

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for June 18, 2017. Your MOW Team had a hot time out on the line this week as the first big heat-wave of this year hit Sacramento. So, let's keep things hot around here by getting this update cooking right now!

Pat Scholzen, Joe Margucci, Alan Hardy, Frank Werry, Heather Kearns, and Chris Carlson kept things cooking in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday. With the recent electrical upgrades to the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, Joe, Chris, Frank, and Heather decided that the alternator needs to be changed. The current alternator just isn't strong enough to keep the battery sufficiently charged. So, Heather will be procuring a new one. Then we decided to call a "meeting of the minds" and gathered everyone together to discuss some of the mechanical issues we're facing. We needed to make some decisions about priorities and wanted the input of the folks that will be doing the work. It was a very good meeting and some very good decisions were made. With that, the meeting adjourned and everyone went back to work. Frank continued working on the rail-rod. Chris and Joe reviewed the schematics of the Jackson 125's hydraulic-oil cooler to determine its amperage. Also, a dumpster was brought around to the north-end of the Erecting Shop with Green Machine 2 so that all the accumulated garbage and amassed pink-boxes could be taken out. And thus, the evening ended with everyone feeling very positive about the MOW Team moving forward.

Thursday, Heather, Joe, Alan, Weston Snyder, Michael Florentine, Frank, and Chris were on hand to keep the progress moving forward. Earlier in the day, Heather had retrieved the rebuilt lift-cylinder for the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger from the hydraulic repair shop. You may recall that, several weeks ago, this cylinder went haywire and deployed in an uncontrolled fashion when out on the line. Well, it's been repaired and Chris, Mike, Joe, and Weston spent the evening reinstalling it on the machine. Weston, on the forklift, brought it in and lifted it over the machine and then lowered it into position while Joe, Mike, and Chris got it all hooked up. It took quite an effort to get it back in place as this machine was not exactly manufactured with ease of maintenance in mind. But, the Team persevered and got the job done. The new lifting ram was then installed. Chris fired it up and tested it in operation. Of course, it worked exactly as it should. As Joe said, "The Jackson is back in action!" Meanwhile, Frank continued his efforts with the rail-rod. It will make an excellent alternate inspection vehicle when the Old Sacramento Yard is out of service while the waterfront boardwalk is rebuilt by the city. The Team then did a little staging for our Saturday operation before, "Quitting time, USA," was proclaimed. Another evening of great progress by your MOW Team.

Heather arrived extra early on Saturday and headed to Old Sacramento to open-up machines and pull the MOW work-train out of the container so that the Team could make a speedy departure following the briefing. It was predicted to be a very hot day so Heather's extra effort helped the Team make a quick start of it. Over in the Shops, Heather joined Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Pam Tatro, Bev Ratzlaff, Kyle Blackburn, Weston, Jose Gomez, Chris, Matt Blackburn, and Harry Voss for the traditional Saturday morning restorative: doughnuts. The Sutterville Line was our destination where the Team would continue gauging the track and spiking along the west rail. Harry took the truck over to Old Sac. Weston and Jose climbed behind the controls of the Kalamazoo tug to pull everything down beyond the I-5 Bridge to the Sutterville line. A significant distance of the track down there is too narrow – below the 56-inch threshold that constitutes a defect pursuant to federal regulations. Spikes from the ties that were not removed had to be pulled to allow the rails to move as we spread them. Jose and Kyle took on the job of removing those spikes. Joe and Clem deployed the two rail-spreaders. Alan set up the track-gauge (measuring device) that works in conjunction with the gauger/rail-spreaders. As the rails moved apart, the track-gauge would drop down indicating that we had achieved the required 56 ½ inch distance between the rails. Then, Pam, Joe, Bev, and Weston set spikes to hold the rails in gauge. As the gauging work progressed, Chris and Harry got the rail-mounted air-compressor fired-up. Jose connected the 60-pound pneumatic spike driver to the air-hose began driving the set spikes. Clem managed the air-hose as Weston piloted the Kalamazoo, shoving the air-compressor very slowly north as the spiking advanced. Matt then relieved Jose and continued with the spike-driving. This process continued like Swiss clockwork. The track was gauged, spikes were set, then driven home giving us a near perfect four-feet, eight-and-one-half-inch gauge throughout the work area.

At lunch time, the Team loaded up the equipment and took it south across Sutterville Road. Chris and Jose flagged the crossing and brought traffic to a stop, as surprised motorists watch this rare event. We spotted the consist between Sutterville and South Land Park Drive and went to lunch. Following lunch, we headed back across Sutterville Road and continued with the work. Indeed, the Sacramento summer heat was on – big time. Fortunately, most of the Sutterville Line is shaded by burly oaks and cottonwoods. Plus, a slight breeze kept us cool enough to carry on working well into the afternoon. As gauging continued, Joe and Heather set spikes, and Kyle took his turn at the pneumatic spike-driver. Unfortunately, at this point, we encountered a bit of a mechanical issue. The air-compressor broke-down in a somewhat critical manner. This brought our efforts to a sudden halt. The problem with the compressor is serious and may take longer than a week to resolve. This will impact the Team's ability to continue work on the Sutterville track. So, we packed-up and headed back to town. Once everything was put away, Heather, Kyle, and Joe took the A-6 motorcar, pulling the compressor, over the UP Mainline to the Shops. Getting this machine repaired, or determining an alternative, will be the priority for the week ahead. Despite this late developing challenge, the Team got a tremendous amount of work done on Saturday. In the meantime, the dedication and perseverance of the incredible volunteers of the MOW Team, doing hard-labor despite the 100-degree plus temperatures, is inspiring.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather as usual on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, things will get underway at 8 o'clock a.m. Depending on the condition of the compressor, we hope to go back down to the Sutterville Line. In any event, many thanks to the fantastic volunteers and supporters of the MOW Team as we work to build a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Chris, Heather, and Frank investigate the need for a new alternator for the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger

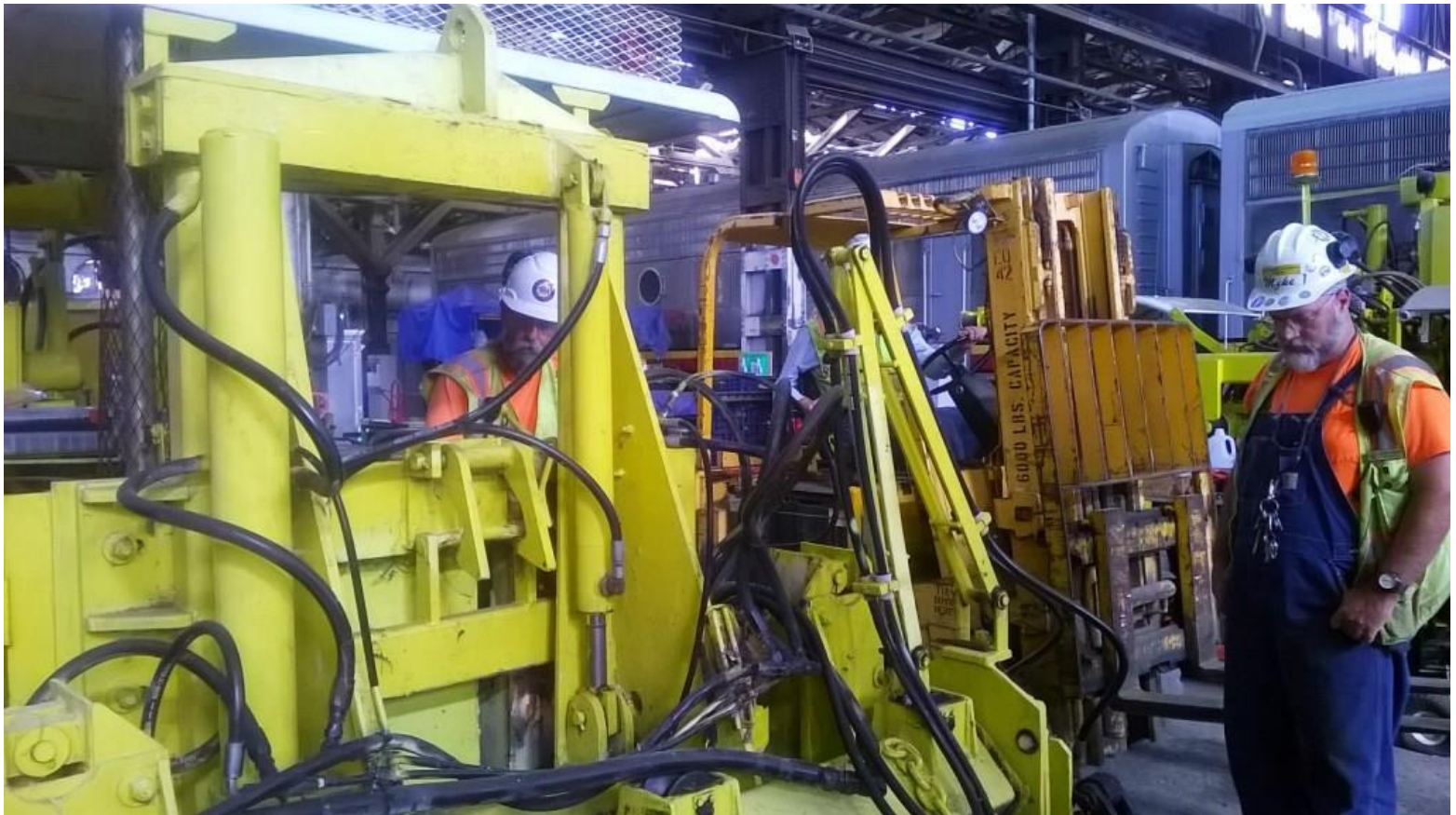


A meeting of the minds: Joe, Frank, Alan, Heather, Pat, and Chris make decisions



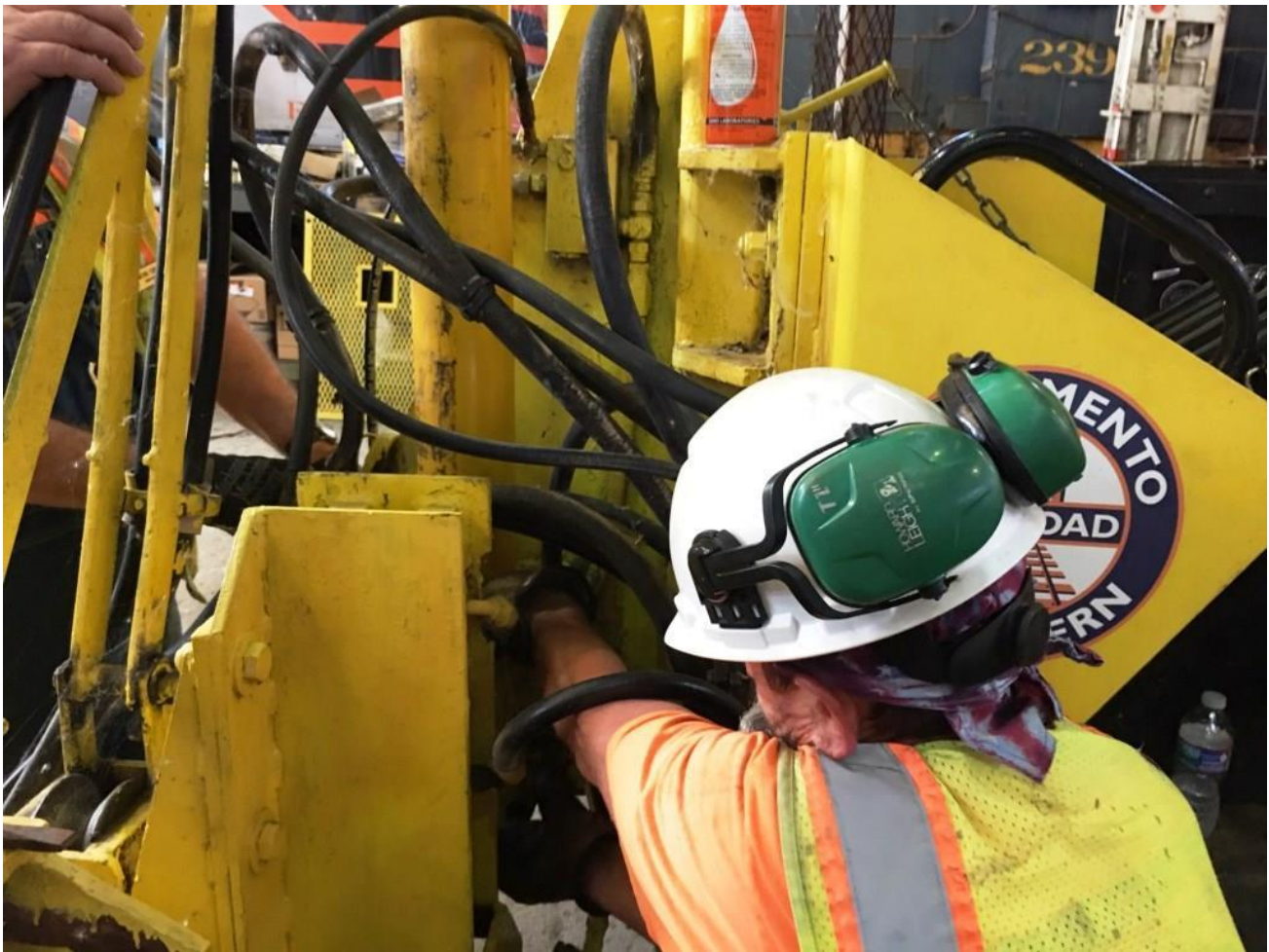


Frank works on restoring the rail-rod to service



Joe and Mike F. working to restore the lift cylinder on the Jackson 125





Joe reconnecting hydraulic lines to the Jackson 125's lift cylinder



Chris and Mike F. work with Joe on installing the lift cylinder





Engineer Bev taking the A-6 motorcar to Baths



Kyle removes spikes in a narrow area so that the track can be spread





Heather, Pam, and Bev deploy tools

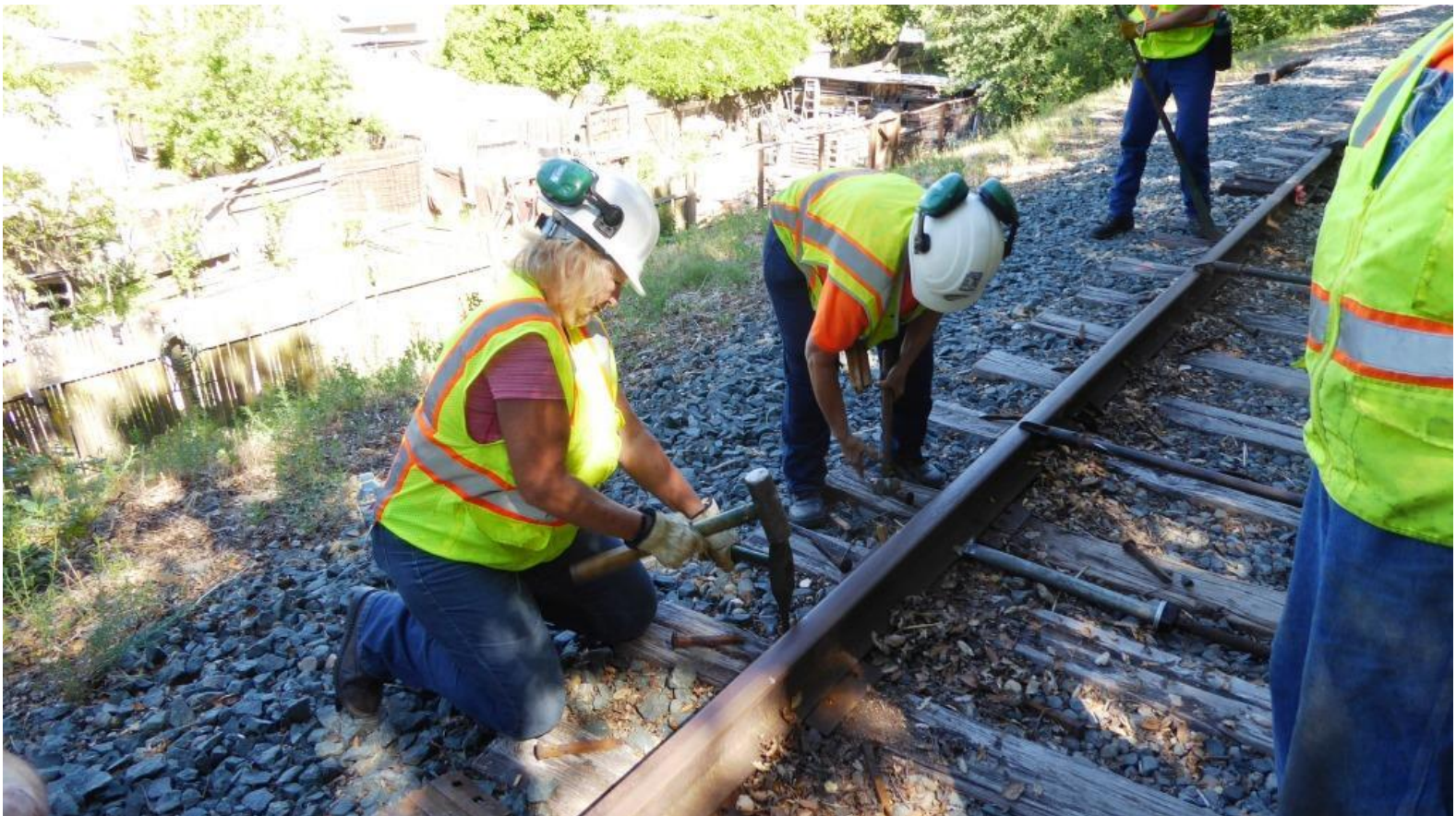


Further up the line, Jose keeps on pulling spikes





The hammer-head was loose so Weston and Joe drive a wedge into the handle to tighten it up

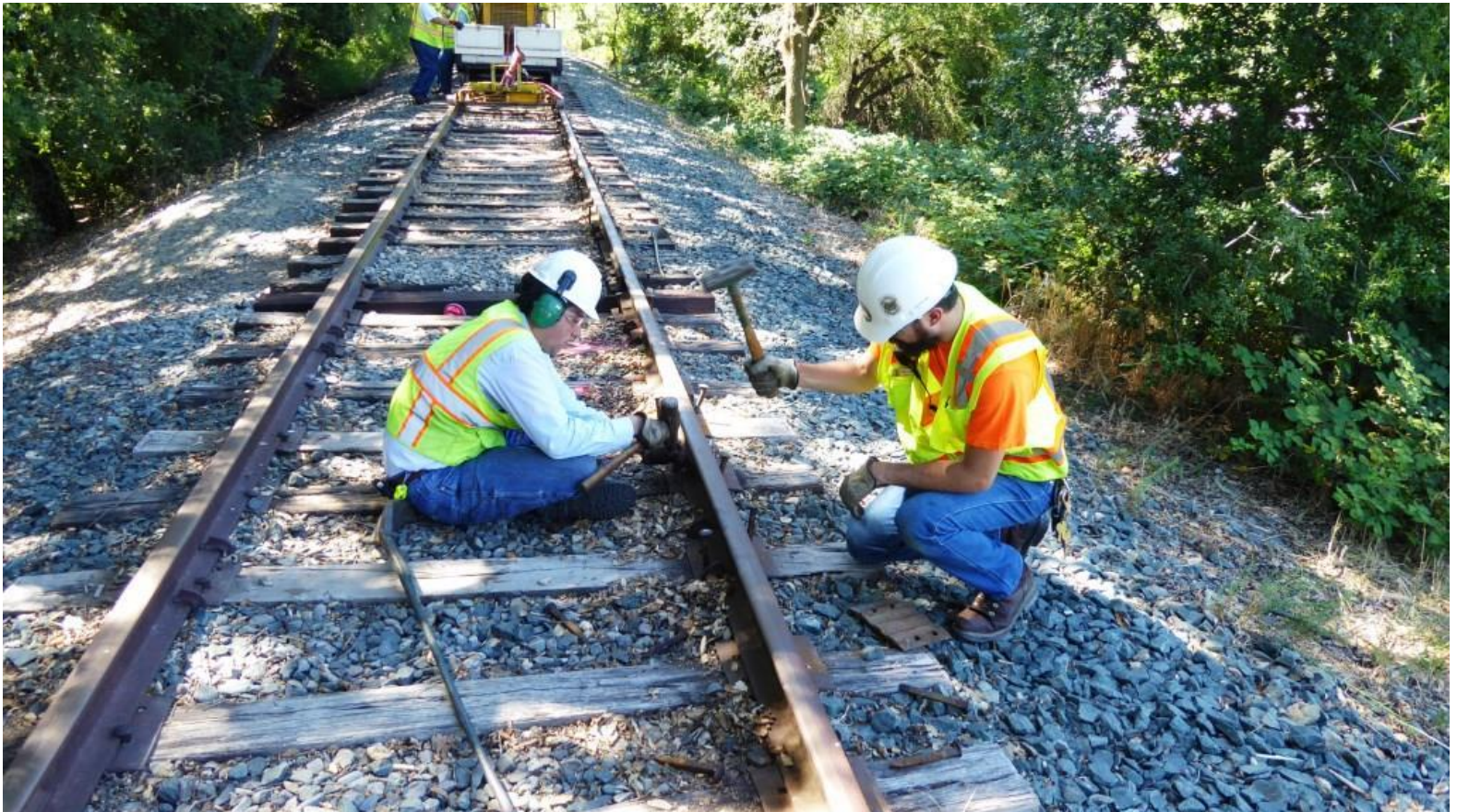


Bev drives a tie-plug into the tie and Pam sets spikes



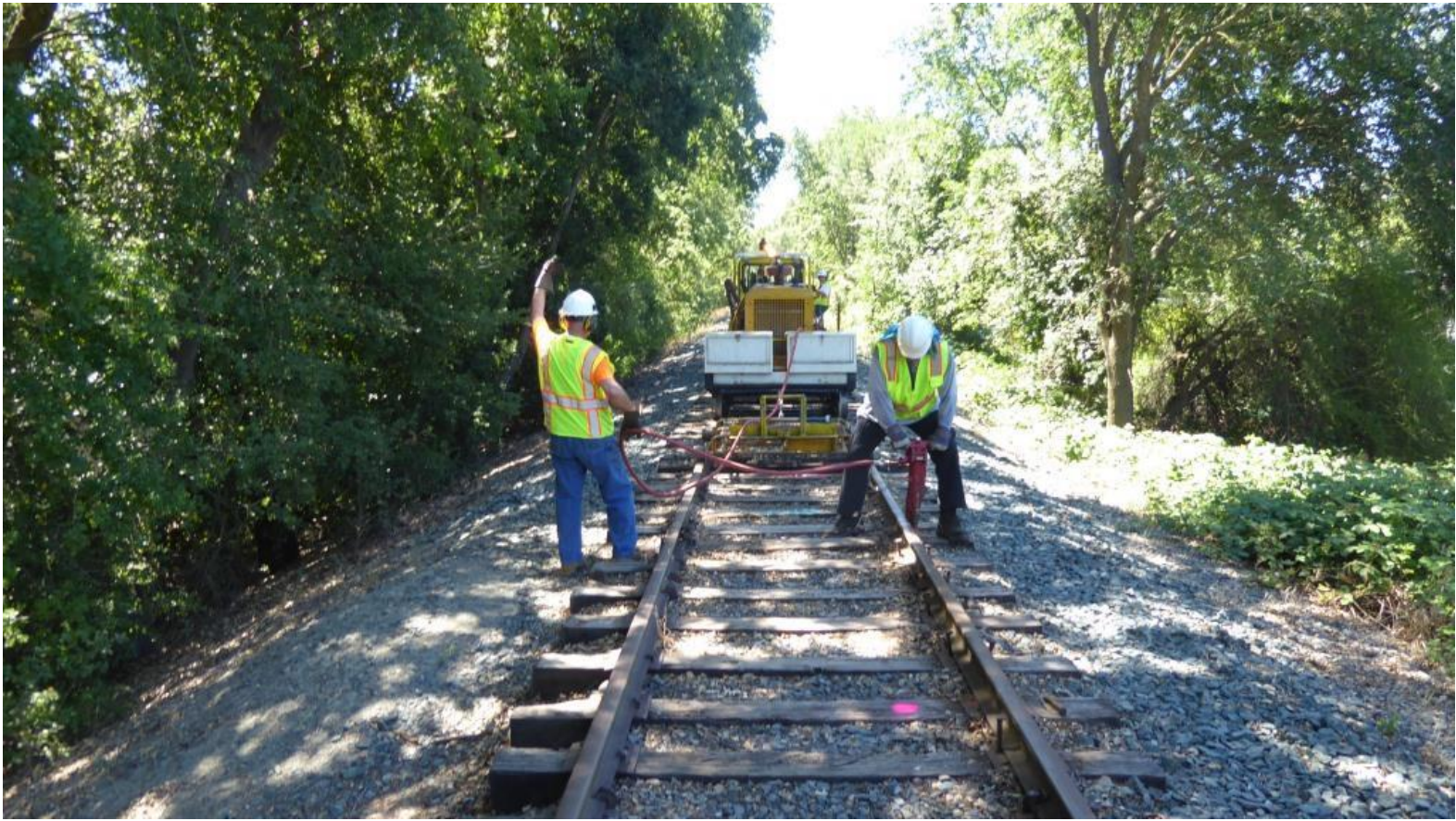


Clem spreads the rails with the rail-spreader as Alan monitors the track-gauge



Weston and Matt set spikes





Clem signals to Weston in the Kalamazoo to move ahead as Jose drives spikes with the pneumatic spike-driver



Jose drives spikes with the pneumatic spike-driver





Weston at the controls of the Kalamazoo closely watches Clem's signals



Now Matt takes a turn using the pneumatic spike-driver



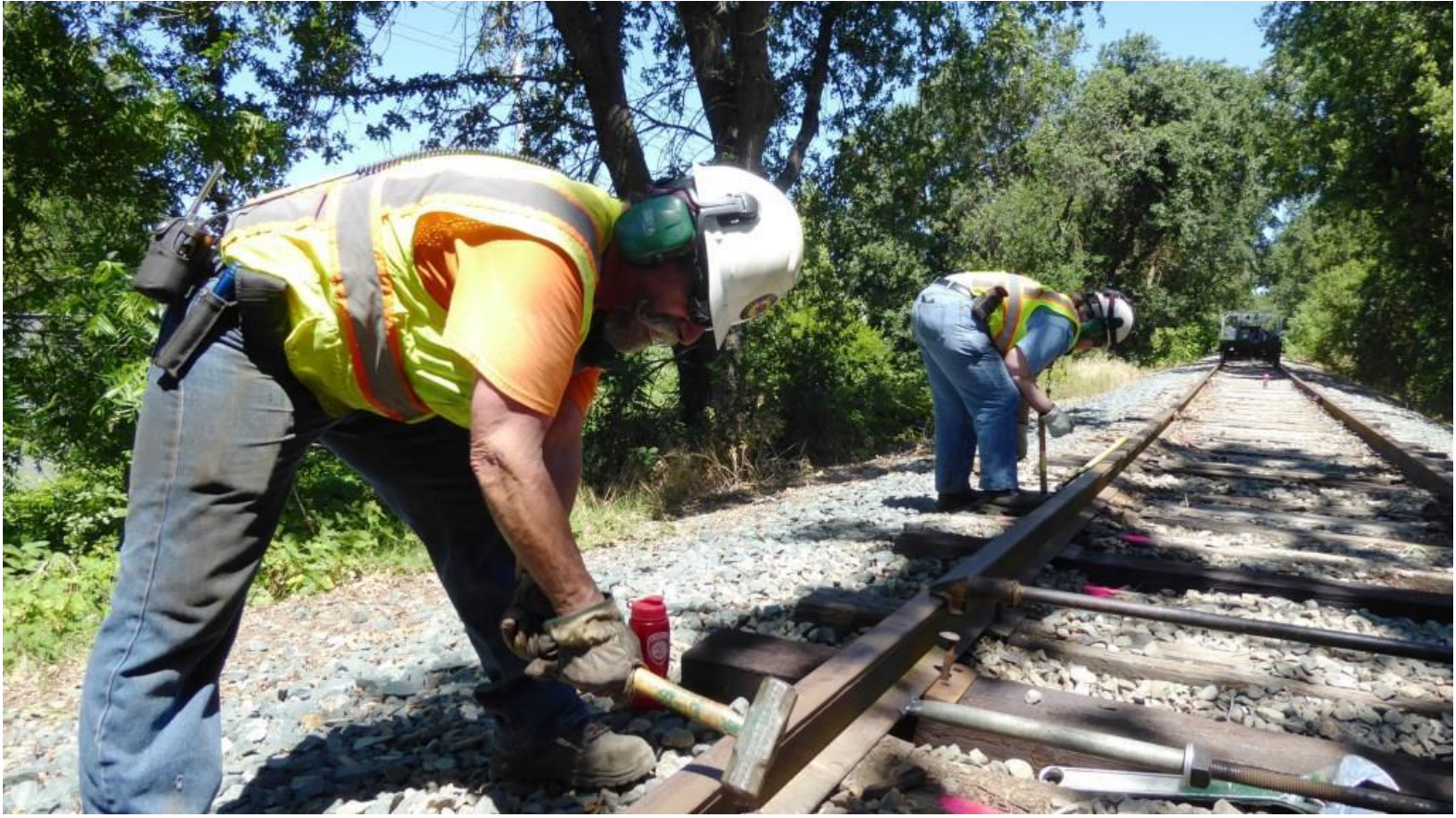


Spiking has caught up with the gauging so, Weston decides to drive a spike the old fashioned way



As Chris nips-up the tie, Kyle takes a shot at interpreting old fashion railroading





Meanwhile, Joe and Heather set spikes around the rail-spreaders



Now Weston tries his hand at Steve Nemeth's world famous as-seen-on-TV windmill-spiking technique





Back to more modern methods, Kyle takes on the 60-pound spike driver



And, here comes the Brothers Blackburn on the A-6 motorcar





With the MOW Team Work Train having crossed Sutterville Road, Heather, Kyle, Joe, and Jose pause for a commemorative photo

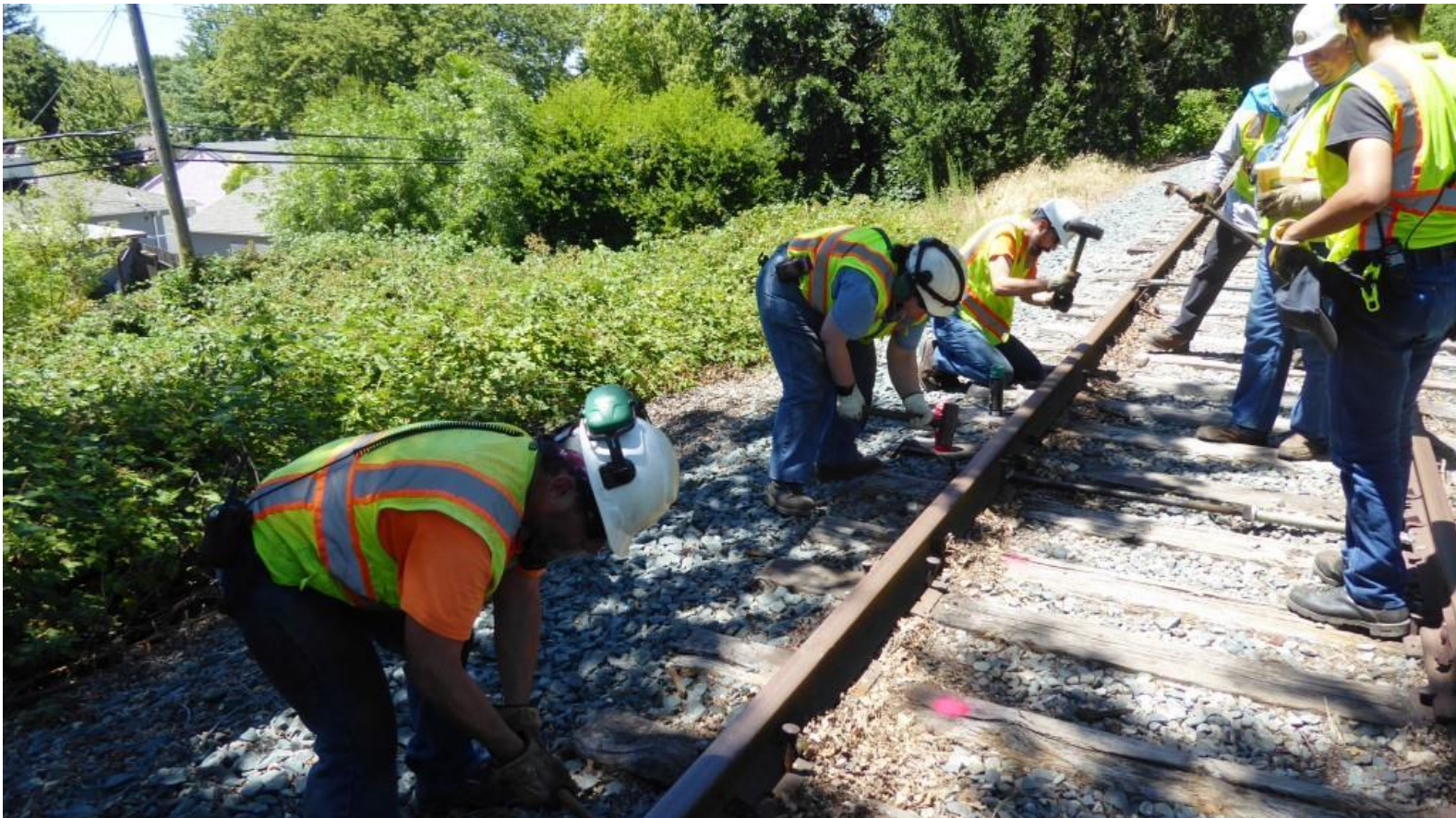


After lunch, the Team crosses Sutterville Road and heads back to the job-site





Weston pilots the Kalamazoo across Sutterville Road



Joe, Heather, and Matt pick up right where they left off





Joe guides the air-hose as Jose drive spikes



Kyle removes the rail-spreader





With the compressor having gone kabloobie, Kyle and Jose pack-up the Nolan track-cart



Heather and Kyle pull the dead compressor over the UP Main to the Shops – not quite how we anticipated ending the day...