

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for July 8, 2018. The MOW Team commemorated 242 Years of American Independence this week by continuing its quest to build a better railroad. So, let's get the words flowing and update you on all the Team's great accomplishments.

Considering the hyper joviality of Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Joe Marcucci, Weston Snyder, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Jack Shrive, Kyle Blackburn, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns on Tuesday, one would have thought doughnuts were available. Turns out, it was just their normal high spirits for another evening of MOW fun. Cliff is working on a means to secure the *Nordberg Super-B Hydra-spiker* from the ravages of vandals. Unfortunately, the Super-B is totally exposed to potential vandalism if left outside. Cliff is creating a structure around the machine onto which shields can be attached. It may be a complex project but, just child's play for Cliff, our master of the metallurgic arts. Heather and Joe did some maintenance on the Weed Team's equipment. Mike H., Jack, Kyle, Chris, and Weston headed to Old Sacramento to retrieve a flatcar for transporting materials for the new switch we're building. But, the flatcar was piled high with dead-ties. So, they chose to take them to our dead-tie pile in the Setzer Yard for disposal. While there, they relocated the ballast-hopper cars from the Miller Park Siding to Setzer, as well. Chris and Mike H. fired-up the Kalamazoo and hooked it up to the flatcar. Weston, Kyle, and Jack did the switching. Arriving at Miller Park, the hoppers were unchained, hooked to the Kalamazoo, and slowly shoved down the Setzer Grade. Mike H. and Chris chained the hoppers to the track while Jack, Kyle, and Weston disposed of the dead-ties and swept the flatcar free of debris. To spread the machine operating wealth a bit, Weston took the Kalamazoo's helm for the journey back to the Shops where Heather and Joe were waiting with the transfer table lined. With so many successes on their belts, the Team members headed home to begin their Independence Day celebrations. Let freedom ring!

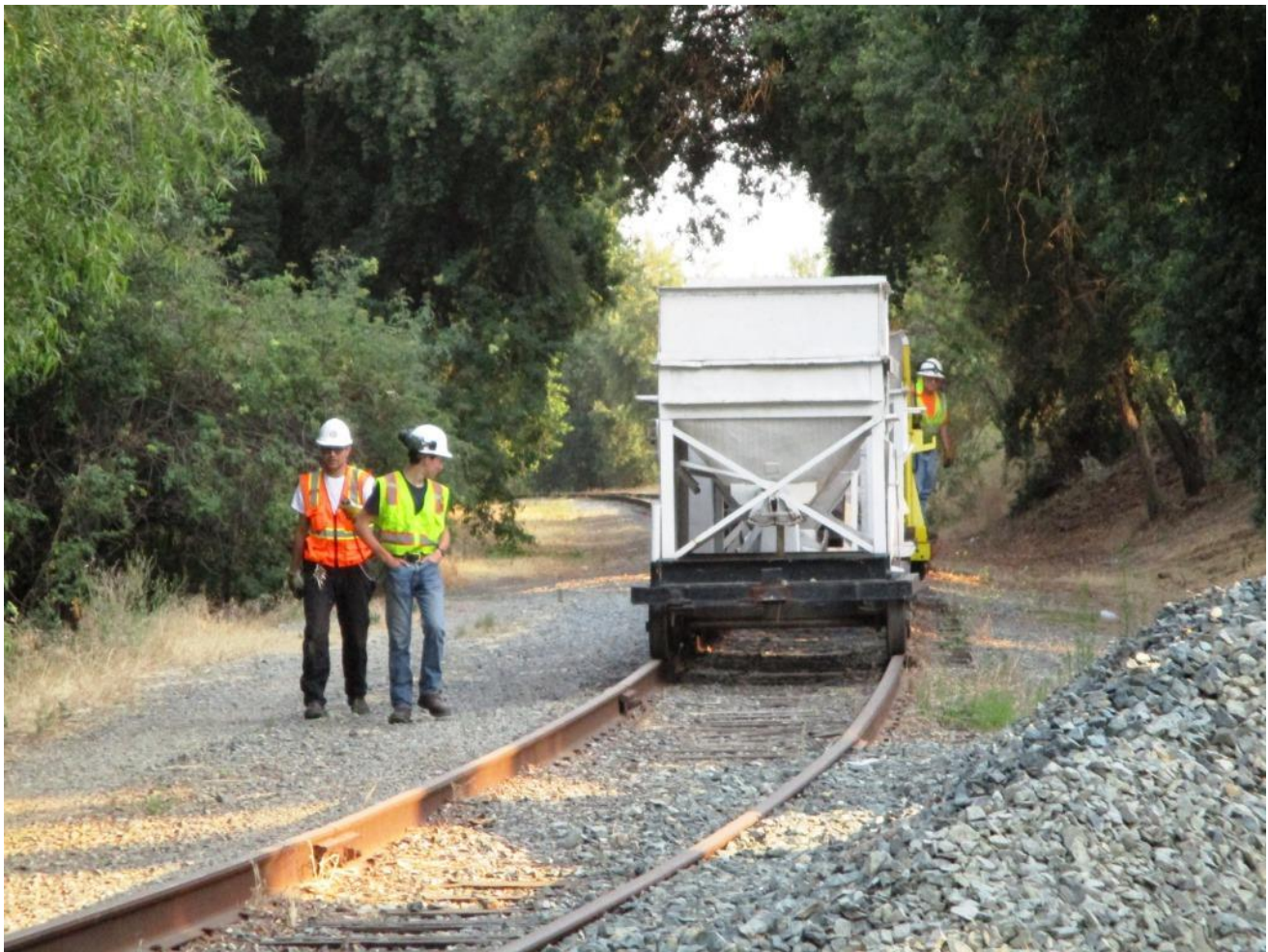
It's always momentous when a new member joins the MOW Team. On Thursday, Ed Kottal, Heather, Joe, Chris, Matt McCracken, Kyle, and Mike H. welcomed Samantha Houck to our happy band! Ed arrived extra early and hopped on the back-hoe over in Old Sac. to do some of the grading work for building the new storage track off the switch we're building behind the Museum. Samantha told Mike H. and Kyle that she's mechanically inclined. So, they put her right to work installing the securing pin for the tie-shear's kicker. Mike H. worked the mechanism from the cab as Kyle and Samantha descended into the pit and used a tapered reamer to bore-out the receiving hole in the kicker for the securing pin. Mike H. tested it and, Cinderella! It fit like a glass slipper! The tie-shear can return to service. Matt and Conductor Heather returned the Kalamazoo to Old Sac. and got it ready for Saturday service. Joe, Ed, and Chris headed to the north switch at Baths to resolve some issues identified by our trusty track inspectors that were making it difficult to throw as well as dealing with several loose bolts in the frog. After careful evaluation, they determined that a permanent fix requires moving the head-block a couple inches to the north. Not having the available manpower or tools to do that kind of work, Ed, Chris, and Joe scraped the plates, adjusted the switch-stand, and greased all the components. Then, they tightened bolts on the frog. Back at the Shops, it was a round of water on the house for everybody after an evening of such success.

Joe and Michael Florentine arrived in the pre-doughnut hour to deploy the MOW Team's work-train on Saturday morning. They got it in place and ready to go for when Alan, Chris, Bill Hastings, Clem Meier, Pam Tatro, Ed, Samantha, and Heather arrived to start work on the new switch. The goal for the day was to get the frog, guard-rail, the diverging stock-rail, and the east switch-point installed. First, Samantha, Pam, and Clem began taking apart a couple joints we had bolted up last week on a temporary basis to keep the track contiguous. Bill pulled spikes with the hydraulic spike-puller. Joe set up the rail-saw to cut the segment out where the diverging stock-rail would be placed. He and Pam traded off quality time with the rail-saw. Saturday's train brakeman and MOW regular, Chris Machado, stopped by during his break and joined in the rail-cutting fun. Once the rail was cut, Mike F. on the Big Green Machine (Big Green) rolled in and removed the freshly cut rail. Then, he brought over the frog. Clem and Chris used lining bars to shimmy it into place. Once in position, Clem, Joe, and Samantha bolted the north-end to the track. Next, Ed brought the back-hoe over and, with chains attached between its bucket and the rail to the south of the frog, pulled them together. Pam and Heather were ready and waiting with joint-bars and bolts and got the south rail bolted to the frog. The diverging stock-rail was next on the agenda. You will recall that, two weeks ago, the Team used the rail-bender to bend a stick of rail. This was the stock-rail for the east side of the diverging track. Mike F. on Big Green demonstrated his operating skills by taking it down the hill, making a U-turn to get it facing the right direction, and coming back up the hill with a 39-foot stick of track hanging from its forks. It was quite an impressive display. Once the diverging stock-rail was placed, Bill, Pam, and Ed got it bolted in place. Once bolted, Pam proclaimed, "Wow! It's really starting to look like a switch!" Samantha, Bill, and Heather next interpreted old-fashioned track-gang railroading with a little "Gandy-dancing." They used lining bars to shove the rail into gauge. Then Mike F. and Samantha spiked rail to hold gauge. Following lunch, Kyle Blackburn joined the fun for the installation of the east switch-point and heel-block were next on the program. Mike F. used Big Green to bring the switch-point to the job-site. The installation of a heel-block is a bit of an intricate procedure. Kyle, Joe, Ed, Heather, and Bill had to use lining bars to shimmy things about to get all the various holes to line up. Once it was partially bolted, the point was brought in and, with a little more shimmying, it got attached. Mike F. moved the guard-rail and blocks into place and bolted up. Then, the closure rail was brought over. It was placed but not attached as it will have to be cut. Kyle and Bill used a gauger to pull the rails into gauge before Ed, Chris, Joe, and Mike F. spiked it all down. Then Joe clamped the east-point with a point-clamp to hold it place and keep the track serviceable. Indeed, as Pam said, it's really starting to look like a switch. Building a turnout is a very complicated and involved process and this Team of dedicated volunteers is doing an amazing job.

This coming week, the MOW Team continues its successes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting at or before 5 o'clock p.m. in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, more MOW fun commences at 8 o'clock a.m. The fine work and dedication of all MOW Team members is greatly appreciated and recognized by all. As always, thank you!

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Kyle and Jack walk the point as Chris and Mike H. shove the hoppers down the Setzer Grade



Mike H. on the Kalamazoo watches for the correct spot for tying down the hoppers



Jack starts the dead tie disposal with the broken bits



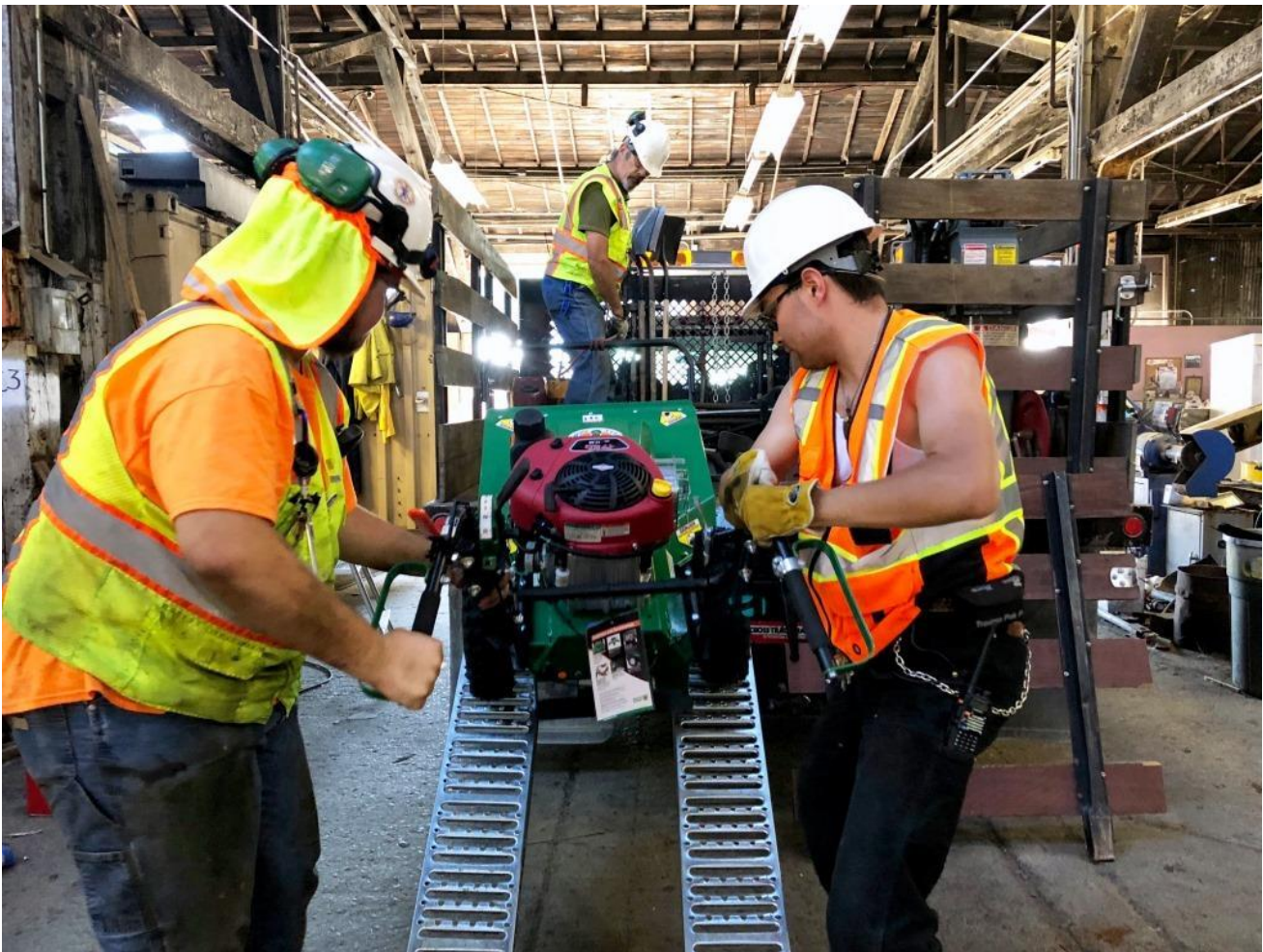
Weston, Kyle, and Jack remove dead ties from the flatcar



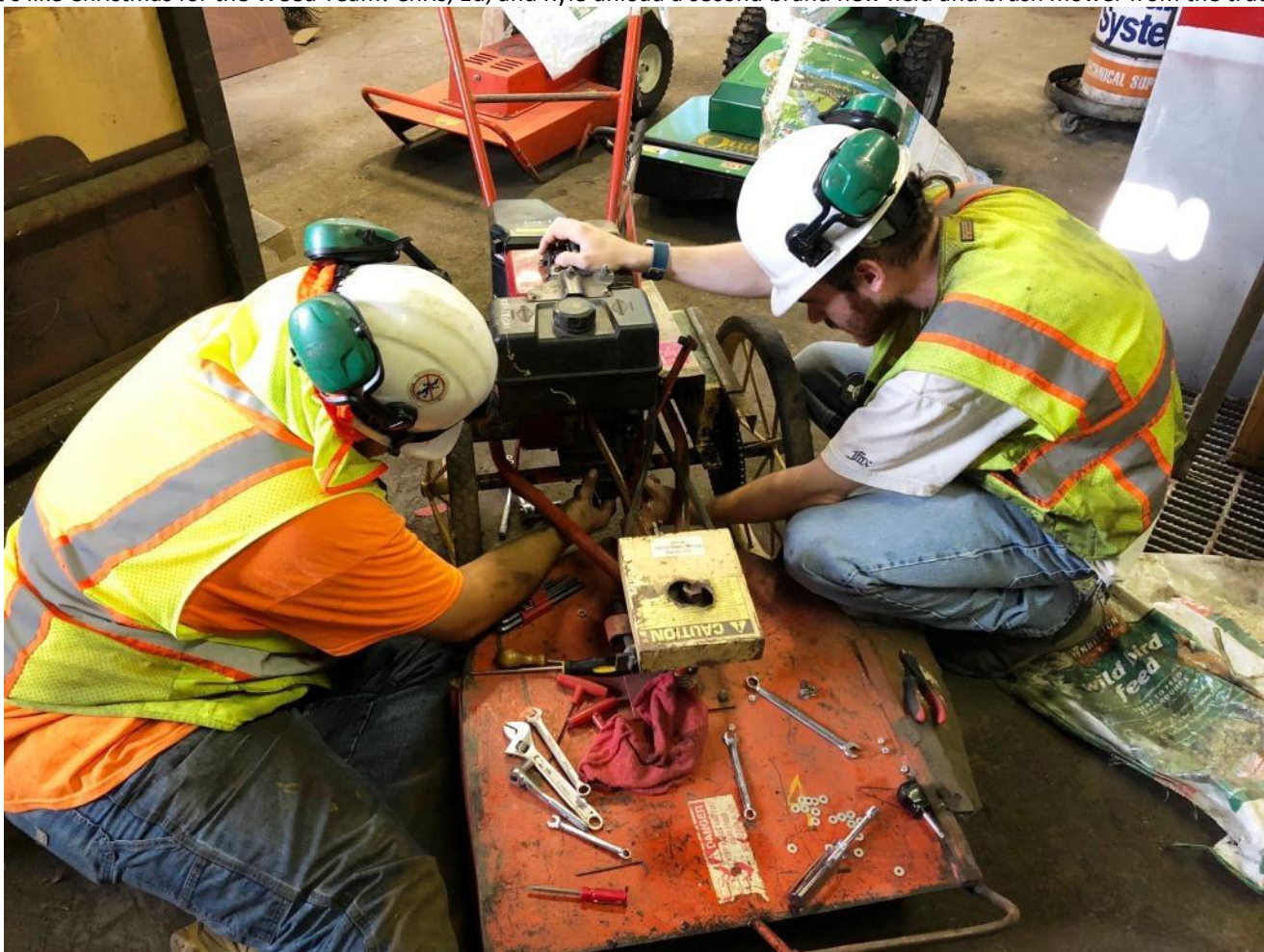
Ed uses the back-hoe to grade the roadbed for the diverging track being built behind the Museum



Kyle in the "pit of despair" working on the tie-shear's kickers



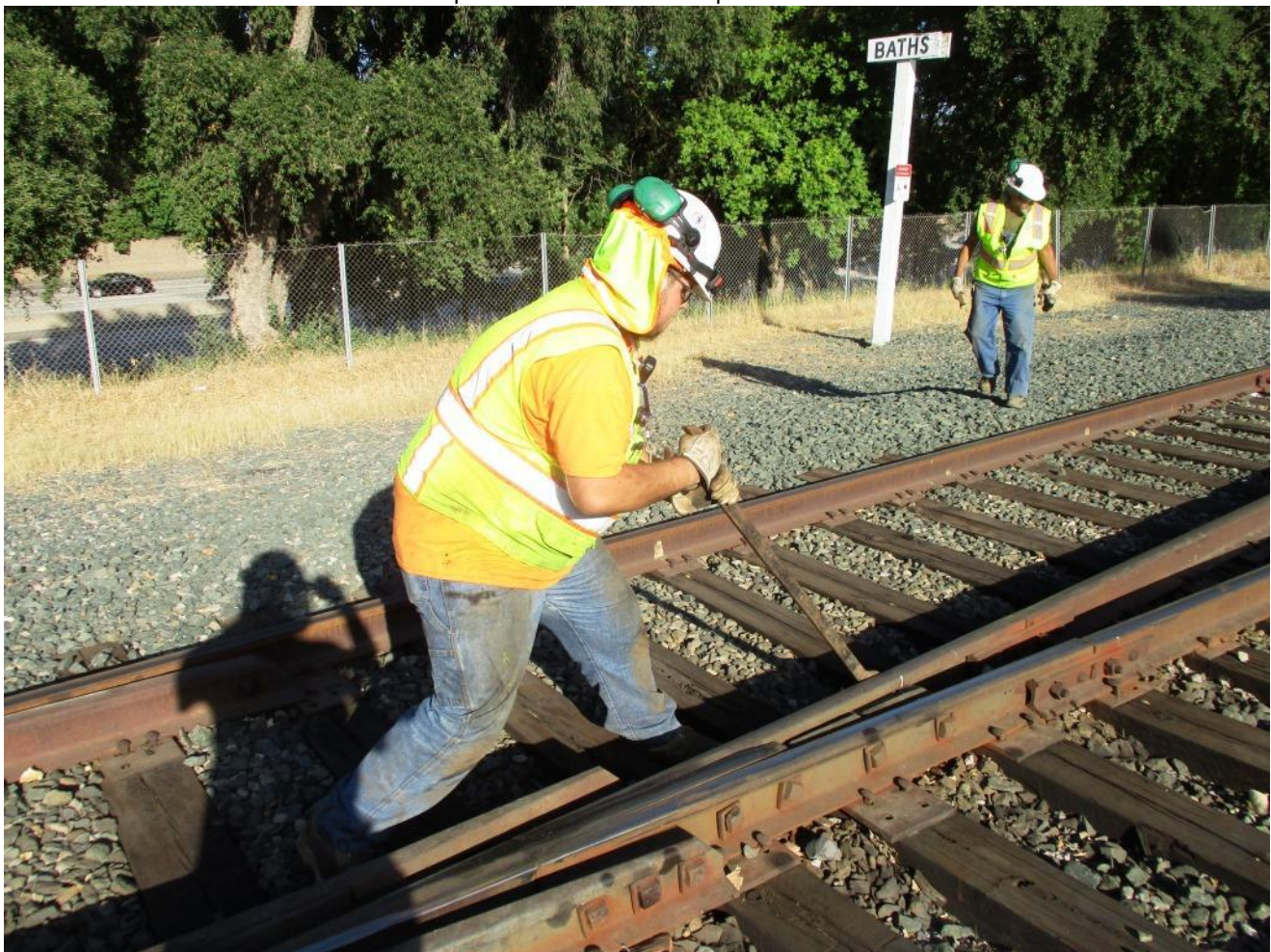
It's like Christmas for the Weed Team! Chris, Ed, and Kyle unload a second brand new field and brush mower from the truck



Chris and Matt try to bring life back to one of the Weed Team's old field-and-brush mowers



Joe scrapes debris off the switch plate at Switch 17



Chris tightens bolts on the Switch 17 frog



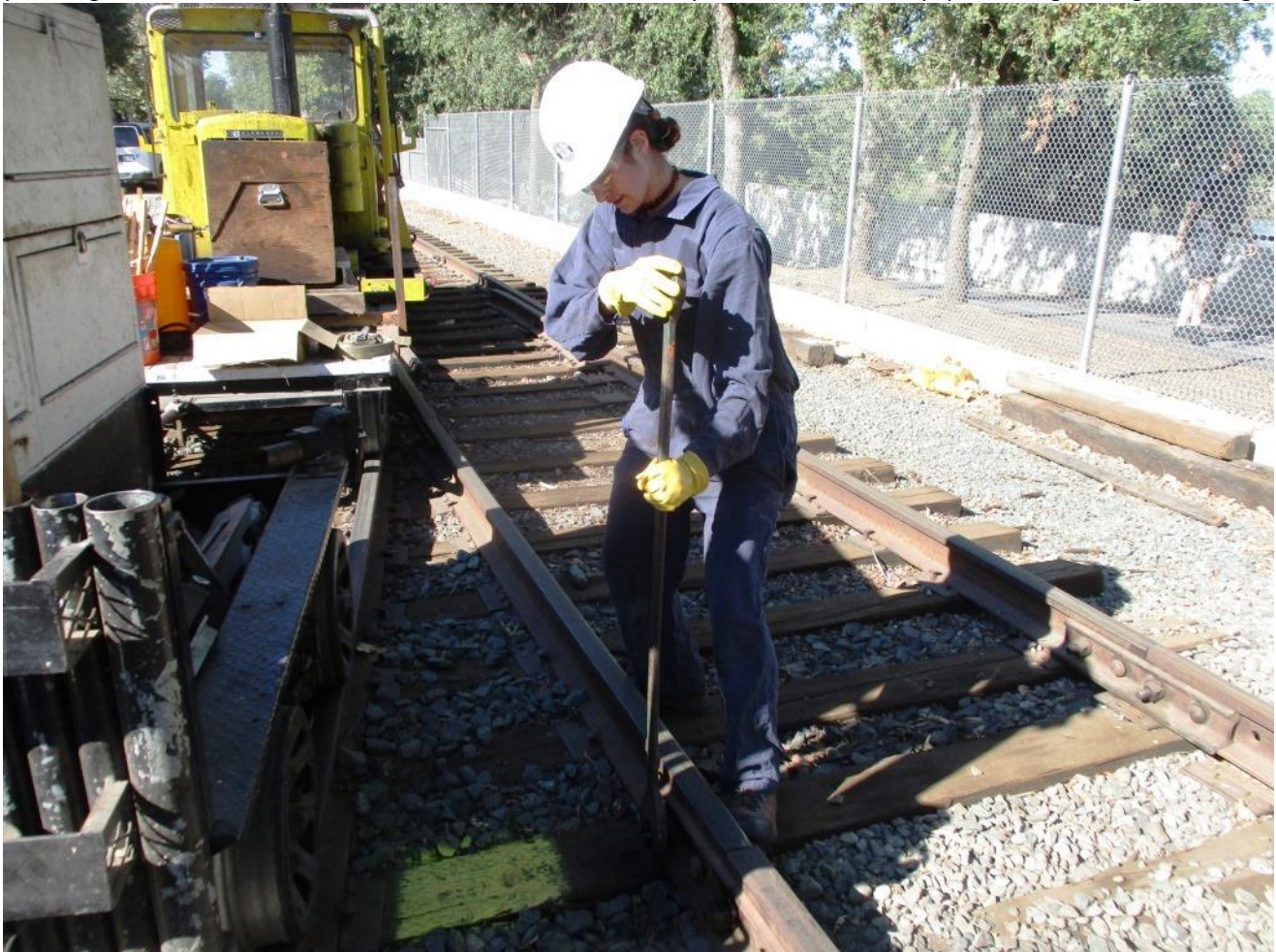
Ed exercises the switch machine as Joe slathers switch-grease on the components



Chris makes subtle adjustments to the switch-stand



In the pre-doughnut hour, Mike F. and Joe use the turntable to switch-up the MOW Team's equipment to get things in the right order



Samantha removes the bolts at the joint where the diverging stock-rail will be installed





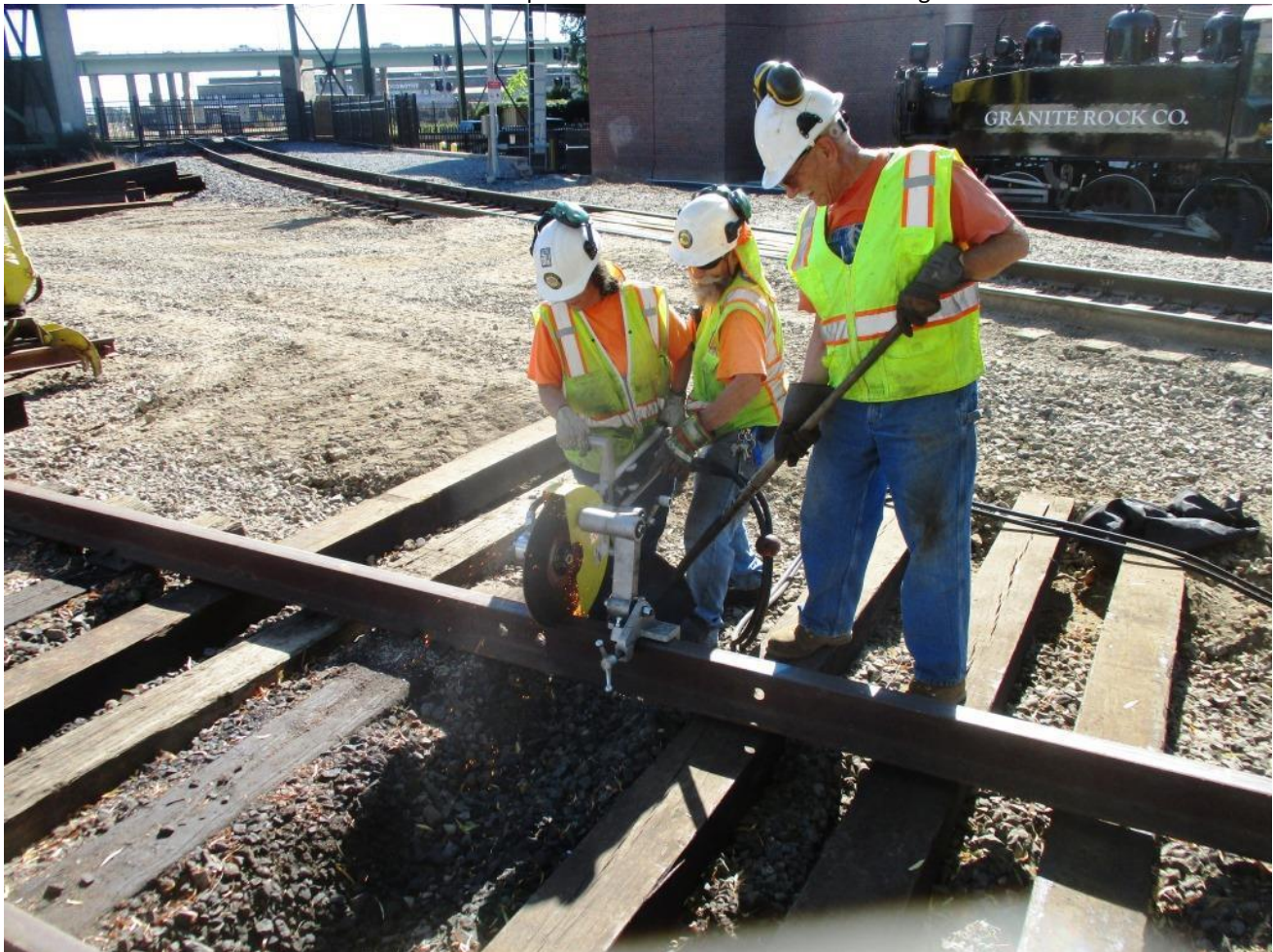
Bill uses the hydraulic spike-puller to pull spikes on the rail that will be replaced with the diverging stock-rail



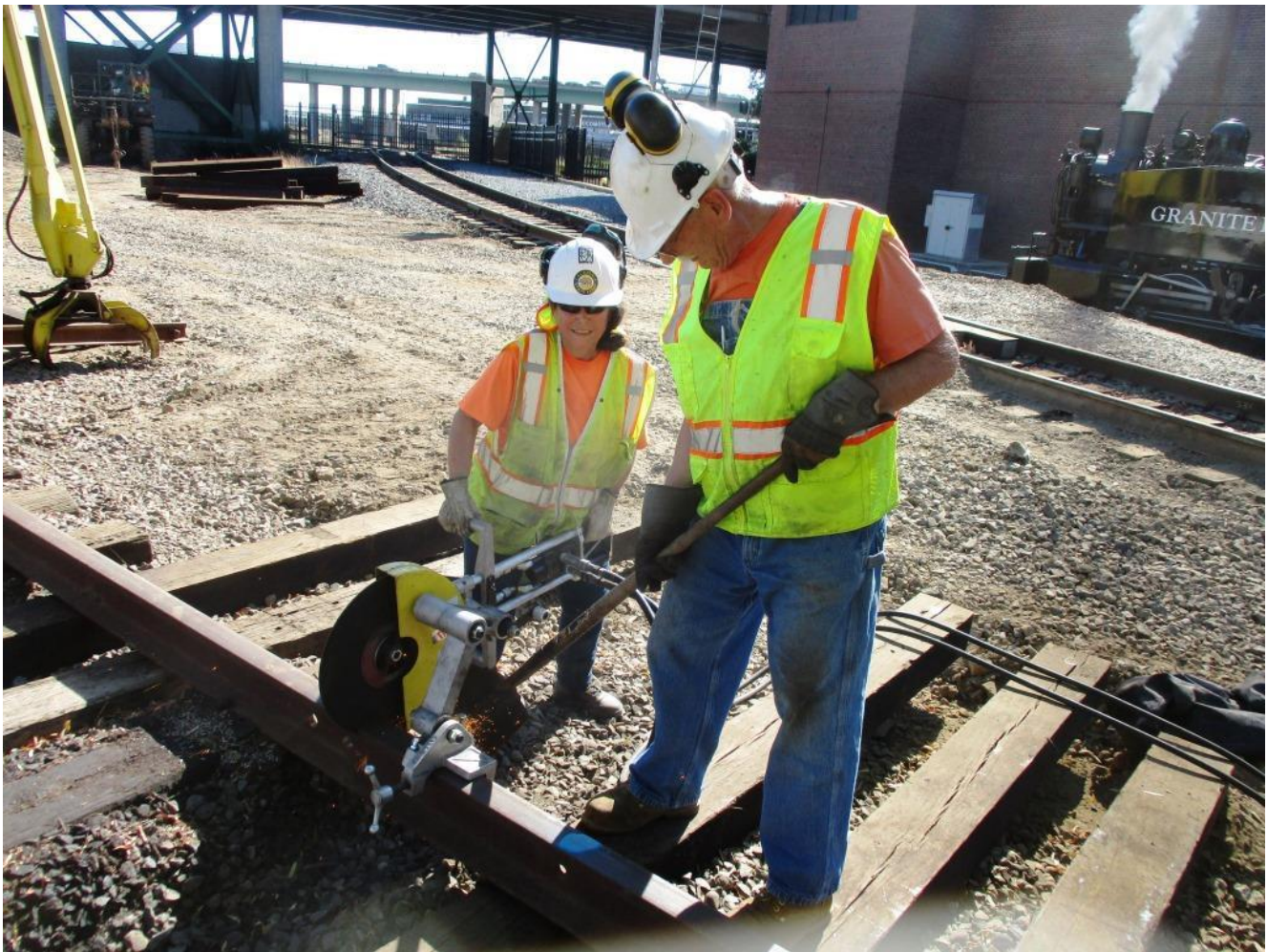
Clem, Mike F., and Pam take apart the north joint on the rail being replaced by the diverging stock-rail



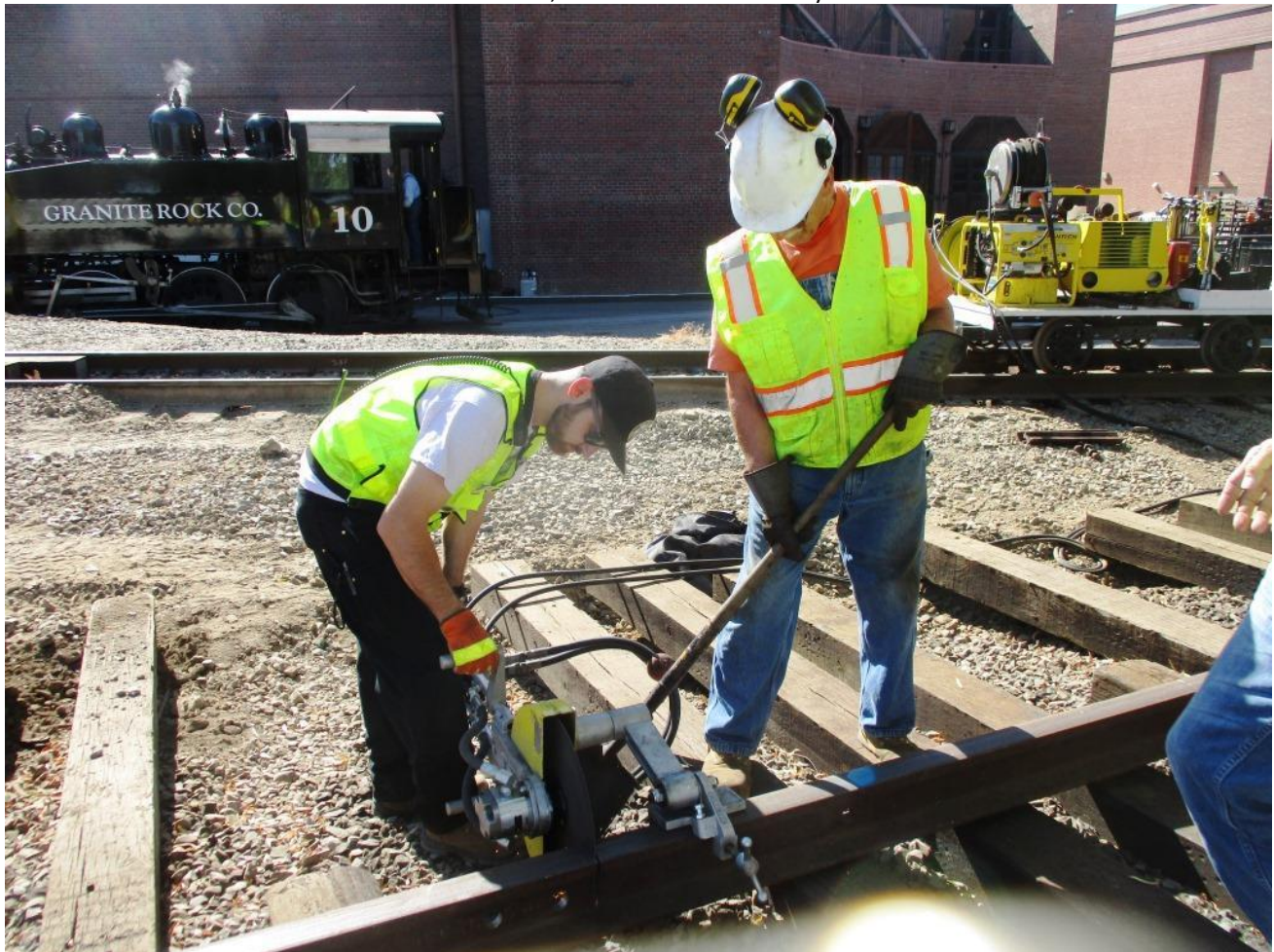
Clem uses a shovel to shield sparks from the rail-saw from bouncing back on Joe



Joe demonstrates the operation of the rail-saw to Pam



In no time, Pam is a rail-sawin' away!



Chris Machado, who was brakeman on the train, couldn't stand to be left out of all the MOW fun and took on the rail-saw



Alan watches as Clem and Joe finish the cuts necessary for replacing this segment of rail with the frog



Speaking of the frog, with the rail cut and removed, Mike F. on Big Green brings it in



Alan guides Mike F. on Big Green with the "stinger" attachment for the precise placement of the frog



Clem and Samantha begin bolting the frog in place



With a chain attached between the bucket and a stick of rail, Ed on the back-hoe pulls the rail up against the frog



Heather and Pam attach joint-bars to connect the rail and frog together



Bill guides the diverging stock-rail hanging from the forks of Big Green as Mike F. takes it down the hill to turn around



Samantha tightens bolts at the north end of the frog while Joe and Pam work on the south end

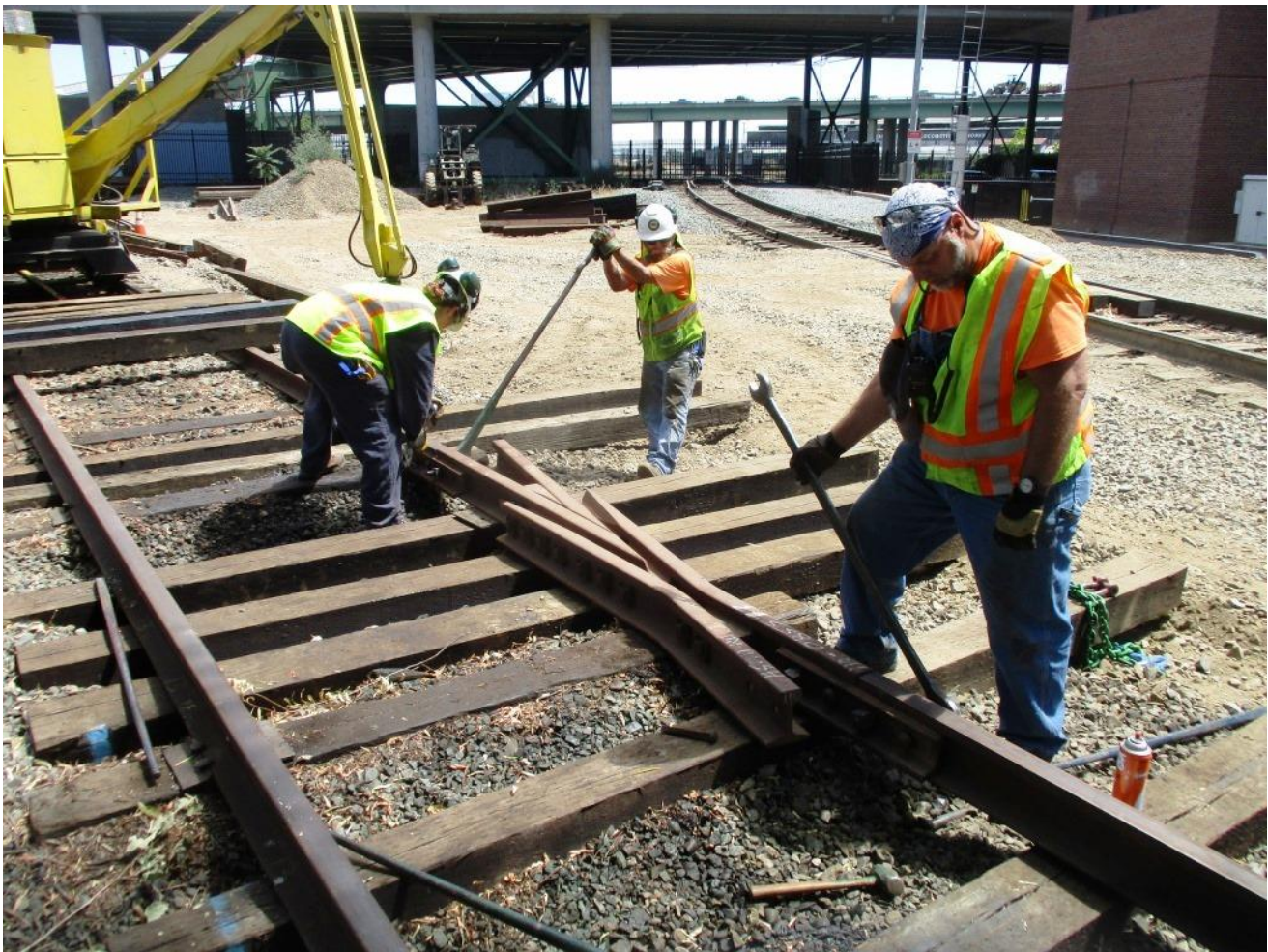


Alan directs the placement of the diverging stock-rail as Mike F. on Big Green brings it into position guided by Bill and Clem



With the diverging stock-rail in place, Bill tightens the bolts





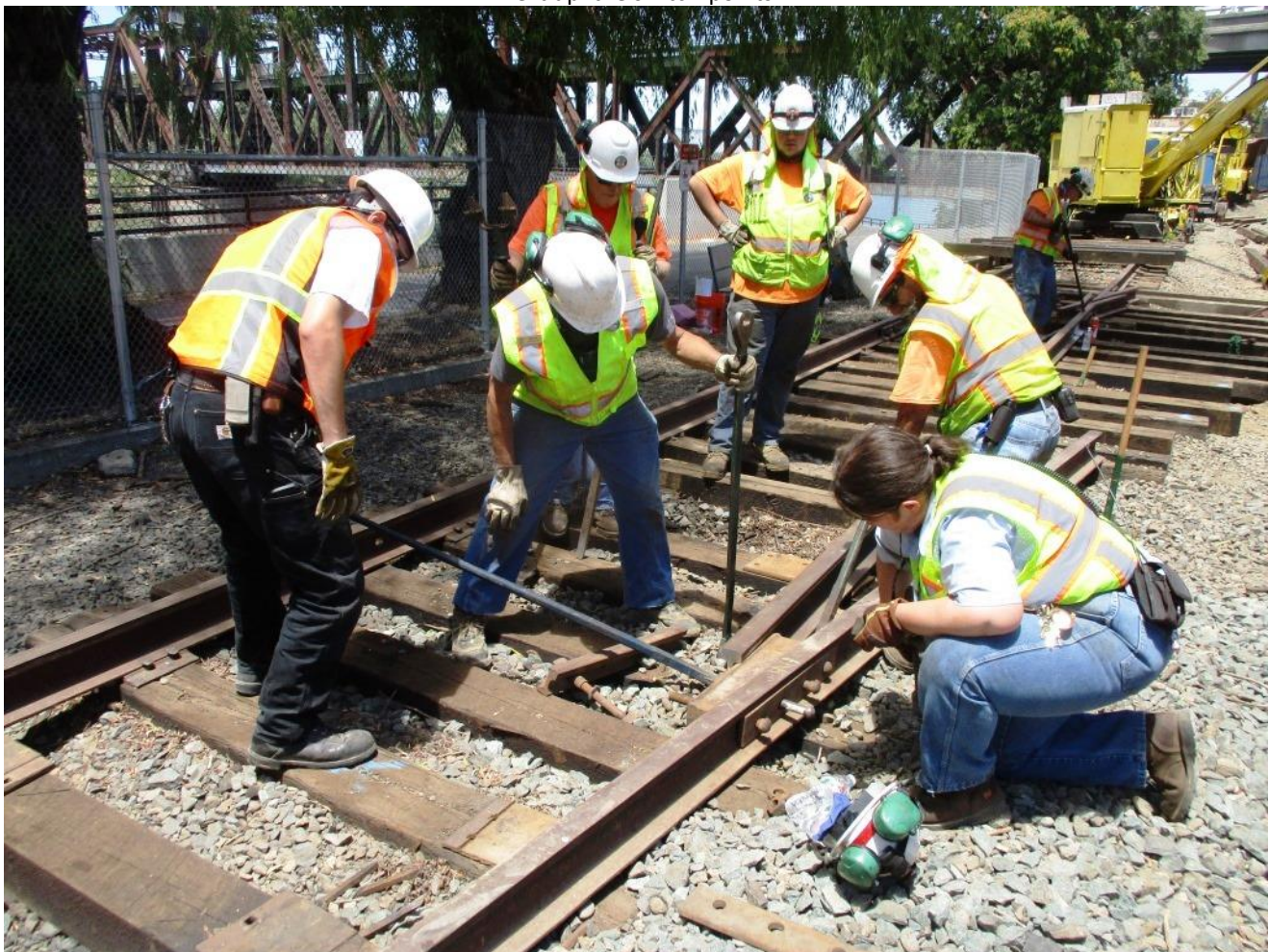
Joe nips-up the north end of the frog to help line up the bolt-holes for Samantha to insert bolts as Mike F. tightens bolts on the south end



With the frog bolted in, Samantha, Heather, and Bill do a little "Gandy-dancing" to shove the rail into gauge



Next up: the switch-points



Kyle, Ed, Joe, and Heather play the tricky game of installing a heel-block



Bill, Kyle, and Joe shimmy around the weighty block to get everything lined up before the switch point can be installed



Meanwhile, back at the frog, Mike F. uses a lining-bar to shove the guard-rail into place



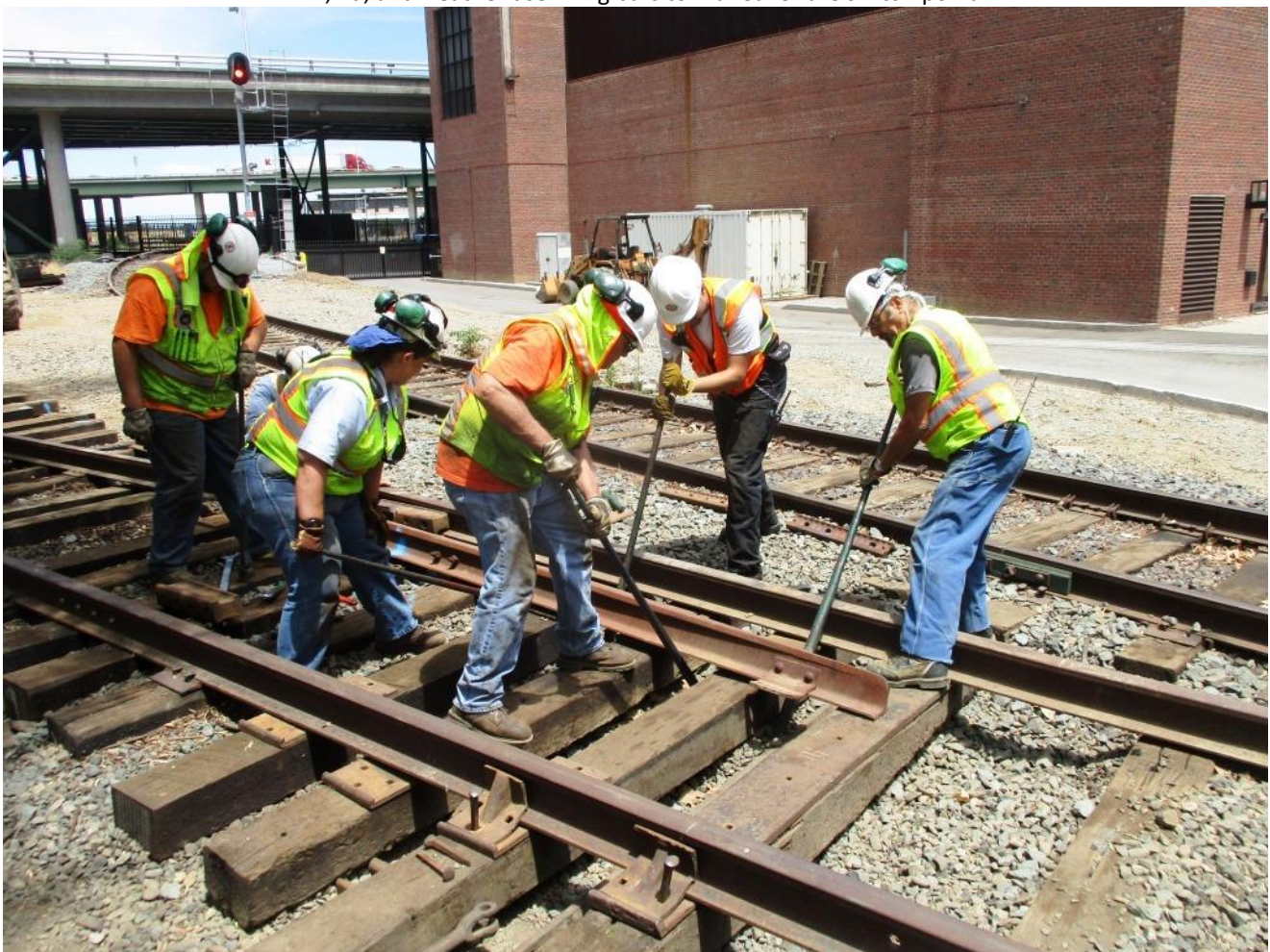
Did somebody say, "switch-point"?



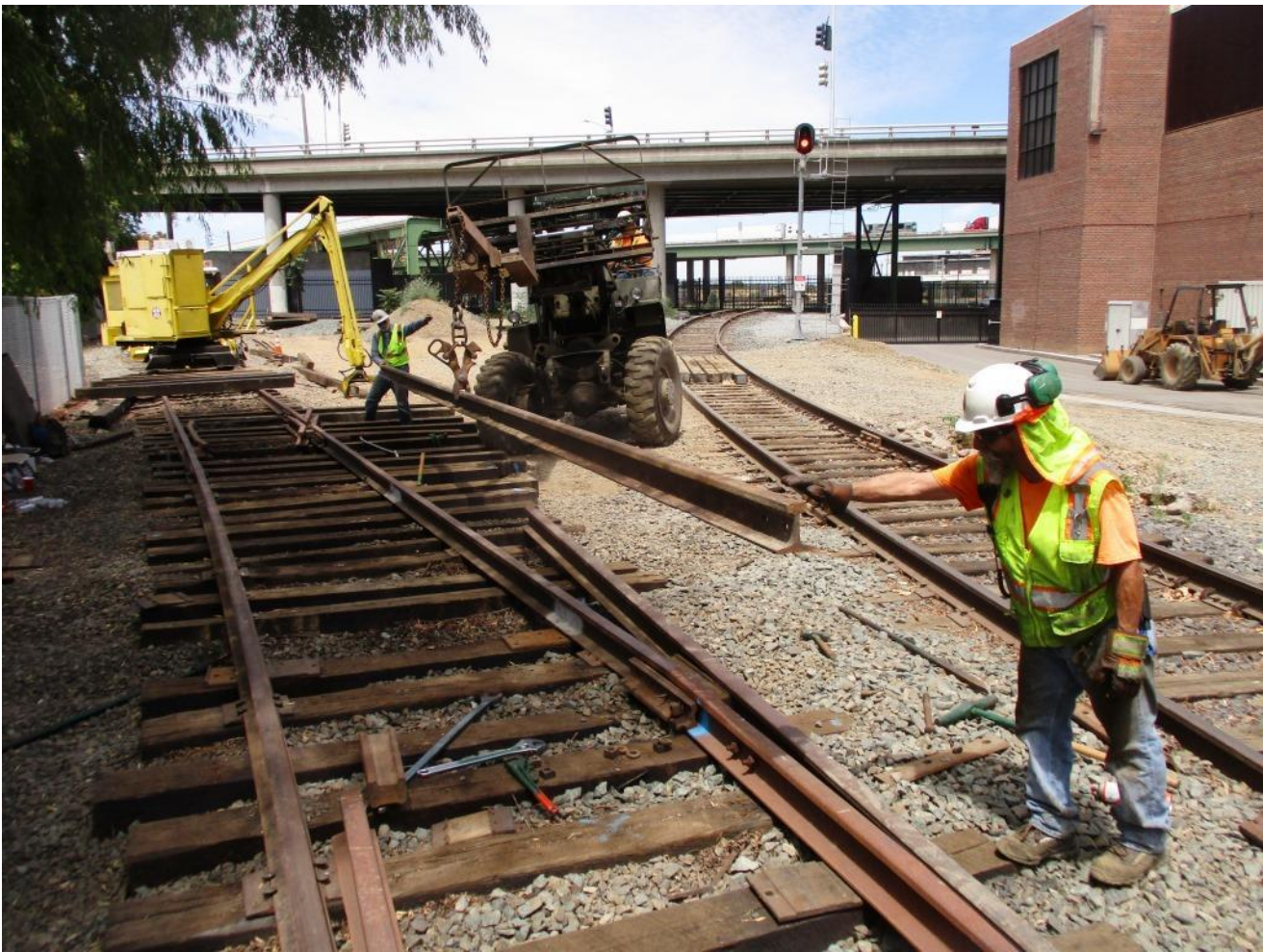
With the switch-point hanging from the stinger of Big Green, Joe, Bill, Ed, and Heather manipulate it into place against the heel-block



Bill, Ed, and Heather use lining bars to maneuver the switch-point



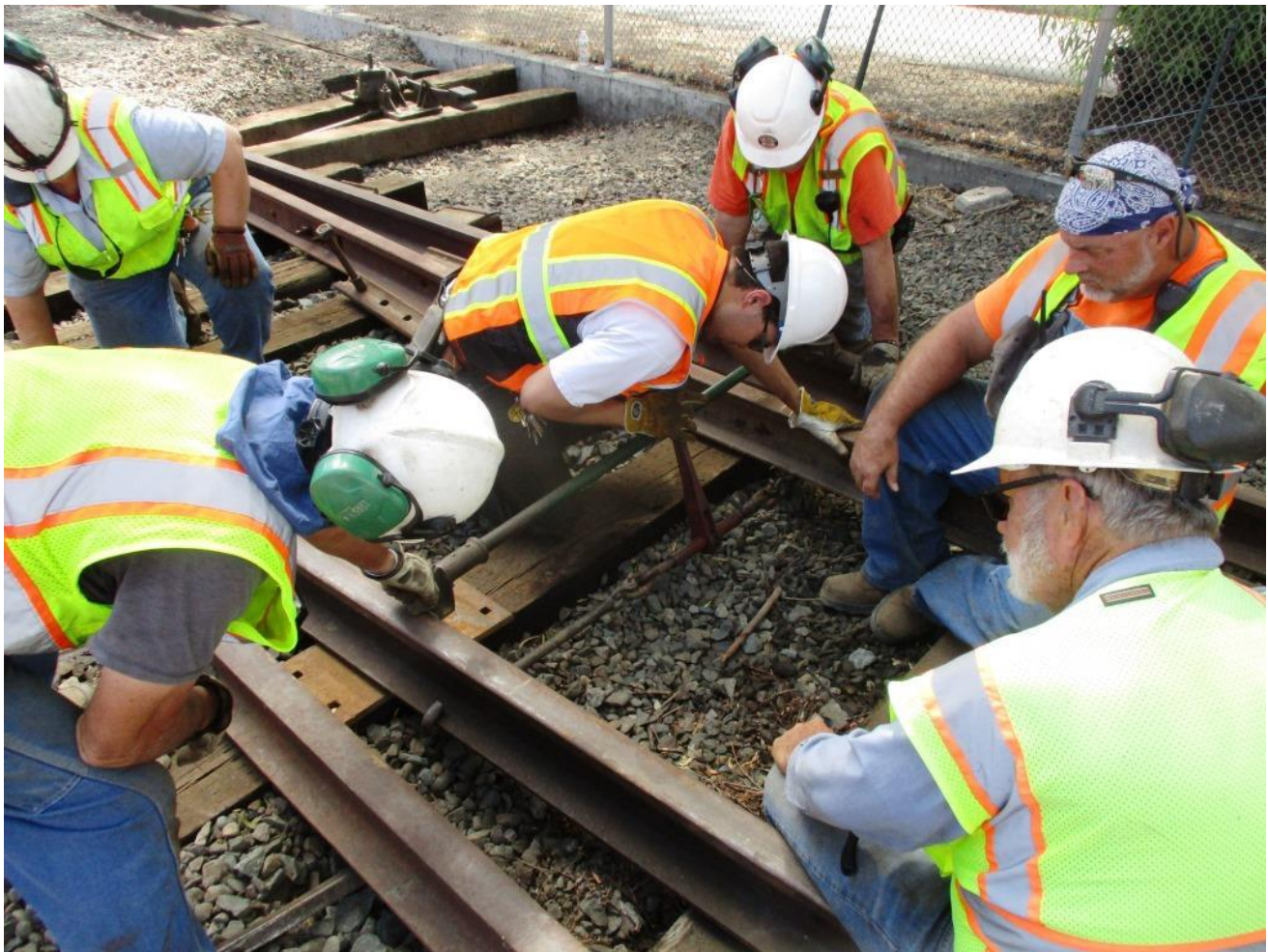
Bill, Heather, Chris, Kyle, and Ed make the precision moves necessary to line the switch-point with the heel-block



While the switch-point maneuver is going on, Alan directs Mike F. to bring in the closure rail which Joe guides to keep it from swinging about



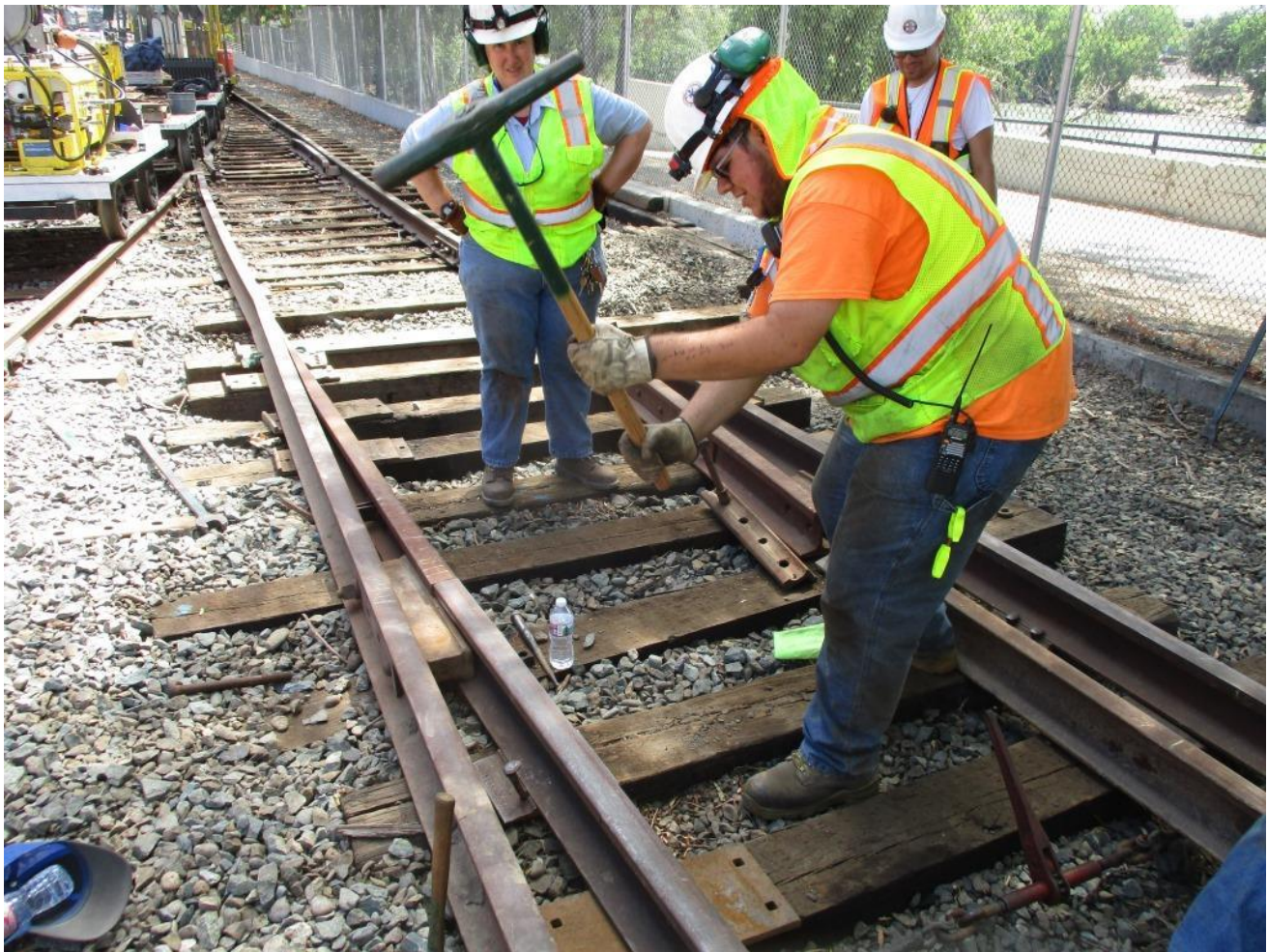
As the closure-rail hangs from the forks of Big Green, Joe and Ed do a little Gandy-dancing of their own



With the switch-point now attached, Kyle uses a gauger to pull the rails into gauge



Ed demonstrates his patented "two-fisted hammering" technique for pounding tie-plates into place



Chris drives a spike to hold the rail in gauge



Yep, as Pam says, "It's starting to look like a switch!"