

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 10, 2016. Your MOW Team was “cooking with Crisco” this week, making progress on a variety of projects. So, let’s not turn the heat down and allow that Crisco congeal by delaying this update any further!

The north-end of the Erecting Shop was buzzing on Tuesday with Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Frederick Carr, Anthony Filamor, Frank Werry, Jose Gomez, Gene Peck, and Harry Voss all diligently working away. First up, Fred certified the A-5 motorcar ready to return to Old Sacramento (Fred always guarantees his work until the machine rolls out the door...). Jose, on the forklift, grabbed it from off the lift-stand on which it was spotted and weaved his way through the building to place it on the rails. Heather and Anthony continued servicing and repairing and our primary inspectors’ motorcar, the A-6. While it’s in the Shops, Cliff is building a bracket to attach a bell to the front-end. The bell will improve safety when moving through Old Sac. – especially with all the blind-spots around the Santa Fe locomotives. Then, Frank, Jose, and Anthony headed to the south-end of the Erecting Shop to service and start the 1931 Ford Model AA rail-mounted firetruck. It hadn’t been started in over a year. After a little coaxing, they were able to fire it to life! It was an excellent evening of great progress.

Thursday, Conductor Heather, Engineer Mike H. and Brakeman Anthony prepared to take the A-5 motorcar over to Old Sac. When crossing the UP Main, the A-5 does not trigger the signals and, therefore, the dispatcher in Omaha cannot see it on his/her board. So, the Kalamazoo tug, which does triggers the signal system, was brought over to the Rail Yards to tow the A-5 back to Old Sacramento. The Team handled the Kalamazoo’s round-trip with ease and stowed the A-5 in the Central Pacific Passenger Station for use by the Interpretive Handcar Program. But, when deploying the Kalamazoo, they discovered that someone had tried to break into its battery box to steal the battery. Although the attempt failed, the battery box was badly mangled and needs to be re-built – another job for Cliff. Speaking of Cliff, he got the bell-bracket built on Thursday and ready to install. Fred and Harry did some electrical work on the A-6 motorcar. Yep, the good days roll on!

Like *Old Faithful* at Yellowstone, the great pink box made its anticipated appearance on Saturday morning thanks to Chris Carlson. Anxiously awaiting its arrival were Harry, Pam Tatro, Chris Machado, Steve Wilson, and Heather who would serve as EIC for the day. Although it was a bit wet and dank outside, the Team hopped right to it and headed back to Miller Park to continue restoring the proper super-elevation in the south-curve. While on a track inspection, trusty track-inspector, Frank, took measurements on the area we leveled last week and found that a portion of it did not hold. So Heather and the Team were determined to re-double their efforts. Steve and Chris M. brought the tamper down from Old Sac. Pam and Harry began digging under the base of the rail to set track-jacks. Heather measured elevation with the track-level as Harry and Pam cranked on the jacks. With the proper super-elevation of the west rail set, Chris M. and Steve began tamping to the track to the new level. This time it appeared to hold. As train-time approached, the Team prepared to head back to Old Sac.

Meanwhile, in the CSRM East Theater, the second offering of “Roadway Worker Safety Training,” fondly known as “Part 214 Training,” was underway. Code of Federal Regulations Title 49 Part 214 requires that members of the MOW Team, Signal Department, Handcar Program and those, “whose primary duties include the movement and protection of trains,” are trained in on-track safety procedures every calendar year. About 30 attended the training and passed the grueling examination including MOW Team manager Chris C., and regulars Anthony, Jose, Clem Meier, Mike Miller, John Rexroth, Taka Blackburn, and Dave Megeath. In addition, Mike Taylor gave his presentation on the pesticide protocols used by the Weed Team. The MOW Team sends a special shout-out and big thanks to CSRM Chief Guide, Jason Rankins, who saved the day when we were experiencing technical problems. He made it possible for the presentation to precede Thank you, Jason!

Following Part 214 training, Chris C. Mike T., John, and Mike M. joined-in on the MOW Fun. The Team spent the afternoon working on Switch 101, the switch behind the turntable, which was still giving us some trouble. Chris M. brought in the tamper to tamp-up the head-block. Tamping a head-block is very delicate job because all the mechanical switch-bits are in the way. Chris C. and Steve kept a keen eye on the tamper’s tines as Chris M. lowered them around all the switch-bits. With the other switch ties, EIC Heather decided it was best to bring in the hand-tampers. First, Mike T. raked and Steve used the compressor’s air-wand to remove the organic debris from the switch. Then, Anthony and Steve used the pneumatic hand-tampers (and teeth chatterers) around the other switch ties carefully avoiding the switch-bits. But, we were not getting the “lift” we needed to effect switch movement. The rock was already pretty well compacted around the ties. As Chris C. investigated, he decided we needed to try to square-up some of the ties to the north of the head-block. John, Steve, and Mike T. set track-jacks in the horizontal position and began cranking on them. Anthony then got his first lesson in tamper operation. Although not perfect, the switch is throwing much better now. The final act of the day was to take the Kalamazoo over to the Shops so that Cliff can repair the battery box. Conductor Heather and engineer Steve took care of that. Despite the rain, it was a good day all around.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather on Tuesday and Thursday at the regular time of at or before 5 o’clock. Saturday, the MOW Team *may* be going on an adventure to Hood. The head-block at the Hood container switch needs replacing. So, if the Tuesday and Thursday crews can work out the logistics, the pink box brigade will head to Hood on Saturday. Meet at the Shops at 8 o’clock a.m. It should be a very interesting day. Many thanks to everyone on the MOW Team for working in the rain on Saturday. Also, thank you to everyone who took the Part 214 training. *Now, I expect to see all of you out on the line enjoying doughnuts with the MOW Team!* If you were unable to attend either Part 214 class and still want to be qualified, please contact me and arrangements will be made.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Jose on the forklift and Frank position the A-5 on the rails in preparation for its return to Old Sacramento



Anthony and Heather continue repair work and servicing work on the A-6 motorcar





Anthony, Frank, and Jose get the 1931 Ford Model AA rail-mounted firetruck started



The excruciating, intensive, grueling, and in-depth Part 214 open-book examination in progress





Pam uses a mattocks-tool to dig under the base of the rail in order to set a jack



Steve guides Chris M. in the tamper as they level the track through Miller Park





Harry sets a jack at a location where the west rail is low



With all the jacks lined-up, the super-elevation was restored to the curve and Chris M. and Steve tamp the track to the new level





Back in town, Steve provides signals from the ground as Chris M. pilots the tamper up to Switch 101 to carefully tamp the head-block



Chris C. and Steve closely monitor the tines as the descend around critical switch components





Chris C. and Steve keep a close eye on the switch-bits as Chris M. tamps-up the head-block

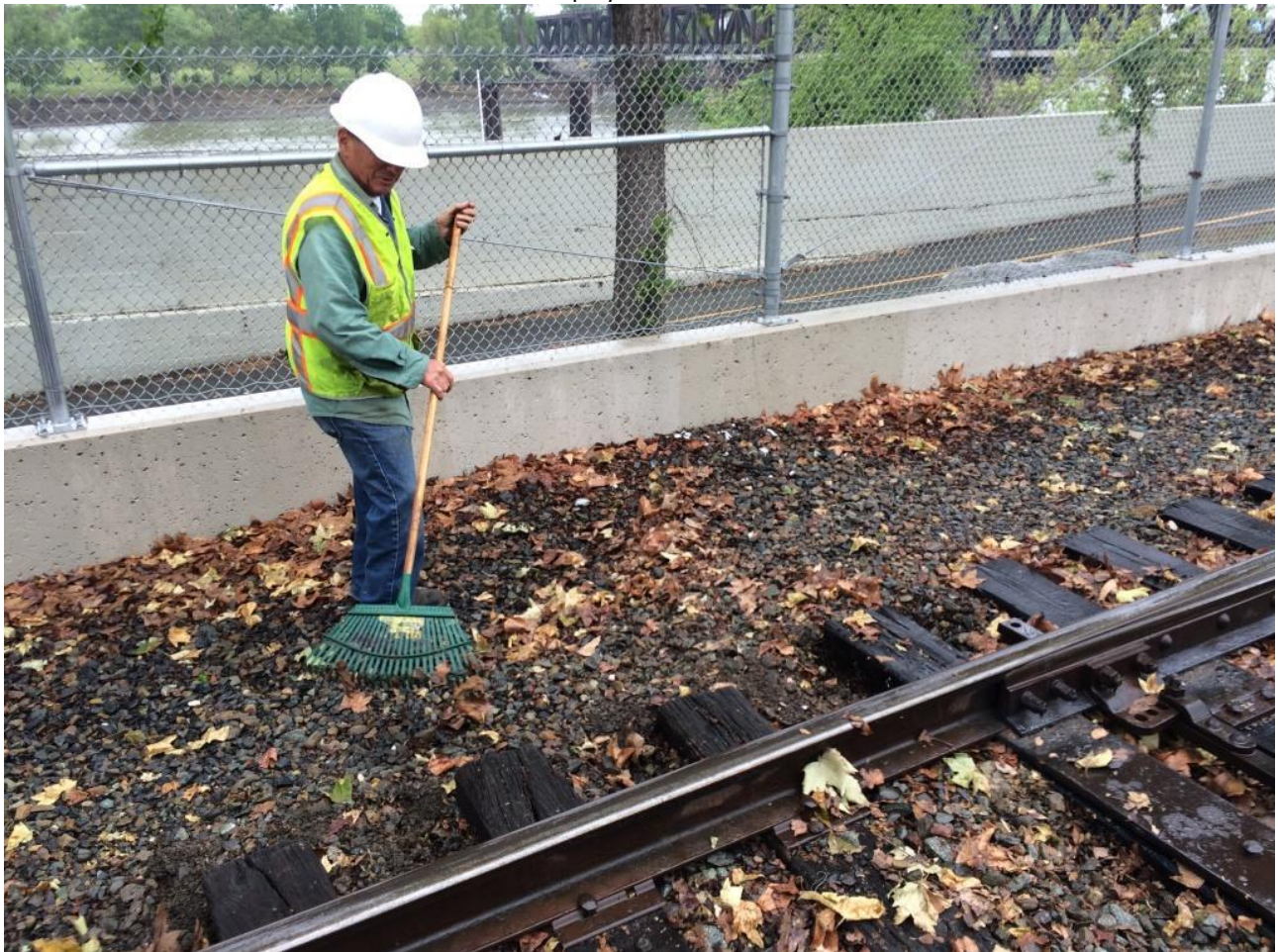


Steve throws the switch to see if tamping the head-block made any difference





Chris C. and Steve deploy the MOW Team's work-train

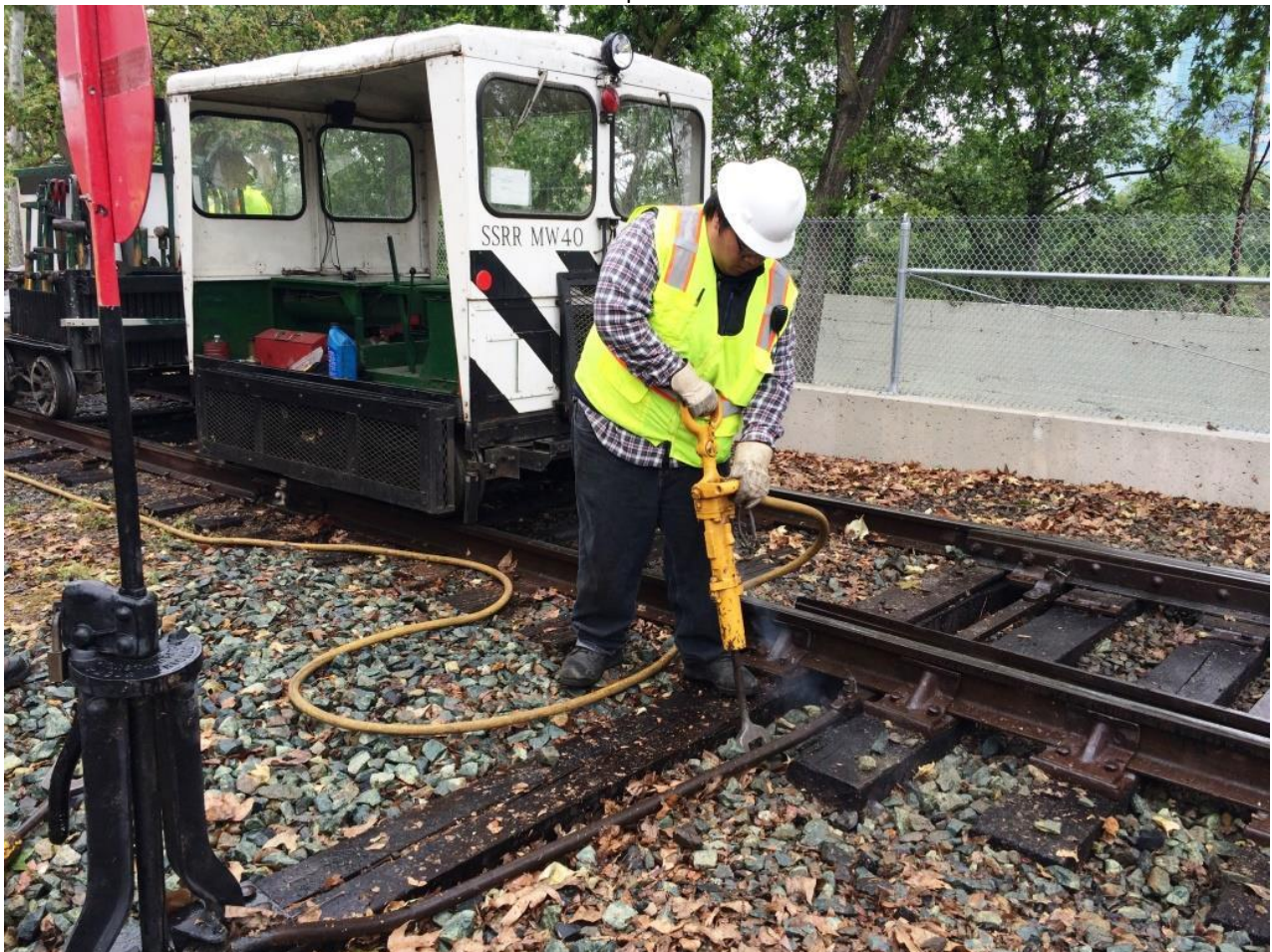


Mike T. clears away organic debris from the switch





Steve uses the air-wand from the air-compressor to blow-out debris from switch-bits



Anthony employs the teeth-chattering pneumatic hand-tamper to tamp ties that the tamper could not



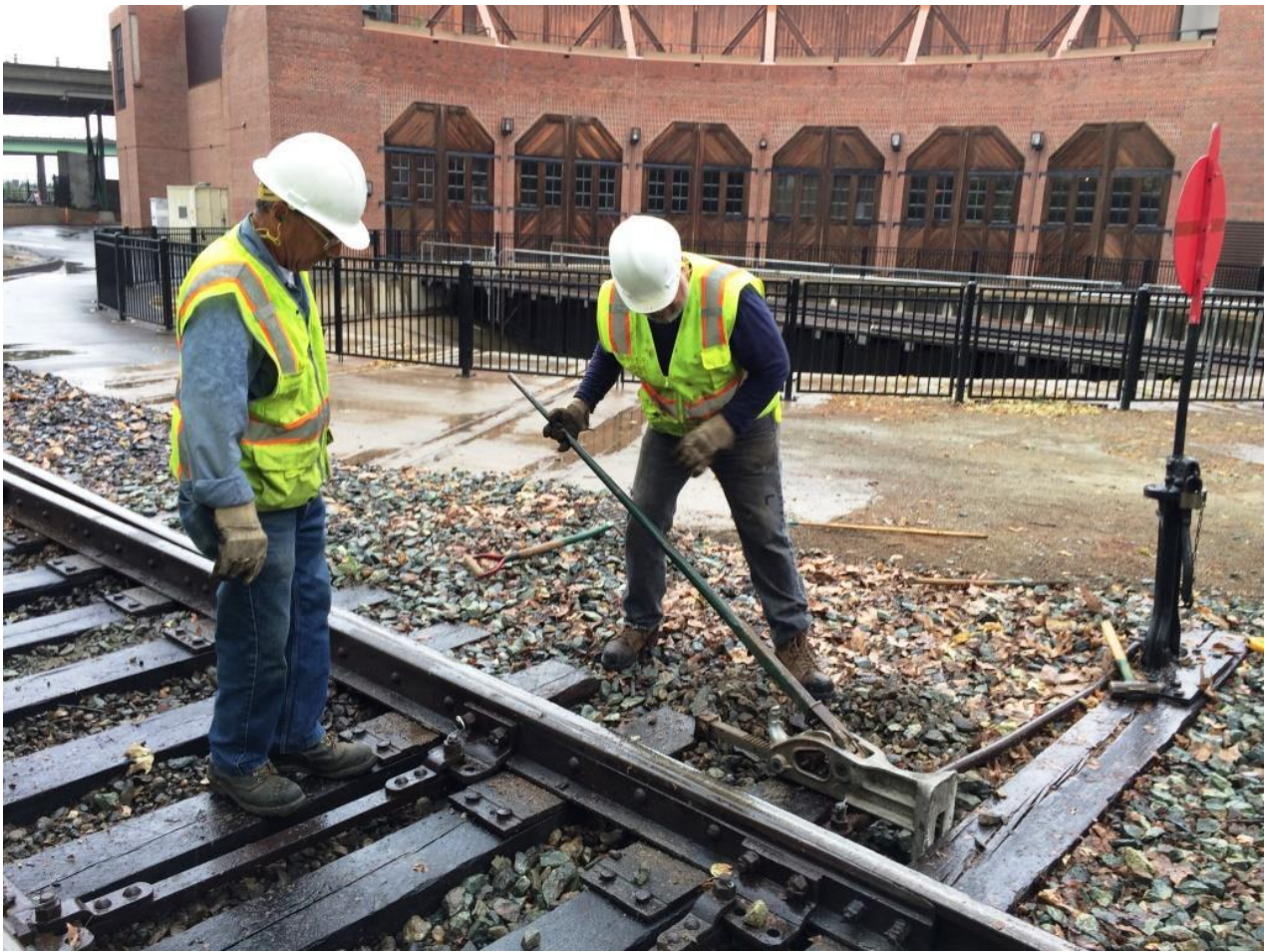


Steve hand-tamps switch-ties as Chris C. give the switch-plates a "ka-bang" with the ka-banger tool



Meanwhile, EIC Heather replaces the head-light on the A-4





Mike T. observes movement as Steve uses a track-jack to shove the tie to the north of the head-block back a few inches



Now Chris C. tries to straighten catawampus ties with a track-jack





Anthony gets a lesson in tamper operations



Engineer Steve and Conductor Heather take the Kalamazoo over to the Shops for repairs to the battery-box