

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 20, 2014. We are continuing to deal with the situation regarding our happy home in the Boiler Shop as we plan for the transition to a new base of operations in the Erecting Shop. But, before we transition out time, let's get this update rolling.

Tuesday, the Mighty MOW Weed Team set off for the Hood Line to eradicate star thistle and other nasty infestations along the right of way. Joining Mike Taylor and Dave Megeath was the official chief bird-a-thologist from State Parks who reviewed the operation to make sure no nesting tweeties were being disturbed. Needless to say, the Weed Team received the stamp of approval from on high as no bird habitats were found in the "eradication zone." Despite being volunteers, our Weed Team does an outstanding job. The Weedies are trained and certified to do the work they do. Nonetheless, it's always nice to have such positive affirmation from those higher up. Another job well done by the Mighty Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, and Mike Taylor got together to work on re-arranging the north-east corner of the Erecting Shop we occupy, already. We store track implements, switch-kits, machine parts, and other components in there. With Pat on the forklift, and Gene, Mike, and Alan moving and directing, the area is coming together nicely and looks much better. Significant new space has been created through consolidation and re-organization. This work will continue for a while as we prepare to bring our equipment over from the Boiler Shop.

The MOW Team did not gather on Thursday. However, Saturday was a big day. Alan, Harry Gobler, Clem Meier, Kent Ransom, Harry Voss, Mike Miller, Steve Nemeth, Frank Werry, Frederick Carr, and Michael Florentine congregated around the new outdoor alter of the pink box where these faithful disciples of the doughnuts received their briefing. Saturday's mission was to lay the narrow-gauge rails on the Whisker Track. First on the list of tasks was to locate four sticks of 90-pound rail and get them over to the work-site. Mike F. hopped on the Big Green Machine and headed over to our stacks of spare rail. Clem, Fred, Mike M., Kent, and Alan joined him in helping identify and move the rails we need. Subsequently, Conductor Frank and engineer Steve powered up the tamper and used it to shove the flat-cars over the double diamonds where Mike F. on Big Green was waiting to load the rails.

With Steve and Frank's successful transfer of the rails across the UP Main to the work site, our surveyor in chief, Harry G., set up his trusty transit to take one more reading of the track's level just to make sure it hadn't shifted any since last week. It was spot on – not a millimeter's difference. Then the crew began leveling the ballast between the rails with picks and shovels so that the new narrow-gauge rails would sit flush on the ties. The east rail would be installed first. Mike F. on Big Green brought in the two sticks of rail which were bolted together. Next, we began gauging and curving the rail. Specially designed spacers for the specific purpose of setting dual-gauged tracks were used to guarantee a constant and consistent distance between the standard and narrow gauge rails. Lining bars, nippers, and track-jacks were used to bend the rail into the appropriate 22 degree curve at which point, it was plated and spiked-down.

In the afternoon, the same procedure was repeated with the west rail – got it spotted, curved, and spiked. Well, almost. We ran out of tie-plates about half-way along the northern most of the two rails. But, not to worry, there are enough in our inventory to finish the job. By the end of the day, all were all quite pleased with our efforts. We had progressed further than we had anticipated in the morning. This Whisker Track project is a great accomplishment that our railroad will be using for decades to come. Many thanks to the incredible crew of volunteers who have built it – basically by hand!

Now for the week ahead. Tuesday, Maintenance of Way will be meeting for a regular evening session. We will continue with general organizational work over in the Erecting Shop as we prepare to move our primary base of operations into that building. As usual, meet in the parking area at the south end of the Boiler Shop. Briefings, plans, and updates will be provided at that time. Thursday is questionable at this point. Unless you hear otherwise, consider Thursday cancelled. Saturday, however, we'll be meeting in full force to continue our noble endeavors out on the line. Meet at the south end of the Boiler Shop for our weekly doughnut ritual. Again, many thanks to all our tremendous volunteers and supporters!

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard





Mike T. at Hood "beating around the bushes..."



Happy to be back at MOW on a Tuesday, Pat pilots the forklift





Let us bow our heads...

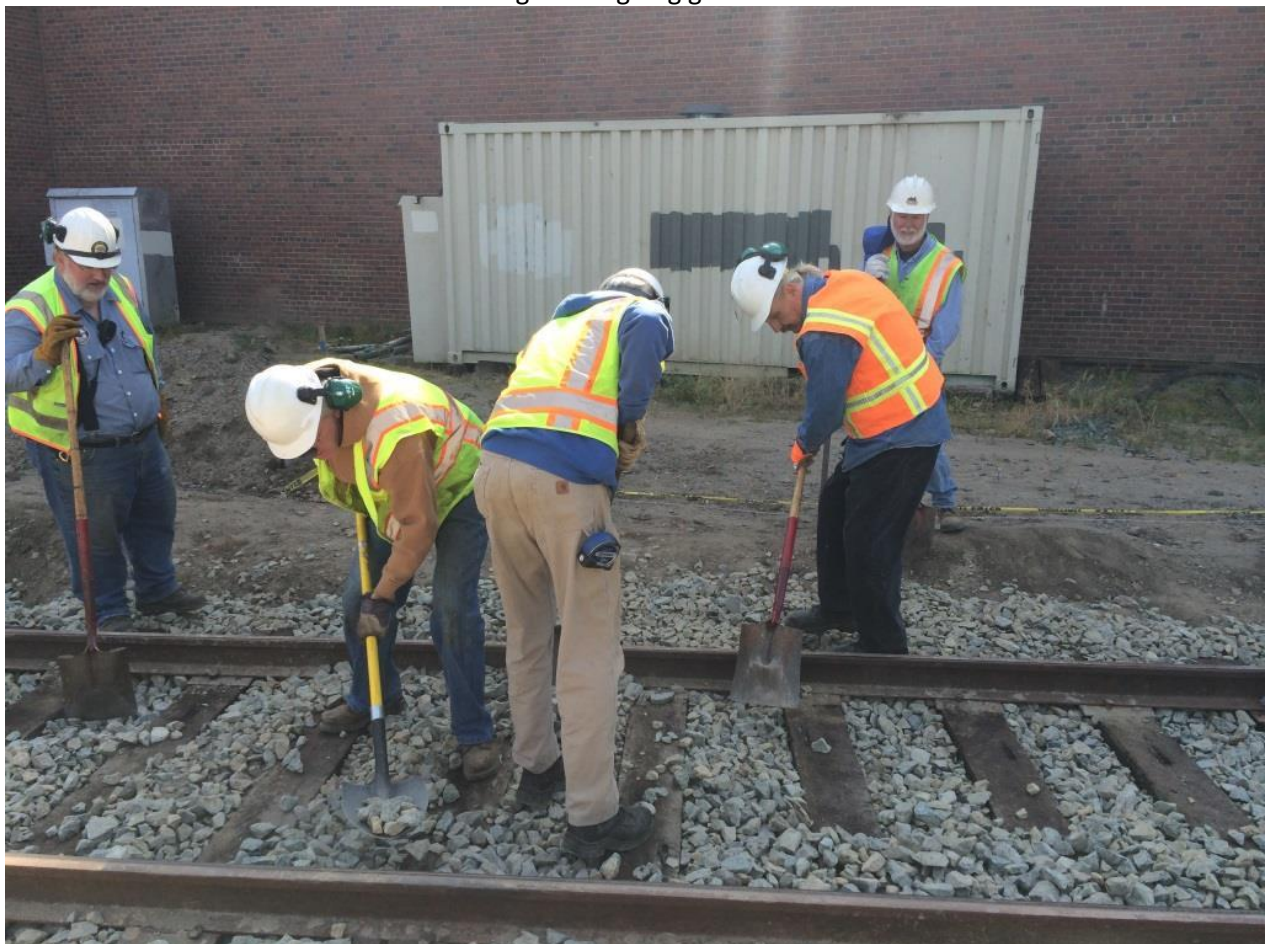


Clem positions the rail tongs for Mike F. to grab with Big Green





Big Green going green...



Frank, Steve, Kent, Fred, and Mike M. leveling the ballast for laying the narrow-gauge rails





Alan and Mike F. bring in the first rail



Steve and Clem join the two rails and bolt them in place





Fred with the nipper, and Harry G. start setting the curve



Alan, Harry G., and Fred gauge the inner rail





The MOW Team's interpretation of "Gandy Dancing..."



The process is repeated for the west rail, as well