

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team Update for July 21, 2013. You know it's true. When you think "MOW Team," you think "progress and productivity." So, let's get productive right now with a review of the week's progress.

Tuesday, Mike Taylor and the Weed Team, Heather Kearns and Dave Megeath, were out on the line making our railroad safe and compliant with federal law. Their task was to trim tree branches that were brushing against the locomotive on the Interchange Track. While pruning, they received an emergency alert that a pair of *Purple Martins*, a species of bird whose natural habitat is the underside of highway overcrossings (such as the I Street Bridge ramp above the Museum's parking lot) might have been seeking to nest in the very tree the Weedies were trimming. Folks, we often joke about the Weedies "waging war" against the vegetation invasion. But, in all honesty, Mike and his fellow Weedies are naturalists at heart. Once they were made aware of the plight of these wayward *Progne subis*, the Weed Team reassessed their plans, held a briefing, and managed to complete their task while preserving the Purple Martins' freedom to roam. It is reported that Weed Team regular, Dave Megeath, was moved emotionally by the experience. Congratulations to our incredible volunteers who, once again, demonstrated their uncommon abilities adjust to out of normal situations. They've proven that critters and trains can coexist!

Meanwhile back at the Shops, Pat and Gene have the scarifer almost completely rewired. Mike Harris built a battery bracket for the electric starter on one of our new generators. Leonard Cassieri lent his skills to keeping the Big Green Machine working at peak efficiency. Out on the line, Frank Werry lead a team in the tamper to tamp the area where we changed ties a week ago Saturday. It is now level and smooth. With Heather at the controls and two of our trusty track inspectors on the crew, we headed down the Setzer Line and then along the Miller Park Siding for their required monthly inspections. Many thanks to our dedicated Tuesday crews!

Thursday, was a bit quiet around the Shops. Only Heather and Mike Harris were on hand. Mike managed to fix the air-line leak in the air compressor. It's now working as it should. We staged for Saturday by loading the section-gang machine on our trusty Chevy Truck and then gathered a bundle of ties with Big Green and chained them down. As it was still quite warm, we closed the evening with some refreshing iced-tea and good conversation in the MOW Lounge.

Saturday was projected to be over 100 degrees. So, we planned to work out on the line until noon. Chris Carlson, Clem Meier, Harry Voss, Heather Kearns, Steve Nemeth, Alan Hardy, Mike Taylor, and Pam Tatro made a fantastic team for the day's activities. We started off the day with more doughnuts than you can shake a stick at (thanks to Chris and Harry)! Then, after a philosophical debate in the Crew Center over the nature of our train orders, we headed out on the line continue tie changing around Mile Post 1.0. Although last week we managed to rectify the situation that required a slow-order in the area, we at Maintenance of Way strive to maintain our track to conditions above basic minimum federal standards. So, we were out there again, pulling ties – and man, were they rotten. But, a solid team of dedicated volunteers on the line got right to work and managed to accomplish great things, making our track safer for everyone.

After lunch, Chris led a team in the Shops while Steve Nemeth was EIC of a crew that set out to repair the north doors of our equipment container over on the House Track in Old Sac. Something had attempted to break-in (or, perhaps, break-out) through these sealed doors. Our trusty front-end loader was brought in to shove the bent doors closed. Inside the container, Steve and the crew managed to seal them up. Easy-peasy. Success! Our container is secured once again!

So much for last week's excitement. Now for a look ahead. Just like the Legislature, the Weed Team is on Summer Recess for a well-deserved break. Stay tuned for news on when they will reconvene. On **Tuesday** and **Thursday**, we'll be gathering at the Shops in the afternoon with the goal of finishing work on the Scarifer. There are several small but necessary things left to do. It should be ready to be out on the line again next week. Plus, we want to give it a steam-bath to make it all pretty for its return to service. There will be plenty of other things to do as well. **Saturday**, we'll gather for doughnuts and more MOW fun starting at 8 o'clock a.m. in the Boiler Shop.

Again, many thanks to everyone who helps and supports us in our noble endeavors. We'll see you out on the line!

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Weed Team regular and naturalist, Dave Megeath tweeting with the birds.



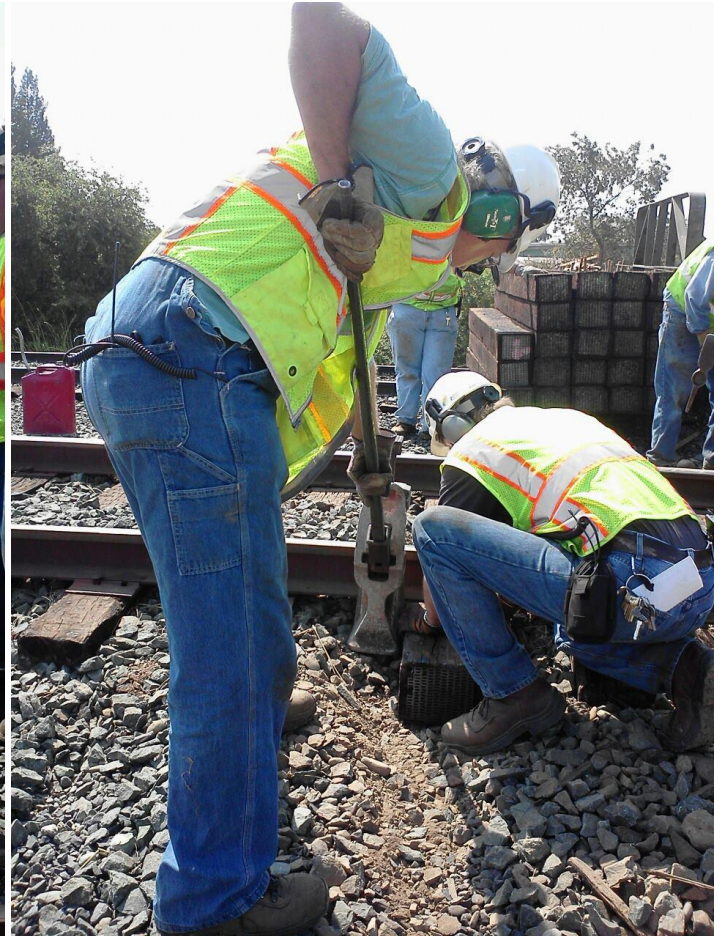
Dave and Mike turning green branches into mulch with our trusty chipper



With Heather in the cab, Frank guides the action from the ground.



Teamwork: Heather, Chris, Richard, Clem, and Harry.



Steve Nemeth jacks the rail for the placing of a tie plate.



Mike Taylor: naturalist and champion spike-tosser...



Harry, Clem, Steve, and Chris with the section gang machine removing a splintering tie.



Pam and Heather enjoying the view of SP 6051 passing through our work limits.



Our trusty front-end loader being used to hold the north doors of the container closed.