

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 13, 2018. For all intents and purposes, your MOW Team finished the track restoration project on the I-5 Bridge – just a little “touch-up” work left to do. But, there’s nothing little about this update so, let’s get it started right now.

Pat Scholzen, Alan Hardy, Mike Harris, Ed Kottal, Chris Howard, Joe Margucci, Steve Nemeth, Cliff Hayes, Gene Peck, Jack Shrive, and Heather Kearns showed up at the Erecting Shop on Tuesday for some MOW fun. Alan, Mike H., Heather, Ed, and Joe were on hand early to do some prep work on the new track that’s being built behind the Museum for additional storage. Mike H. handled the back-hoe and started grading the road bed. As evening approached, other work needed doing. The plan was to get the ballast-hopper cars, which were being stored on the north end of the Erecting Shop, over to Old Sacramento. The hoppers were situated on a temporary “snap-track” which had shifted somewhat leaving about a two-foot gap between it and the transfer-table. So, Steve climbed on the Big Green Machine and tried to use a chain to pull the snap-track closer to the table. That didn’t quite work. So, instead, with Chris’s help, he decided to pick up the hoppers and place them on the table. Meanwhile, Joe, Heather, Jack, and Ed retrieved the Kalamazoo tug out of the Passenger Station. Conductor Heather conducted them across the UP Main. With the hoppers now properly spotted, Joe and Jack in the Kalamazoo soon had them back across the UP Main and tied down on the old 150-Track. This was good news as we’d be able to fill them on Thursday evening thus giving us a head start for Saturday.

The mighty Weed Team was busy as bees on Thursday. Mike Taylor, Ed, and Heather were everywhere – from Setzer to Hood – mowing weeds. The Weedies used their field-and-brush mowers to mow the spur-track down to Setzer and around the materials yard. Then, they headed to the triangle of land between Sutterville Road and South Land Park Drive to clean-up that area. Next it was to the Hood Line where the driveway to the container was mowed. Finally, to the other end of the Hood Line at Cliff’s Marina where they mowed around the container up there. It was an incredibly productive day for these amazing volunteers. They are the only ones maintaining these valuable State Parks properties.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, our friends from Team Signals continued their efforts at helping the MOW Team. On Thursday morning, they repaired various electrical issues we were experiencing with our machines. Amongst them was the repair of the scarifier-inserter’s faulty reverse lights. In the evening, Joe, Chris, Mike H., Jack, Heather, Alan, and Ed were on hand to get things rolling. Ed climbed aboard the back-hoe and headed to Setzer where he met up with Chris and Mike H. in the Kalamazoo pulling the hoppers. Ed filled them up. Back in Old Sac., we needed to free-up the other two hoppers which were buried at the top of the hill behind everything else. Heather, Jack, and Joe got the tamper, scarifier, and tie-shear all out of the way so the ballast regulator could pull the hoppers off the hill. Once the hoppers were spotted on the 560-Track, the machines were re-arranged to be in a good order for deployment on Saturday. When Chris, Mike H., and Ed returned from Setzer, they grabbed the now freed hopper off the 560-Track and tied them down on the 150-Track ready for service on Saturday morning. Everything was set and ready to go for the big final push at getting the bridge track back in service.

Alan kindly picked-up doughnuts for the Team on Saturday to make sure that Michael Florentine, Harry Voss, Chris, Clem Meier, Pam Tatro, Ahyma (Hemi) Martin, Ed, Jack, Heather, Frank Werry, Bill Hastings, and John Rexroth were well fortified for the day. Saturday, the Team would finish-up the major reconstruction work on the track over the I-5 Bridge. Mike F. and Chris showed up extra early to get the equipment over in the Old Sac. Yard opened up and ready for deployment. Harry headed down to Setzer with the back-hoe to fill the other two hoppers which were delivered by Bill and Chris in the Kalamazoo. Alan ran the tamper. Frank handled the tie-shear. Mike F. took out the scarifier, and Ed piloted the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. At the job site, Pam, Hemi, and Clem pulled spikes on the final group of ties to be removed. Then, Frank rolled in with the tie-shear and, before anyone had a chance to take any pictures, he had all the bad ties chopped to bits. That tie-shear is simply an amazing machine (when it works). With the ties all cut-up, Mike F. in the scarifier was next on the agenda. He dug-out the tie-cribs with the machine so that new ties could be inserted. We had trucked several new ties down to the job-site to add to those already there. Hemi, Pam, Clem, and Mike F. manually moved them onto the waiting flatcar. Then, Alan, Pam, Clem, and Hemi distributed them along the rails and lined them up for insertion. Next, Ed, on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger pulled the new ties under the rails. Alan brought in the tamper and tamped the new ties up against the base of the rails. Ed on the 125 used its hydraulic track-jacks to lift the rails slightly for Mike F. Chris, Pam, and Hemi to insert tie-plates. Then, Pam, Bill, Hemi, Mike F., and Clem set spikes. Chris and Bill deployed the hydraulic spike puller and began driving the set-spikes home. In addition to the new ties inserted on Saturday, 18 more ties had been left un-spiked from last Saturday.

Following lunch, Alan began a second pass with the tamper. Chris and Bill in the Kalamazoo brought over the four ballast hoppers which were filled to the rim with ballast rock. Mike F. directed the ballasting of the track and worked with John and Jack to disgorge rock between the rails and along each side. At one point, the rock became jammed within one of the hoppers. So, Jack climbed up into it and, using a lining bar, managed to get the rock flowing again. Meanwhile, Heather and Ed removed the semi-permanent retractable red-flag at Mile Post 3.05 and took it down to Sutterville Road and reestablished it at Mile Post 3.52. With that, the track was declared ready for service once again. Now, all that’s left to do is a little touch-up work, such as running the ballast-regulator over it a few times to make it look nice and pretty. It was a very good day with the crew and machines running on all cylinders. It was a professional job done by the most talented volunteers in all of Creation.

This coming week, the MOW Team will meet at 2 o’clock p.m. on Tuesday to continue work on the new track behind the Museum. Thursday, the Weed Team will mobilize for more vegetative mayhem at 8:30 a.m. Thursday evening, the MOW Team will gather as usual at or before 5 o’clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, 8 o’clock a.m. is the call time for the next MOW adventure. Thanks, as always, to everyone!

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.





Alan and Mike H. prepare the ground for the building of a new switch behind the Museum



Steve, on the Big Green Machine, attempts to pull the snap track closer to the transfer table runway to close the gap



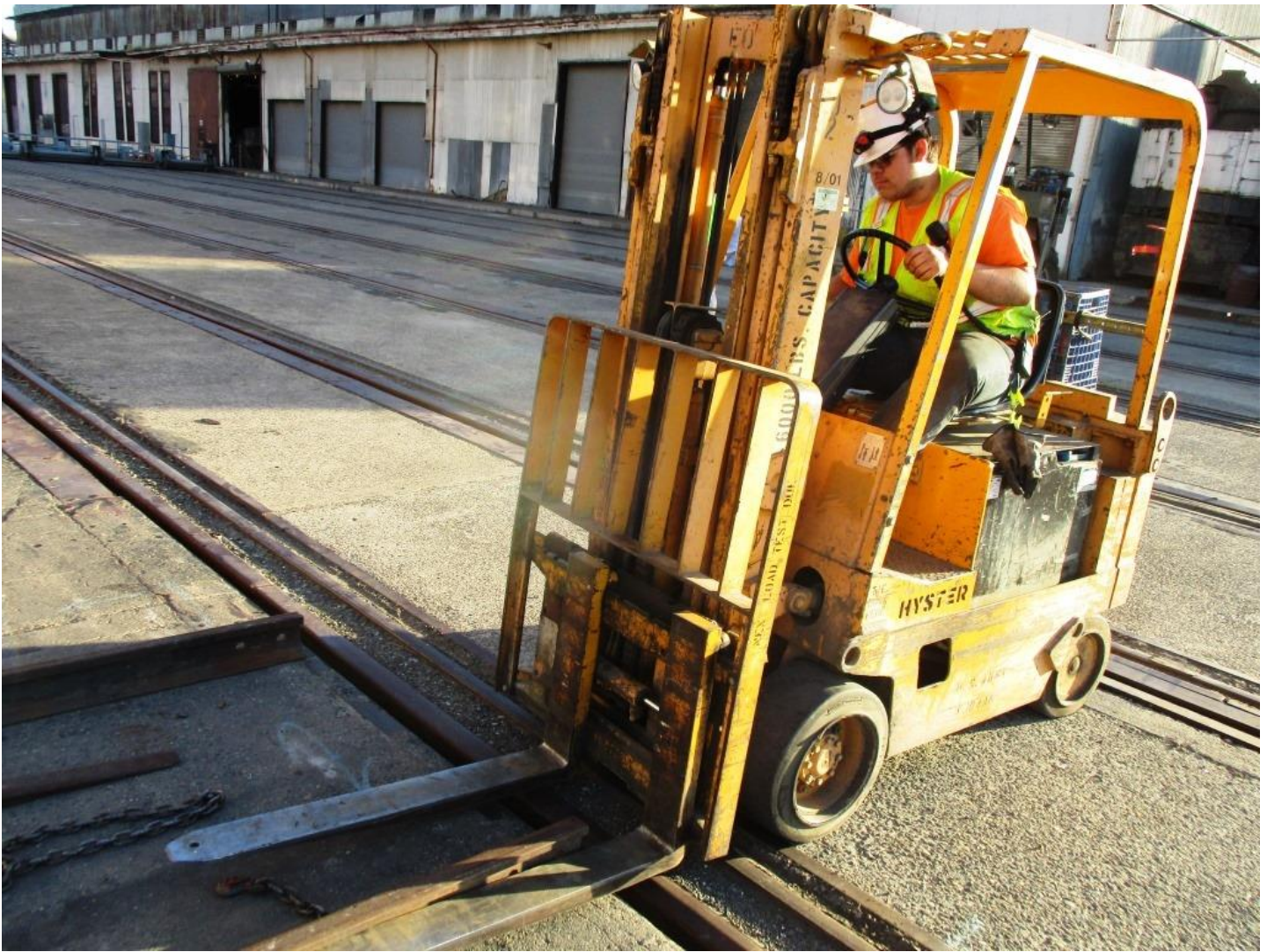


When that didn't work as anticipated, Steve picks up the hoppers with Big Green and moves them to the transfer table



Joe and Jack use the Kalamazoo to pull the hoppers off the transfer table and over to Old Sacramento





With the weight of the hoppers off the snap-track, Chris is able to square it up with the yellow Hyster forklift



Joe and Jack head over to Old Sac. with the hopper cars...





...and spot them on the 150 Track



Mike T. mows-down the weeds infesting the container at Cliff's Marina





Ed and Mike T. use trimmers to cut down the weeds at Sutterville Road



The driveway at Hood after the Weedies had been there





Ed on the back-hoe fills a hopper-car with rock



Joe switches the ballast regulator and hoppers onto the 560 Track





Jack brings the Jackson 125 back onto the 150-Track



Chris acts as brakeman for Mike H. in the Kalamazoo to remove the skate from under the hopper's wheel





Mike F. and Chris spin the Kalamazoo and work-train consist early Saturday morning



Frank and Ed spin the scarifier





Chris walks the point of the work-train as the second set of hoppers are deposited at Setzer for Harry on the back-hoe to fill



Bill skillfully pilots the Kalamazoo down the Setzer Grade





Hemi and Clem move a tie from the truck to the flatcar



After Frank had chopped the ties up with the tie-shear, Clem guides Mike F. in the scarifier as he digs new tie-cribs





Alan and Pam roll new ties off the flatcar



Pam uses tie-tongs to position the end of the tie under the base of the rail





Ed takes an "E-Ticket" ride on the Jackson 125 as Alan and Mike F. spin him around



Ed on the 125 now pulls the new ties into place





Pam sets spikes as Hemi nips-up the tie

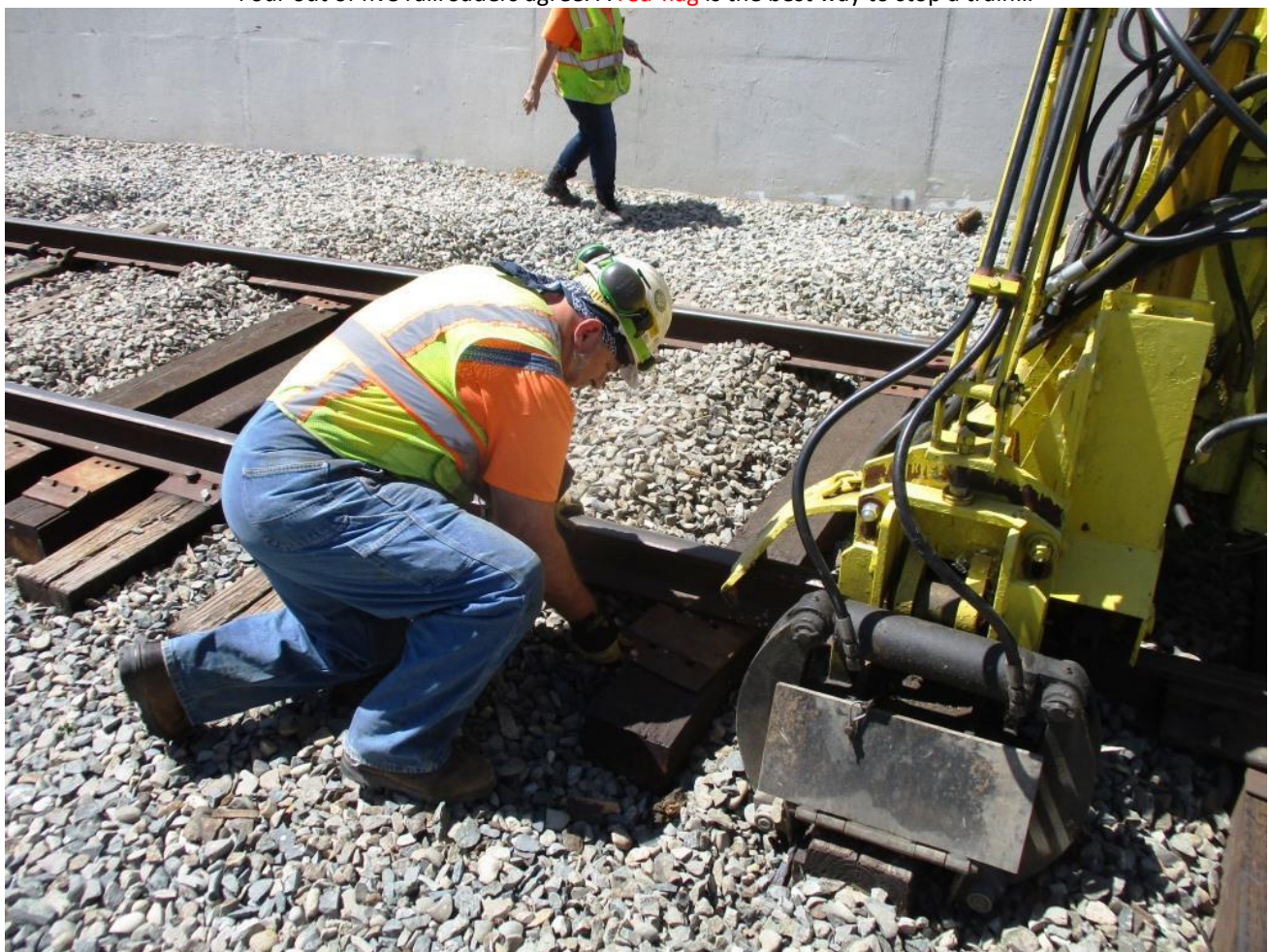


Alan tamps the bridge track





Four out of five railroaders agree. A red-flag is the best way to stop a train...



As Ed on the 125 jacks-up the track slightly, Mike F. places a tie-plate between the tie and base of the rail





Chris repositions the tie to make sure it is centered



Bill nips-up the tie as Heather sets spikes





Mike and Hemi set spikes as Bill nips-up the tie



Ed and Heather nip the tie as Chris drives spikes with the hydraulic spike driver





Mike F. starts the ballasting process by disgorging rock from the center-dump hopper car



John and Mike H. disgorge rock from the side-dump car





Chris, in the Kalamazoo, slowly pulls the rock cars as the rock is disgorged



Jack climbs up into the hopper and uses a lining bar to unplug the jammed-up rock





Mike F. and Jack discharge rock from the other side-dump car



Heather and Ed re-establish the red-flag at the end-of-track at Mile Post 3.52 Sutterville Road





Back in Old Sac., the “great yellow fleet” gets switched around



Finders keepers! Ed shows-off one of the most unique things we’ve ever found out on the line...