

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 24, 2016. After our week at Hood, the Team was back out on the SSRR Mainline making life difficult for the crew dispatchers this week. We don't want things to be difficult here, however, so let's get this update started.

Another multi-meeting week for the Mighty Weed Team commenced on Tuesday in Old Sacramento where Team Captain, Mike Taylor, along with Heather Kearns, Dave Megeath, and Ed Kottal spent the day servicing and arranging equipment for quick deployment on Thursday. In particular, the man-lift and chipper needed attention prior to their activation for combating arboreal overgrowth across the I-5 Bridge along the Sutterville Line. In the afternoon, Mike T. and the official State Parks' ornithologist surveyed the trees along the down there to make sure no ornithoid habitat would be disturbed during the de-limbing process. On Thursday, Mike T., Heather, Ed, Steve Wilson and Dave began the pruning process. Dave flew high above the boughs in the man-lift's bucket slicing-up offending branches. Steve and Ed discovered the joy chopping limbs to tiny bits with the chipper. It's a near forest down there so the Weedies have their work cut out for them as they continue this project over the weeks ahead. Many thanks to this dedicated band who keep our line free of vegetation defects!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Pat Scholzen, Anthony Filamor, Cliff Hays, Frederick Carr, Frank Werry, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Harry Voss kept the place was buzzing with excitement. Heather finished painting the walls of the Bay 5 pit (to reflect light better when working beneath machines) and started on the Bay 4 pit. Frank, Mike H., Anthony, and Harry had the task of switching equipment around for an easy deployment on Saturday morning. The BEB-17 ballast regulator (fondly known as the *USS Sea Tiger*) in Bay 5 was buried behind other machines so, the plan was to switch positions with the Super B Hydra-spiker in Bay 4. The Kalamazoo tug was still in the Shops after having its battery box rebuilt. It had to be moved. In the middle of this muddle was the rail-lifter. So, the transfer table was energized and the Team got rolling. Over in the Boiler Shop, Pat, Cliff, Gene, and Fred were moving the electrical cabinet to the Erecting Shop so we wouldn't have to keep trekking over to there every time we need a piece of wire. Needless to say, all these tasks got accomplished with enthusiasm.

Thursday, Heather, Frank, Fred, Cliff, and Anthony kept things moving. The A-4 motorcar was brought to the Shops for some much needed clutch-adjustments. Fred and Cliff got to work on that. Cliff manufactured an extension for the clutch-peddle adjusting rod so that it would engage the clutch sooner. Heather and Frank took several jerry-cans of diesel over to Old Sac. to top-off the tamper (which was getting low). Back at the Shops, Anthony, Frank, and Heather brought a 55-gallon drum of diesel over to the regulator and Kalamazoo and filled their tanks. It was a good evening of solid effort by your MOW Team.

Saturday, the Team headed back out onto the Mainline but first, had to torment the Train-Crew Dispatchers with multiple train-orders and clearances. Before picking up their train-orders and clearances, Mike Willis, Clem Meier, Anthony, Harry, Frank, Michael Florentine, and Heather gathered round a bright pink box of fresh doughnuts and conducted a job-briefing. The plan for the day would be to finish raising the west-rail at the south curve at Miller Park. In a curve, the outside rail (in this case, west) needs to be higher than the inside rail. This added height is called "super-elevation" and is determined by a mathematical formula with variables that include maximum allowable speed and degree of curve. Prior to starting this project, there was no super-elevation in the curve. With computations calculated, the Team headed to Miller Park with track-jacks at the ready. Heather began by marking the placement of the jacks. Clem, Mike W. and Anthony dug-out enough space under the rails to fit the jacks. Then Heather set the track-level on the rails and measured the proper amount of super-elevation needed as Harry, Clem, and Mike W. jacked the track. Meanwhile, Mike F. in the tamper and Frank as his guide on the ground began tamping the track to the new level. As the tamper approached a jack, Anthony would remove it and "hop-scotch" further down the line to continue the raise where Heather again would measure the correct super-elevation. The Team proved to be a well-oiled machine as it moved through the curve with alacrity. That wasn't necessarily the case with the tamper, however, which was giving us fits. Harry determined that it needed more hydraulic fluid so, he ran back to the Shops to gather a couple buckets. With trains about to descend upon us, the Team packed up its jacks and headed back to Old Sacramento.

In the afternoon, Heather was EIC. She, along with Frank, Harry, and the two Mikes headed down to the vicinity of Mile Post 2.0 where the track has become buried in organic debris from the long winter. In addition to the regularly scheduled Excursion Train, the Granite Rock 10 was undergoing some test runs out on the line between trains. Therefore, Heather and Frank invoked their training pursuant to 49 CFR Part 214.328 – "Train approach warning provided by watchmen/lookouts" and monitored both ends of the working limits as Harry, Mike W., and Mike F. donned huff-'n'-puff machines to clean off the tracks. It was quite the out-of-normal situation to have multiple trains moving through our work limits. Their training paid off and kept the Team safe. The Team did a great job and really cleared up a tremendous amount of debris. With the task complete, the Team headed back to the Shops pleased with the day's accomplishments.

This coming week, the Shops Crews will gather for good times at or before 5 o'clock on both Tuesday and Thursday. The Mighty Weed Team will be venturing down to Hood on Thursday to mow the driveway, grease the switch, pull star-thistle, and verify several mile post locations. Meet at the shop at 9 o'clock a.m. Saturday, doughnuts will be served promptly at 8 o'clock a.m. Amongst other things, we'll be taking the bolt-machine out on the line to commence a bolt-tightening sweep at all joints, from the Circle of Lights to Baths, on the SSRR Mainline. As always, many thanks to the valiant members of the MOW and Weed Teams for their dedication to building a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Pat and Cliff: separated at birth or simply snazzy dressers?



Heather displays her artwork...



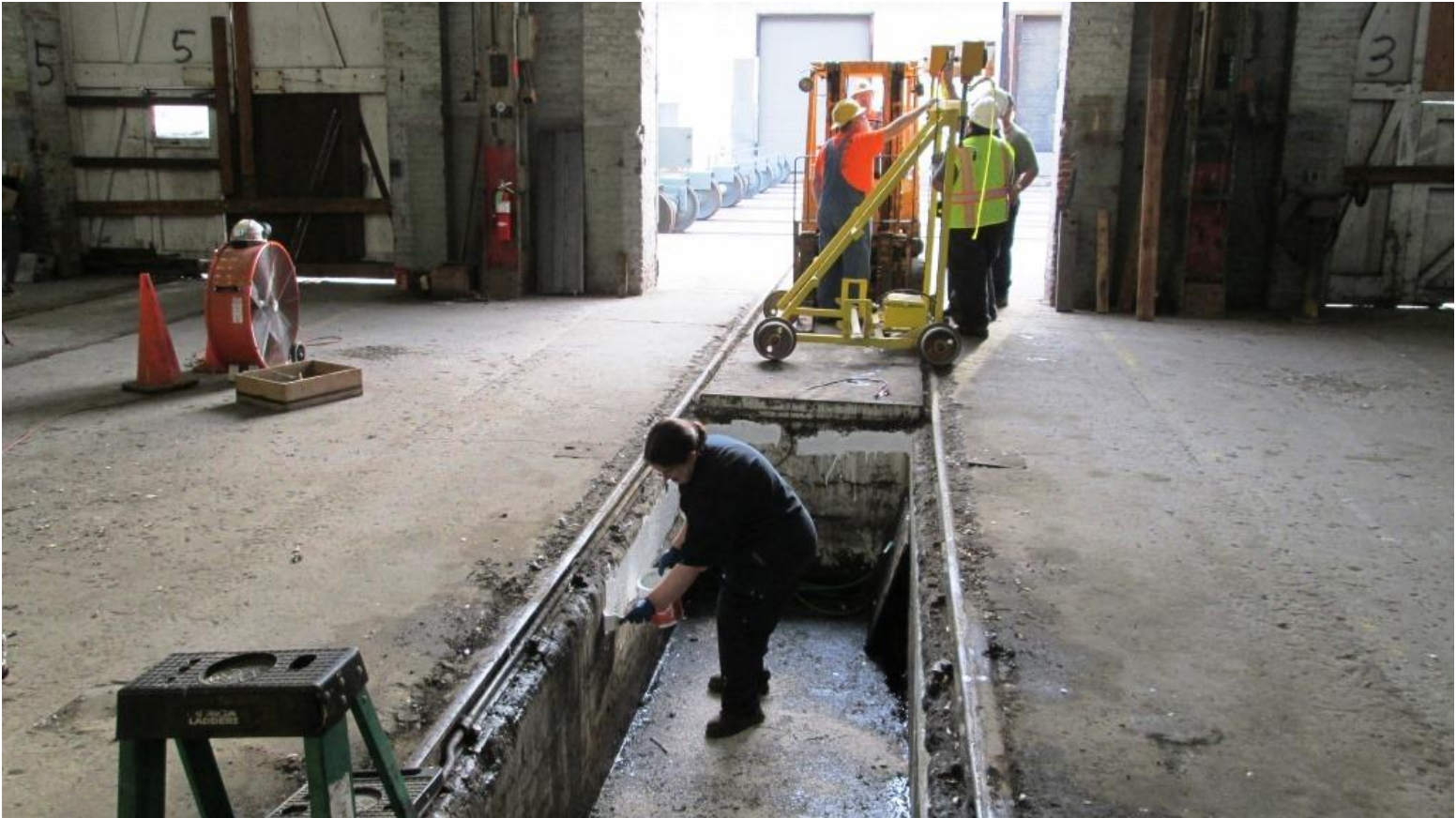
Frank, Anthony, and Heather move the rail-lifter off the transfer table and into Bay 5



Followed by Mike H. and Harry on the spiker



Cliff on the forklift hitches a ride on the transfer table with the ballast regulator as Pat prepares to drive it north



Heather starts on her next work of art as Cliff, Pat, Anthony, and Gene move the tamper's light buggy out of the way



Ed and Dave add hydraulic fluid to the man-lift



Dave flying like a bird through the boughs of the trees wielding a gas-powered chainsaw on a stick



Ed and Steve have too much fun stuffing trimmed limbs into the maw of the chipper



Frank and Heather grab a barrel of diesel



Frank, Anthony, and Mike W. transfer jacks from the truck to the deck of the tamper for transport to the work-site



Frank unloads jacks off the tamper while Clem and Mike W. set them in place



Clem knocks-out enough rock from under the base of the rail for the jack to fit



Mike F. operates the tamper while Frank guides from the ground





Mike F. at the helm



Frank and Anthony remove a jack as the tamper approaches



Mike W. cranks on the jack as Heather monitors the level for establishing a proper super-elevation



Mike W. removes a jack as the tamper approaches



Clem prepares to set another jack



Anthony cranks on the jack under Heather's direction



Mike F. concentrates on his task at hand



Frank and Harry add hydraulic fluid to the tamper



One of two trains operating on Saturday pass through the MOW work-limits



Mike W. adds mixed-gas to the huff-'n'-puff machine



Harry rakes as the two Mikes blow organic debris from the track



Mike F. and Mike W. did an amazing job