

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 14, 2017. The Team spent the week focused on rebuilding the Sutterville Line to the Zoo. So, before we lose our focus here, let's get this update started.

It was a grand time in the ol' Erecting Shop for Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Matt McCracken, Joe Margucci, Mike Harris, Harry Voss, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, Chris Carlson, Alan Hardy, and Heather Kearns on Tuesday. Joe, Chris, Mike H., Harry, and Frank, undertook the herculean task of pulling the main lift-cylinder out of the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. You may recall that, a couple weeks ago, the cylinder piston had drifted while the machine was heading to the job site. The lifting ram got caught in the rails breaking the piston and twisting the ram. Field repairs were made to keep the machine functioning. But, the broken cylinder needs to be rebuilt and, in order to do that, it had to be removed from the machine. As these machines weren't exactly designed with ease of maintenance in mind, it took a bit of effort to disconnect everything and shimmy-out the heavy component. Of course, they were successful and now the cylinder will be taken to our hydraulics vendor for rebuild. Alan, Heather, and Matt headed down to the Sutterville Line track with the tie-crane, two flatcars, and the motorcar to pick-up the remaining dead-ties strewn about down there. Last Saturday, the dead-ties kept getting in our way and slowed productivity. There were about 25 or so left to pick-up. With great efficiency, Matt, Heather, and Alan got the job done and deposited the tie-remains at Setzer. Indeed, the two Team projects were completed successfully thus paving the way towards greater progress.

Although there were no formal Weed Team activities on Thursday, Weed Team Commander-in-Chief, Mike Taylor, spent the day down at Hood and elsewhere on the SSRR Mainline surveying the areas sprayed with magical blue-brew in previous weeks. At Hood, Mike T. mowed the driveway to the container and pulled star-thistle, the nasty nemesis of track-workers, by hand. Alas, it appears that the torrents of rain this winter emboldened the vexatious green assailants and overwhelmed the weed-killing power of blue-brew. Despite the disappointment, Mike T. has a reformulated plan which the Weedies will implement in coming weeks. Many thanks to Mike T. for his boundless dedication!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Heather, Matt, Kyle Blackburn, Alan, Joe, Mike H., Kevin Hecteman, Chris, and Frank gathered on Thursday for more MOW fun. The Team would load bundles of ties onto flatcars in preparation for Saturday's work on the Sutterville Line to the Zoo. In Old Sacramento, Frank, Kevin, Mike H., and Joe fired-up the Kalamazoo-tug and attached three flatcars. Conductor Heather toned-up Dispatcher 62 in Omaha and secured one of the fastest crossings in history. The derails were lining even before she requested authority! With the green signal indication, Engineer Kevin engineered the Kalamazoo over the UP Main to the Shops. Matt, on Green Machine 2 (GM2) had staged three bundles of ties at the south end of the Boiler Shop and was ready to load them as the Kalamazoo and flatcars arrived. Kyle, Chris, and Mike H. guided the loading operation from the ground. Once the ties were strapped down, Kevin and Mike H. were on their way back to Old Sacramento setting yet another speed-record for crossing the UP Main! In Old Sac., Joe, and Frank secured the consist on the Old 150 Track. The job was done much faster than anticipated. With time to spare, welding apprentice Kyle welded up a couple of doo-dads and thingamajigs needed for the Jackson 125 repair. It was a very successful evening of great efficiency by a Team that really knows what it is doing.

The pink box of sugary fried-dough goodness took quite a circuitous route to get to the Shops on Saturday due road closures for some silly bike festival going on downtown. Fortunately, the doughnuts made it through the spandex brigade and were on site when Heather, Joe, Anthony Filamor, Alan, Michael Florentine, Pam Tatro, Taka Blackburn, and Kyle got the Shops. Heather and Mike F. arrived extra early and got the machines opened and fired-up in Old Sac. Alan took the tie-crane, Mike F. the Kalamazoo, Joe drove the scarifier-inserter, and Anthony mastered the motorcar. Down on the Sutterville Line, the Team would work south-to-north. Mike F. positioned the tie-laden flatcars near empty tie-cribs with the Kalamazoo. Pam and Joe rolled ties off the bundles. Alan in the tie-crane came along and lined the ties up for insertion. Heather climbed in the scarifier-inserter and scarified the tie-cribs. Then, using the inserter winch, Joe and Anthony would guide ties under the rails. Mike F. and Joe dug-out by hand some old ties that were not fully removed because they split or shattered when the attempt was made to pull them mechanically. Then, new ties were inserted.

Pam and Alan took the 11:30 train from Baths back to Old Sacramento where they represented the MOW Team at the "Docent Open House" for recruiting prospective new docents. The rest of the Team continued with tie-insertion on the Sutterville Line. Joe discovered that we had missed about 20 empty tie cribs at the bottom of the hill near Sutterville Road. So, Taka and Kyle began unloading new ties next to the cribs. Heather dug out the cribs with the scarifier while Kyle and Taka guided the insertion of new ties. Heather decided that this was a good opportunity for training so, she had Kyle climb into the cab of the scarifier and taught him how to operate it. There's quite a bit of nuance in operating that machine but Kyle is mechanically inclined and picked it up very quickly. Tie insertion continued up the hill at breakneck speed with Taka and Joe working closely with Kyle and Heather in the scarifier. After the Team got 85 ties inserted, it was time to head back to Old Sac. Alan arrived back on the scene just in time to take control of the tie-crane. The Team stowed the equipment and returned to the Shops quite pleased with the very productive day. The Sutterville Line to the Zoo project is going great and, right now, we're ahead of schedule thanks to the dedicated efforts of the super-fantastic volunteers of the MOW Team!

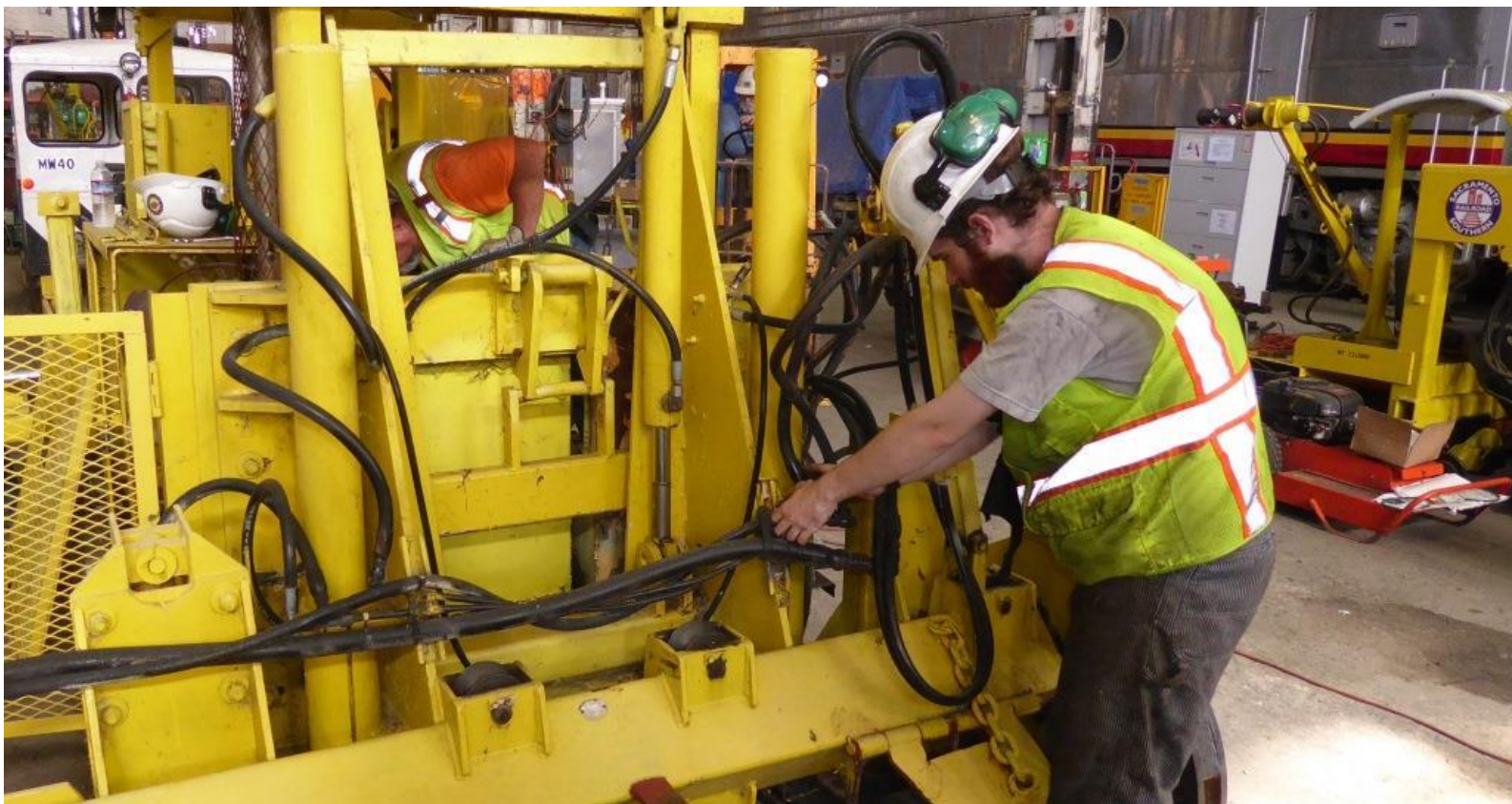
This coming week, the MOW Team will continue making great progress on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, the real fun begins with the plating and spiking of the 150 ties we've inserted. Meet at the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. It should be another great week. Thanks very much to all of our great volunteers and supporters!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Joe digging into the inner-workings of the Jackson 125 Tie-exchanger



Matt disconnecting hydraulic lines from the lift-cylinder



The removed broken cylinder-piston and twisted lifting ram



Alan in the Tie-crane removing dead-ties strewn about the Sutterville Line track



Heather and Matt balance the load on the flatcar



At Setzer, Alan transfers the dead-ties from the flatcar to the new and growing dead-tie pile



Matt cleans dead-tie debris off of the flatcar



Matt on GM2 brings over a bundle of ties for loading onto the flatcars



Kevin positions his train for the loading of ties onto the flatcars



Matt on GM2 loads the second flatcar with a bundle of ties



Chris guides Matt on GM2 as he approaches the flat car with a bundle of ties



Kevin and Mike H. transfer the pile of tie-plates from the deck of the Kalamazoo into a wire basket

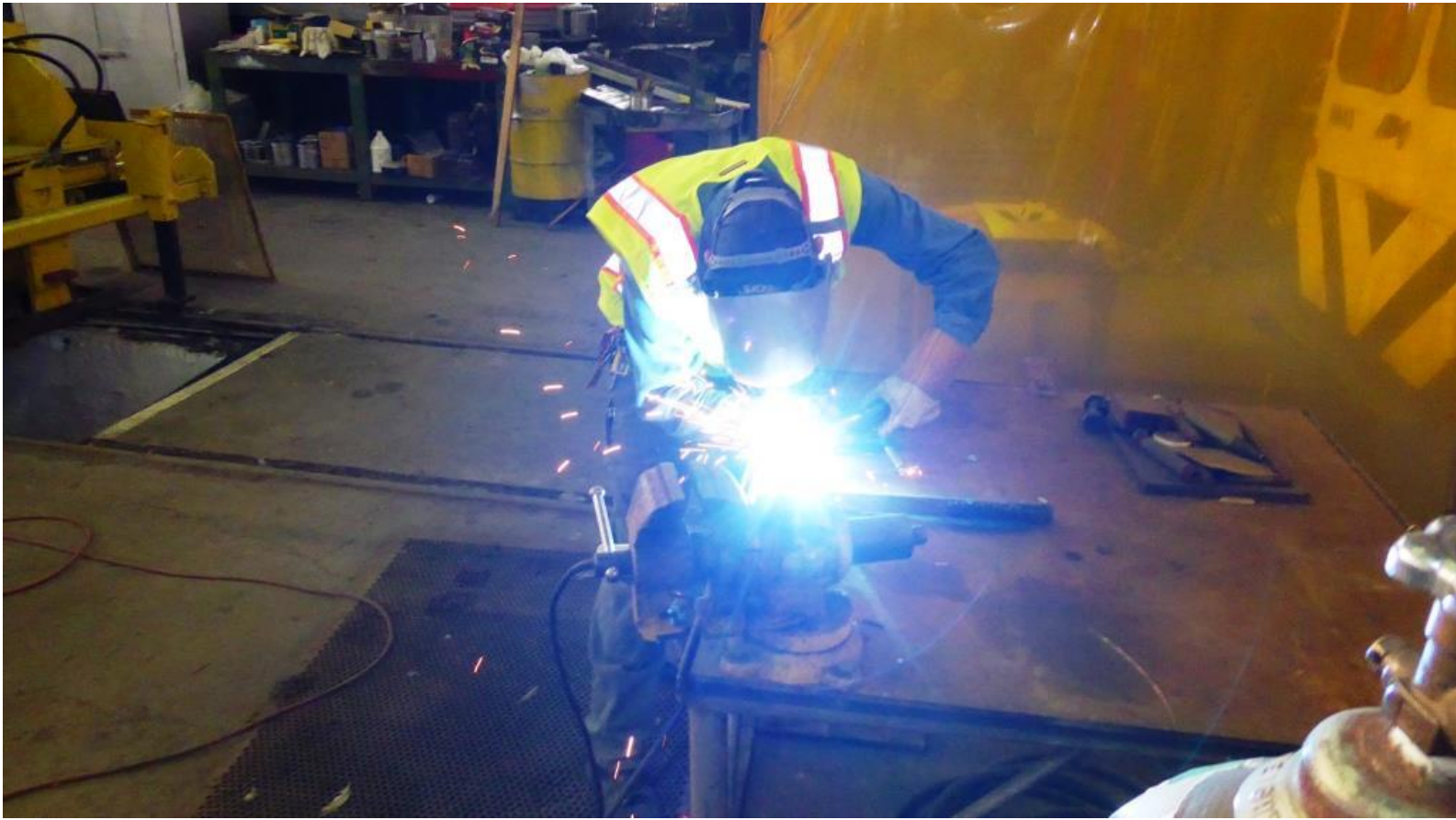


With a green signal indication, Conductor Heather setting a new speed-record for securing a crossing over the UP Main



Brakeman Joe guides Engineer Kevin in the Kalamazoo in the spotting of his train





Apprentice welder Kyle makes repairs to a thingamajig for the Jackson 125



Our train is ready to roll!



Mike F. cuts the band holding the bundle together



Joe and Pam drop ties off the flatcar and spot them near the empty tie-cribs



Joe requests a "red-zone" before going in-between to drop more ties



Joe and Pam spot more ties



With ties deployed, Joe guides a new tie under the rails which Heather, in the scarifier-inserter, pulls into place



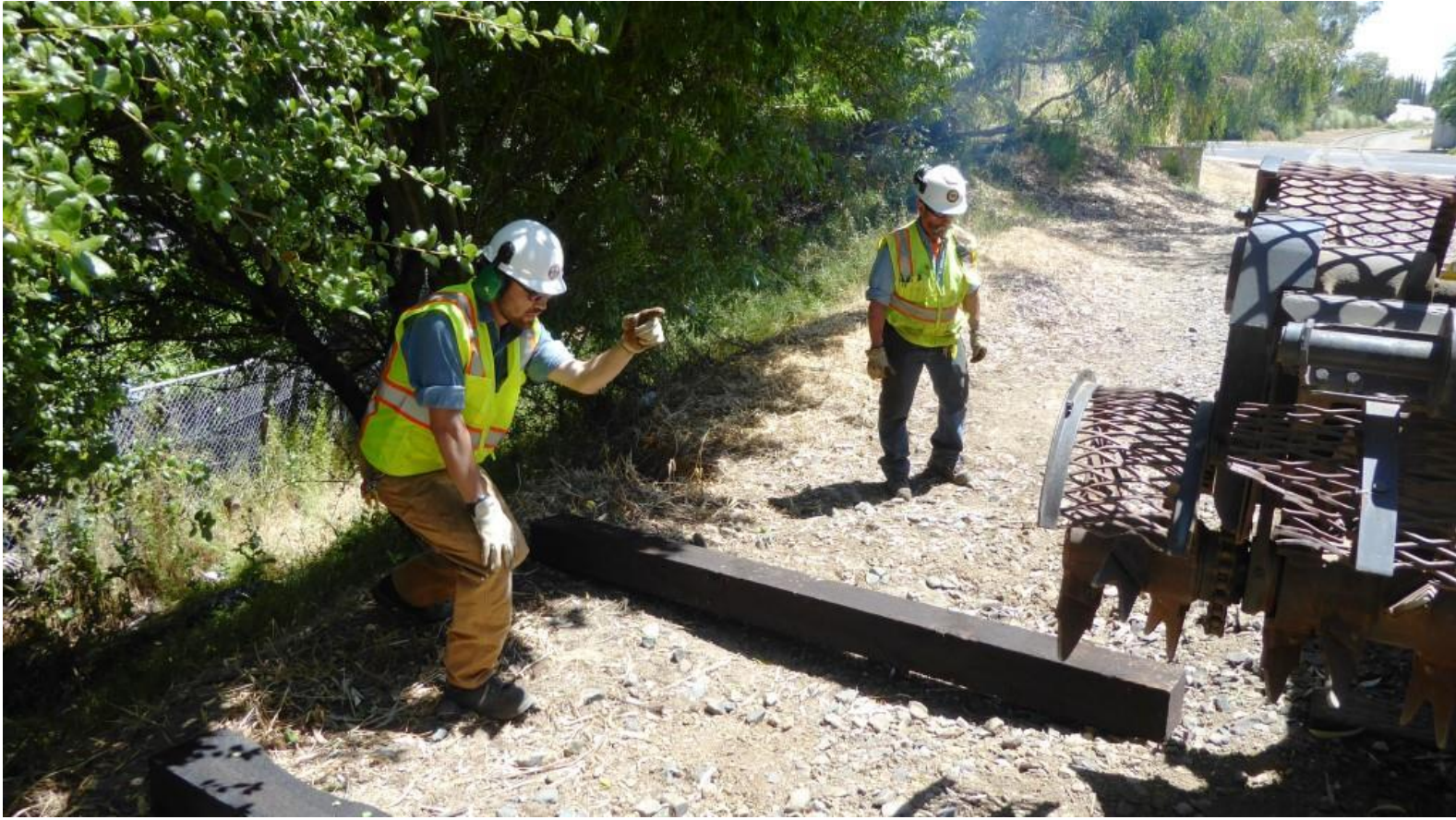
Heather digs out a tie-crib



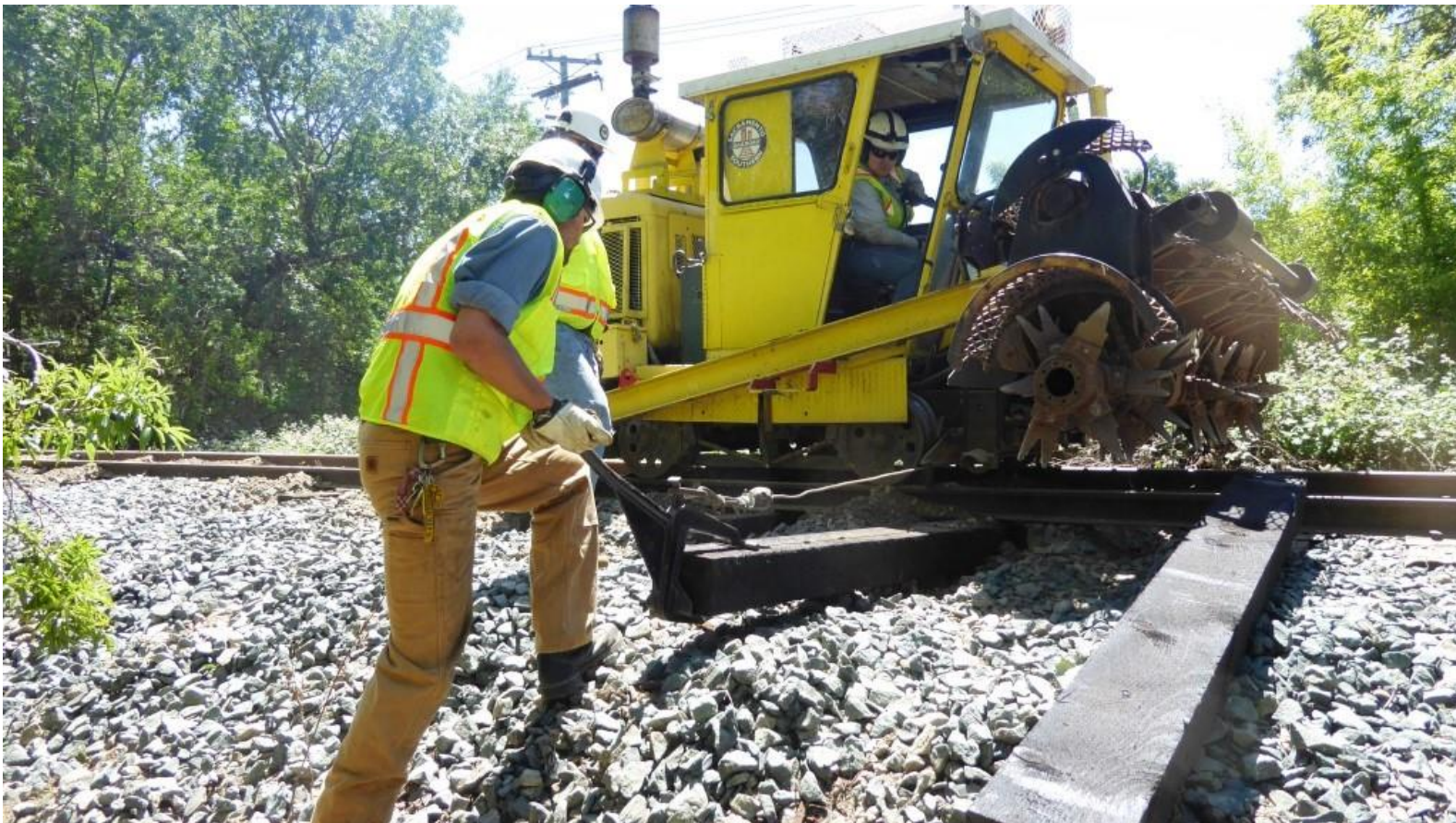
Joe and Mike F. remove the remnants of half a tie that broke in half when being pulled



With the discovery of about 20 cribs that we missed, Taka and Kyle move more ties into position for installation



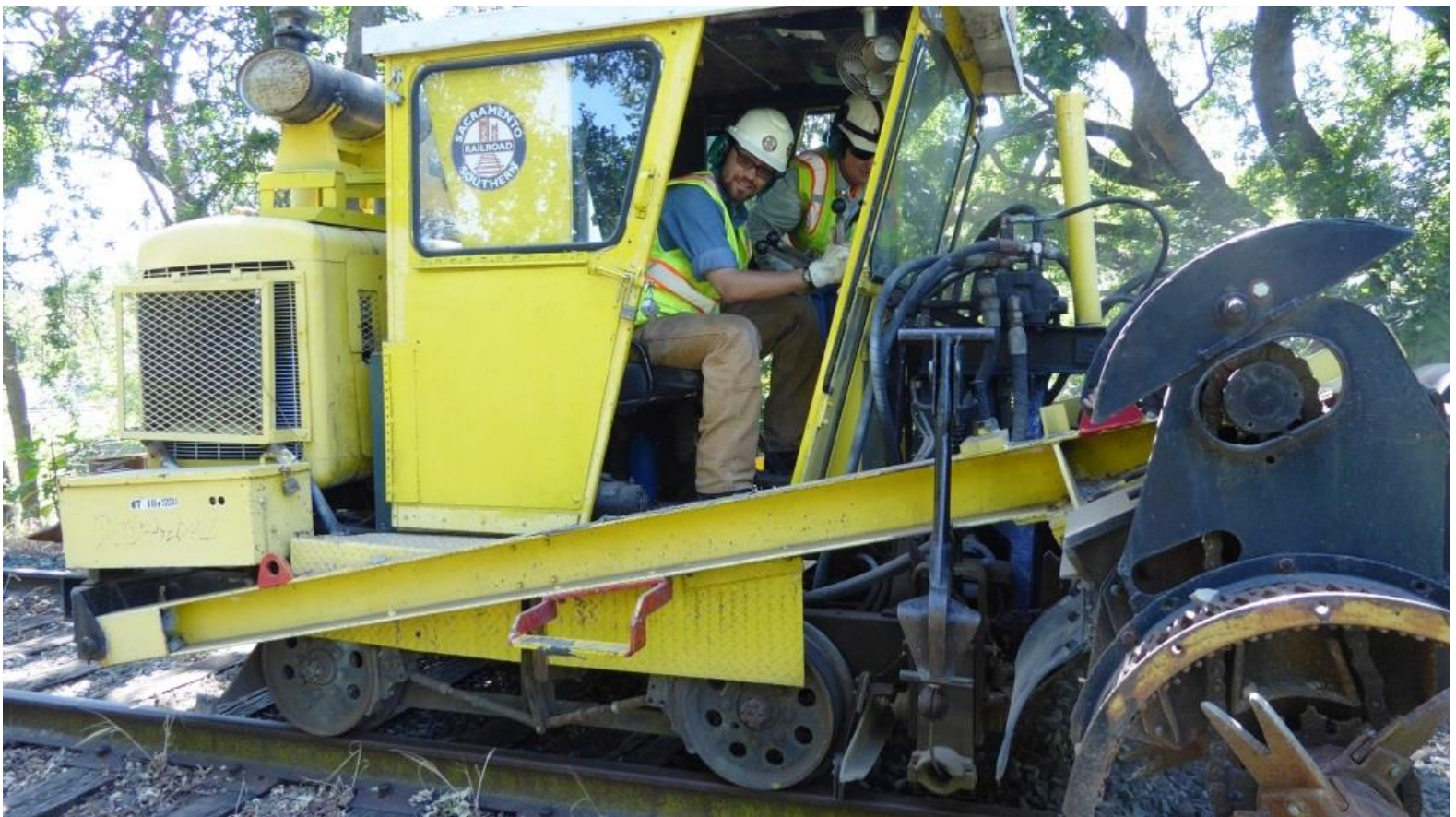
Kyle signals to Heather in the scarifier-inserter as to when she has it lined up with the empty crib



Kyle guides the tie in place as Heather pulls it in with the scarifier-inserter



Taka requests a "red-zone" which Engineer Mike F. on the Kalamazoo acknowledges



Heather gives Kyle instruction on the operation of the scarifier-inserter



Kyle operates the scarifier-inserter as Taka guides a tie under the rails



Last tie of the day: Taka guides Kyle in the scarifier to line-up with the empty crib where he and Joe will guide it into position