

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 7, 2016. Delta breezes brought cooler weather this week and the cool-cats of the MOW Team took full advantage of it. So, before Sylvester catches Tweety, let's get this update flying.

Things got rolling early on Tuesday. Pat Scholzen, Anthony Filamor, Joe Margucci, Jose Gomez, Cliff Hayes, Mike Harris, Frank Werry, and Heather Kearns were all anxious to get things done. Cliff, Pat, and Mike H. took on the blue tractor and the grader-box which wouldn't lift and lower. They were able to diagnose the problem relatively quickly but it took a couple hours and affect repairs. By evening's end, the tractor was working like new and the grader-box operating as it should. Joe and Heather worked on the Big Green Machine and the tire-mounted air compressor. Meanwhile, over in Old Sacramento, Frank, Jose, and Anthony set out to replace a cracked joint-bar on the CPPS lead that our trusty track inspectors found. First, the Team organized the tools on the motorcar and tool-car which needed to be done. With the motorcar reorganized, the Team focused on replacing the cracked joint-bar. The track in this area consists 61.5-pound rail which was prevalent in the 1860s and 1870s. It's perfect for the Museum's interpretive purposes. However, the modern heavy equipment that rolls over it on a daily basis today tends to flex it significantly. Thus, broken joint-bars are more common in this area. Frank, Jose, and Anthony worked diligently to replace the bar while fending off an army of pokey-people who descended upon us transfixed on their phones. Pokey-people are like zombies and walk into things – like track crews – blindly. Holy moly! Joint-bars are fairly easy to replace but, they always take time. Of course the crew was successful. But, with its replacement, we have exhausted our supply of 61.5-pound track joint-bars. This weight of track went out of style in the 19th century and, in this day and age, components are difficult to locate. For now, the track is complete again and we'll just hope our trusty track inspectors find no more breaks.

Thursday, Anthony, Joe, Cliff, Mike H., Heather, and Frank took advantage of the cool evening for some MOW fun. We're embarking on a program of switch-target restoration and Anthony "Van Gogh" spent the evening painting some up. As our tools are color-coded for location, Anthony freshened them up, as well. Then, he headed out on to the 560 track and repainted the tie bordering the approach circuit to crossing over the UP Main. Heather and Joe continued their program of servicing equipment and took on the back-hoe. Mike H. and Cliff took care of the wonky alternator on the tie-shear. In addition, the Team staged for Saturday's adventure out in the Rail Yard working on the Firing Line Track. As darkness descended, the Team headed home happy with an evening of good progress.

Clem Meier, Mike H., Ed Moriarty, Frank, Joe, Mike Willis, Taka Blackburn, Michael Florentine, Ed Kottal, John Rexroth, Heather, Harry Gbler, and Leonard Jones all showed up Saturday morning with visions pink boxes and of fresh doughnuts. They weren't disappointed. Frank was EIC for the day and did a fantastic job. Saturday's plan included assistance from ERM, the company undertaking the environmental mitigation of the Rail Yards. Earlier in the week, Leonard J. suggested asking for ERM's help in grading the roadbed of the Firing Line track. Thursday, Restoration Shops Manager, Al DiPaolo, and Leonard Cassieri met with ERM folks on our behalf to arrange ERM's assistance. Speaking of cool-cats, Saturday morning, ERM sent over an extra-large "Cat" front-end loader and water truck to cut a roadbed into the engineered compacted soil between the track under I-5 and the Firing Line. Frank coordinated the operation. Meanwhile, Heather, Joe, and Mike W. got out the concrete saw and started cutting the concrete around the west end of the Firing Line. We needed to expose the rails in order to drill bolt holes to connect with the rest of the track. Then, Ed M., Ed K., Clem, Mike F., Mike H., Taka, and John all took turns on the jack-hammers to break the concrete away. Folks, 100-year-old plus concrete is tough stuff. The Team pounded away at the concrete on both the north and south Firing Line tracks with the jack-hammers and had to take turns as this stuff was not going to give up easily. In fact, at times, the jack-hammers would get stuck as they broke through the concrete and into the ties below. The hydraulic power of the three-ton capacity forklift was needed to yank the hammers out. But, the crew persevered and got the job done.

Meanwhile, Harry, using his surveying tools, measured and spotted the center-line and off-set lines of the new track. He determined the depth necessary to dig out at various locations along the line and provided that information to Frank who, along with Leonard J., was coordinating with ERM's loader crew to grade the new roadbed. The big-Cat ERM loader cut away at the compacted soil like the preverbal hot knife through butter. The water truck sprayed the area to subdue the dust and soften the ground. With the new roadbed cut, Harry again took sightings and readings. Although ERM did a great job creating a new roadbed, some more work needed to be done in order to level the ground. So, Joe spent some quality time in our front-end loader and, following Harry's direction, scooped out additional soil at the high spots. Following Joe's great efforts, Harry again took reading and proclaimed at a sufficient level for the track at both ends. With that, the Team decided to call it a day. All that jack-hammering of miserably hard concrete and wielding the concrete saw takes a toll on a crew. But, opinion was unanimous. Significant progress was achieved on Saturday. In fact, the Team felt much more encouraged this week about this project. After a few setbacks, we are back on track. Many thanks to Al and the two Leonards for interceding with ERM on our behalf.

This coming week, the Team will gather for more MOW fun on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Also on Thursday, the Weed Team will reconvene for another great adventure down on the Hood Line. Remember folks, it is the Weed Team that is keeping the Hood dream alive. Come on out and join them. Meet at the Shops at 8:30. You know, Mike W. said it best. "All who come out for MOW are the BEST!" Truer words have never been spoken. The camaraderie of this Team makes all the hard work worth it. Great folks doing good work having a good time building a better railroad for all.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Anthony digs-out the offending joint-bar



Jose and Frank bring order to chaos



The zombie apocalypse descends on our work-site in Old Sac.



Frank and Jose prepare to re-spike the joint while trying to avoid being trampled-on by pokey-people



Anthony paints the night away



Anthony marks the east approach to the UP Main crossing signal circuit



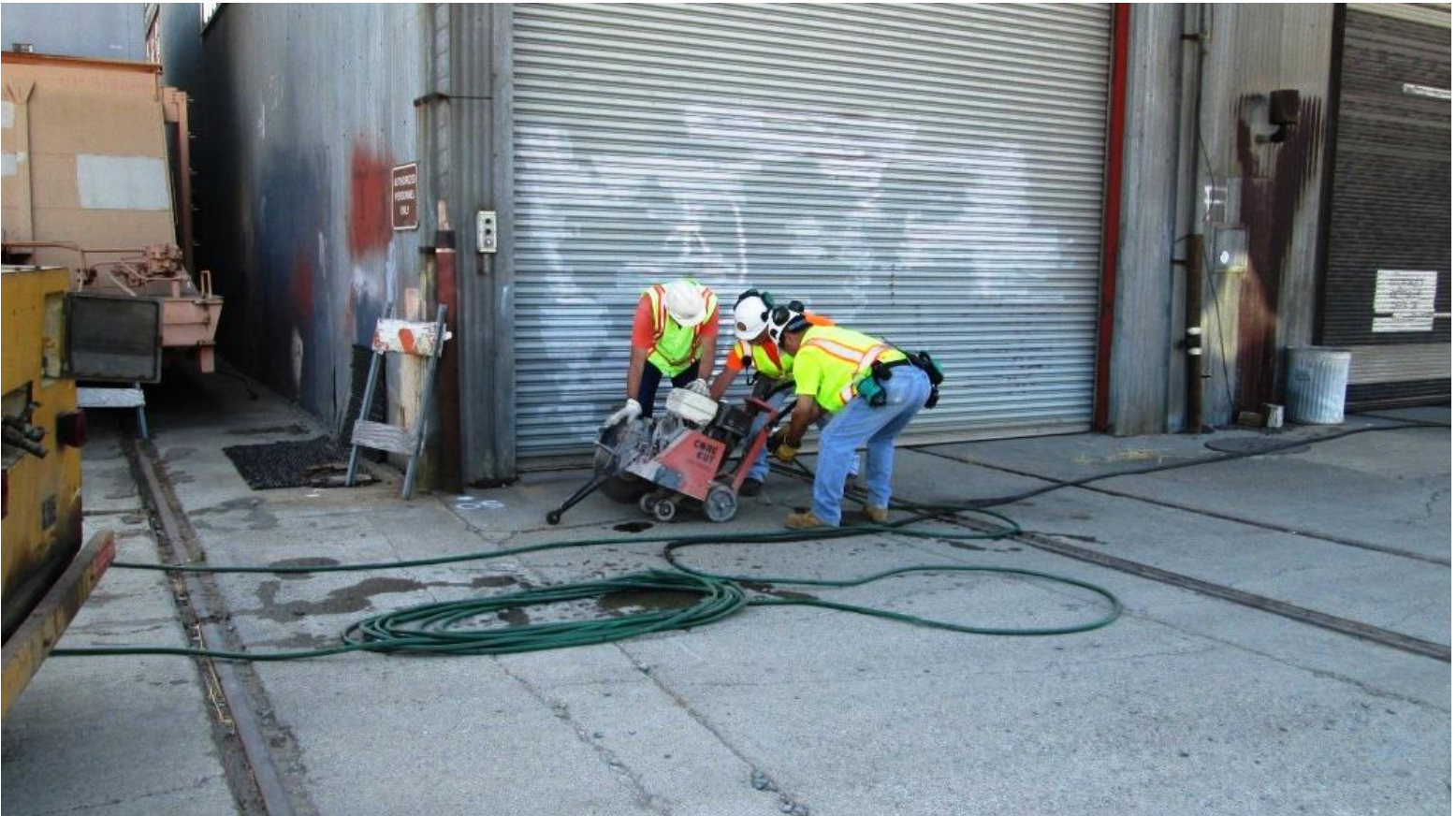
Joe and Heather service the back-hoe



"H" marks the spot – or something like that. Ed M. marks the area of concrete to break-up



Harry and Clem discuss logistics with the operator of the “big-Cat” from ERM



John, Joe, and Taka deploy the concrete saw



Meanwhile, Ed M. continues to jack-hammer as Mike W. clears away the rubble



Second shift: Joe clears away rubble as John jack-hammers



After Harry sighted the center and off-set lines, Frank marked them with marker paint



Bring in the Big Cat!



Mike W. takes the helm of the concrete saw



Jack-hammering begins on the north Firing Line track



"Jack-hammer" John keeps Joe and Clem busy



Leonard J. admires the Big-Cat



Ed K. takes on the concrete of the north Firing Line track



Dueling jackhammers: Clem, Ed M., Taka, and Joe place wagers on who will win. Mike H. or Mike F.?



Oops! I think we're stuck. Mike F. and Ed M. work to free the jack-hammer as Harry looks on



Dang, this is hard work! Taka, Mike F., and Ed M. use the loader's bucket as a bench



Joe in the loader and Mike F. in the back-hoe take care of the final details



And there it is. The graded roadbed ready for track