

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for July 26, 2015. The MOW Team brought principle construction on the Miller Park Mainline to a conclusion and was able to open the line *without restriction* in time for the 4 o'clock train on Saturday. More on that a bit later. But, before anyone tries to put restrictions on the excessive wordiness of this update, let's get it started.

On Tuesday, Frank Werry, Mike Harris, Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Cliff Hayes, Scott Morrison, and Gene Peck kept the Shops up and running. Frank did us all an incredible service by cleaning out the pit in Bay 4 of the Erecting Shop by shoveling out three or four bucket-fulls of muck which can now be disposed of properly. In the same spirit, Pat took up Weed Team duties by removing offensive vegetation along the north wall of the Erecting Shop. Cliff constructed a bracket to hold the flashy gumball light on the "Super-B" spiker in place. Fred worked on the ballast regulator's hydraulic filtration system. Gene and Scott took on the tamper's over-heating issues. Heather put a new pull-start on the track-gauger machine. Then, Frank, Mike H., and Heather headed over to Old Sacramento to retrieve the man-lift and chipper and bring them to the Shops for routine servicing prior to the commencement of the Weed Team's tree-trimming season in September. However, when they arrived, they discovered that vandals had absconded with the man-lift's 24 volt battery. The steel box in which it was housed fell victim to substantial crow-bar action. Although the Team takes extensive measures to vandal-proof the machines, vandalism remains a major issue for us. The theft of the battery is yet another expensive example. Although the man-lift didn't make it over to the Shops, Heather, Mike H., and Frank rearranged the other machines on the 150 Track for easy departure on Saturday morning.

Thursday, Heather, Fred, Cliff, Mike H., Frank Squire, and Frank W. were on site. We just can't keep Mike H. out of the pit. Again on Thursday, he descended into the pit under the tamper to grease its fittings. Fred and Heather added coolant to the tamper's radiator. Frank W. got things ready for deployment on Saturday by retrieving a 55 gallon drum of diesel and topping-off the tamper, back-hoe, and front-end loader. The loader's tires needed air, so he took care of that, as well, then loaded the truck with the equipment the Team would need for Saturday's big finish of the Miller Park project. It was a good evening, indeed, and thanks go out to all who keep the MOW Team going.

Speaking of Saturday, the early crew arrived pre-dawn to get all the all the equipment ready to roll. Once reason it takes so long to set things up is the need to remove all the anti-vandalism measures on the machines so we can use them. Over in the Shops, Clem Meier, Frank W., Harry "Iceman" Voss, a super-majority of Mikes – Willis, Miller, Harris, and Florentine – Steve Nemeth, Heather, Fred, Scott, and Chris Carlson constituted the largest crew thus far to gather for the Miller Park project. Thanks to Chris, the crew was well doughnuted before heading out on the line. You will recall that last week during our track leveling operation, we encountered an area where, despite repeated attempts, the level would not hold. So, this week, the plan was to bring in ballast-rock to fill in that "hole" and re-level the line. Frank W. in the front-end loader and "Iceman" Harry in the back-hoe headed down to Setzer where the Team's supply of ballast rock is kept. Mike H. piloted the Kalamazoo which pulled the four ballast-hopper cars. Steve took control of the tamper and Mike F. managed the motorcar. Once again, the Signal Department offered its support at Front Street where Dave Megeath operated crossing gates manually throughout the day. His reward was the very last doughnut. Mike H. took the ballast cars down to Setzer where Frank W. and Harry filled them with rock. Clem, Mike M., Heather, Steve, Mike W., deployed track-jacks. Meanwhile, Chris, Scott, and Fred dealt with an unsupported comp-joint at the north end of the Miller Park Mainline. They used the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger to insert two new ties which corrected the defect. Back at the "hole", the Frank W. and Mike M. began dropping rock, particularly on the west side. Heather, Steve, Clem, Mike M., Mike F, and Mike W. took on the role of *human ballast regulators* by spreading rock around using shovels and mattocks tools. Then, with Steve in the tamper guided by Chris from the ground, the entire area was tamped in order to provide a stable foundation for the ties. After the initial tamping, the leveling of the west rail began. Using track-levels and jacks, sections of track were measured and jacks placed under the rails. The goal was to raise the west rail one-half bubble above level. This provided for a proper "super-elevation" in the curve. Once at the optimal level, the Mike H. tamped the entire area a second time. All that new rock provided for excellent compaction under and around the ties. As the tamper moved in, the jacks were removed. Steve, Mike W., and Heather gathered the jacks on a Nolan Track Cart for a return to the truck. The track looked good. We were ready to re-open the line. It was time for the moment of truth.

The EIC called the Crew Center to annul the train-orders providing for the diversion of the train onto the siding as well as the speed restriction that had been put in place the previous week. The Team stood by and watched as the Granite Rock 10 came roaring down the track at track-speed, across Front Street, and onto the Miller Park Mainline. Success! With that, the Team returned to Old Sacramento to put the equipment away and then go home. It had been a 13 hour day for many on the Team. But the project was done – for the most part.

The reviews are in and they are good. The track is smooth, stable, and level. On Sunday, the Granite Rock 10 was able to maintain its timetable schedule throughout the day. The MOW Team appreciates the very kind words and commendations offered by so many on the train crew for its work on this project. It was an excellent example of Operations, Signals, and MOW working together to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the Shops will roll-up the doors at or before 5 o'clock on Tuesday and Thursday. Saturday, a new adventure begins for the MOW Team. Come and be a part of it starting at 8 o'clock a.m. in the Erecting Shop. As always, major thanks go to the very dedicated volunteer crew of the MOW Team who worked so diligently to make the track through Miller Park safer for all.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Frank shovels out the muck from the Bay 4 pit



Heather installs a new pull-start on the track-gauger



Fred takes on the ballast regulator's maladies



With the Weed Team on summer-recess, Pat clears the north wall of the Erecting Shop of offensive vegetation



Mike H. takes a "spin" in the tie-crane



Frank W. adds diesel to the back-hoe



Keep a good man down – in the pit, that is. Mike H. greasing the undercarriage of the tamper



Saturday's excitement commenced pre-dawn. The motorcar and work-train is up before the sun!



Heather and Mike W. transfer track-jacks from the truck to the work-train



Signals Dave doughnuts-up...



At Setzer, Iceman in the back-hoe and Frank W. in the loader fill the hoppers with rock



Scott guides Chris on the 125 in order to get a tie under a comp-joint properly positioned



Fred nips while Scott drives spikes on ties under a comp-joint

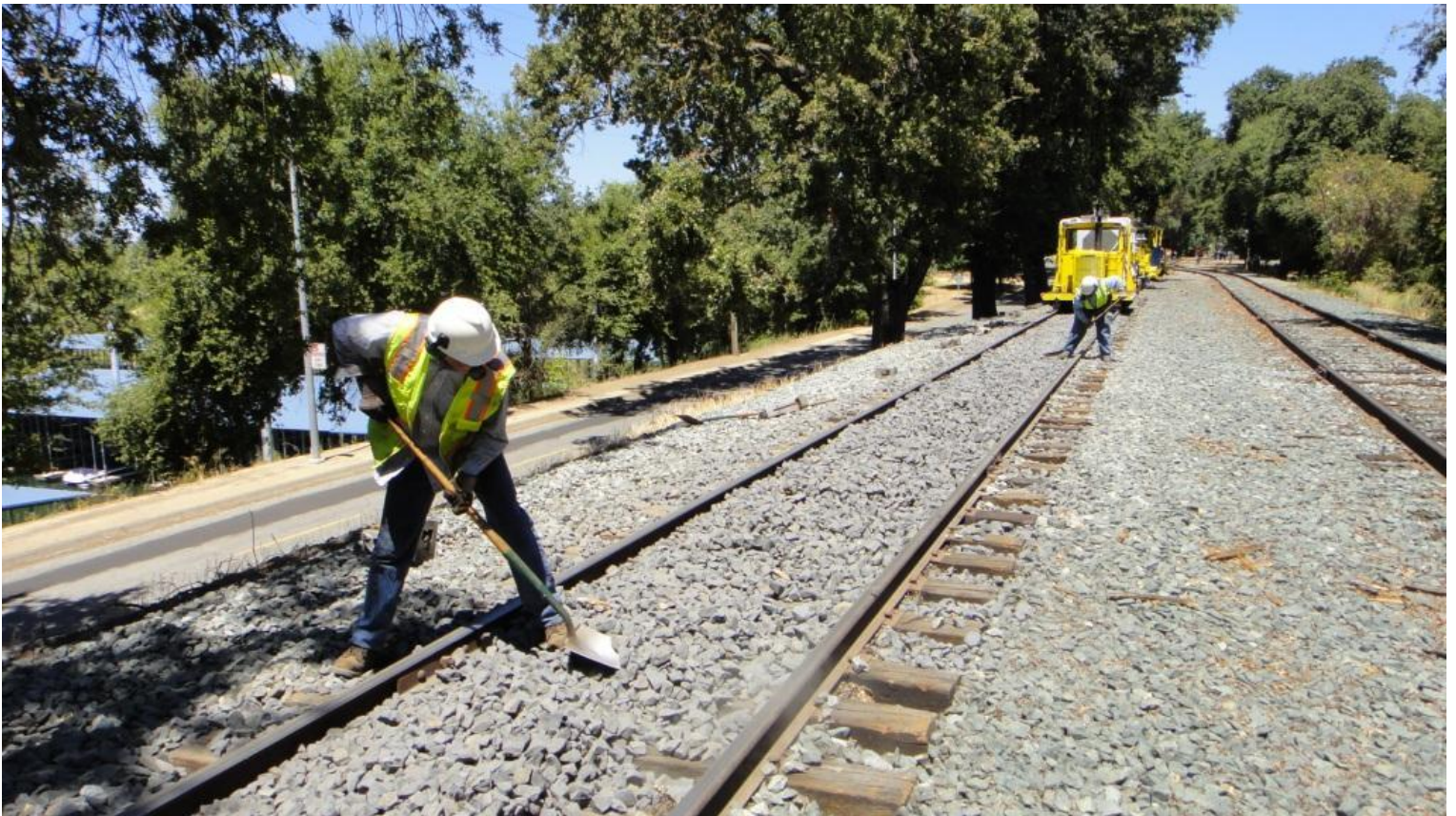


Meanwhile, Mike H. pilots the Kalamazoo tug while Mike M. and Frank W. drop rock from a ballast hopper over the "hole"





Mike M. and Frank W. dumping rock onto the line



Human ballast regulators Steve and Heather spread the newly laid rock



Chris keeps an eye on the level as Heather jacks-up the west rail



Mike H. brings in the tamper. Chris guides him and Scott prepares to pull a jack as the tamper approaches



Mike W. and Steve collect the jacks on the Nolan Track Cart after a successful leveling operation



The Granite Rock No. makes the final run north on the Miller Park Siding.