

Greetings!

This is you Maintenance of Way Team update for August 6, 2017. Again this week, thanks to the excellent reporting of Heather Kearns, it's time for your weekly dose of MOW Team fun. So, let's get this update started before all the fun runs out.

Tuesday night was well attended. Alan Hardy, Chris Carlson, Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Cliff Hayes, Joe Margucci, Mike Harris, and Heather Kearns were all on hand to manage several projects. Joe immediately set out to work on repairing one of the tamper's vibrator motors. When last used on the Firing Line track, a problem developed whereby the motor seemed loose and was shaking around rather more than it should. Joe enlisted the help of Mike H. and, between the two of them, found the problem and quickly solved it. Since Mike H. had helped Joe, it seemed only fair that Joe help Mike H. with the disassembly of the Big Green Machine's engine cowling. It needs to be removed to access the main hydraulic distribution valve which had gone wonky. They sought Alan's help with the forklift who was able to lift several pieces off. Cliff worked on several projects including building more protective shields for the new air-horn assembly on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. Then he went to work on Alan's flatcar project. He and Cliff are building side-rails on to it to hold dead-ties in place so they won't fall off during transport. Pat and Gene discussed many projects with Chris. Then Chris started and ran the dump truck for a while to keep the batteries healthy. Heather cleaned and serviced the Mighty Weed Team's chain saws for the big upcoming tree-pruning adventure on September 1st. It was a very productive evening, indeed.

Thursday, Alan, Joe, Mike H., Heather, and Anthony Filamor were on hand to take on more Shops projects. Alan did a bunch of little tasks to clean up around the shop. He fixed a malfunctioning table-mounted vice, gathered oily rags, and even took out the trash. Then he painted the ballast regulator's new windshields. Joe and Mike H. set out to finish tightening the vibrator motor on the tamper. Then they changed-out several hydraulic hoses on the tamper's work heads. You may recall how we lost the use of the tamper a couple weeks ago because of a blown hydraulic hose. Well, Mike H. and Joe have now taken care of that problem. Then the plan was to move the tamper back to Old Sacramento and bring the malfunctioning man-lift over to the Shops. However, that plan was abandoned once it was discovered that the transfer table was "locked-out" for repair. So, Mike H. moved on to working on the Big Green Machine and Joe prepared the Jackson 125 to leave the Shops. The hope was that the transfer table would be repaired so that all the necessary moves could be made on Saturday. Anthony then showed up and quickly went to work greasing the work-heads of the tamper. Heather headed to Woodland to pick up the repaired man-lift bucket door which had been sent out to a man-lift repair shop. She then reinstalled it on the man-lift and set out to identify the electrical problem from which the machine was suffering. She did manage to narrow down the problem considerably but, it is yet to be solved. You can't ask for better work from a more dedicated crew. They certainly got a great deal done in a short amount of time.

Saturday was a good day for doughnuts. Both Frank and Chris made sure that Alan, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Jose Gomez, Clem Meier, Harry Voss, Michael Florentine, Mike Willis, and Joe were well fortified. The plan for Saturday included moving the tamper to Old Sacramento then heading down the line to restart work on the Sutterville Road Line to the Zoo. The lock-out on the transfer table was cleared so, Steve climbed aboard the tamper and spotted it within the circuit to cross over the UP Main as Conductor Frank made the call to Omaha. He secured a very quick green signal indication and, with that, Steve in the tamper was on his way. After some minor switching in the Yard, the Team headed out. Mike F. piloted the Kalamazoo tug which pulled the MOW Team's work-train south. But, soon, Mike F. spotted trouble ahead. Some silly community spirit run thing was occurring at Capitol Mall. Nonetheless, as federal law provides train operations with the right-of-way across grade crossings, he proceeded into the Capitol Mall north approach. Soon, the gates came down, the light turned green, and all the community spirited runners got a quick lesson in federal regulations. Despite the obvious irritation of the runners, the MOW Team work-train crossed Capitol Mall without incident and headed south. Meanwhile, Frank and Steve in the tamper held back in the Clunie area to do some tamping of the track that MOW Team raised some month ago. It had settled and needed re-tamping. At the Sutterville Line, Jose and Clem pulled spikes on ties destined to be removed. Mike F. and Mike W. plugged spike holes in ties where the spikes were removed to re-gauge the track. Chris, Harry, and Heather used the rail spreader to push the rails into gauge and set spikes. Once Frank and Steve caught up with the Team at Sutterville, Frank joined the spike pullers and Steve joined the spike drivers. Mike F. and Steve then decided to demonstrate their skills at interpreting old-fashioned railroading by engaging in their famous tandem spiking technique. By lunchtime the Team had re-gauged over 100 feet of track. After lunch, Joe showed up and, with his help, the Team was able to complete the re-gauging of another hundred feet of track. As there was still switching to do in the Old Sacramento Yard in order to get the man-lift over to the Shops, the Team packed up at about 3:30 and headed back to town. Using his mechanical magic, Chris managed to get the man-lift started. He and Heather hooked the chipper to it and switched them onto the turntable. Joe lined the turntable and Heather piloted it onto the interchange track where Conductor Frank opened successful negotiations with the UP Dispatcher in Omaha for a quick crossing to the Rail Yards where it was spotted in Bay 5 of the Erecting Shop. With that, the Team put the rest of their toys away very pleased with the day's progress on the Sutterville Line. Work will continue down on the Sutterville Line over the next several weeks as this magnificent Team of dedicated volunteers endures with the goal of making it safe for regular train operations.

This coming week, the MOW fun will keep on coming. Tuesday and Thursday, the Team will gather at the usual times of 5 o'clock p.m. or a little before. Saturday, the adventure down on the Sutterville Line to the Zoo will resume with a fresh pink box of doughnuts starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks, as always, to all the fantastic volunteers of the MOW Team who handle the hard labor in pursuit of building a better railroad. Again, my thanks to Heather for providing such fine details of the MOW Team's active week.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Cliff builds a protective shield for the Jackson 125's new air-horn



Mike H. and Joe assess the problem with one of the tamper's vibrator motors



Alan prepares to lift off part of the Green Machine's engine cowling that Joe and Mike H. have been dismantling



Cliff welds components for the new railings being added to a MOW flatcar



Mike H. lying down on the job – in order to access the tamper's vibrator motor, of course...



Joe and Mike H. hook up the tamper's new hydraulic hoses



Next, Joe adds hydraulic fluid to the tamper as Mike H. moves Big Green to provide easier access for working on the engine



Anthony greases the many moving parts on the tamper's work-head



Conductor Frank arranges for the tamper to move across the UP Main at RV 988



Mike F. in the Kalamazoo teaching community spirit runners a lesson in federal regulations...



Jose, Mike W., and Clem pull spikes and plug holes



Chris checks the gauge after having employed the use of the rail-spreader



Steve and Mike F. in action demonstrating their famous dueling tandem spiking technique



Steve and Mike F.'s tandem spiking technique is the best show in town!



Joe sets spikes after the rail-spreader was used to re-gauge the track



Back in Old Sac., the man-lift and chipper are moved onto the turntable