

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for July 24, 2016. The dog-days of summer have set in as evidence by another coyote sighting in the Rail Yards. So, in that light, let's show some dogged-determination and get this update started ASAP!

A conspiracy was brewing on Tuesday evening. Mike Harris, Mike Taylor, Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Cliff Hayes, Harry Voss, Anthony Filamor, Heather Kearns, Joe Margucci, Frank Werry, and Alan Hardy all conspired to get some good work done. Harry, Pat, Gene, and Cliff worked on the blue tractor trying to get the grader-box to lift and lower. Heather picked-up the new air-compressor for the scarifier-inserter which we ordered some weeks ago. Mike H. got it installed. Joe, Mike T., Frank, Heather, and Alan headed over to the new track we've been building out in the Rail Yards to continue the effort. A few ties from under the track-panels needed to be removed. New tie-cribs will be dug to lower the elevation of the track. There was just too much of a "hump" where the old track connected to the new. Frank and Heather jacked-up the rails to relieve pressure on the ties. Then Joe and Mike T., using tie-tongs, pulled the ties out by hand. Next, Joe got some quality time in the front-end loader and moved some rock at the existing piles under the freeway. Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Frank and Anthony used the wire brushes to clean and then oil track-bolts for use on the new track. All that made for a pretty busy evening.

Thursday, the Mighty Weed Team set out to continue its gallant efforts of fighting back against the tree invasion down on the Sutterville Line. But, Mike T, Heather, Ed Kottal and Dave Megeath ran into a snag. A city crew was removing some old bits and pieces of an unused water intake down along the levy and had the outrigger of a crane smack-dab in between the rails thus blocking their progress. So, "plan-b" was put into effect: attack invasive weeds in Old Sacramento and in the Rail Yards. They made the most of the day despite the physical impediment obstructing their path to the Sutterville Line. Another outstanding effort by some of the finest volunteers you'd find anywhere.

Our friends in the Signal Department were offered a number of old signal cabinet by the Western Railway Museum in Rio Vista. These cabinets will be used to store tools and equipment. So, Thursday morning, Alan and Anthony joined Mike Gaulke, Jim Lower, Carl Clayworth, Dennis Gallagher, and Jim Atkins of Team Signals in a parade of trucks and trailers to retrieve these cabinets. In the afternoon back at the Shops, Anthony on the yellow forklift and Alan on Big Green unloaded about a dozen cabinets from the trucks and trailer. These cabinets are like safes and will come in very handy to better secure the MOW Team's, Weed Team's, and Team Signal's equipment.

The MOW Team Thursday evening consisted of Pam Tatro, Cliff, Joe, Heather, Anthony, Weston Snyder, and Mike H. Our good friend, Consulting Engineer and land surveyor, Harry Gobler, joined us to take some measurements of the height differentials between the Firing Line Track and the new track we had started building last Saturday. Anthony and Joe spotted the measuring stick and Harry G. took measurement along the line. His calculations will be used to figure out how much we have to lower the new track to hook up with the Firing Line. Inside the Erecting Shop, Mike H. made the final adjustments to the new air-compressor in the scarifier-inserter. He topped off the engine-coolant and oil. Then, he, Pam, Weston, and Anthony took it down to the Transfer Table Lead and 560 Track to test it out. It worked perfectly. This also provided an opportunity to do a little training on the operation of the scarifier. Both Weston and Anthony got their initial training on the machine. With the scarifier secure back in the Erecting Shop, we called it a successful evening and said "good-night."

Doughnuts were on-spot waiting for Joe, Mike Willis, Ed, Michael Florentine, Harry V., Anthony, Chris Carlson, Chris Machado, Mike H., Heather, Harry G., and Leonard Jones to arrive. With the pink box emptied, the Team headed back out to continue work on the new track. Harry G. and Ed continued taking measurements of the high-spots on the track. Chris M., Heather, and Leonard moved some equipment in the building in order to get access to "Simba," the 36,000-pound forklift. Mike H. took command of Big Green and Harry V. captained the back-hoe. Mike F., Joe, Anthony, Mike W., and Chris M. got ties out of the tie-pile and arranged them in the areas where they needed to be inserted. Several still had plates spiked to them which had to be removed. Mike W. Joe Heather, Chris M., Anthony, and Chris C. pulled spikes and plugged the holes. The old section-gang machine was brought in and, under Chris C.'s nimble control, pulled ties into place. Chris M., Mike W., Joe, and Ed spaced the ties evenly to fill in the gaps in the panels laid last week. Heather gathered tie-plates and placed them on ends of each tie. Mike W. nipped-up the ties while Mike F., Joe, Chris M., and Ed all set spikes. Harry used the back-hoe to drag-out the tire-mounted air-compressor. Then, the Team began driving spikes into place with the pneumatic spike driver. It was heating up by now so the Team retired to the friendly confines of the Erecting Shop for another yummy barbecue burger lunch. Pat, our Designated Supervisor of Barbecue Engineers provided proper permission for Chris C. to wield the spatula at the custom-made keg barbecue. Following lunch, spiking the remaining ties was the order of business. As the temperature was now approaching 100 degrees, the Team took turns driving spikes with the 90-pound spiker. Over the radio, we heard that the 3 and 4 o'clock trains had been annulled due to the heat. So, with an official reading of 101 degrees, the EIC proclaimed, "Time to pack it in." The Team protested because they all eager keep working despite the heat but, orders are orders so, tools were loaded in the truck and we retreated to the shade of the Buildings. It had been a good day with significant progress made on the new track. Thanks to Harry G., we have a much better grasp of how much excavating needs to be done.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather for more MOW fun on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, we'll continue our progress on the new Firing Line Track. It's a tremendous Team who head out week in and week out volunteering with MOW to build a better railroad. Thank you for your outstanding dedication and efforts. Always remember, no track, no trains.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris C., and Richard.



Alan watches as Joe pulls spikes



Joe and Mike T. pull a tie by hand



Joe enjoys quality time with the front-end loader



Frank uses the wire-brush to clean bolts



Ed and Dave take on invasive species in Old Sacramento



Mike T. using a pole-saw removes a dead branch over the Rominger Bench



Anthony on the forklift unloads signal cabinets



Harry G. sets up his surveying equipment



Joe holds the measuring stick as Harry G. (in the shade) takes a reading



Pam gives Heather, Weston, and Anthony a ride on the Transfer Table



Mike H. makes a final check on the scarifier's new air-compressor



Mike H. tests the scarifier with its new compressor on the 560 Track



Mike F. and Joe signal to Mike H. on the Green Machine



Ed hammers in a survey marker as Harry G. provides the measurement





Simba and Big Green working in tandem: Leonard on Simba gets ready to move some track panels as Mike H. on Big Green distributes ties



Chris C. provides signals to Leonard on Simba



Harry G. takes a reading...



...From Ed who holds the measuring stick



Anthony plugs spike-holes in the tie as Mike W. gets ready to grab the spike that Chris M. is pulling



Mike F. and Joe move a tie into position



Now Heather joins the fun of moving hardwood ties by hand



Chris M. signals to Mike H. on Big Green who moves ties the easy way



Anthony and Chris C. insert ties using the section-gang machine



Chris C. and Chris M. use a track-jack to lift the rail so that the section-gang machine can slide a tie underneath



Joe sets a spike as Mike W. nips-up the tie



Chris C. barbecues lunch



Nice to be out of the sun and enjoying a MOW tradition: chilled watermelon



This Team is just having too much fun!



Back at it, Joe uses the 90-pound pneumatic spike drive to drive spikes while Mike W. nips-up the tie



Chris C. nips while Joe spikes





Mike H. and Anthony check the gauge



101 degrees – it's time to put our toys away