

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 5, 2015. A new week and a new operating season bring with them lots new stuff to do. So, let's keep this update new and fresh by getting it started ASAP!

On Tuesday the mighty Weed Team gathered early at the Shops to collect their implements of weed eradication. Mike Taylor and his team of Heather Kearns and Dave Megeath used the string trimmers between Broadway and Front Street to tidy up the dead weeds that were sprayed previously. Both at the Setzer material yard and from MP 3.2 to Sutterville Road, they weed-wacked more weeds. After lunch they sprayed weeds on the 560 track, around tie piles, and the turntable at the Shops. Dave was seen with chainsaw in his hand and a look of anticipation for the Team's next venture to Hood on April 21st. Kudos to the mighty Weed Team for their outstanding efforts. They are a dedicated bunch of folks and, without their efforts, the railroad would soon be overgrown and could not function.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops where the owls kept a keen eye on us, the goal for the evening was to remove the hydraulic "kicker" cylinder on the tie-shear. It's the last remaining major thing to fix on that vital machine. The "kickers" literally kick the ends of the tie out after the shears have sliced it in three. While Heather, Gene Peck and Pat Scholzen performed maintenance on the rail-mounted diesel compressor, Team Tie-shear captain, Scott Morrison, along with Mike Harris, Frederic Carr, Alan Hardy, Frank Werry, and Cliff Hayes all joined in the fun. Fred got down in the pit under the machine while Scott, Mike H., Frank, and Alan worked from above to remove the pins holding the cylinder in place. It's a large cylinder weighing in at about 125 pounds so Alan brought in the forklift with the "stinger" attachment and lowered a chain through the machine which Frank and Mike H. wrapped around the cylinder. Scott and Mike H. then pounded out the pins and the team guided the cylinder up through the machine to a place where it can be re-built. We're ever so close to bringing this machine on-line.

Thursday, Cliff, Frank, Mike H., Heather, and Alan kept the Shops buzzing. Earlier in the day, Heather and Frank brought the A-6 motorcar and rail-lifter over to the Shops from Old Sacramento. The A-6 was acting up and needed servicing. After a couple hours work, it was ready to go back to Old Sac. along with the compressor which Pat and Gene managed to get working again on Tuesday. We'd need both machines on Saturday. Cliff continued his welding work while Mike H. attempted to diagnose the problem with the A-5 motorcar which had died the previous Saturday. Alan continued on his quest to set a record for the most amount of yellow paint spread by one man in all of human history. More great progress thanks to the dedicated MOW Team!

Friday, Chris Carlson spent his vacation day in the Shops working on the Big Green Machine's brakes. This machine is nearly ready to return to service – just waiting on some ordered parts to arrive. He also delved into the A-5's engine and removed the water-pump. Alas, he determined that the problem is more than just the water-pump. Further investigation is required but, it doesn't look good.

And now for something completely different. For months, the Team has been changing-out bad ties like crazy. Now, with a new week and 2015 operating season upon us, we switched gears. Saturday, Clem Meier, Alan, Mile Willis, Frank, Pam Tatro, Michael Florentine, and Signals Joe Galipeau were greeted by Harry Voss and a big pink box of doughnuts for all to enjoy. The day's task: unbury and service rail-joints along Embassy Suites Alley. Our trusty track inspectors have been making note of several issues in the area (not the least of which was the buckling asphalt impeding the progress of the motorcar). This area is all within the Capitol Mall grade-crossing warning system circuit so Signals Joe was with us to deactivate the Capitol Mall system and keep an "owl-eye" on us while we worked around bond-wires. The jack-hammer was deployed to break-up the asphalt around the joints so we could access the bolts. Mike F. and Mike W. traded off that task. They unburied four sets of joints. Clem, with face-shield protection, blew the debris out using the air wand attachment on the compressor. Pam and Frank followed behind with shovels and broom to clean it all up. Now that the joints were exposed, we could finally see how nasty they looked. Many bolts were loose and rusted and the joint-bars were rattling against the rails which caused that "ringing" sound every time something passed over. So, they were given a good soaking in Kroil. After lunch, the crew returned to see if the Kroil had worked. Sure enough, the bolts started spinning. Kroil is magic stuff. Frank, Mike F., Mike W., and Harry took turns tightening bolts then pounding on the joint-bars with sledgehammers and the jackhammer to shake any looseness out of them. On one joint in particular, we managed to get enough turns on the nuts to expose a half-inch of threads. Then Frank, the two Mikes, Frank, Harry, and Alan filled in the holes with pea-gravel to eliminate trip-hazards. And, all of this was done with trains running through our work-limits. It was a good day and the Team accomplished a significant amount. We will be returning the next couple of weeks to continue repairing these joints. The Team would like to send a great big thank you to Signals Joe for all his help. Also, thanks to Dispatcher Joann Cole for producing our clearances and orders, Trainmaster Dick Noonan, DSLE Jeremy Levish, Conductors Tom Peterman and Larry Holcomb, Engineers Harry Forni and Leonard Cassieri, and Fireman Chuck Malley, and for their patience, cooperation, and smooth coordination when traveling through our working limits. Saturday was a fine example of everyone working together to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the Tuesday and Thursday crews will meet at the Shops at or before 5 o'clock as usual. Saturday after doughnuts, we'll head back down to the area between Capitol Mall and the Circle of Lights to continue servicing the rail-joint. Many thanks to the MOW Team volunteers for your tremendous dedication. Always remember, no track, no trains...

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Cliff molding metal for our machines



Alan on the forklift lowers a chain to be wrapped around the "kicker" cylinder



Mike H. and Scott work on pounding-out a pin holding the cylinder in place



Research indicates that Alan has applied more yellow paint than any man in the history of human kind



Mike F. using the spade-bit on the jackhammer shaves-off rippling asphalt along the flangeway



Mike W. cuts away at the asphalt around a rail joint



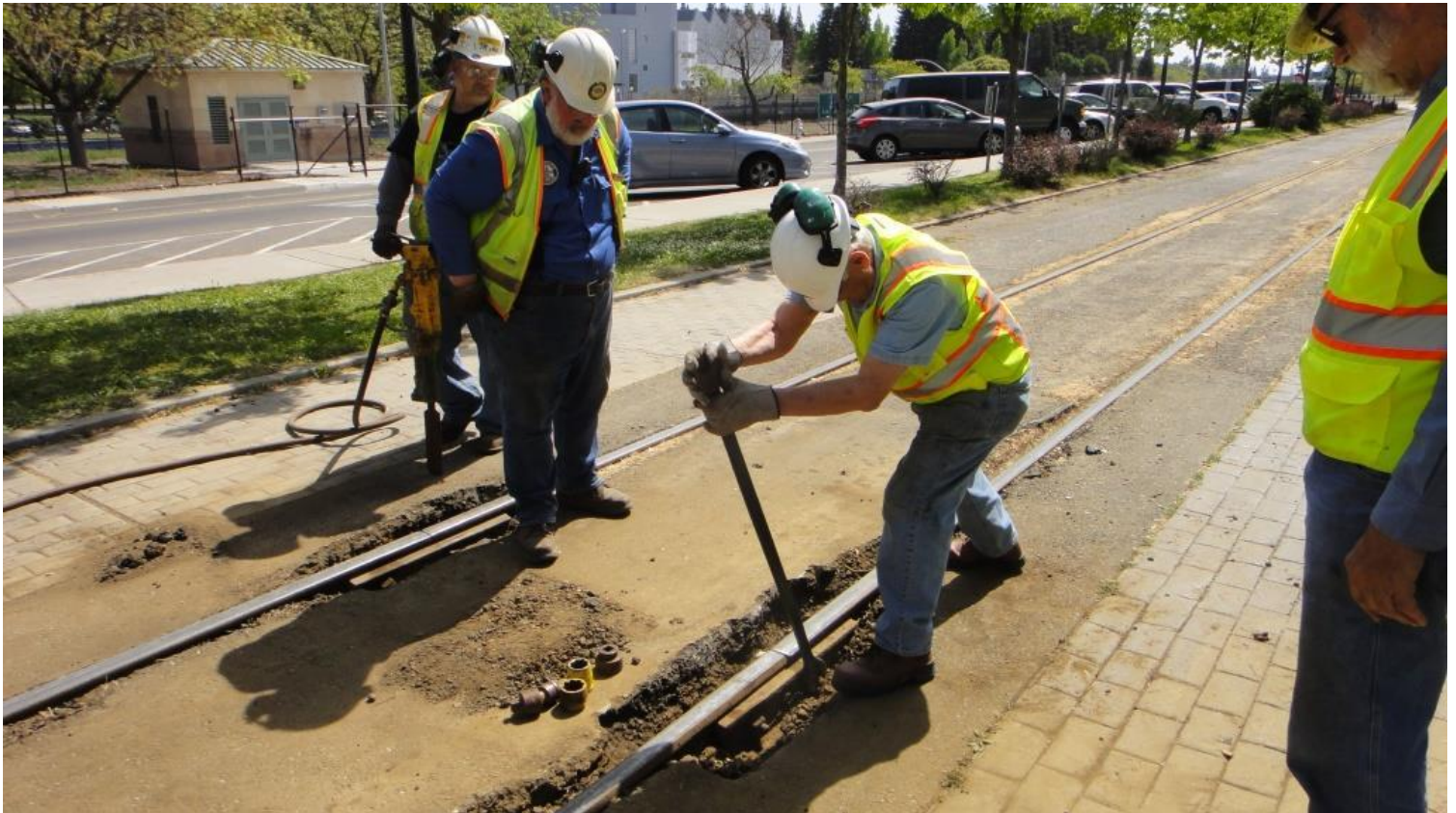
Practicing his Weed Team skills, Mike F. removes an offending blackberry vine



Clem blows all the crud and corruption out from around the rail-joint with the wand attachment on the air compressor



Pam and Frank transfer the debris from the ground into the dumpster



Mike W. tightens down bolt using the track-wrench. Good body mechanics there...



Mike F. taps the top of the joint-bar to shake out any debris caught between it and the web of the rail



The MOW Team's three wise monkeys...



The two Mikes shovel pea-gravel into the holes around the exposed joints



Crunch! As the 2008 rolled over the newly filled joint, lots of crunching sounds were heard as it crushed loose gravel in the flange ways