

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 28, 2016. Your MOW Team was rockin' this week – literally! There's now 525-tons worth of rock right next to the levee at Setzer – and, there was a Chevy involved, too. So, let's get this update rolling before the music dies.

Truck-load after truck-load of ballast rock arrived at our Setzer Yard on Tuesday – 525-tons of brand-new ballast (millions of years in the making). And, that's just the start of it. Another 175-tons will be delivered this coming week. Like Anak Krakatau rising from the depths of the Sunda Strait off Indonesia, a mountain of ballast grew down at Setzer with such rapidity to astound even the most learned of geologists. Alan Hardy spent most of Tuesday and Wednesday directing the deliveries and monitoring the growth of Mount Ballast. With this quantity of rock, the MOW Team will be able to undertake substantial track-raises this coming off-season in areas of the line that have been desperate for a proper foundation. Getting this rock under the track will go a long way towards smoothing-out those areas where the train "rocks-and-rolls." Many thanks to the CSRM Foundation for making this investment in the MOW Team's efforts of building a better railroad!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Pat Scholzen and Gene Peck labored away on several important projects. Joe Margucci worked on wiring and lighting for the Interpretive Handcar Program's motorcar and bench-car combination. Heather spent a good deal of the day working with the folks at Capital Glass who were replacing the windshield on tamper which, we suspect, had been broken by marauding Goths and Vandals. Frank Werry, Anthony Filamor, Jose Gomez, and Weston Snyder headed to Baths in order to mitigate more gothic vandalism to the switch-stand at Switch 20. In an act of social protect, vandals had painted the switch machine and target a lovely shade of sky-blue. Frank's team soon put things to right. Then, they headed to Old Sac. to clean-out debris from under the grating at Switch 1 (ground-throw at the turntable). This was in preparation for our work on Saturday. Once back at the Shops, Frank repaired the busted engine-mounts on the rail-lifter. There's no doubt that the MOW Team had a very successful and productive Tuesday.

Thursday, Heather, Alan, Ed Kottal, Joe, Jose, and Anthony gathered for more MOW fun. The Team headed out to the Firing Line track to finish plating and spiking the remaining ties. We're now at a point with this project where we cannot proceed with the final hook-up to the Firing Line adjacent to the Boiler Shop until ERM, the company completing the environmental mitigation of the Rail Yards, digs trenches and installs pipes connecting its many test-wells that will run under this track. Nonetheless, there were about a dozen ties on the track we have built that still needed to be plated and spiked So, Heather and her crew eagerly completed this final work. They did a great job and have put us in a position where we can return to our primary mission of maintaining our revenue line.

Saturday was a new day and, with it, a new project beckoned for your MOW Team. First, of course, Alan, Michael Florentine, Clem Meier, Joe, Mike Willis, Harry Voss, Matt Blackburn, Heather, Chris Carlson, and Frank convened for the traditional convocation of doughnuts. With the pink box depleted, the Team headed over to the Old Sacramento Yard to address several issues identified by our trusty track inspectors. Also, the City of Sacramento requested our help at the J Street crossing as part of its plan to pave the area. First stop was Switch 101, the switch to the west of the turntable. A critical component was scraping against another critical component making the switch difficult to throw. One of the ties needed to be moved to correct the issue. Mike F., Joe, and Matt dug-out the ballast rock beside the tie so that Clem, Mike W., and Alan, could set the track-jacks. Matt and Mike W. then cranked on the jacks to push the tie about two-inches south. Next, the rod that connects the two switch points needed adjusting so that they would fit more firmly against the stock-rail. Meanwhile, Heather, Matt, Joe, and Harry moved to on to Switch 1 – the ground-throw at the turntable. The switch-machine needed replacing as it exhibited too much "lost-motion" – considered a defect under federal regulation. Matt removed the grates over the switch and pulled spikes. Joe and Harry disconnected the machine from the control-rod. Mike F. brought in the Big Green Machine to lift and move the rather heavy object out of the way. The switch-ties on which the ground-throw is mounted are a bit worn but, can't be replaced because they are partly buried in concrete. So, Heather used a special epoxy goo that is designed to bind old ties together. Then, Alan, Matt, and Frank placed the replacement switch machine which Mike F., on Big Green, brought in. Soon, the whole Team was working on Switch 1. Replacing a switch-machine requires significant adjustment as each machine has unique features. Joe employed his special two-fisted sledgehammer technique to fine-tune the machine's position. Meanwhile, Mike W. and Clem moved down the line servicing and lubricating switches in Old Sac. Then Alan, Heather, and Mike F. headed to J Street where the City requested we undertake some test digs to determine what was beneath the track. Designated Supervisor of Railroad Engineers, Jeremy Levish, joined the Team and took-up the mattocks at J Street. He was on the crew that built the Center Siding at the depot back in the 1990s and knew there was concrete beneath it at J Street. With a little digging, he found its corners. Jeremy's institutional memory and help was greatly appreciated! Back at Switch 1, Joe, Matt, and Frank got the gratings replaced. Heather and Matt then cleaned out the impacted flange-ways of the North Turntable Lead. With that, the Team was tuckered and called it a day. Indeed, it was a day of significant accomplishment. Next week, switch work in Old Sacramento will continue.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather in the Erecting Shop on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, the convocation of doughnuts commences at 8 o'clock a.m. Next week is Labor Day weekend and, on a personal note, I will be out of town on Monday which necessitates a one-day publication delay of next week's installment of the update. But, not to worry, all the exciting details of your MOW Team's heroic adventures that you look forward to each week will be in your inboxes on Tuesday. This fantastic team of volunteers did a magnificent job this week, as it does every week, working to build a better railroad. Always remember, no track, no trains!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



The first of the ballast trucks arrive at Setzer



And work throughout the day, Mount Ballast grew!





Alan directs the action as Mount Ballast grows

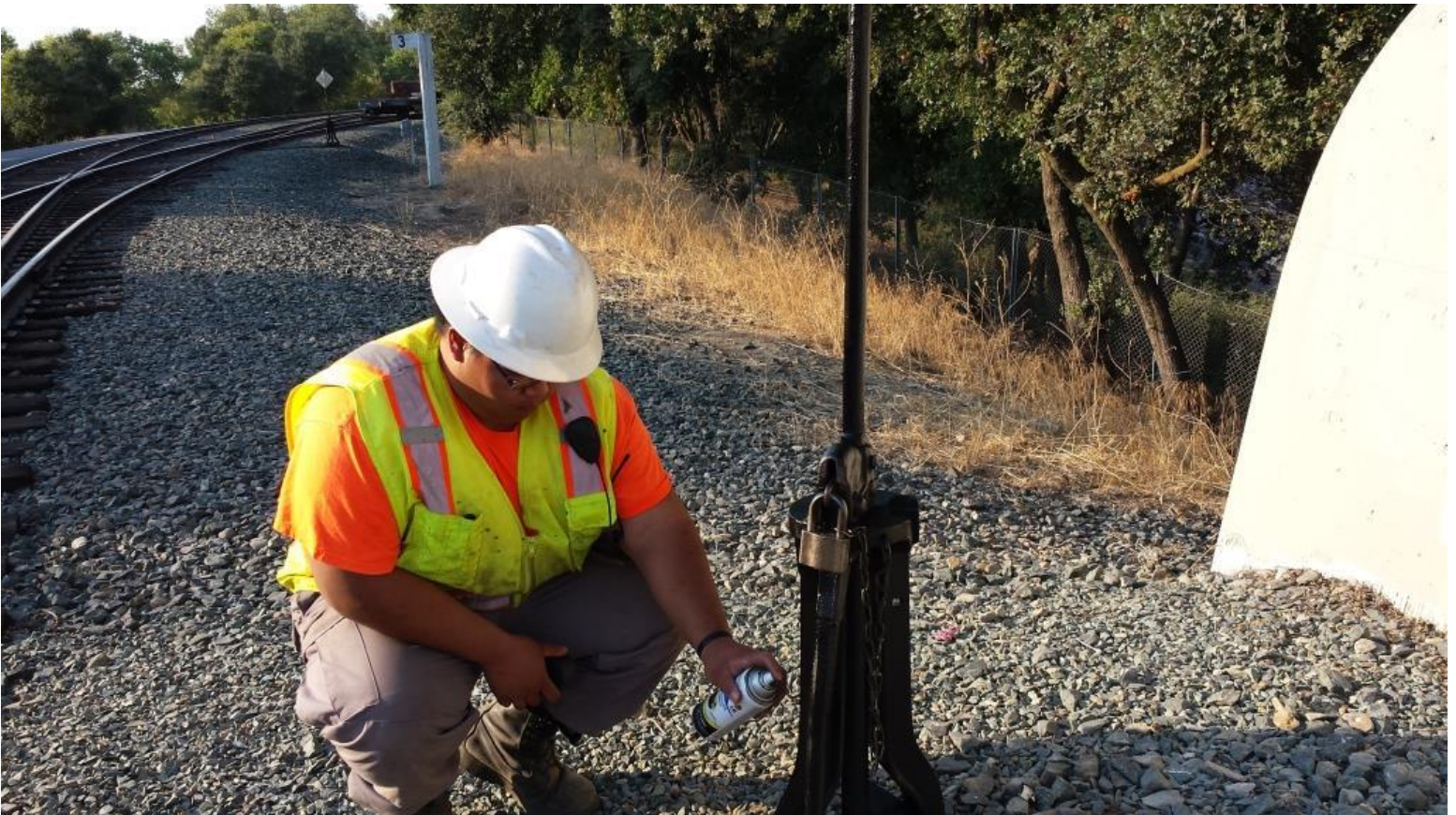


The windshield of the tamper is replaced





Weston and Jose make repairs to the switch machine at Switch 20



Anthony gives the machine a fresh coat of black paint





Anthony and Ed nip as Joe drives spikes



Jose drives spikes as Ed and Joe pull together to nip-up the tie





Matt adds a scoop of switch-grease to the grease-bucket



Mike W. floats the switch-points as Mike F. begins digging out the ballast next to the tie to be moved





With jacks laid horizontally, Matt and Mike W. start cranking on them to push the offending tie south



The Team works to get Switch 101 ship-shape and Bristol-fashion





Alan sprays magical Kroil on the bolt connecting the connecting-rod to the transit clip



Clem, Mike F., Alan, and Joe work on the adjustment of the switch





Chris slides a tie with the track-jack as Clem knocks a plate into position



Clem and Mike F. tighten-down the connecting rod in its new position





Now to the other side where Clem, Mike F. and Alan make adjustments to the connecting rod at the transit clip



Mike W. and Clem take the grease-bucket show on the road





Matt pulls spikes on the switch machine at Switch 1



Joe, Harry, and Heather disconnect the switch-rod from the switch machine





Mike F. brings in Big Green to carry away the old machine



Locked and loaded! Heather prepares to shoot special epoxy-goo into the cracks and crevasses of the cracking and crevassing switch-tie





Mike F. on Big Green grabs the replacement switch-machine



Alan guides Mike F. on Big Green for the placement of the replacement switch-machine





Alan and Matt shimmy it into place



Adjustment of the switch begins with centering the switch-points. Frank measures as Joe manipulates the machine to center the points





Joe uses his patented double-fisted sledgehammering technique to make minute adjustments to the position of the switch machine



Heather and Matt use lining-bars to hold the points at the measured-mark as Mike F. spikes-down the switch machine





Mike F. adds oil to the switch machine while Mike W. uses his thumb as a dyke against spillage



Meanwhile, at J Street, Heather and Alan start surveying under the track





DSLE Jeremy finds the concrete under center-siding that he remembers being there when they laid the track in the 1990s



Mike F. surveys under the platform track





Finishing touches on the switch-machine switch-out: Matt installs the proper target



Frank and Joe blots down the grating over the switch





Heather scrapes compacted dirt out of the flange-way of the North Turntable Lead



Matt and Heather clean up from their flange-way scraping