

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for July 19, 2015. Good news! After an eight-week near total re-build, the MOW Team re-opened the Mainline through Miller Park. So, let's get right too it before anyone tries to close us down here!

Tuesday, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Frank Squire, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Frank Werry gathered for a momentous evening over in the Shops. Alan declared the paint-work on the Nordburg Super "B" Spiker complete. Mike H. descended into the pit under the new-old tamper to investigate why it's having some "umph" issues. He discovered that the drive-chain had broken nearly in two and was being held together by the most tenuous of links. Mike H.'s eagle-eyes averted a potential disaster. Had the final bit broken out on the line, we would have been in deep trouble. Mike H. pulled the remaining pieces and conferred with Alan who would procure replacements. Meanwhile, down at Baths, Frank S. and Frank S. installed gauge-rods between the frog and guard-rails in the turnout at Switch 17 (north Baths). Our good friends in the Mechanical Department requested this modification as a means of trying to mitigating the excessive flange-ware on the Granite Rock 10. Although no track defects could be identified in the area, the theory is, if the frog moves at all while under load, the gauge rods pull the guard rails along with it. Frank and Frank dug-out the rock between ties. Then, they slid the rods under the track and frog, hooked-up the clamps, and then tightened down the bolts. Indeed, it was a good evening of great accomplishment.

Thursday, Heather Kearns, Alan, Mike H., and Fred returned for more MOW fun. Fred and Heather worked on the ballast regulator (a.k.a "USS Sea Tiger"– the pink submarine). Fred is rebuilding the regulator's hydraulic filtration system. He and Heather reviewed the machine's schematics as they worked on rebuilding it in such a fashion to allow for easier maintenance. Alan had spent the day searching all over Christendom to find to find the proper bits and pieces to rebuild the tamper's drive chain. His perseverance paid off and the parts were waiting for Mike H. who descended back down into the pit to re-link the chain. Of course, Mike made this complicated repair look easy.

It was another very early morning over in Old Sacramento for the MOW Team's early crew. Michael Florentine drew the short-straw and was out staging equipment for deployment before the sun rays crested the Central Pacific Passenger Station's roof. Over in the Shops, Chris Carlson drew doughnut duty and arrived with a large pink-box. Fred, Clem Meier, Alan, Heather, and Scott Morrison quickly took care of its contents. If all went well, Saturday would be the culmination of our efforts to rebuild the Mainline through Miller Park. The plan was to finish leveling the track. Due to its staffing issues, SSRR Operations co-opted the MOW Team's conductor-in-chief, Frank W., for train service (once again, the MOW Team saves the day). Nonetheless, Frank was still able to conduct the new-old tamper across the UP Main. Down at Miller Park, the west rail was still lower than the east rail from about Mile Post 1.65 to MP 1.75. The Team would set-out track jacks, track-levels, and the tamper to raise it up. At Front Street, our good friends from the SSRR Signal Department, Joe Galipeau, Al Utzig, and Paul Helman operated the warning system manually for the train all day. Throughout this project, Team Signals has been incredible.

Scott, Mike F., Heather, Clem, and Chris placed jacks along the line. Fred brought in the track-levels. Every two or three ties, the track level was measured and, where low, a jack would be placed. Then, the jack would lift the track until the bubble in the track-level showed one-half bubble high to the west. Chris, Heather, and Alan traded off running the tamper to tamp the track up to the new level. Everything was going swimmingly. As the tamper tamped near a jack, it would be removed and redeployed further north in a "leap-frog" manner. This way, we had a continuous assembly-line effort. It was impressive. The track was leveling nicely. Then, as we approached the area where the Main and Siding converge, we hit a spot that just would not raise. Four, five, six, even seven clicks of the track-jacks were necessary to bring the west rail in line with the east. The tamper would tamp and tamp and tamp and still, the level would not hold. The Team grabbed shovels and mattocks tools to try to fill in around the ties with more rock. Yet, no bueno. We realized what we had here was an area where the levy beneath the track had settled. So, for about 200 feet just south of the turnout at Switch 14 (North Miller), there's a "dip" in the track. It's certainly better than it was but, but does not quite meet the Team's high standards. Don't worry, though. We have a plan. Next week, the Team will bring rock up from Setzer and fill-in "the hole." Then, we'll jack it level and tamp it up to bring it in line.

In the meantime, the Team was ready to re-open the track for service. The EIC contacted the SSRR 2030, which was already on its way from Old Sac., to let engineer Ilias Athanisiou know his train would be diverted onto the Main with a speed restriction not to exceed 10 m.p.h. Yes, the 4 o'clock train would be the "guinea pig" to test the new track. A bit of a mad scramble occurred to get our equipment off the Main and onto the siding. As the train passed by, applause erupted from the passengers as the narrators informed them of the momentous event. Indeed, it was a success. General reviews after Sunday's trains, as well, are quite good. Most said that they didn't even feel the dip, the ride is smooth, and the train no longer leans to the west. Next Saturday, the Team will fill the hole and do some general touch-up work. Alas, this means one last Saturday of trains running on the Siding. But then, things should be good – normal operations can proceed with no restrictions. It's been a tough and, at times, frustrating project. Nonetheless, the Team appreciates everyone's support and patience.

This coming week, Shops activities will progress as normal. On Tuesday and Thursday, Erecting Shop doors will sing open at or before 5 o'clock. Next Saturday, we'll have few logistical issues early as a different set of equipment will head out on the line. But, the doughnuts will arrive at 8 o'clock – and so should you! Again, Team offers its highest commendation to the Signal Department for its unwavering support. And, of course, many, many thanks to the volunteers of MOW Team who have made the Miller Park Mainline safer for everyone.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Frank W. and Frank S. installing gauge-rods between the frog and guard-rail at Switch 17



Frank W. and Frank S. use crescent and track-wrenches to tighten-down the gauge-rods



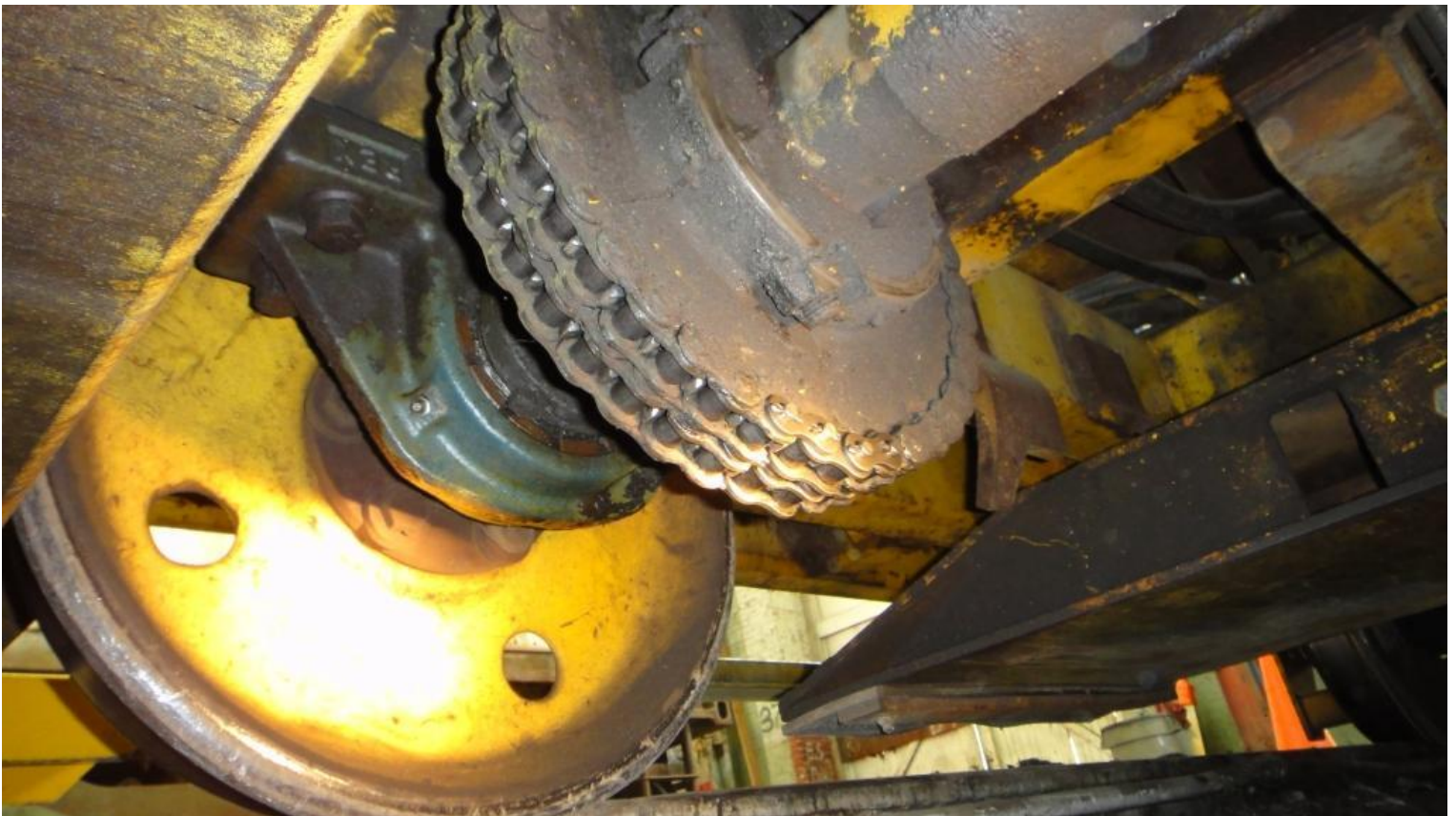
Alan declares principle painting on the Nordberg Super "B" Spiker complete!



The moment of discovery: Mike H. finds the broken drive chain on the new-old Tamper



Fred and Heather confer with the *USS Sea Tiger's* schematics



The drive-chain as it should be! In the lime-light is the corrected section thanks to Mike H.'s eagle-eyes and skills



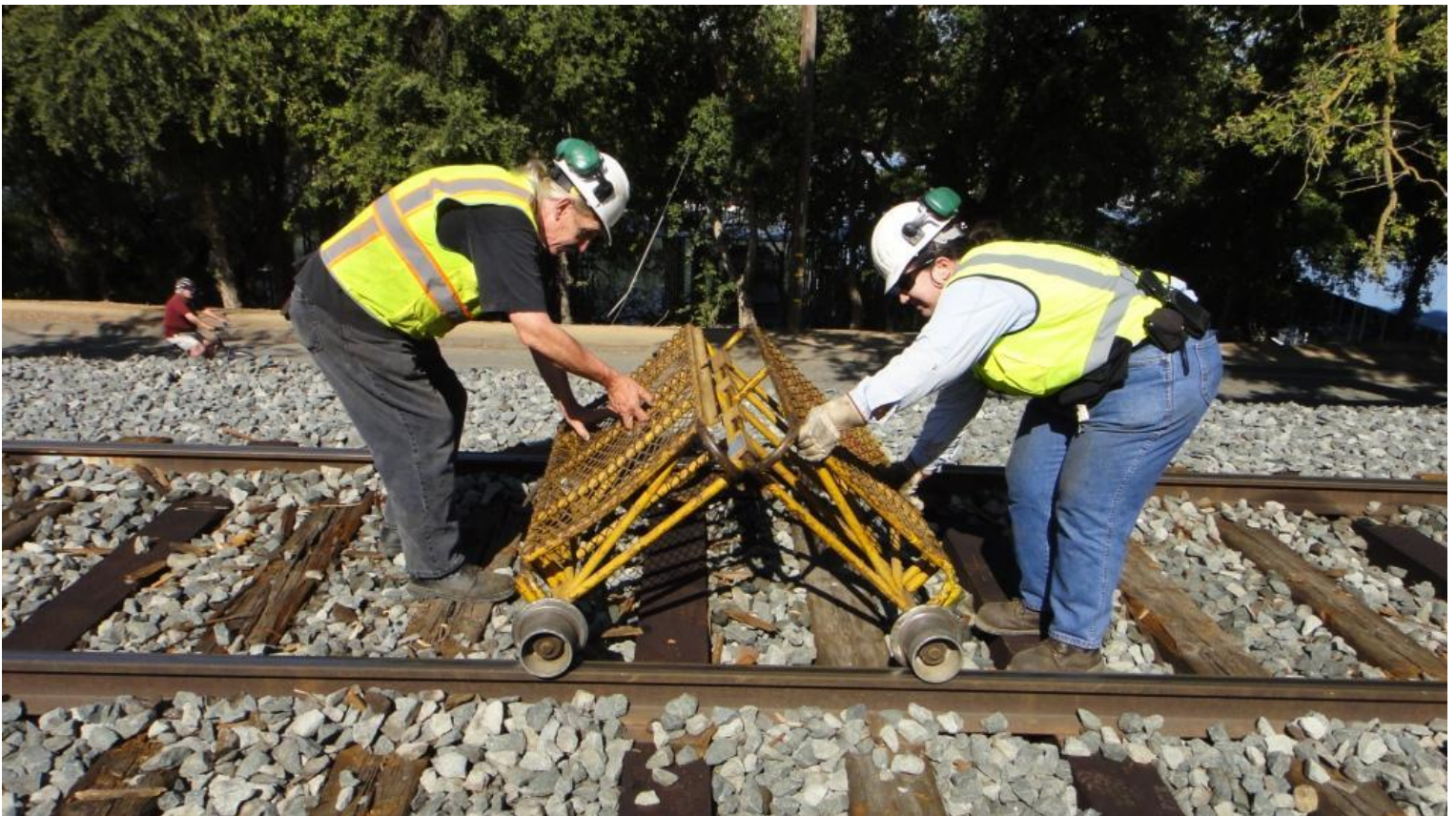
Despite being co-opted for train service, Conductor Frank W. conducts the tamper over the UP Main for service on the SSRR Mainline



Clem with lining-bars as Fred carries the bulk of the MOW Team's track-level inventory



Levels deployed...



Fred and Heather assemble a Nolan Track Cart



Mike F. sets a jack as Chris and Alan verify the level



With jacks in place, the track is level. Time to bring in the tamper



As the tamper comes in, Heather removes a jack



Heather guides Chris in the tamper as Clem loads jacks onto the Nolan Track Cart





The 11 o'clock train passes by while Chris and Heather verify the level as Mike F. lifts the west rail with the track-jack



Scott places a jack



Scott guides the tamper as Mike F. prepares to remove jacks



Open for business! Designated Supervisor of Locomotive Engineers, Jeremy Levish, surveys the MOW Team's accomplishment from the 2030's porch while engineer Illias takes the train onto the Miller Park Main for the first time in eight week!