

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for July 31, 2016. Man, I'll tell ya. It was sunny-side of Mercury hot in the Erecting Shop this week. Nonetheless, your MOW Team kept plugging away in its quest to build a better railroad. So, before we slip in any molten pools of zinc, let's get this update underway.

Pat Scholzen arrived early on Tuesday and began reorganizing the north-east corner of the Erecting Shop. Anthony Fimamor and Cliff Hayes soon joined him and, for the first time in who knows how long, this area is orderly and more importantly, we can find things now. Joe Margucci, Frank Werry, and Heather Kearns took on the task of removing the wheel from the second Green Machine (the one that doesn't work) with the idea of salvaging a brake-caliper to replace on on the working Green Machine. Once the wheel was removed, the part-numbers were visible and, instead of performing major surgery on the non-functioning machine to remove the caliper, Heather is going to try to order the right parts. Anthony headed over to Old Sacramento to replace a bent switch-target on Swtich 7. Pokey-people searching for pokey-thing congregate around that switch and so it is suspected that they vandalized the target (at least, that's who we're blaming). The bent target constituted a defect for purposes of 49 CFR Part 213.135(g). As we had a couple spares, Anthony corrected the defect at Switch 7 and then headed to Baths to replace the target at Switch 20 which was covered in graffiti. It will be cleaned-up and restored for use again. Back at the Shops, Joe and Frank rewired the work-lights on the yellow Hyster forklift for the new LED lights that Heather had procured. It was still 95 degrees at 8 o'clock so, the sweat-drenched Team packed it in and headed home pleased with their successes.

Thursday, Cliff, Anthony, Weston Snyder, Frank, Joe, and Heather defied the heat for some evening MOW fun. Our good friends in the Signal Department are restoring two interlocking mechanisms, one of which came from the Elvas Tower. These are rather large artifacts – one being 10-feet in length. Where they were situated made it very difficult to maneuver the forklift around – especially when carrying things such as the section-gang machine. So, Cliff, Anthony, Joe, Weston, and Frank decided to make more efficient use of space by rearranging the area. It was a bit of a logistical challenge at first, but, they did it and now, there's a clear path for the forklift as well as plenty of room for Team Signals to continue their restoration work. Speaking of the forklift, Joe and Weston got the new LED work-light installed. They're brighter than a thousand suns. Heather was busy changing a fuel filter on the Green Machine. Anthony, Joe, and Weston decided to join the fun. Cliff worked on designing new removable side-view mirrors for the ballast regulator. Wow! Talk about busy. Bees have never been so busy! Well, that made for another full evening of great achievement.

For the first time in living memory – and, in the history of these updates – only one of the MOW Team's five Mikes – Mike Harris -- was on the premises this week. Sure, we've had days of only one Mike. But, not a whole week. Without question, Mike did an outstanding job representing his fellow Mikes. They should be proud. We did have two Harrys – Voss and Gobler – who were joined by Steve Nemeth, Heather, Clem Meier, Frank, and Anthony. Steve kindly provided the doughnuts this week which made the Team very happy as we were headed back out into the heat and hard-soil of the Rail Yards to continue building the Firing Line Track. Steve got the surprise of his life when he started the Green Machine and was showered in engine oil. At that moment, a gasket failed on one of the oil filters. So, kept him away from any open flames for the rest of the day. Frank and Harry brought the rail-lifter out the Erecting Shop. Harry G. set up his surveying equipment and multiple measurements of high-spots on the track. Mike fired-up the front-end loader and Harry V. the back-hoe. At the work-site, job number one was to finish plating and spiking the track. Clem and "Oil-Man" Steve put the rail-lifter on the track. Frank fired it up and began lifting the rails so that tie-plates could be placed beneath. Heather set spikes. Then, the whole Team shared spike-driving duties using the 60-pound pneumatic spike-hammer. Harry G. continued his measurements and concluded that the track was about 18-inches too high to connect to the Firing Line. Therefore, the decision was made to move the track to the north and dig-out road-bed. With all the ties in place, plated, and spiked, the structure was complete and could be moved as one piece. Leonard Jones was on site so, "Simba," the Restoration Shop's 36,000-pound capacity forklift was deployed. Frist, Mike used the "dozer" function on the loader to scrape the hard-pan soil to the north of the track. The dirt was so compacted that it was like scraping concrete. With Simba placed in the center ready to lift, Harry V. in the back-hoe and Mike in the loader took up positions on each end of the track. Simba lifted in the center and loader and back-hoe pushed. Within seconds, 150-feet of track was moved laterally 11-feet north. The magic of hydraulic power. With the track out of the way, Harry V. set the out-riggers of the back-hoe and began digging. It was like trying to dig through concrete.

Again, this week, the MOW Team's famous custom-keg barbecue was fired-up to cook a yummy barbecue lunch for the Team. Following lunch, Leonard, with Heather's help, put away Simba. Harry G. and Steve measured and marked the center-line of the roadbed. Steve drove spikes into the ground at the measured marks. The heat, out on that hard soil, was becoming oppressive so, the Team packed-up and headed for the Shops. Mike, then, was able to repair the Green Machine. Heather replaced the handles on two sledgehammers that had broken earlier in the day. Tools and equipment were put away and we called it a day. We got a lot of work done but, with having to re-grade the roadbed, this project is going to take longer than anticipated. But, as our hearts are pure and our cause is just, we shall persevere.

This coming week, the MOW Team evening crews will gather at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, the Team will convene at 8 o'clock a.m. to continue on the Firing Line Track. The MOW Team this week demonstrated extraordinary working to build a better railroad in spite of the challenging conditions. This is volunteerism at its best. Thanks to one and all.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



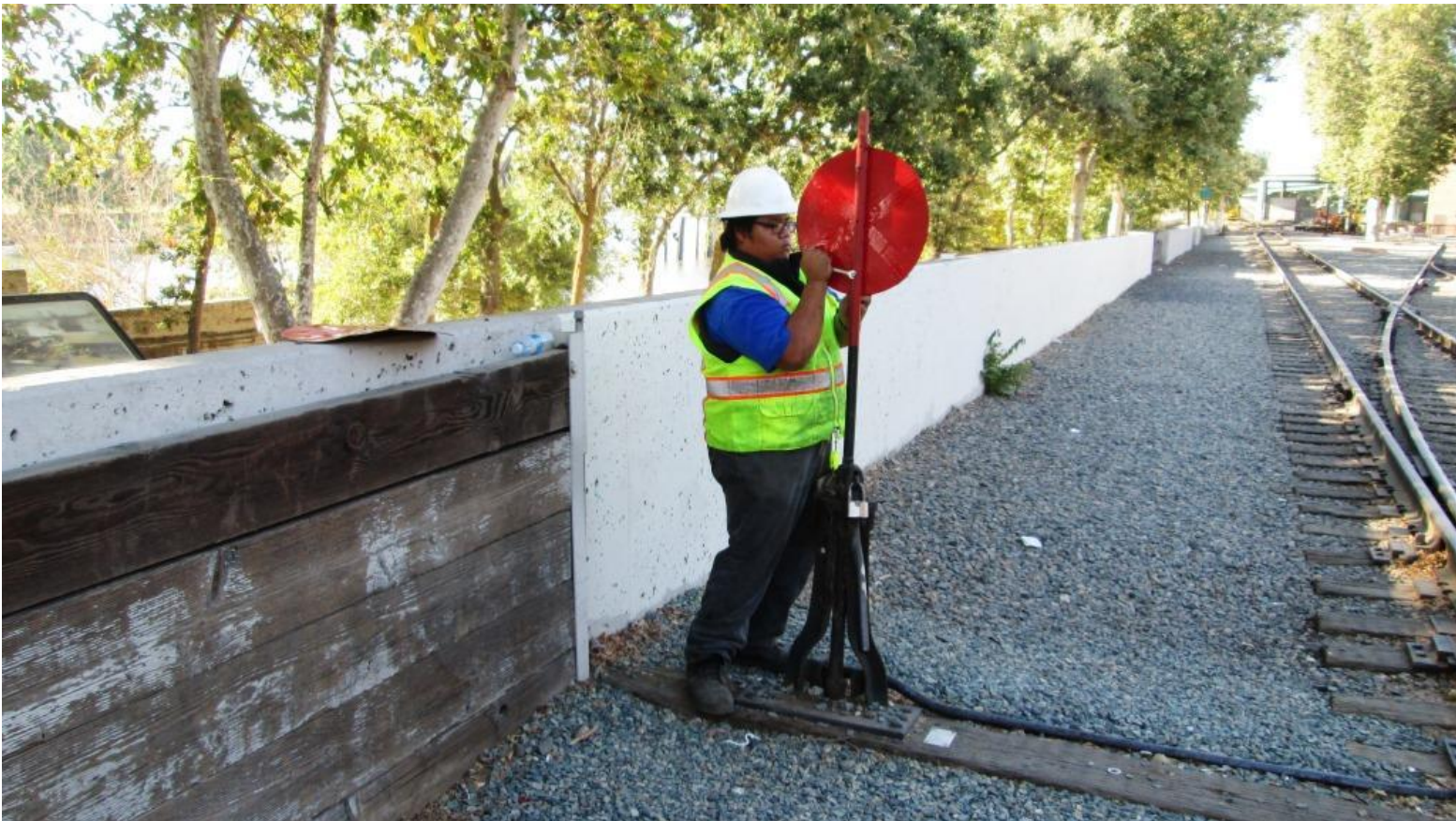
Frank brings in the forklift while Joe and Heather remove the second Green Machine's wheel



Joe shines with excitement as he finds the part-number that we need!



Anthony removing the pokey-damaged switch target on Switch 7



Then, in defiance of the pokey-people, installs a new one – well, newish – which is made of steel and won't bend as easily



Joe and Weston install the new LED work-lights on the Hyster forklift



Frank demonstrates the luminosity of working work-lights



Cliff and Joe guide Anthony on the forklift as they relocate one of the switching devices that Team Signals is restoring



Weston and Anthony find a new home for the interlocking mechanism being restored by Team Signals



Frank and Harry V. prepare the rail-lifter for deployment



Oil-man Steve works with Harry G. on the back-hoe which will carry it to the job-site



"On your marks!" Harry G. marks measuring points on the rails



Clem and Oil-man Steve situated the rail-lifter on the rails



Frank operates the rail-lifter to lift the rail so that Steve can get tie-plate between its base and the tie



The Oil-man nips-up the tie as Heather sets spikes





Whoops! Broken sledge handle. Heather doesn't know her own strength!



Frank nips-up the tie as Steve sets spikes. His shirt could be used as an oily-rag to fire-up the Granite Rock 10!



Heather is first-up on the pneumatic spike-driver. Frank nips-up the tie as Harry V. manages the air-hose



Up next, Clem takes a turn



Driving spikes with the 60-pound spike driver is more fun than you can shake a stick and Mike did not want to miss out



Now it's Steve's turn. Harry G. guides the hose while Clem nips-up the tie



Mike uses the loader as a bulldozer to try to clear a path for the track as it moves north by about 11 feet



In order to get Simba in and out of the building, the SP 291 needed to be moved. Leonard handled the move with Heather as brakeman



And now it's time for the big show. Harry V. on the back-hoe and Leonard on Simba get in position



Harry V., Leonard, and Mike in the loader get ready to move the track north



And, they're off! Actually, with Simba lifting in the center, the whole thing moved rather easily



Harry V. starts digging away at the incredibly hard and compacted soil. The machine would lift up as the hoe tried to scrape the ground



Steve stays away from the flaming barbecue for his own safety and helps Harry G. set up his surveying equipment



Harry G. measures and marks the centerline of the new track



Steve drives a spike into the ground at the measured center-point of the track



With the centerline marked, Heather and Steve place the measuring stick to Harry G. to sight the elevation