

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 7, 2017. It's full steam ahead on the rebuilding of the Sutterville Line and the train to the Zoo! So, before any red flags get in our way, let's open the throttle on this update right now!

Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Joe Margucci, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns were on hand Tuesday for some MOW fun. You may recall that, last week, we had a spot of unpleasantness with the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger as it was being deployed out on the line. The lift cylinder drifted down and the lifting-ram got caught on the rails. Those components were removed in the field so that we could continue using the machine. Well, Tuesday, the Team surveyed the cylinder and ram and found the damage was much graver than initially conjectured. The entire ram assembly, which consists of half-inch steel plates, is severely twisted and the cylinder's piston-rod actually broke. The cylinder itself will be sent out for repair but the lifting ram will have to be rebuilt by Cliff in the Shops. Cliff sure has his work cut out for him. Joe and Mike H. continued their heroic efforts on restoring the small tractor to service. Amongst other things, they identified several challenging electrical issues that will need to be addressed before the vital machine will start. All in all, a good evening, indeed.

The mighty Weed Team was busy on Thursday de-weeding the SSRR Mainline. Mike Taylor, Ed Kottal, Dave Megeath, and Heather mixed a fine gruel thick and slab of blue brew in their 65-gallon spray rig to combat the advancing legion of prickly green invaders along the right-of-way. Outfitted in their fashionable white Tyvek suits and rubber gloves, the Weedies drenched anything with the slightest hint of green along the tracks. The Team managed to get all the way down to Sutterville Road and across to South Land Park Drive, the southern point of the SSRR Main. This is a never-ending battle and it's thanks to the mighty Weed Team that no 49 CFR Part 213.37 vegetation defects are ever logged against the Sacramento Southern Railroad.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Joe, Frank Werry, Heather, Mike H., Kyle Blackburn, and Alan Hardy pushed-forth with preparations for Saturday's continuing rebuild of the Sutterville Line to the Zoo. The Kalamazoo Tug and two flatcars would be brought over from Old Sacramento and loaded with bundles of brand new ties. But first, the Team needed to do some triage on the turntable. Earlier in the day during a yard move, one of the rails on the turntable dislodged and slipped about eight inches to the north. This eight-inch gap exceeded specifications pursuant to Part 213 of federal regulations by 300-percent and thus, constituted a "defect." Therefore, the turntable was locked-out by our trusty track inspectors until further repair work could be undertaken. Focus then switched to the equipment move. Conductor Frank negotiated terms with the dispatcher in Omaha in order to allow Joe in the Kalamazoo to pilot it across the UP Main. Waiting over at the Shops with two fresh bundles of ties was Kyle on Green Machine 2 (GM2). Kyle deposited the bundles of 32-ties each onto the flatcars then Frank and Joe pulled them over to Old Sac. where Heather and Mike H. were waiting to secure them up on the 150 Track. With the ties spotted and ready for Saturday, the Team headed back to the Shops ready to conclude the evening.

Thanks to Chris Carlson, the cheery bright pinkness of a fresh box of yummy doughnuts greeted Alan, Joe, Mike Willis, Michael Florentine, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Mike H., Kyle, Matt McCracken, and Frank on Saturday. Heather was EIC and provided the job briefing. Mike F. climbed up on GM2 and Mike W. took out the truck. The scarifier-inserter, which has been at the Shops for several weeks undergoing a refit, was ready to redeploy. So, Joe took command of the scarifier and Chris fired up the ballast regulator as Conductor Frank conducted them across the UP Main to Old Sac. Mike H. handled the Kalamazoo, Matt maneuvered the motorcar, and Alan spun-around in the tie-crane. Last week, the Team managed to pull 165 old, rotted ties out of the ground. This week, brand new ties would be inserted in their places. At the job site, Chris and Joe dropped new ties from the bundles on the flatcars next to the empty cribs. Steve, Matt, Kyle, and Heather moved them by hand into position for the scarifier-inserter to pull in. Joe climbed back in the scarifier and, guided by Chris, used the rotating blades to dig-out the cribs to sufficient depths then pulled new ties under the rails with the inserter-wench. Meanwhile, Alan in the tie-crane picked up where he left off last week and picked up more dead-ties strewn about. Soon, the two flatcars attached to the tie-crane were fully loaded so, Alan, Matt, Kyle, and Mike W. headed down to Setzer where they met up with Mike F. on GM2 ready to transfer the ties to the dumpster. Matt and Kyle worked in the dumpster to balance the load. Things were going great guns in the morning as old ties were disposed of and new ties inserted.

After lunch, the work continued. Matt and Kyle took turns inserting ties as Heather operated the scarifier. Mike H., in the Kalamazoo, skillfully pulled the flatcar containing the tie-bundle slowing down the line as more ties were dropped off next to empty cribs. Mike W., Chris, Joe, Kyle, and Matt moved them into position as the cribs were scarified. At Setzer, Steve took the controls of GM2 to gather and dumped more dead-ties into the dumpster. Matt served as load master arranging ties in the dumpster to maximize space. By midafternoon, the Team had inserted 64 new ties under the Sutterville Line track. Unfortunately, due to logistical constraints, we can only haul two bundles of ties at a time down to the job site. Otherwise, the Team could have easily inserted another 20 or 30. So the Team packed-up and followed Matt carrying the pink box back to Old Sacramento. The machines were put away and we headed back to the Shops very pleased with our progress. A total of 280 ties need to be replaced to bring the track up to minimum federal standards. We've pulled 165 ties. Next week, another 64 ties will be inserted. Once all the currently empty cribs are filled with new ties, then we'll begin phase-two of the project and pull and replace an additional 115 ties.

This coming week, the Team will meet as usual on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. The Saturday crew meets at 8 o'clock a.m. for doughnuts then more MOW fun out on the line. We're making great progress on the track to the Zoo. As always, the thanks go to the formidable and fantastic volunteers of the MOW Team. Your noble efforts are greatly appreciated!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Joe assesses the damage to the lifting ram from the Jackson 125



Mike H. and Joe breathing life into the little tractor





“Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble,” as Mike T. and Dave mix a batch of blue-brew...



Mike T., Dave, and Ed drench every discernable trace of green with lovely blue-brew



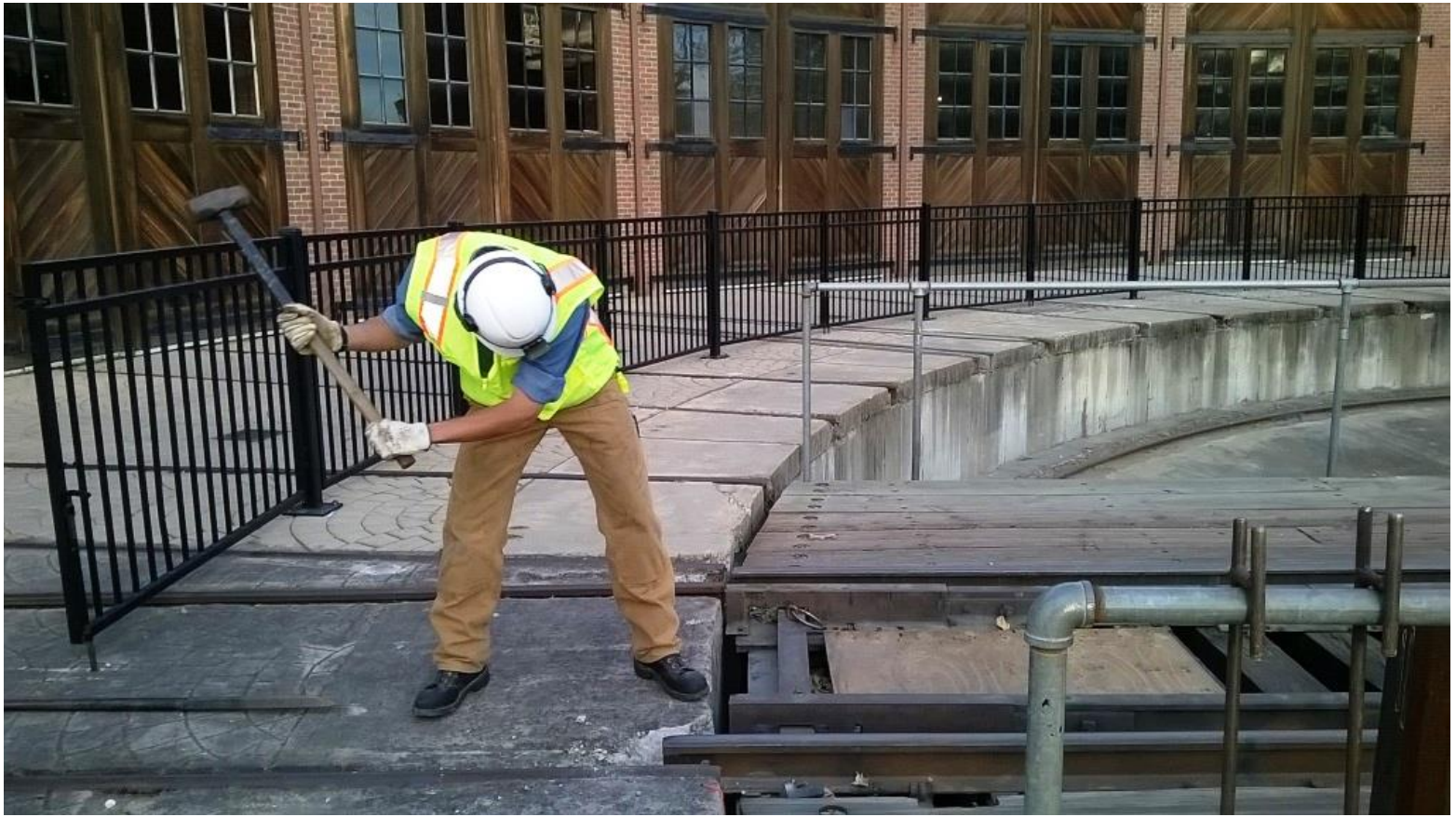


Kyle in control of GM2 grabs a flatcar for placement on the tracks

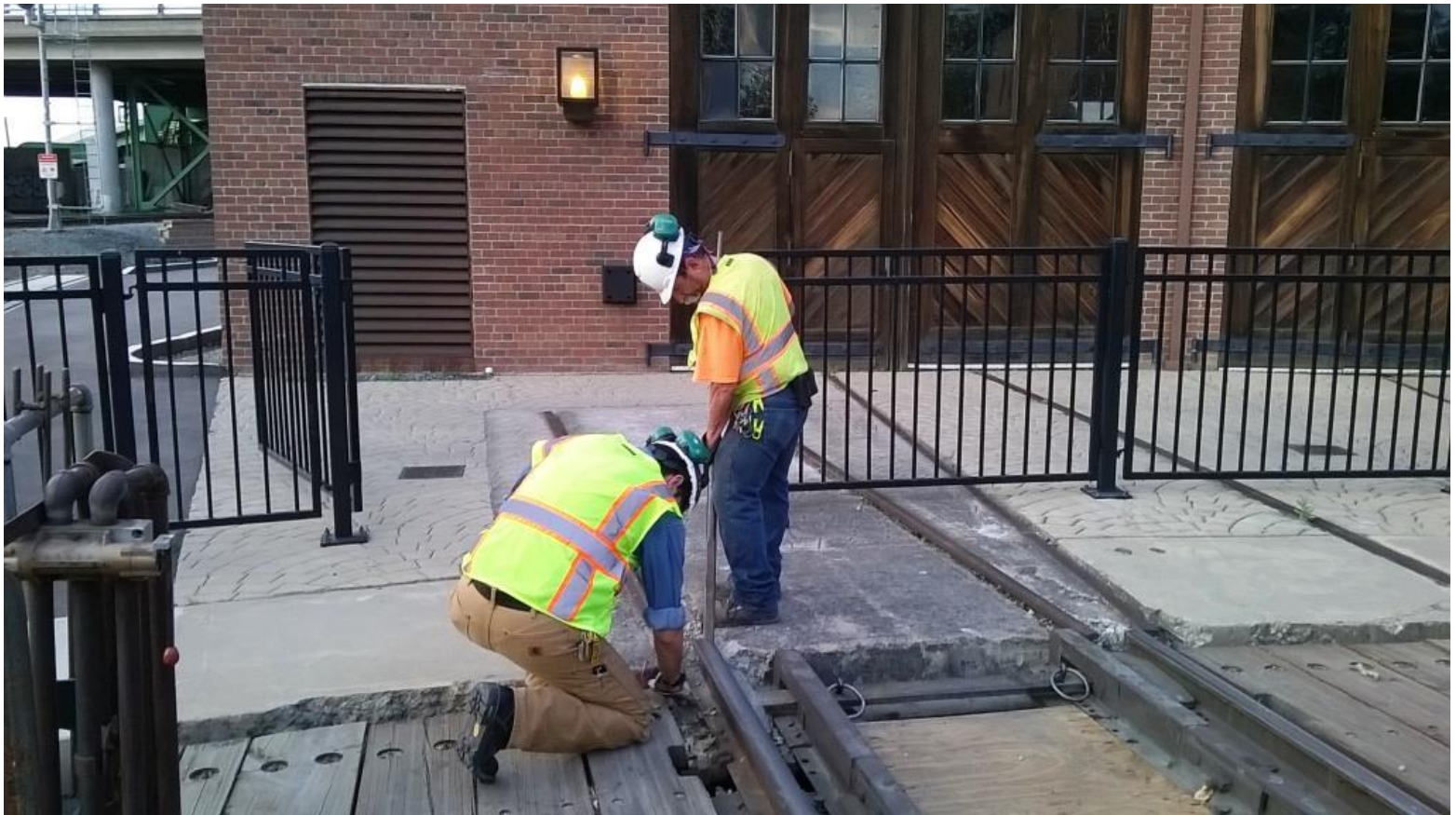


Conductor Frank and engineer Joe ready to pull their train to Old Sacramento





Kyle tries to convince the wayward rail on the turntable to return to its rightful place



Kyle and Joe work to properly line the rail





Chris and Joe deploy new ties



Alan grabs dead-ties with the tie-crane





It's always a good time when the crew can stand around...



...And watch Joe work...





Chris guides a tie into place as Joe pulls it in with the scarifier-inserter's wench



The scarifier scarifies the tie-crib





Chris stand ready with a new tie as Joe in the scarifier digs a fresh tie-crib



Mike H. positions a tie to be inserted





Meanwhile, down at Setzer, Mike F. on GM2 disposes of dead-ties



Kyle cleans tie-debris off of the flatcar





Back on the Sutterville Line to the Zoo, Alan loads up more dead-ties...



...And takes them to Setzer where, this time, Steve manages GM2





Steve on GM2 drops more dead-ties into the dumpster



Load Master Matt ties to un jumble the jack-strawed ties





Steve skillfully uses GM2's forks to push a wayward tie into place



Joe guides Heather in the scarifier to the right spot for pulling in another tie





Matt guide a new tie as it is pulled into place under the rails



Where the pink box goes, the MOW Team follows...