

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 2, 2017. Well, this week we saw the season finale of the SSRR's off-season and the MOW Team's exclusive occupancy of the track. So, before this show gets cancelled, let's get this episode of the update on-air.

Anticipation for the big finale began on Tuesday when Pat Scholzen, Alan Hardy, Cliff Hayes, Weston Snyder, Matt McCracken, Joe Margucci, Chris Carlson, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, Heather Kearns, and Mike Harris all tuned-in. A special edition of the MOW Team show was scheduled for Friday so the Team would spend the evening prepping for it. We still have lots of rock to drop on the track and regulate between Clunie and Broadway. So, Frank took the back-hoe to Setzer where he met Weston and Joe in the Kalamazoo tug pulling the ballast-hopper cars. To speed things up, Matt took the A-6 motorcar down to Setzer to grab the first two hoppers that were loaded to the work site while the other two were being filled. At Clunie, Matt met up with Chris who disgorged the rock from the first two hoppers along the sides of the track. A few moments later, Weston and Joe showed up with the Kalamazoo shoving the other two hoppers. They were quickly disgorged and the process continued. Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Heather and Mike H. tried to get the front-end loader working again. After some effort, they determined that the issues with the machine may be more complex than initially thought. As darkness descended, the Team gathered in the Erecting Shop to discuss the next stage of prep for Thursday then headed off into the night.

The Weed Team had a very successful day on Thursday for what was likely the final day at Hood for a while. Mike Taylor, Heather, Ed Kottal, and Weston did more mowing of the ramp leading up to the top of the levee where Weedies' container is situated. They also continued trimming and fighting back against the green invasion. Another outstanding day for the Weedies. For the foreseeable future, the Weed Team will concentrate on the SSRR Mainline. Many thanks to the outstanding volunteers of the mighty Weed Team!

Thursday evening was déjà vu all over again for Matt, Alan, Joe, Mike H., Chris, and Frank. More rock would be loaded into hoppers and disgorged on the Mainline. Heather was EIC, Mike H. at the helm of the Kalamazoo, Frank loaded rock with the back-hoe, and Matt handled the motorcar. Anyway, you know the story. Rock was loaded and hauled to the worksite where it was spread. Back at the Shops, the Team loaded the truck with the necessary supplies. We were ready for our extra special Friday edition of MOW.

"They Call the Wind Mariah" and, man, was she angry on Friday. Gusts up to 40 miles per hour greeted Alan, Joe, Chris, Harry Voss, Clem Meier, Mike Willis, Ed, Weston, Matt, Mike H., Bev Ratzlaff, and Michael Florentine for this extra special Friday edition of the MOW Team. But, Mariah was no match for the draw of doughnuts, of which there were plenty. This would be the last day until October that the MOW Team would have unfettered access to the Mainline. The Team was determined to finish-up with the track-raise project before the opening day of train season. Harry took the back-hoe to Setzer, Ed and Chris would take out the ballast regulator, Mike H. the Kalamazoo, Weston and Heather handled the tamper, Joe took out the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, Alan fired-up the tie-crane, and Mike F. drove the motorcar. The Team had 29 ties left to plate and spike from the 45 that were replaced last week. While Mike H. Harry filled ballast cars, Chris and Ed plowed the rock laid on Tuesday and Thursday to clear it off the ties. Joe would use the rail-jacks on the 125 to lift the rail slightly so that tie-plates could be inserted. Bev, Clem, Matt, Weston, Mike F., Mike W., and Joe set spikes then used the pneumatic spike driver to drive them home. Mike H. brought in the filled ballast cars. Bev, Heather, Matt, and Mike W. disgorged the rock. Alan brought the tie-crane in to pick up all the dead ties along the line. Clem and Mike F. worked with him to make sure the dead ties were stable on the flat-cars. It was quite a show as six machines were all operating within the same limited space. The coordination thereof was, at times, mentally taxing on the EIC. To make it possible to use so many machines within the north approach to Broadway, our good friends from the Signal Department, Dale Parker and Paul Helman removed the grade-crossing warning system from service for the day. A tremendous amount of work got done. A super-big thanks to the super-fantastic volunteers of the MOW Team who came out on Friday to help on Friday!

By Saturday, Mariah had calmed down and the draw of more doughnuts brought Alan, Joe, Chris, Steve Nemeth, Jose Gomez, Heather, Ed, Clem, Frank, and Matt back to the Shops for another day of MOW fun out on the line. Mostly touch-up work remained. Clem arrived at the work-site early to set spikes on four remaining ties. Again, Ed and Chris took the regulator to plow and broom the track. Heather and Frank took the Kalamazoo and back-hoe to Setzer for one more load of rock. Matt brought the motorcar. With spikes set, Jose and Steve drove them deep into the ties with the pneumatic spike driver. Frank, Joe, and Matt disgorged more rock. Ed and Chris made several trips over the whole length of the raise plowing and pulling rock between the rails and packing it down. Meanwhile, Alan was in the tamper and started at the north end of the project area and tamped every tie along the way. With the track now in excellent shape the EIC annulled the slow-order that had been issued through the project site for the duration of the work. Soon, it was train time and, for the first time in 2017, the Team gave way and cleared the track. All eyes were on the on the track as the train rolled over and it was solid. No pumping at all. With that, the Team headed back to Old Sacramento. In the afternoon, the Team decided to take a train-ride and check out how the train felt rolling over the upgraded track. All their efforts had paid off. It was definitely a smooth ride. These incredible dedicated volunteers are building a better railroad and can take pride in their tremendous accomplishments.

This coming week, MOW Shops crews will gather together on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock p.m. The Weed Team will be trimming trees on the Mainline this Thursday. Meet at 8:30 a.m. in the Shops. Saturday, a new adventure beacons for the MOW Team. Doughnuts at 8 a.m. Many thanks to everyone for putting in so much extra time this week. No doubt, this Team deserves its doughnuts!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



No, Heather didn't run over Mike H...



Frank on the back-hoe loads rock into ballast hoppers



Chris disengages the center-dump car



Matt drops rock between the rails just under the Pioneer Bridge



At Hood, the Weed Team has done incredible work keeping the line free of weeds. Now, all we need are trains...



Weston and Mike T. on the Hood Line take a quick break



Déjà vu all over again as Frank loads more rock on Thursday



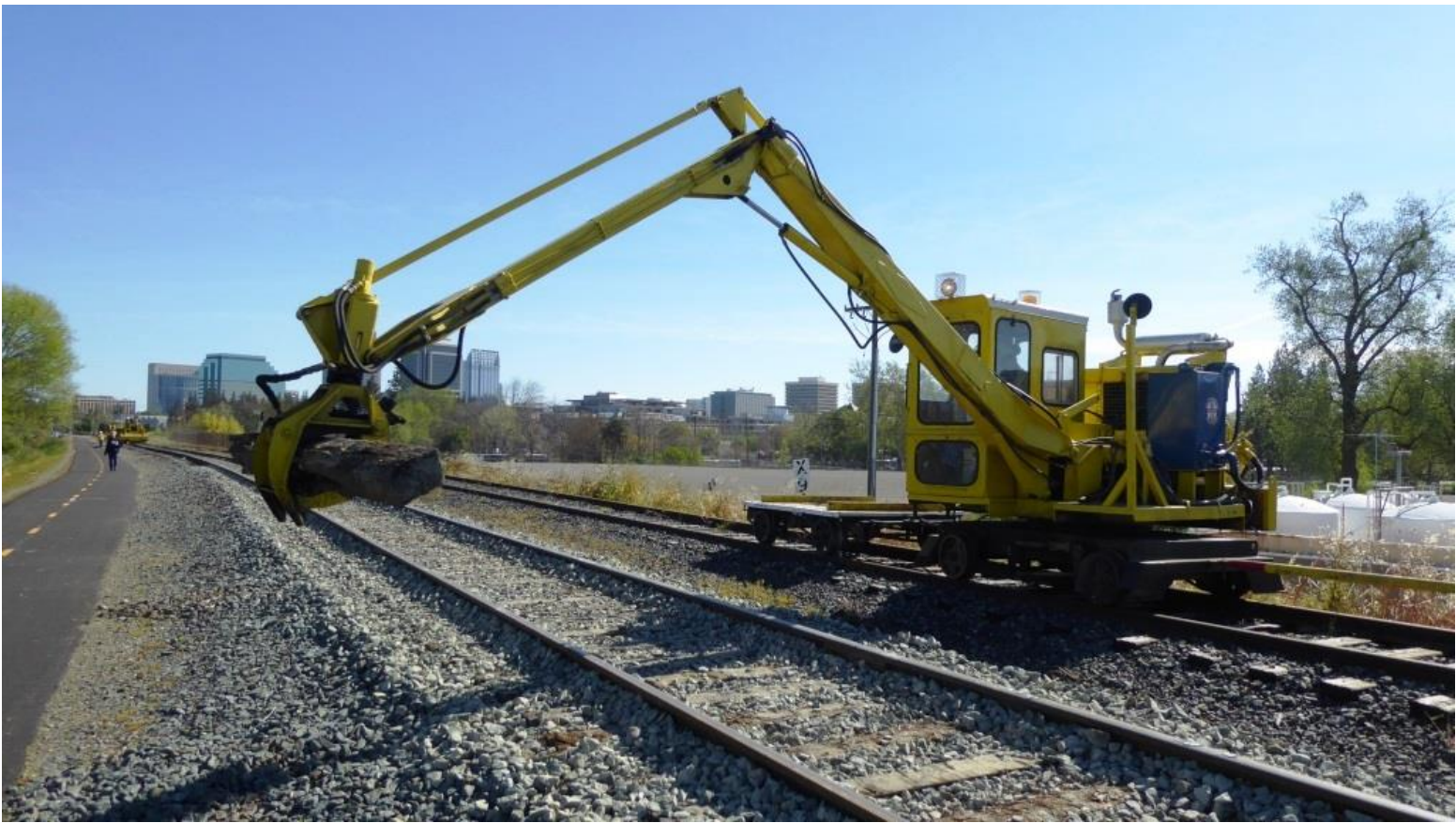
Mike H. signals, "Filled to the rim!"



Mike H. pilots the Kalamazoo as Weston drops rock from the hopper



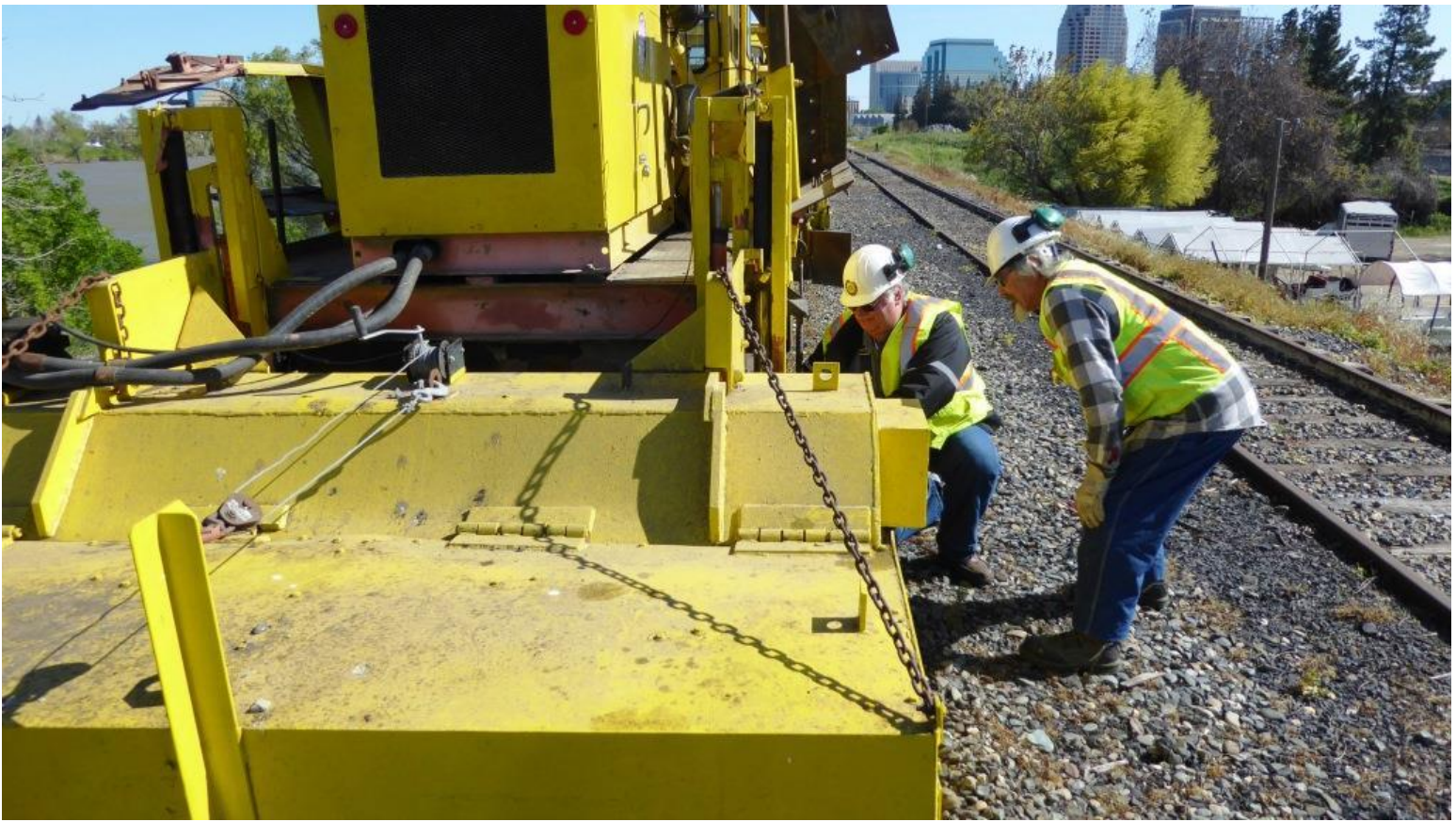
Similar scene, different day. Mike H. again operating the Kalamazoo as Clem and Chris drop rock on Friday



Alan in the tie-crane picking up the dead ties along the line



As the tie-crane places ties on the flatcar, Clem adjust them and makes sure they won't fall off



Chris and Ed make an adjustment to the regulator as they prepare to deploy the broom

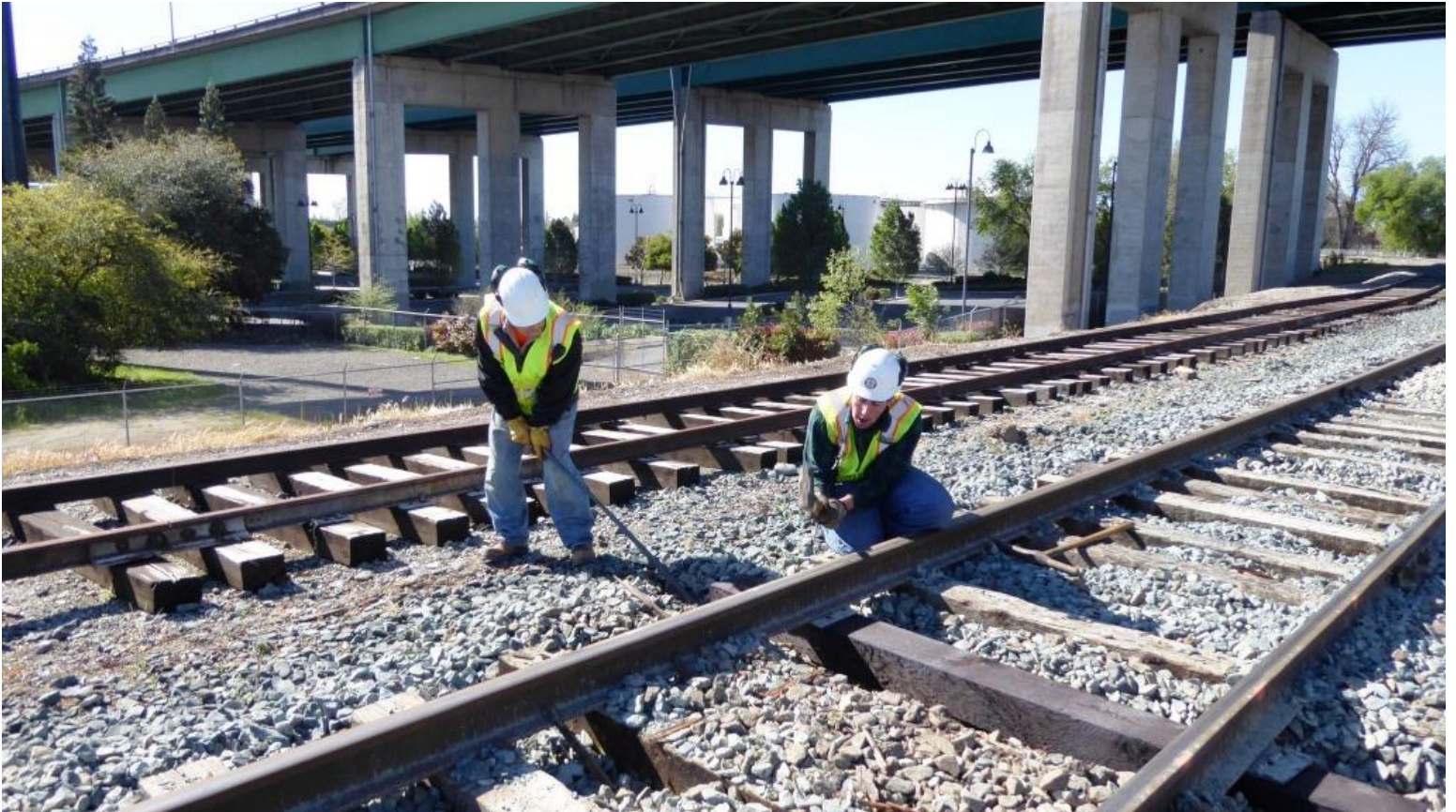


Ed and Chris broom the track with the ballast regulator





Bev sets spikes



Mike W. nips the tie as Weston sets the spike



Chris and Mike W. nip a tie up against the base of the rail as Weston sets a spike



The great monster of the railroad: the ballast regulator plows newly laid ballast rock



Still lots of holes in the rock to fill in. Bev and Mike W. lay rock along the sides of the track



Oops! We missed one. Luckily Joe had the 125 and an extra tie to quickly insert



Mike F., Heather, and Clem protect the bike path as the tie-crane's boom swings out over it



Joe and Mike F. strap down a bundle of dead ties



The wind was gusting something fierce. Weston, Matt, and Joe lean into the wind



Chris and Joe struggle to straighten a bent spike



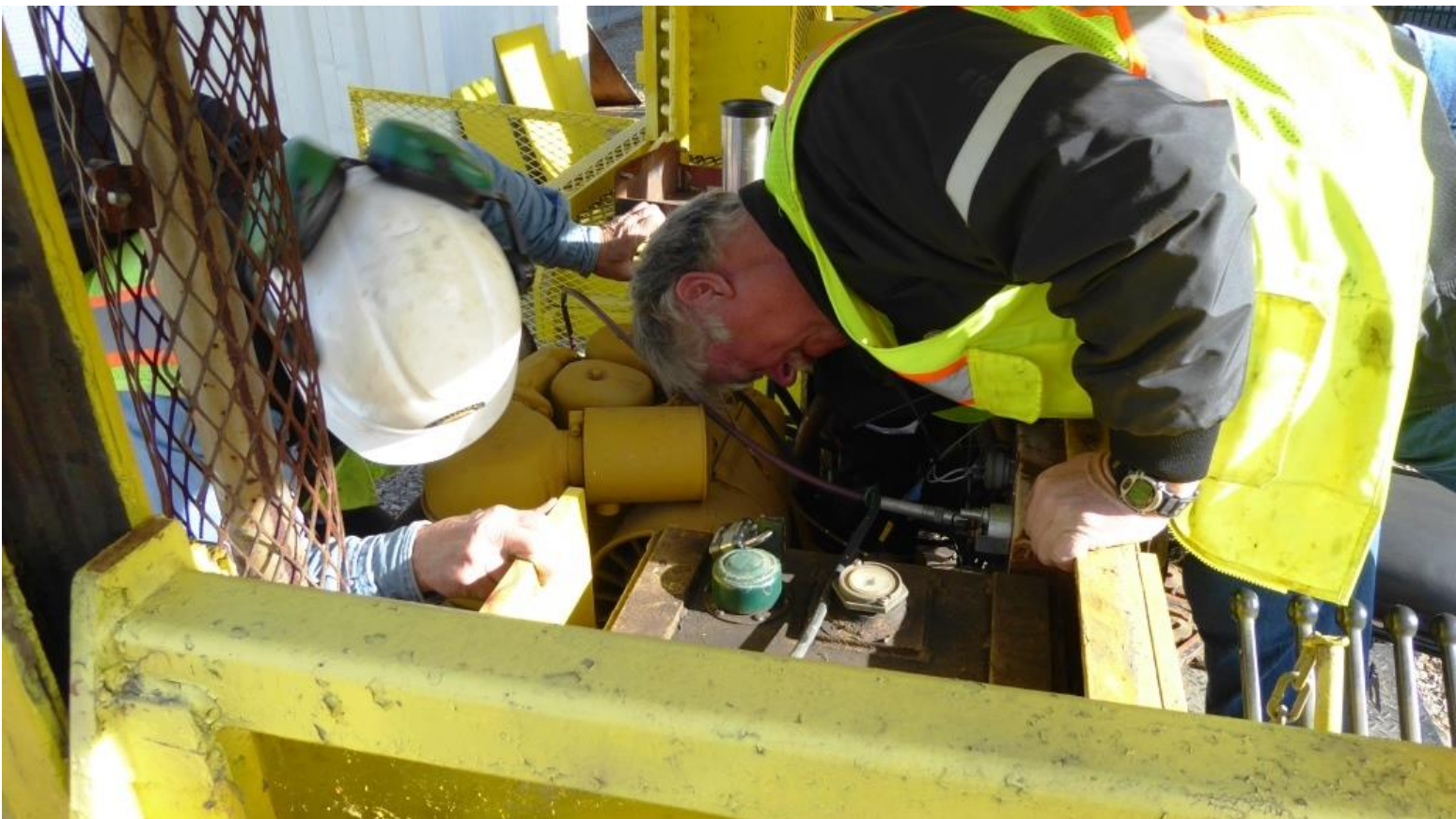
Chris drives spikes with the pneumatic spiker



Joe uses the 125's rail-clamps to lift the rail slightly so the Ed can insert a tie-plate



Friday concludes with a quick green signal indication for the ballast regulator to return to its home in the Erecting Shop



A bad omen? Saturday morning, the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger wouldn't start. Joe and Chris work to resolve the issue



Clem arrived early Saturday and set spikes



Jose then uses the pneumatic spike driver to drive them home





The action picks up as Steve drives spikes while Chris nips the tie



More rock arrives. Heather handles the Kalamazoo...



...As Joe and Frank guide the rock into place



It's train time! The first train of the 2017 operating season passes through the MOW Team's work site



With the regulator's wing deployed, rock is pulled up along the side of the track to form a nice even slope



Train time for the MOW Team: Steve, Alan, Ed, Jose, Joe, and Matt go for a train ride!