

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 30, 2017. It was a big week for your MOW Team as work began in earnest on restoring the Sutterville Line, the track to the zoo. So, before those lions, tigers, and bears (oh my!) escape for a train ride, let's get this update going.

Tuesday, Pat Scholzen, Weston Snyder, Joe Margucci, Mike Harris, Frank Werry, Cliff Hayes, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns were on hand for an evening of MOW fun. The motorcar had been acting up lately proving difficult to start and, once started, to wouldn't keep running. So, Joe, Mike H., Heather, Frank, and Weston headed to Old Sacramento to figure out what was going on. We absolutely needed the motorcar running for Saturday and the start of the Sutterville Line project. Indeed, it was being stubborn to start so Frank, Mike H. and Joe opened the engine compartment and did a little of this and a little of that until it was running smoothly. Ultimately, it will have to return to the Shops for servicing but, for now, it's working. Next, Joe and Mike H. fixed a broken shunting wire (to trigger crossing signals) on the motorcar's wheel and made some adjustments to the brakes. Weston headed up the 150 Track to open the Kalamazoo tug which would be used to pull two flatcars over to the Shops so that ties can be loaded onto them for the train to the zoo project. With the flatcars hooked up, Conductor Heather secured a speedy green signal indication. Engineer Weston tooted twice on the Kalamazoo's horn and quickly crossed the UP Main where Green Machine 2 (GM2) was standing by to lift the flats off the track. Conductor Heather arranged a quick return trip to Old Sac. for the Kalamazoo. With everything put away the Team back to the Shops where plans were made for rearranging and fueling equipment on Thursday night.

The mighty Weed Team proved their mighty character on Thursday as Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, Heather, and Steve Wilson ran the length and breadth of the Sacramento Southern Railroad. It was deemed too windy to spray weeds so, the field-and-brush mowers were deployed and the weeds along the line were mowed from R Street to South Land Park Drive. Heather deployed the huff-'n'-puff machine and cleared organic debris that was burying the line through Miller Park. After mowing between Sutterville Road and South Land Park Drive, the Weedies headed to Cliffs Marina near Freeport to mow around the MOW container located down there. It was a remarkable day for the mighty Weed Team who, once again, proved that they are the unsung heroes of the Railroad.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Mike Willis, Matt McCracken, Joe, Mike H., Heather, Frank, Steve, Alan Hardy, and Chris Carlson were ready and willing to work. Mike W. and Chris spent the evening working on the A-4 motorcar that has been in the Shops for a while awaiting a replacement wheel and brake-rigging components. The successfully changed out the wonky wheel and fixed the brakes. Ed serviced the field-and-brush mowers. Matt M., Joe, Mike H., and Heather loaded a 55-gallon drum of red-diesel in the truck to fuel equipment in Old Sac. For Saturday, we'd need the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, tie-crane, and Kalamazoo. But, the 125 was buried behind all the other equipment. So, as each machine was brought down the hill, it was fueled. A tremendous amount of switching around was necessary, including moving out four hopper cars. Mike H. handled moving the tie-crane and tamper. Joe moved the 125. Matt M. handed the Kalamazoo. Heather ran the gas-station. By evening's end, everything had been moved and fueled and was in the right position for a quick getaway on Saturday morning. The Team did a remarkable job switching around all the machines and rollingstock. You'd think they worked for a railroad!

Saturday started with a doughnut crisis. Chris was bringing the doughnuts but got caught in traffic on his way into town. So, Alan, Joe, Pam Tatro, Michael Florentine, Ed, Harry Voss, Kyle Blackburn, Matt M., Frank, John Rexroth, Heather, and Weston all jumped for joy when Chris walked in with the pink box. The plan for the day called for the removal of as many of the marked ties as possible down on the Sutterville Line. So, Joe fired up the 125, Mike F. the Kalamazoo, Alan the tie-crane, and Frank the motorcar. Ed took GM2 down to Setzer to have it ready to receive dead ties removed from Sutterville Line. It wouldn't be a MOW work day if we didn't have some mechanical issue with which to deal. The hydraulic cylinder on the 125 that lifts the rails when pulling ties malfunctioned requiring its removal from the machine. At first, we thought this might be a mission-ending malfunction. But, we decided to try using the machine despite not being able to grab and lift the rails to relieve downward pressure on the tie being removed. Fortunately, under Joe's expert handling, the 125 was able to shimmy ties out from under the rails. So, work continued. Matt Blackburn joined the crew midmorning and worked with his brother, Kyle, digging out the end of the ties to be removed to make it easier for the 125 to grab them. As Joe pulled ties, Alan would pick them up with the tie-crane and load them onto flatcars. Matt B. and Ed helped arrange the dead ties on the flatcars to maximize space. Weston, Heather, John, Matt M., and Ed picked up tie-plates. It was an assembly line out there as everybody knew just what to do to keep things moving.

After lunch, Anthony Filamor joined-up with the Team. Weston and Kyle took turns pulling ties with the 125 with Chris as their trainer. Ed, Alan, Frank, and Matt B. headed down to Setzer with the first two flatcars full of dead ties for disposal in the dumpster spotted down there. Ed moved ties with GM2 to the dumpster. Matt B. served as load-master and climbed in the dumpster to arrange dead ties to keep them neat and tidy. Heather, Anthony, Matt M., and Weston figured that they picked up, by hand, two-tons worth of tie-plates. By day's end, the Team had pulled 165 ties stretching from the I-5 Bridge all the way to Sutterville Road. Next week, we'll start filling the empty tie-cribs with new ties. But, that's just the beginning. In order to bring this Sutterville Line up to minimum standards, at least 280 ties need to be replaced. No question, your MOW Team is up to the task and will have that line ready to take passengers trains to the zoo before the zoo is ready to take passengers!

This coming week, the Team will have its usual evening gatherings on Tuesday and Thursday at the Shops starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. The mighty Weed Team will deploy its 65-gallon spray-rig on Thursday for a fun day out on the line. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. As always, everyone on the Team did an outstanding job this week. Many thanks to all the great volunteers and supporters of the MOW Team!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike H., Joe, and Weston work on the motorcar



Mike H. and Heather make adjustments to the brake rigging



Mike H. and Weston wait for a green signal indication to move the flatcars over to the Shops



Flying flatcar!



Ed chopping weeds to tiny bits with the field-and-brush mower at Broadway



Between Sutterville Road and South Land Park Drive, Ed and Mike T. cut weeds down to size



Cliff's Marina before...



...And, Cliff's Marina after the Weed Team made its presence known...



Ed works on one of the field-and-brush mowers



For the big equipment shuffle, Mike H. brings the tie-crane down the hill



Matt M. at the helm of the Kalamazoo heads back up the hill to grab the hopper-cars



Joe switches the Matt M. in the Kalamazoo onto the North Turntable Lead



The Jackson 125 tie-exchanger was buried on the old 150 Track. Joe waits for the tamper to move so he can switch it into the lead position

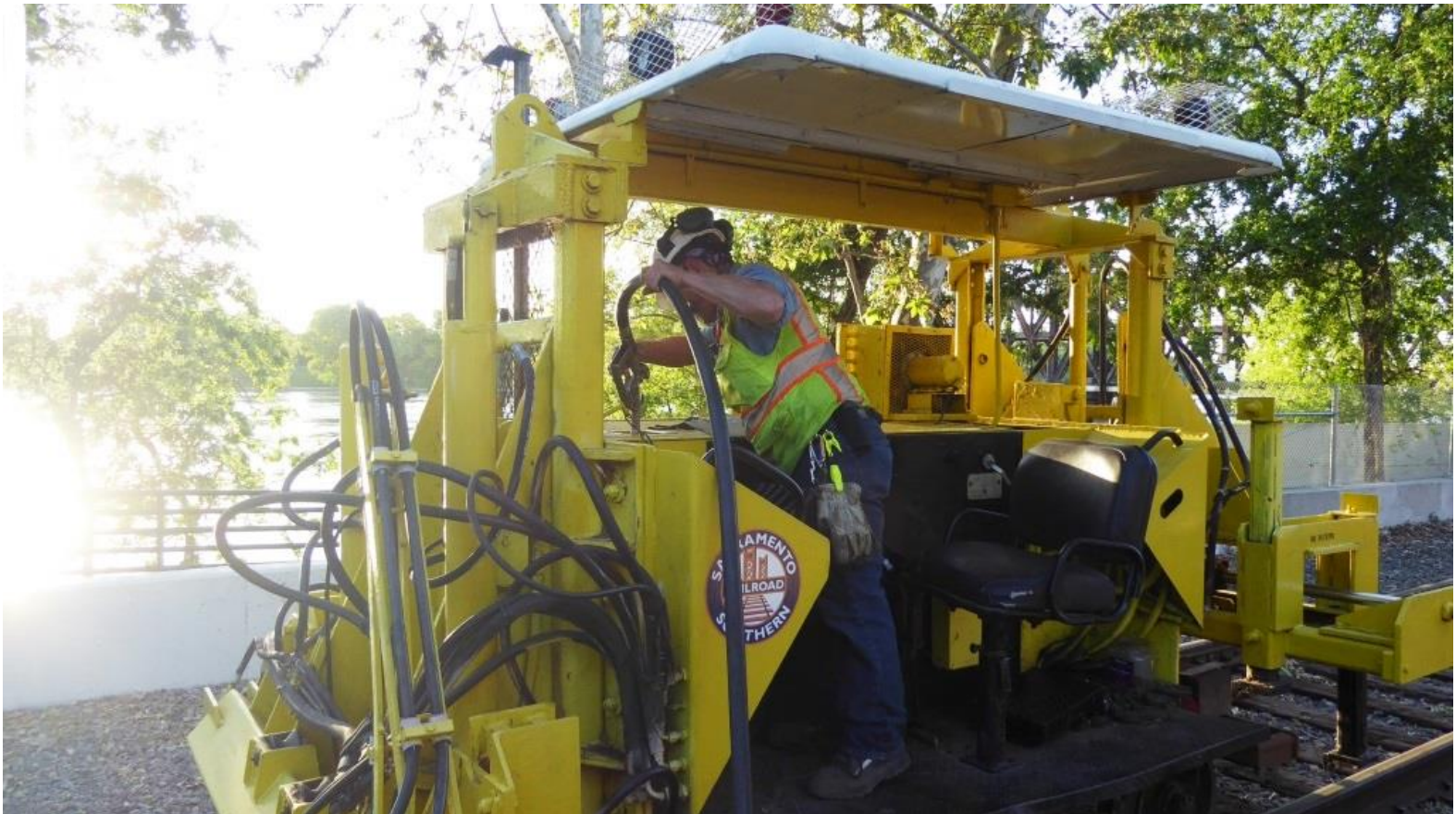


Mike H. get the tamper moving so that Joe can bring the 125 down the hill





Heather operates the fuel pump...



As Joe fills the thirsty 125 with red-diesel



By evening's end, everything is lined up in the correct position



Saturday morning beacons and Mike F. in the Kalamazoo pulls the work-train past Front Street



The lift-cylinder and ram on the 125 would not retract, so, Chris works to remove it so that the Team can move on



Despite the lift-cylinder being removed, Joe still manages to remove ties with the Jackson 125



Kyle digs out the tie-ends to make it easier for the 125 to grab them



The brothers Blackburn working together to build a better railroad



The Jackson 125, under Joe's expert touch, pulls old rotten ties from under the Sutterville Line



After just a couple hours, old ties are coming out exceedingly well and we're halfway down the hill



First train of the day stops well short of our red-flag on the I-5 Bridge



At lunch, Alan dropped a loaded flatcar on the Auxiliary Track at Baths then uses the crane to arrange ties on the second flatcar



Weston on the 125 continues the push down the hill



Kyle takes a turn operating the 125 with Chris as his tutor



Heather serving-up tie plates



Cue the tie-crane!





Matt B. and Ed balance the load on the flatcar



At Setzer, Matt B. lifts the end of a dead-tie so that Ed on GM2 can get the forks under it



Matt B. as load-master maximizes space in the dumpster



Ed on GM2 dumps another load of dead-ties into the dumpster



Weston on the motorcar leads the MOW Team back into town



Matt B. designed a special unofficial logo for the Train to the Zoo!