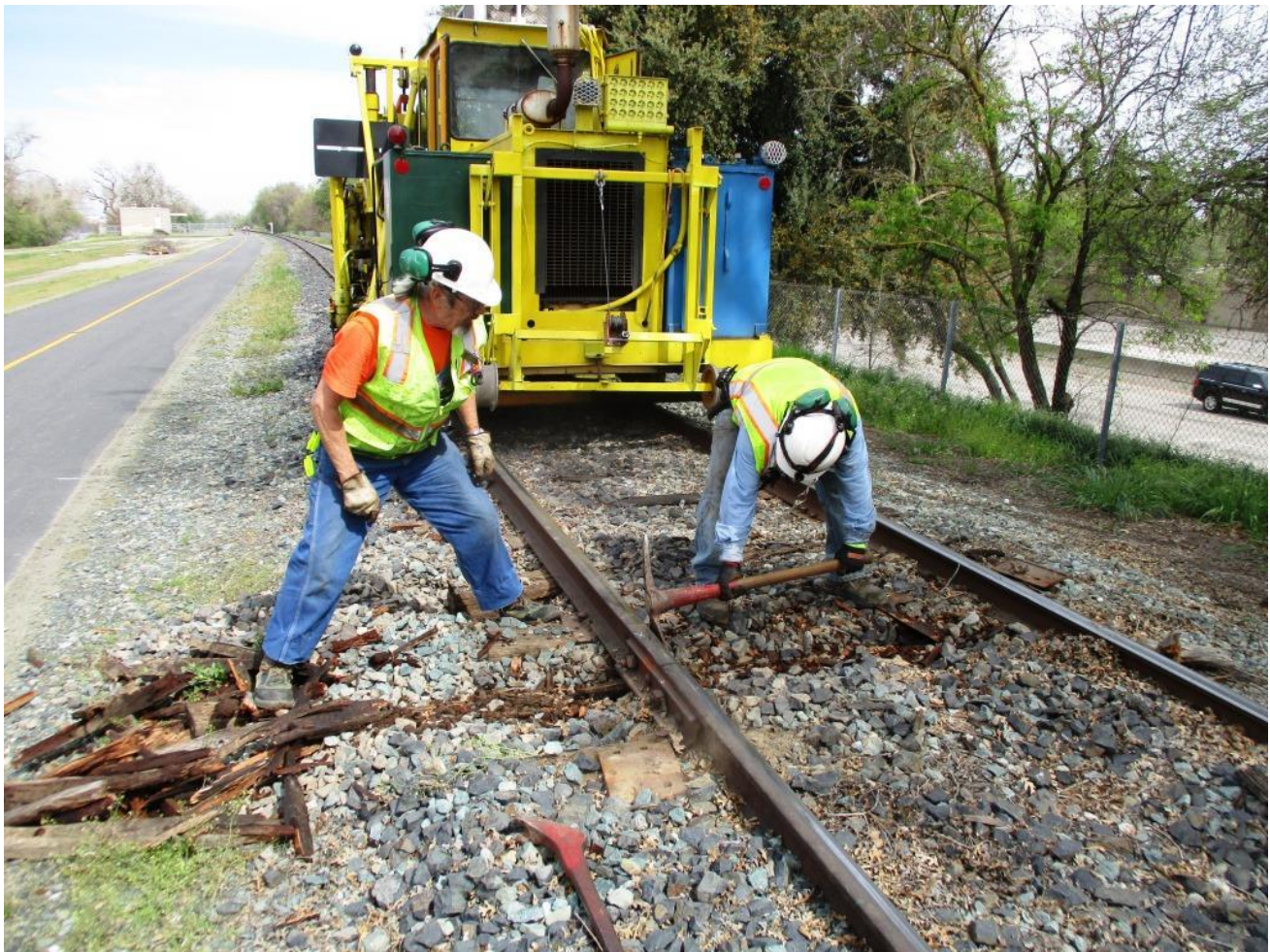
Joe uses the claw-bar to pull spikes



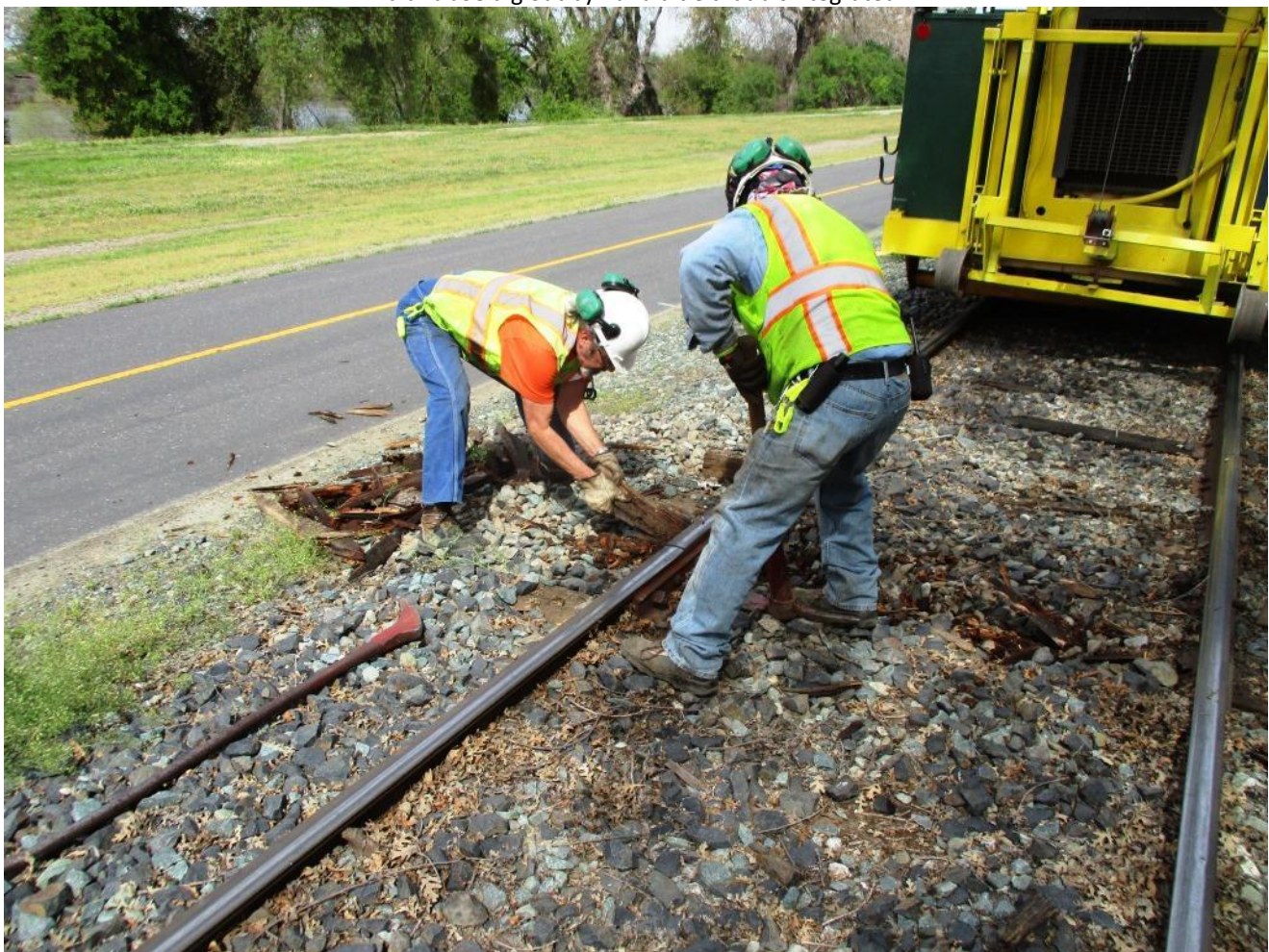
Mike works with the Jackson 125 to remove nasty ties



Heather lines up dead-ties for GM2 to pick up



Ed and Joe dig out by hand a tie that disintegrated



Digging ties out by hand is more proof of Ed and Joe's dedication



Heather carries the cribbing onto which the dead-ties can be stacked once collected



Ed and Joe slide dead-ties onto the forks of GM2



Mike F. on GM2 sets down the first group of dead ties



Joe and Ed deploy new ties at each empty tie-crib



Heather gets ties line up for the Jackson 125 to insert



Joe and Ed set a tie for the Jackson 125 to pull in



Mike F. guides Heather as she tamps the new ties



Mike F. and Joe set spike