

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 24, 2015. The Team got some good news this week – and some affirmation that the work we're doing is paying off. Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) inspectors paid an official visit to our line. So, let's get right to that news before a defect can be logged against this update.

That's right. Tuesday morning the CPUC and FRA inspected the Sacramento Southern Railroad's Mainline. CSRM's Manager of Track Programs, Alan Hardy, and SSRR Track Inspector, Frank Werry, escorted the government inspectors down the line. The CPUC and FRA inspectors spent a good two hours between Mile Posts 0.3 and 3.10 walking the line, poking, prodding, inspecting under the head of the rails, scrutinizing joints, surveying cross-level, measuring gauge, examining switches, questioning maintenance and inspection protocols, and were unable to find anything that would constitute a defect under state or federal regulations. They declared our line in very good shape and made particular note of the obvious and consistent maintenance work being done. This is a testament and tribute to all the members of the MOW Team who dedicate their time, skills, and effort of maintaining the SSRR tracks. Most of all, the entire SSRR family should feel gratified in the affirmation that, despite a few wobbles here and there, our line is in good shape, safe, and well maintained.

Meanwhile, back in the Rail Yards, the Weed Team gathered to continue their never-ending battle against those pesky green things that keep popping up. Weedies Mike Taylor, Heather Kearns, Joe Galipeau, and Dave Megeath took on recent growth at the transfer-table between the Boiler and Erecting Shops and turntable to the north of the Erecting Shop. A variety of plant life, including some saplings, had sprung up this spring along the rails that carry the transfer-table. Next, they headed to Setzer to attack the overgrowth near the tunnel portal before focusing on the line leading up the hill. Weed Team mercenary, Carol Nelson, carried on working the line south of Sutterville Road between MP 3.5 and MO 3.6 turning the overgrowth in that area to mulch. Indeed, the Weed Team's valiant efforts continue to pay-off!

In the evening, Designated Supervisor of the Barbecue, Pat Scholzen, fired-up the custom-built cooker and fixed a feast for the MOW Team. Alan, Frank, Heather, Dave, Mike T., Mike Harris, Frederick Carr, Harry Voss, Matt Blackburn, and Gene Peck thoroughly enjoyed Chef Pat's specially prepared bratwurst and pork-loin. Harry's deviled-eggs, Frank's macaroni salad, and Fred's beans and bread made it a banquet. Work did get done, as well. The new air-compressor arrived for the tie-shear. Mike H. and Fred set out to remove the old one and install the new. Although it put up a little resistance, the old compressor came off and they began transferring the fittings over to the new. Frank worked on the A-5 motorcar. Everyone had a very nice time enjoying excellent Pat's yummy barbecue on a very fine day for the Team.

Thursday, Signals Department volunteers Dennis Gallagher and Scott Martel helped troubleshoot an electrical problem with the old-old tamper in Old Sacramento. In the evening, Heather, Alan, and Joe Rivera spent set out to the problem. They replaced the starter and solenoid which was deemed the culprit. Yet, the machine still wouldn't start. Digging around inside the engine compartment, Heather found the problem – a cable between the batteries and the battery-switch had become dislodged. Once reattached, the tamper started right up. Over in the Shops, Fred and Mike H. got the new air compressor installed and tested on the tie-shear. Cliff Hayes began building the protective shields for the tie-crane while Frank worked on the A-5 motorcar. It was an evening of good success.

It was another early start on Saturday. This time, Matt and Mike Florentine drew the early shift. They arrived pre-doughnut hour to get the equipment out of the container and ready to roll. Doughnuts arrived in the Shops, thanks to Chris Carlson and Harry, which Heather, Frank, Mike H., Steve Nemeth, Pam Tatro, John Rexroth, and Alan all enjoyed. Off to the Miller Park Siding we go. There were several ties left to insert. They were in tight spaces where the Setzer Lead and Mainline all converge. The elevation of the Mainline is higher than the siding which meant we had to do a lot of digging to make the insertion trenches as level as possible. Harry handled the back-hoe and tried to dig out the trenches. But it was a difficult angle. So, Pam, Frank, Mike F., Chris, Heather, and John all took shovel and mattocks to hand and dug. Meanwhile, Mike H. took the Kalamazoo tug, flatcar, along with Steve and Matt down the line south of MP 2.5 to collect dead ties from our pre-season tie-changing efforts on the Main. Despite all the digging on the siding, ties were still going in on a downward angle. Several jammed up as they were shoved into place. Pam was a superstar and tirelessly took on both shovel and mattocks. With perseverance, the Team installed the final ties. Frank and Steve shoveled rock back into the cribs around the new ties so that when Mike F. brought in the tamper to tamp-up the new ties, there would be rock to tamp under them. Then, John and Chris deployed the rail-lifter and lifted up the rail over the new ties just enough so that Steve and Mike F. could insert tie-plates. Chris and Steve then spiked the new ties down with the pneumatic spiker. By day's end, the work on the Miller Park Siding was complete. Starting next Saturday, all trains will be diverted onto the Siding as the Team takes on a major rebuild of the Mainline through Miller Park. This will be our biggest project of the whole year. We'll be changing out upwards of 100 ties as well as leveling the track. The Mainline will be out of service for several weeks as we undertake this job. Yes, it will prove inconvenient for a time. But, when it is done, we will have a smoother, more stable track, and most importantly, a safer track. We could sure use your help. Come on out and join the Team in this important endeavor in building a better railroad.

This coming week, the Team will gather in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock p.m. On Saturday, we will commence the rebuild of the Mainline through Miller Park starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Meet in the Erecting Shop. Congratulations and thank you to all the MOW Team. The CPUC and FRA this week validated all our efforts and endeavors in maintaining the quality and safety of the SSRR tracks. Your work is meaningful and undoubtedly appreciated by the entire railroad family. Always remember, no track, no trains.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Designated Supervisor of the Barbecue, Pat, works his magic on several pork loins



Dinner is served!



Mike H. and Fred work on removing the old malfunctioning air compressor on the tie-shear.



Cliff fits new shields on the headlight of the tie-crane, which is looking quite yellow thanks to Alan's artistry...



Heather and Joe prepare to install a new starter-motor and solenoid in the old-old tamper



Eureka! Heather finds the culprit!



Chris guides Harry on the back-hoe who was digging out a trench in which a tie could be placed for insertion on the siding



Mike H. pilots the Kalamazoo tug while Steve and Matt load dead ties south of MP 2.5 onto a flatcar for disposal



Heather operates the inserter function of the scarifier. Chris tries to dig out from under the tie to prevent it from going in at downward angle. John guides the scarifier's inserter grapple to keep it straight.



Mike F. tries stomping down on the tie to reduce the angle of insertion.



After the new ties are inserted, they are tamped-up against the base of the rails. Chris guides Mike F. in the tamper.



There was a whole heck of a lot of digging that needed doing as Mike F. and Pam can attest...



Mike F. flaunts "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" as the rail-lifter is deployed...

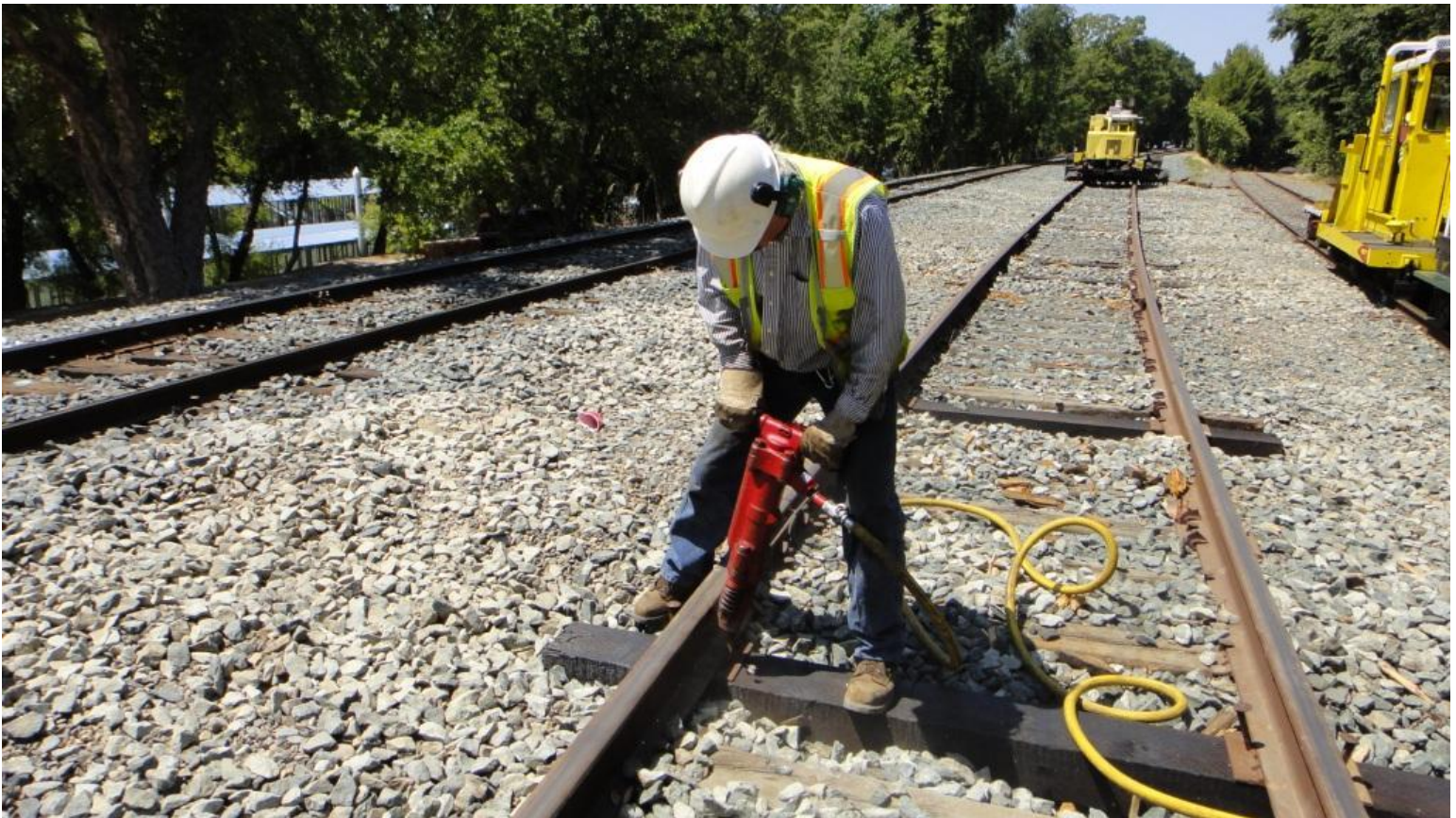


Steve and Mike F. use specially made wands to insert the double-shouldered tie-plates as John and Chris operate the rail-lifter





Steve guides the air-hose as Chris drives a spike



Now it's Steve's turn at the pneumatic spiker...



The northbound Granite Rock No. 10 passes by the MOW work-limits.



Heather gathers pieces of former ties. Yeah, those were ties...