

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 20, 2017. Real, honest to goodness, genuine, first-hand, primary source excessive wordiness returns to your MOW Team update this week. So, let's get started before the dictionary runs out of words!

The Shops were hopping with activity on Tuesday as Pat Scholzen, Joe Margucci, Alan Hardy, Gene Peck, Mike Harris, and Heather Kearns got right to work. Pat, Gene, Alan, and Mike H. set out to replace the broken engine-mounts on the rail-mounted air-compressor. One of the issues with the machine is that engine sits catawampus in its frame because the engine-mounts are all busted. Now, lifting a 2,000-pound engine inside its frame was a bit of a challenge. But, using lining bars and the fork-lift, Pat, Mike H., Alan, and Gene managed to get the old mounts out and two of the new mounts installed. The remaining two mounts need to be modified slightly to fit this particular and ancient machine. While the man-lift is in the Shops, the decision was made to do some additional work on it. Joe and Heather changed the oil and fuel filters. Then Joe set out to install a new ignition switch and tachometer (as the old one wasn't tach-ing at all). Heather began the process of disposing of old spray-paint cans that have been accumulating for quite some time. This is one of those, "we'll get to it next week," crazy-fun jobs. Well, Heather got it started on Tuesday using the process as proscribed by Sacramento County Hazardous Waste Disposal Office. The fun of old spray can disposal was so infectious that Alan couldn't contain himself and had to join in. But, soon he realized it was more fun than he could handle so left it all to Heather. But, don't feel left out if you weren't able to make it on Tuesday. There's plenty more spray-can fun in our future!

Thursday, Alan, Heather, Joe, Kyle Blackburn, Kevin Hecteman, Frank, and Mike H. brought the Shops to life. Alan rearranged the hose connectors on the rail-mounted air compressor to prevent the hoses from kinking. Everything fits better now. Heather gathered a crew together to get the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger back to Old Sacramento and the tamper over to the Shops. Joe climbed aboard the 125 as Kyle brought the transfer table over. As Joe took the 125 out of the building, a grass fire was noted on the other side of Rail Yards Blvd. Joe quickly called 911 and the fire trucks were dispatched. Over in Old Sac., Mike H., Heather, and Frank got the tamper Kalamazoo tug opened up and ready to roll. Conductor Kevin contacted UP Dispatcher 62 in Omaha and quickly secured a green signal indication. The Kalamazoo would be used to escort the 125 back to Old Sac. since the 125 has insulated axels and does not trigger the signal system at the interlocking. Once the Kalamazoo and tamper were at the Shops, a little switching between the 125 and tamper was done and they were off. Again, Conductor Kevin secured passage for the two machines back to Old Sac. With that, the Team returned to the Shops to accomplish more great work. Kyle was super excited at the prospect of draining old spray paint cans and disposing of them. The fun was so overwhelming that he decided to do something less fun in order to calm down and descended down into the pit under the ballast regulator to remove a leaky hose. Once that was done, he, Kevin, and Heather replaced broken handles on sledge hammers. All in all, a great deal was accomplished.

It's been a banner couple of weeks for new volunteers with the MOW Team. Last week, we welcomed Scott Dunn and Bill Hastings to the Team. Saturday, Mary DiPietro, Robert Jones, Ty Smith, Dave Wolf, and DJ Mandella were initiated as full-fledged MOW Team members. On hand to welcome them with a pink box filled with fresh doughnuts were Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Michael Florentine, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Weston, Frank, and Kyle. In order to make everyone official and compliant with federal regulations, Scott, Bill, Mary, Robert, Ty, Dave, and DJ had the thrilling pleasure of taking the Part 214 "Roadway Worker Safety Training" and the grueling exam. Despite the "teacher," they all managed passed with 100-percent scores. Heather was EIC of the Team that headed down the Sutterville Line to the Zoo to continue re-gauging the track. Nearly three-quarters of the track from the I-5 Bridge to Sutterville Road was narrow by as much as an inch constituting a "defect" under federal law. So, the MOW Team is re-gauging the entire track back to the perfect distance of 56 1/2 inches. Unfortunately, our rail-mounted air compressor suffered a catastrophic failure several weeks ago. As such, we're unable to use the pneumatic spike-drivers. So, once again, it was a week of hand spiking. Fortunately, our best "spikers," Mike F., Steve, and Weston, were on hand and anxious wear themselves out. Frank identified the starting point (where we lose gauge) while Clem, Weston, and Joe began by pulling spikes on the west rail so that it could be gauged off the east. Clem then set up the rail-spreader while Frank measured. Once back in gauge, Steve and Mike F. began demonstrating their world famous tandem windmill spike-driving technique. DJ, Bill, Mary, Robert, and Scott arrived at the job-site following their successful 214 training and quickly joined in the fun. DJ worked with Weston and Joe pulling spikes up the line ahead of the gauging operation. Mary and Alan positioned the rail-spreaders. Bill and Robert worked with Clem and Heather plugging old spike holes. Weston joined the Steve and Mike F. tandem spiking show and the three of them traded off driving home spikes on the re-gauged track. Of course, Kyle, Joe, DJ, Robert, and Heather were also setting and driving spikes. This was essentially the process that continued through the day: spikes were pulled, old spike-holes plugged, rail-spreader brought in, rails re-gauged, new spikes were set on the re-gauged rail, then driven home by the crew using spike mauls and sledge hammers. This hand-spiking, however, although being a fine example of old-fashioned railroading at its best, is very inefficient, time-consuming, and tiring. As a result, the re-gauging process is taking longer than initially anticipated. But, as our hearts are pure and our cause is just, the MOW Team will persevere. By 3:30, everyone was pretty well worn out so, the Team packed-up and followed the train back to town. Interestingly, Joe was meeting his family for an evening at the Zoo. So, Steve gave him a ride down the hill to Sutterville Road in the Kalamazoo tug making Joe officially the first Zoo patron to arrive via the Sacramento Southern Railroad.

This coming week, the Team shall gather at the same MOW time and same MOW place on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, the Team and the doughnuts will arrive by 8 o'clock a.m. The Team will be back down on the Sutterville Line and, one way or the other, we will have an air source to run the pneumatic spikers. This should allow for the completion of the necessary re-gauging. To the dedicated and hardworking members of the MOW Team, many thanks for all you do to build a better railroad.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike H. uses a lining-bar to lever-up the air-compressor's Deutz air-cooled diesel engine



Mike H. gets a strap wrapped around the engine for Alan on the fork-lift to lift



Heather rolls a barrel of dead spray cans outside for disposal...



Then begins the joyful task of making sure they are empty prior to disposal



Alan could only handle this much fun for a few minutes...



Joe calls 911 after having spotted the grass fire across the road



Kyle runs the transfer table as the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger is moved to the transfer table lead track



The tamper and the Jackson 125 are switched-out



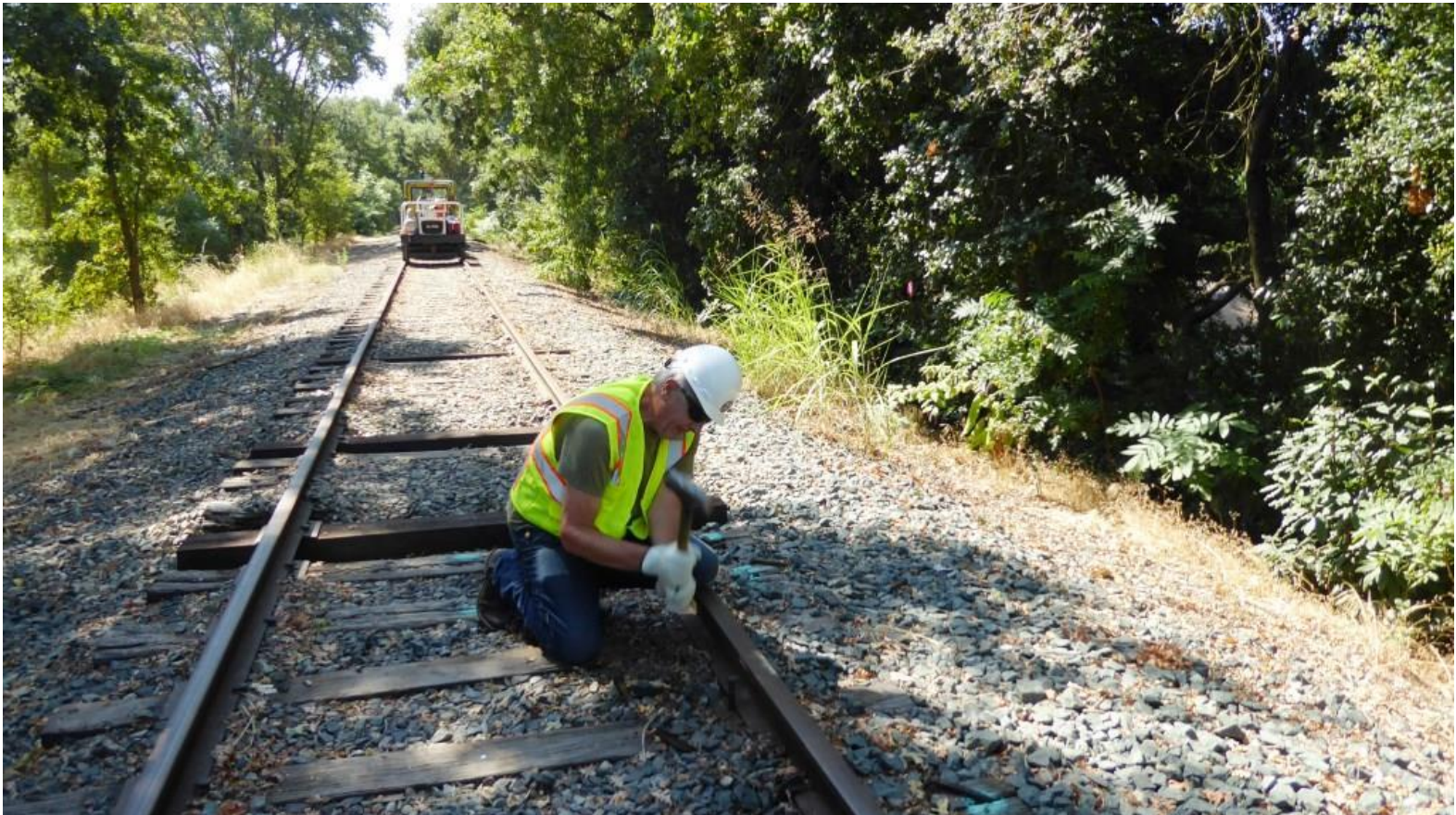
Kyle couldn't think of anything more fun than emptying out old spray cans...



Kyle and Kevin work on replacing broken sledge-hammer handles



Weston and DJ join forces against a particularly stubborn spike (under a joint-bolt) as Alan and Mary prepare to measure the area



Scott sets spikes



Heather and Clem pound down tie-plugs



Weston and Steve remove a spike with the assistance of the "road-master"





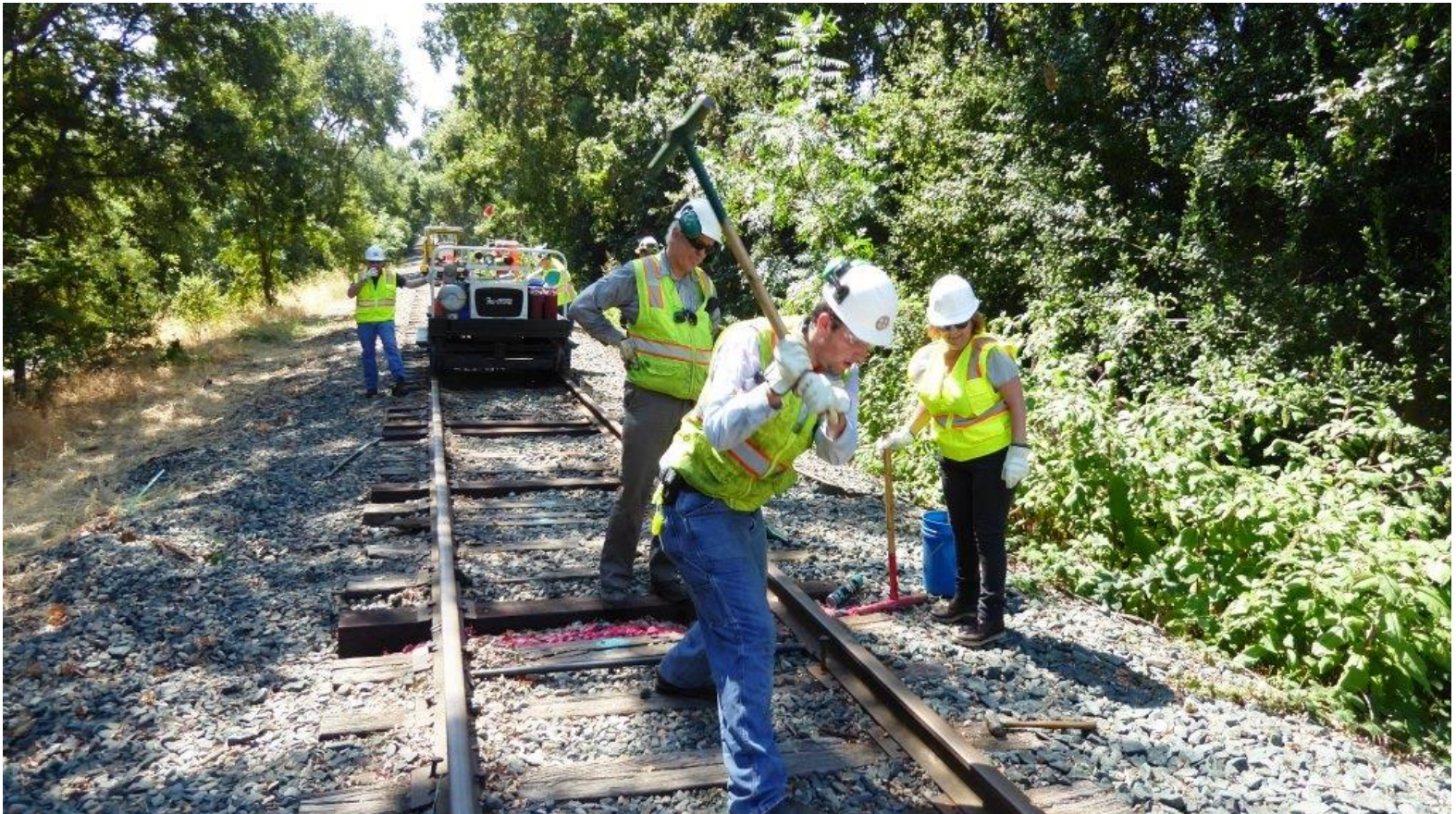
Robert and Bill pound-down tie-plugs



Weston gets serious with the spike-maul



Steve and Mike F. interpret old fashioned track-gang railroading at its finest by demonstrating their world-famous tandem windmill spiking



Weston takes up the challenge and gets the "windmill" spinning



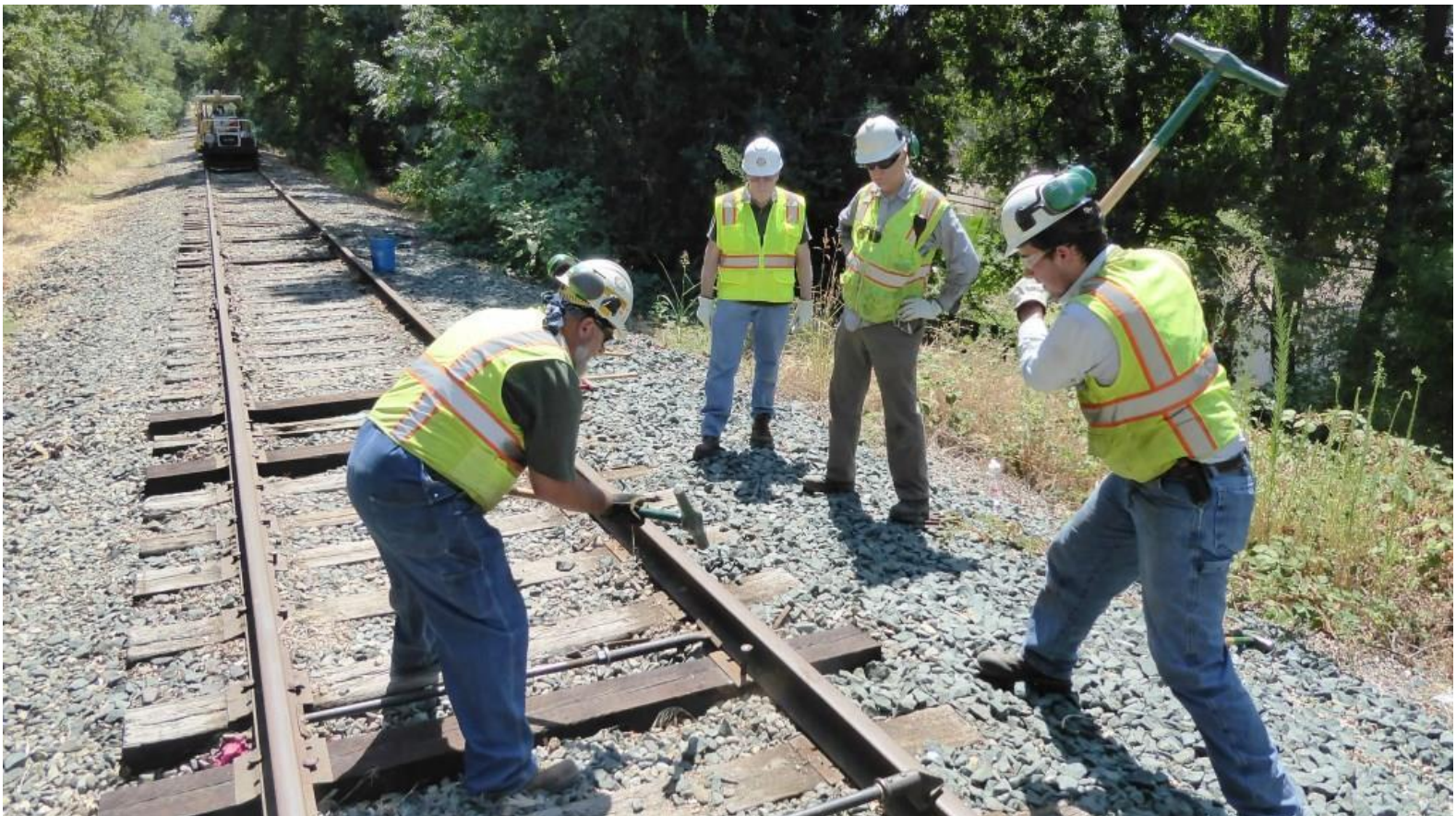
Heather takes up the spike-maul



Mary gets in on the spiking fun



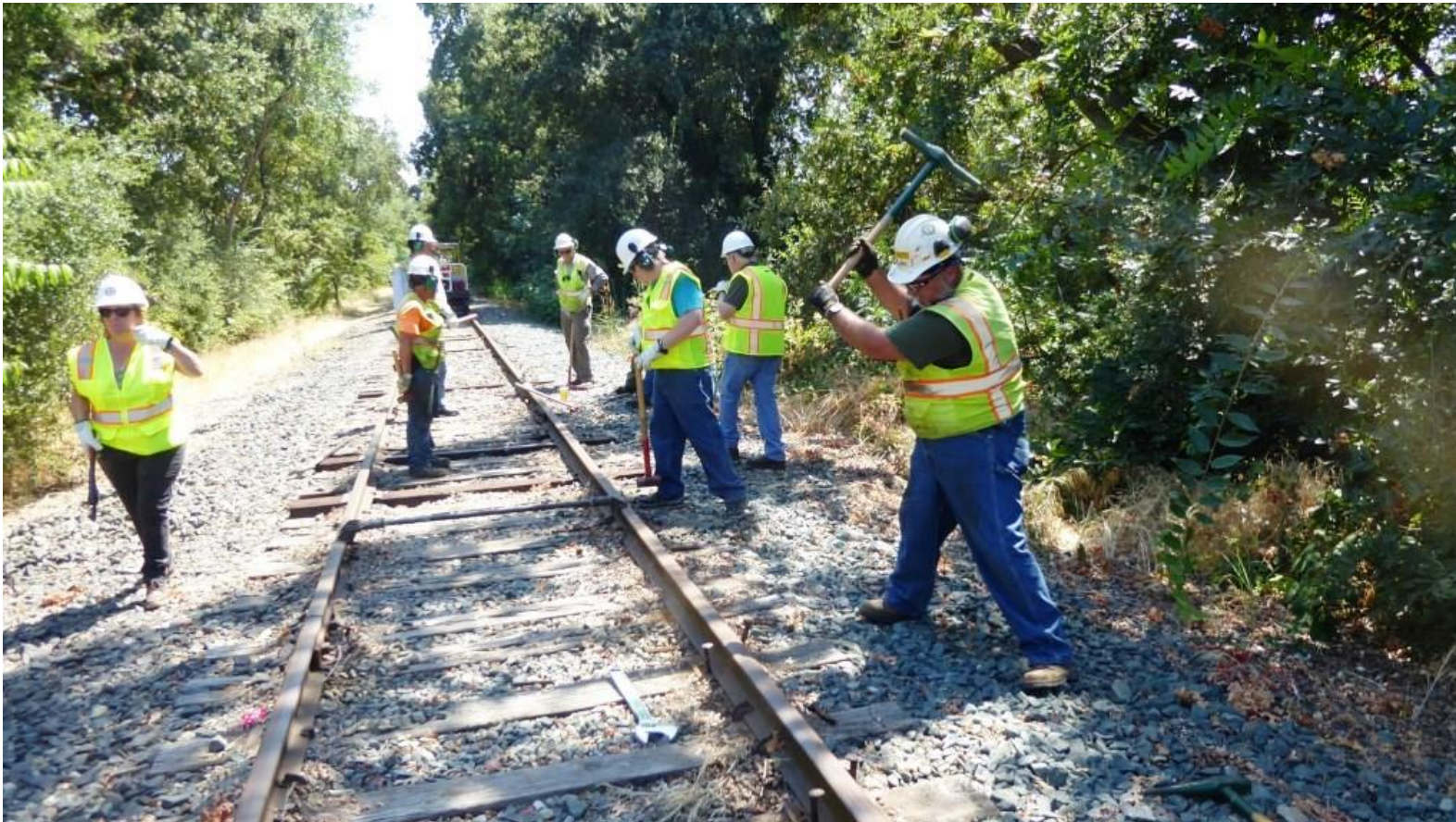
Joe and Heather use the rail spreader and track-gauge to re-gauge the track



Now Weston joins Mike F. in "team spiking"



The MOW Team re-gauging the Sutterville Track



As the Team gets ready to pack it in for the day, Mike F. drives one more spike