

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for September 7, 2015. Hold on to your hard-hats. The MOW Team did a complete 180 and started a whole new track-building project. So, before anybody gets too dizzy, let's get this update started.

Returning the tamper to service was the first order of business for Pat Scholzen, Gene Peck, Cliff Hayes, Scott Morrison, Frank Werry, and Mike Harris on Tuesday. You might recall that, a week-ago Saturday, the tamper suffered a major catastrophe out on the line. So, the Team wasted no time readying it for its next deployment. Cliff made new keeper-pins for the jacks that have handles on them for easier removal. Pat and Gene got the lift cylinder on the work-head re-secured. With these repairs, the "bad-order" lifted. It's ready to roll. Later, Scott and Mike H. removed a bad cylinder from the right-side wing of the ballast regulator. Frank went over to Old Sacramento to fuel and oil the motorcar. The Team was getting ready to head back down the line on Saturday to Mile Post 2.6 to mitigate the slow-order where the tamper had failed last week. So yes, it was a very productive evening, indeed.

Thursday, Heather Kearns, Cliff, Gene, Scott, Frank, Mike H., and Alan Hardy picked-up where they left off on Tuesday. Cliff worked on installing the light guards that he has made on the ballast regulator. Scott and Mike H. rebuilt the hydraulic cylinder they had removed from the regulator on Tuesday. Then, Mike re-installed it. Staging for Saturday's adventure down on the line continued. The MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck was again loaded with the tool-caddie and track-jacks. Alleviating the slow-order was first and foremost on our minds.

Between Thursday and Saturday, a major hurdle was thrown our way. The company cleaning-up the contaminated soil in the Rail Yards gave the Museum very little notice that everything to the west of the Boiler Shop had to move – including the boxcars and dead Santa Fe diesel locomotives stored out there. Unfortunately, in prior "clean-up" efforts, the environmental company had ripped-up the tracks necessary to move the equipment. Therefore, the task of restoring the tracks fell on the MOW Team – along with a strict time-line for their restoration. So, Chris Carlson, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Pam Tatro, Michael Florentine, Scott, Clem Meier, Alan, Harry Voss, Scott, and Frank had shown-up on Saturday morning expecting doughnuts and to fix the low spot in the track at MP 2.6 only to discover we were building track instead. Usually, when the MOW Team builds new track, we have a bit of time to plan, locate, and stage all the materials. But, we were not afforded such a luxury with this project. The materials from the ripped up track had been left under the I-5 freeway. So, after doughnuts, our task: to build about 200 feet of track from the west of the Boiler Shop to an area under the freeway – and fast.

Chris climbed-up on the Big Green Machine. Frank took out the front-end loader. Harry managed the back-hoe, and Heather the MOW truck. Scott, Clem, Steve, Pam, and Mike F., began digging out the ends of the track under the boxcars to match up with the new. Chris brought in a bundle of ties. Scott and Clem dispersed them approximately 24 inches apart. In setting out the ties and track, we were "eyeballing" everything. We didn't have the advantage of Harry Gobbler's survey marks like we did when we built the Whisker Track off the turntable. Chris then grabbed a stick of rail out of the pile under the freeway and dragged it over to the work site. It was lifted onto rollers so that it could be rolled over the ties into position. A second stick of rail was brought in and bolted to the first. Chris on the Green-Machine then shoved it slowly on the rollers into position where Alan, Frank, Scott, Steve, Mike F., Pam, Heather, and Clem struggled to guide it into position to be bolted to the existing track under the boxcars. Using a forklift, lining-bars, and a track-jack to make the minuscule adjustments of a 1,500 pound stick of rail to line up the bolt-holes would line up was a site to see. Our railroad is blessed to have such skillful volunteers who can accomplish such feats. With the bolts tightened, the Team checked the gauge and found it narrow by about an inch and a half. So two track-jacks were brought in and placed on their sides between the rails. Mike F. cranked the jack to push the rails apart. At 56.5 inches, the team spiked the gauge side of the rails to hold them in place. From that, the rest of the track could be gauged.

After lunch, the north rail was put in place. Gauging continued. Because we did not have the opportunity to survey the track materials we'd be working with ahead of time, we were unable to stage the right tools. It turned out the ties that we used were oak. Oak is a hardwood. Spiking oak ties by hand is exceptionally difficult. Spikes tend to bounce off oak ties when struck by a spike-maul. Even Steve, who was featured on the History Channel for his world-famous ability to wield a spike-maul, found spiking these ties a challenge. The hand-spiking took forever and, not only slowed us down but, also, wore the Team out. Had we known, we would have arranged for an air-compressor and pneumatic spikers. Nonetheless, the Team came through and did what was necessary to secure the rails in gauge to the ties. Eyeballing the track, we could see that our alignment was off. The track needed to move south. So, the Team did what docents at the California State Railroad Museum do: [interpret history](#). "Gandy-dancing" was in order. The MOW Team broke out the lining-bars, sang, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "Camptown Races," and "Gandy-danced" the track several feet to south by hand. Indeed, this made our day! It was one tuckered-out MOW Team that gathered around the picnic table the Erecting Shop at the end of the day. Yes, we were proud of our accomplishment of laying more than 100 feet of track without any prep in one day. But, we were distressed at the thought that we were not able to mitigate the slow-order at MP 2.6. Track issues on the Mainline are [always](#) our first concern. This diversion was not by choice. The Museum was put in an untenable situation. So, of course it turns to the MOW Team which, once again, saves the day.

This Tuesday and Thursday, the Team will gather at the Erecting Shop at or before 5 o'clock. Track building continues on Saturday starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to the dedicated volunteers of the MOW Team who always come through in a pinch!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike H. reinstalls the repaired hydraulic cylinder on the ballast regulator



Cliff made new keeper pins for the jacking system on the tamper



Our canvas for Saturday: how the track-build site looked when we started...



Chris on Big-Green looking off into the bright future and seeing new tracks everywhere!



Clem and Scott drop ties



Steve, Pam, Mike F., Clem, and Alan sort "OTM"



Chris drags in the first stick of rail



The Green Machine got thirsty so Steve gave it a nice cool drink of diesel...



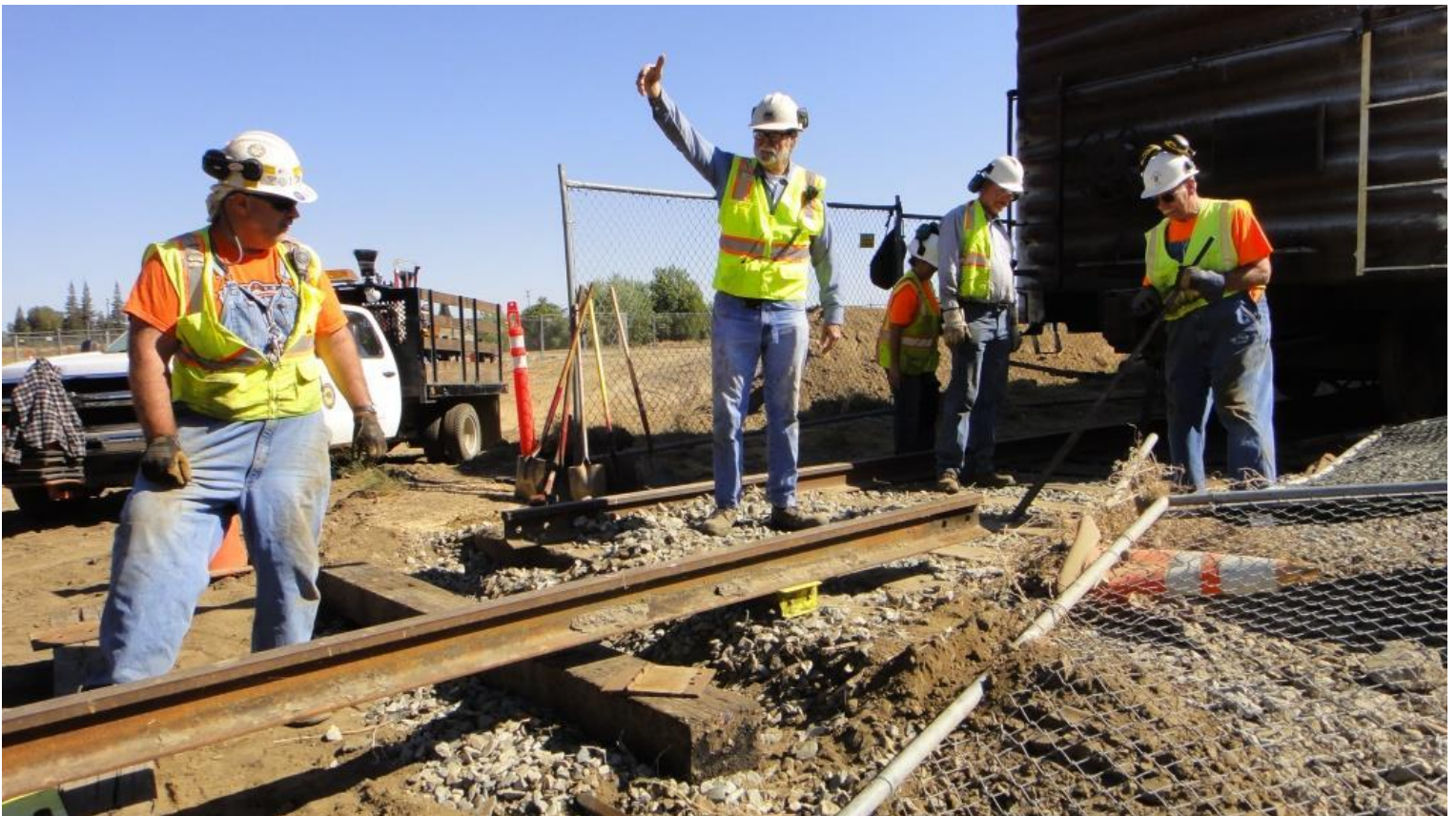
The second rail is brought in. It is bolted to the first then will be rolled into position



Frank and Steve bolt together two sticks of rail



Chris on the Green Machine rolls the rails into position



Alan signals to Chris to keep rollin' it this way...



With the rail bolted in place, Mike F., Frank, and Clem gauge it using opposing track-jacks to push the rails apart



Now in gauge, Mike F. spikes it down





Now for the next rail, Clem guides it with a lining-bar, Alan provides signals to Chris who is maneuvering it into position



Clem and Pam use track-wrenches to bolt the two rails together



Now for the other side: the Team bolts the rails together which will then be shoved over the rollers by the Green Machine



With the rails in gauge, our world-famous "as seen on TV" spiker, Steve was pounding down spikes with all his might...



Gandy-dancing! The MOW Team interprets old fashion railroading by using lining-bars in sequence to shove the entire track into alignment



By the end of the day, there was about 120 feet of track where none had been in the morning...