

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 15, 2016. You MOW Team was back on dry-land this week – no rain to dampen our spirits. So, let's not dampen yours by delaying this update any further.

It was a wash and brush-up day for the MOW Team on Tuesday. Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Anthony Filamor, Frederick Carr, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, Heather Kearns, Harry Voss, and Frank Werry were on a mission to give the Shops, "That certain air of savoir faire, In the Merry Old Land of MOW!" Our end of the Erecting Shops had become a bit cluttered of late and the Team was determined to restore order. Pat was the EIC of this organizing operation. Cabinets were moved, tables cleared, and tools were put away. Anthony on the forklift moved things about. Space on the pallet-racks was reallocated and consolidated in a much more logical fashion. Cliff's welding station was shifted about. Non-essential thingamabobs were moved out giving him more space to work. All in all, it was quite a successful operation and Pat directed it like a maestro. Heather and Frank worked on replacing the battery switch in the Kalamazoo. Later, Heather did tests on the tie-shear's battery to try to determine if it had a dead cell. We couldn't have asked for a more profitable evening of progress.

The mighty Weed Team had a very successful day on Thursday pruning trees and turning the cut material into chum in spite of temperature rivaling summer conditions. Mike Taylor, Heather Kearns, Steve Wilson, Ed Kottal, and Dave Megeath took the man-lift, chipper, and A-6 motorcar south of the I-5 Bridge to thin-out the overgrowth along the Sutterville Line. After carefully surveying the line to avoid interacting with any active ornithological infestations, Dave took flight in the bucket with his trusty gas-powered-chainsaw-on-a-stick. Ed and Steve took great delight pulverizing tree debris into tiny bits with the chipper. Another fantastic job by our mighty Weedies who work their hearts out to make sure our railroad is always compliant with 49 CFR Part 213.37.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Cliff, Heather, Joe, Frank, Fred, and Anthony kept up the good work. Joe and Fred headed over to the Boiler Shop to take on a bit of a problem we're experiencing with the back-hoe. There appears to be a bit of an electrical malfunction behind the dash-board. Fred and Joe are electrical geniuses and soon had the problem diagnosed. They're now working with Quartermaster in Chief, Heather, on procuring the proper parts for a full repair. Anthony on the forklift grabbed the two bolt-tightening machines and loaded them on trailer for use on Saturday. Frank and Joe then strapped them down. Frank also brought a bucket of lock-washers for 75-pound rail over from the Erecting Shop for loading on the truck. Cliff and Fred took apart the brake-rigging on the A-4 motorcar. These brake components are no longer commercially available so our good friend, Dusty Galland from the Mechanical Shops, has volunteered to manufacture some replacement parts. He'll be the brake-shoe assembly that Fred and Cliff removed as a template. Our thanks to Dusty! Then Cliff, Joe, Anthony, and Fred located some bolts for 75-pound rail and wire-brushed the rust off of them. We'll be using them on Saturday. Indeed, there was more productivity in the Shops on Thursday than you can shake a stick at!

Saturday started off as all Saturdays should: with a bright pink box of fresh doughnuts. On hand, were some of the finest doughnut connoisseurs in all of Creation including Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Anthony, Chris Machado, Harry, Joe, Michael Florentine, Frank, and Chris Carlson. The Team would split into two groups with Pam, Clem, Joe, Frank, Harry, and Mike F. using the bolt-machine to tighten track-bolts while Chris C., Chris M., and Anthony deployed the ballast regulator and tamper. Harry handled the truck while Mike F. operated the Big Green Machine which would lift the bolt-machine on and off the track. Joe, Clem, and Frank handled the bolt-machine. Pam cleared rock away from around joints so that the machine could access the bolts. They tightened bolts from Broadway all the way to beyond the Pioneer Bridge. Meanwhile, Chris C. in the regulator along with Chris M. and Anthony in the tamper headed to Front Street to get the ballast rock all smooth and pretty around the new track we built. The regulator's wings and plow pulled rock in to the track and filled in holes. This operation was going smoothly until a rather thunderous "BANG" emanated from under the machine. Well, to make a long story short, a weld had snapped connecting the wing to lift-cylinder. A half-inch thick steel plate had failed and, as a result, we could not move. Fortunately, Mike F. on Big Green was close by at Broadway. The emergency call went out and Mike was there lickety-split. Under the direction of Chris M. and Chris C., Mike F. was able to reposition the wing to lift it into its travel-cradle. This was a delicate operation as the wing had become catawampus and needed to be straightened before lifted. But, the three of them did a magnificent job moving and lifting the wing back into its cradle. Upon investigation, the original welds, from the time the machine was manufactured, never penetrated through the thick steel. Failure was inevitable. Not to be deterred by a little incident, Chris C. was able to deploy the broom on the regulator and continued working the rock. Then Chris M. and Anthony brought in the tamper to squeeze the new rock under the ties.

After lunch, the A-6 motorcar and compressor were brought out on the line to replace broken lock-washers on a number of track-bolts down in Miller Park. Anthony, Mike F., Joe, Chris C., Frank broke-out the pneumatic impact wrench for the job. Still, some of the nuts proved too much for the impact-wrench. In fact, a track-chisel was needed to split the nuts to remove them from the bolts. But, with the perseverance you've come to expect from your MOW Team, the bolts and lock-washers were replaced and the track was once again sound. With that, the Team waved to the passengers as the 4 o'clock train passed by and headed back to town, themselves, to call it a day.

This coming week, the Tuesday and Thursday evening crews will gather as usual at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time when we'll head out on the line again (and hope not to break anything). As always, thanks to everyone for your dedication!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Anthony on the forklift works with Fred, Joe, and Gene in the spring-cleaning operation



Heather testing the battery on the tie-shear for a dead cell



Joe and Fred addressing the electrical issues on the back-hoe



Joe and Frank strapping the bolt-machines to the trailer



Team bolt-tightening ready for duty!



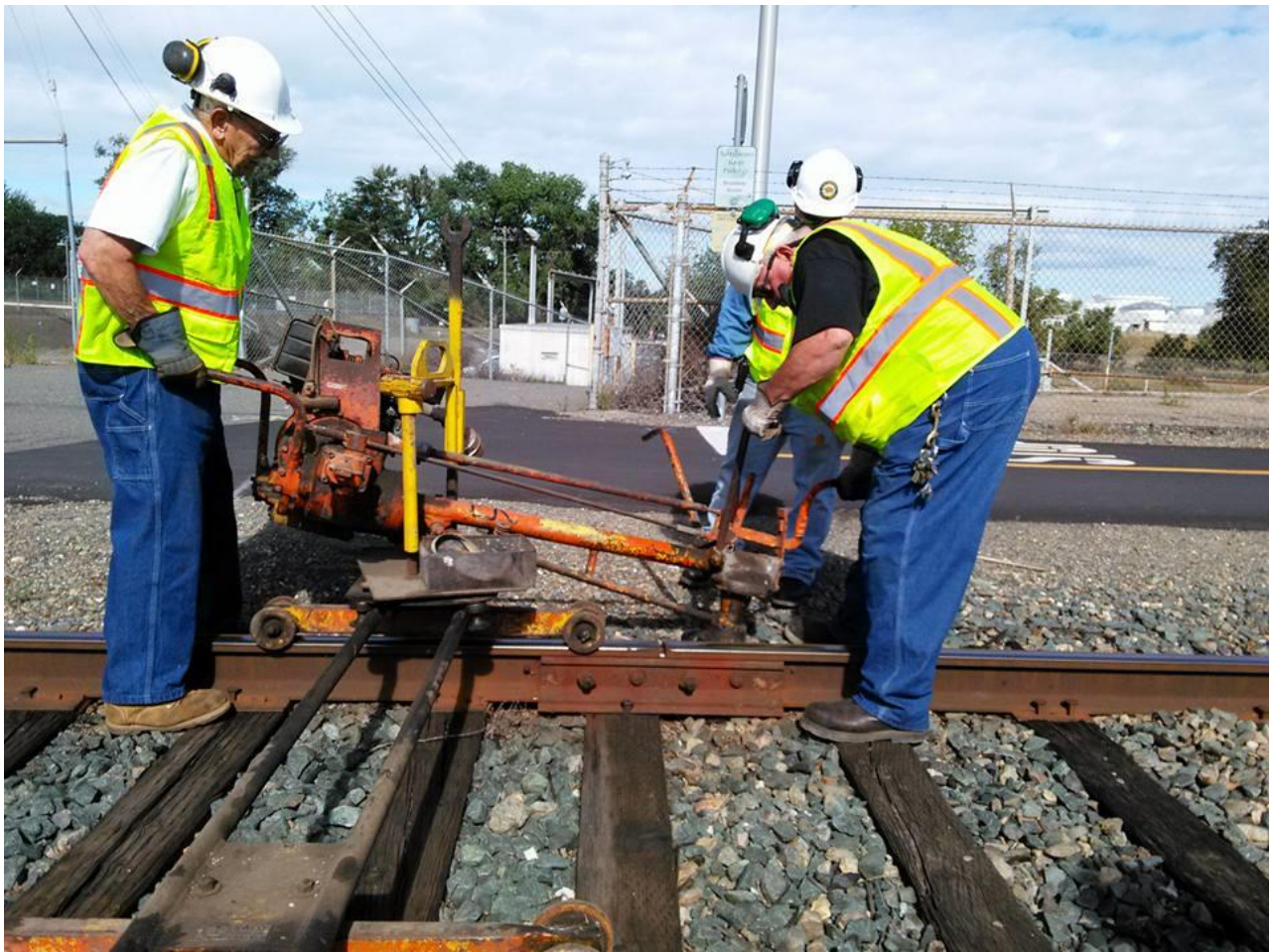
Clem looking for the rail-weight engraving on web of the rail to determine the size of the ratchet needed on the bolt-machine



Joe, Clem, and Mike F. deploy the bolt-machine



Clem, Joe, and Harry with the bolt machine in action



It really is a three person operation running this machine



Chris M. provides guidance from the ground as Chris C. operates the regulator



Chris C. runs the regulator over the rock



After the loud "BANG," Chris M. and Chris C. investigate the malfunction



Chris M. provides direction for Mike F. on the Green Machine in straightening out the catawampus wing



Chris M. and Mike F. work in concert to lift the wing into the travel-cradle





Success! With the wing secured, the regulator can be moved and will not be blocking any trains



The broken lift-cylinder connector



In the meantime, the broom still worked so Chris C. "broomed" the track



Then, Chris M. brings in the tamper..



...While Anthony guides the action from the ground



In the afternoon, Mike F., Joe, and Anthony start off clearing a mound of rock left by the ballast regulator during the "incident"...



Mike F. uses the impact wrench to remove a nut in order to replace the lock-washer as Harry holds the bolt in place to keep it from spinning



But, when the impact-wrench proved too weak, Chris C. comes in to loosen the nut by hand



After the nut was split by the track-chisel, Joe removes it the rest of the way while Chris C. uses a claw-bar to hold the bolt from spinning



Now Mike F. uses the impact-wrench to tighten down a new bolt



Anthony takes on the next bolt with a broken lock-washer



As the train passes by, DSLE Jeremy Levish give the MOW Team a big "thumbs-up" for a job well done!