

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 9, 2015. Yep it was a busy week, indeed, punctuated by long days and late evenings. So, coffee-up, doughnut-up, and hunker-down for a long and wordy – yet pithy (as always) – MOW Team update!

Tuesday, a big crew was on hand in the Erecting Shop. Mike Taylor, Mike Harris, Heather Kearns, Joe Galipeau, Frank Squire, Frederick Carr, Alan Hardy, Harry Voss, Frank Werry, Scott Morrison, Cliff Hayes, Pat Scholzen, and Gene Peck worked on many projects. Cliff and Fred used the big metal shear over in the Boiler Shop to cut expanded metal for use as protective shields for the *USS Sea Tiger's*, a.k.a. ballast regulator, lights and horn. Mike T., Mike H., Joe, and Heather managed to install new chipping blades in the chipper. Mechanically, it's now ready for the Weed Team's autumnal tree-trimming season. Aesthetically, it's ready for Alan's artistic touch. Soon, it will be a cool shade of MOW Safety Yellow. So much was going on that it was difficult to keep track (no pun intended...). Needless to say, a great deal of progress was made keeping everything up and running.

Thursday, Alan, Heather, Frank W., and Fred comprised the crew. During the day, Alan had picked-up a very specialized and complex multi-functional hydraulic valve we needed for the tamper. As you may recall, one of the issues with this machine is that it just doesn't have the "umph" that it should. Scott, our hydraulics expert, has diagnosed the problem to this particular valve. The machine has plenty of power. It's just not getting to where it is needed because of this faulty valve. So, with a replacement in hand, Fred began the process of removing the old system. Alas, easier said than done. The valve is in a rather remote and difficult to access location. This project will take a little more time. Frank W. headed over to Old Sacramento to move the ballast-hopper cars off the old 150 Track in order to spin them around on the Museum's turntable. For Saturday's project, the shoots on both of the side-dump hoppers need to be facing east. Then, he and Heather got the truck loaded with all the necessary accoutrements for Saturday's project.

Speaking of Saturday, the early crew arrived at 6 o'clock a.m. to get all the equipment set up and ready to run (that little 6 a.m. morsel figures in significantly a bit later). A doughnut crisis was averted this week when Chris Carlson showed up with shiny pink box of sugary-goodness. Anxiously awaiting inside the Erecting Shop were Alan, Pam Tatro, Harry, Scott, Heather, John Rexroth, and a quorum of Mikes – Florentine, Harris, and Miller. Joining the Team on Saturday was our newest member, Chris Machado, a graduate from one of the recent docent classes. It's always a good day when the Team can welcome a new member! The plan for the day was to reinforce and expand of the area to the north of Switch 17 (the north switch at Baths) where brakemen step off the train during the run-around. The edge of the existing landing-strip was eroding away and, as the safety of personnel is our top priority, it was time to widen and reinforce this area. Also, we'd use the tie-crane to pick up dead ties along track from our tie change-out in the area earlier this year. Mike F. hopped in the front-end loader and Harry in the back-hoe and headed to Setzer where they would load hopper cars with rock. Mike H. piloted the Kalamazoo tug pulling the hopper cars. Alan climbed in the tie-crane and Mike M. took the motorcar consist. At Baths, Chris M., Mike M., John and Heather placed plywood sheets on top of the existing landing-strip. Large rock from the ballast hoppers would then be dumped on top of the plywood sheets and then pushed over the edge to build up the east bank. As Mike H. in the tug positioned the hoppers, Chris C. and Mike M. spread the rock. Then Pam, Chris M., John, Heather, Scott, and Mike F. used shovels and ballast-forks to shove the rock over the edge to reduce the east-slope and strengthen the bank. They worked on compacting the rock along the edge then moved the plywood to the next position where more rock would be dropped and shoveled into place. By the time the first train arrived, the plywood was removed and the landing-strip opened for the north brakeman, Mike Reed, to step from the train onto the improved landing strip. In the afternoon, the Team commenced and completed Phase-two of the operation – to reinforce and widen the area around the switch stand.

Meanwhile, Alan was gathering dead-ties with the tie-crane. With a full load on the flat-car, he headed to Setzer to add them to our dead-tie pile when suddenly, the machine stopped dead. All efforts to get it restarted failed. So, Chris C., Heather, Harry, and Scott headed to Setzer to help out. By early evening, desperation was starting to set in. After a good deal of head-scratching, investigation, and panic, Heather figured out that the problem was with the starter. To make a long story short, the solenoid had cracked in half. Fortunately, we had a spare starter at the Shops. But, of course, it required multiple trips back there to get equipment and tools. Heather removed the old starter. Then, she and Scott made adjustments to the replacement in order to get it to fit into the machine. Heather then installed the new starter and, four hours after the machine broke-down, it roared back to life. It only took another two hours to get it all put back together, return it to Old Sacramento, spotted on up on the old 150 Track, and the engine coverings and anti-vandalism shields put in place. Just after 9 o'clock p.m., we shut the lights off in the Erecting Shop and headed home. By the time all was said and done, Team members had put in upwards of 15 hours on Saturday. It was a very long day, indeed. Yes, Heather saved the day!

The MOW Team sends a shout-out thank you to Norm Lucas who was Train Master on Saturday. When our precious water supply got knocked over and spilled, he arranged for sufficient supplies of bottled water to carry the Team through the day. Many thanks, Norm!

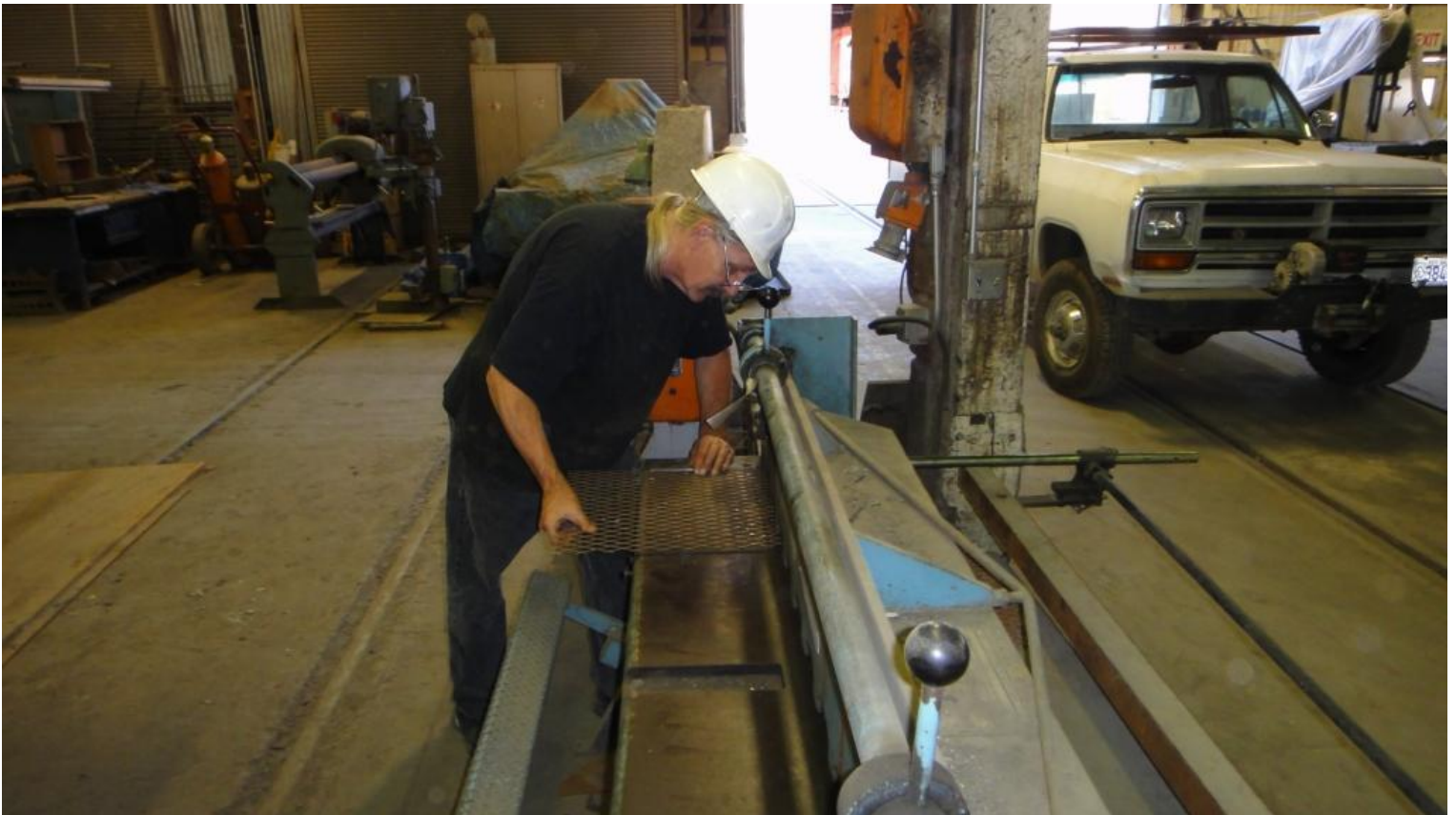
Life goes on this coming week. Tuesday, the Weed Team reconvenes following its summer recess. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. The afternoon and evening crews will gather as usual on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, doughnut hour commences at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to the dedicated members of the MOW Team who, through thick and thin, get the job done!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



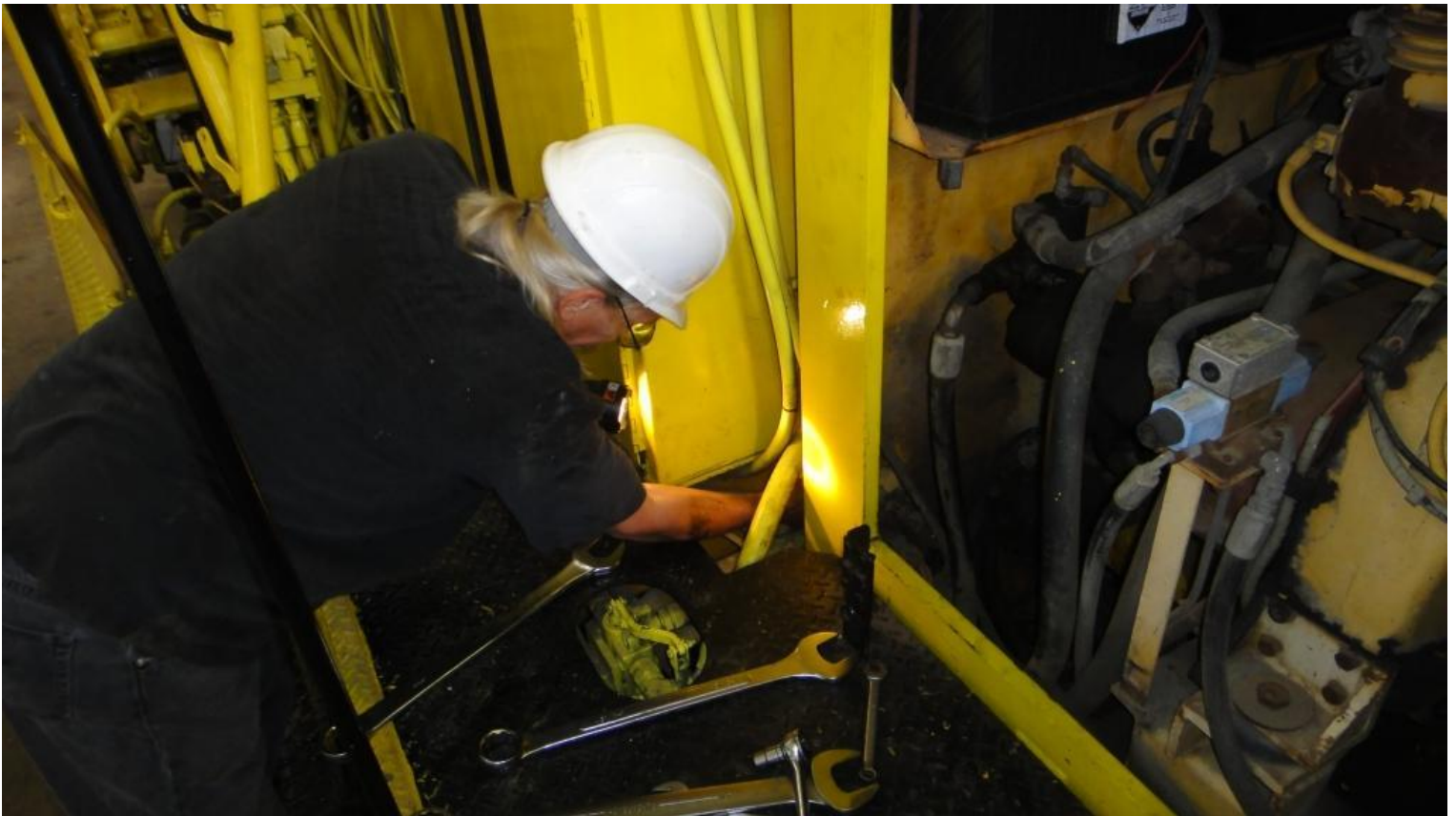
Mike T., Joe, and Heather install the new blades on the chipper



Fred shears expanded-metal to size



Mike H. being serious for a change...



Fred attempting to remove a stubborn hydraulic valve on the tamper



Frank spinning the ballast-hoppers 180 degrees on the turntable



To the north of Switch 17 at Baths, Chris M., Mike M., John, and Heather place plywood sheets over the fine rock on the landing-strip



Mike H. pilots the tug as Mike M. and Chris C. drop rock onto the plywood which will then be shoveled over to build up the bank



Chris M., John, Pam, Chris C., and Heather start moving rock across the plywood to build-up the bank of along the brakeman landing strip



Mike M., Pam, and Heather move rock



John, Chris M., Chris C., Heather, and Pam keep right on digging



Chris M. surveys the completed Phase-1 of the project. The east-bank has been built up to help stop erosion



Pam and Scott retrieve the crew's water



Brakeman Mike Reed steps off the train onto the newly reinforced brakeman landing-strip



Granite Rock No. 10 passes through the MOW work-limits on its 11 o'clock run-around





After lunch, Phase 2 of the project was tackled: the area around the switch stand



Scott and Mike F. build-up the bank around the switch stand



Chris C. and Heather trying to figure out what's going on with the tie-crane



It's alive! Finally, after about four hours of work, the tie-crane fired right up



The shadow of the tie-crane at sunset as it passes the tank-farm north of Broadway



Finally, at 8:34 p.m., the tie-crane is put to bed...