

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for January 12, 2014. Well, it's been a momentous week for your MOW Team with the arrival of our new ballast regulator – well, new for us. This machine is 35 years newer than the ol' bucket o' bolts we had been using as a regulator. So, before its dust cloud overtakes us, let's get started!

Tuesday, the Mighty MOW Weed Team was out and about doing what they do best: ridding the railroad of the green nuisance. Mike, Dave Megeath, continued their efforts along the Sutterville Line reducing the vast savannah into mulch. In the afternoon, our preeminent mechanics, Pat Scholzen and Gene Peck joined Mike and Dave over at the MOW container on the House Track to service the spray-rig which has been acting up of late. Gene and Pat assessed the situation, diagnosed the problem, disassembled the problematic apparatus, affected repairs, reassembled the machine, tested it, and certified it fully functional. Thanks to Pat and Gene, weed eradication can now proceed on an industrial scale!

The SSRR's annual training season kicked-off with our overview of Part 214 "Roadway Worker Safety" on Wednesday evening. All attendees successfully passed the rigorous examination. Congratulations! You are all now legal! Then, Mike Taylor gave his annual presentation on herbicide application protocols employed by the Weed Team. For those who were not able to make it last Wednesday, a second Part 214 session will take place on **Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup> in the CSRM East Theater at 9 o'clock a.m.** All who wish to volunteer with the MOW Team, Signals Department, or any other position working around live railroad tracks, **are required by federal law to attend annual training in Roadway Worker Safety Part 214.** If you have attended Part 214 in the past, please bring your binder. If you do not have a binder, one will be provided.

Thursday was a special day for your MOW Team as we received our new ballast regulator. Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, Frank Werry, Chris Carlson, Harry Voss, and Clem Meier gathered early at the Shops and headed down to the Western Railway Museum (WRM) in Rio Vista from which we acquired the regulator. The SSRR MOW Team met with WRM MOW Team Chief, Joel Cox, to load-up this rather large pink machine. Yes, it is pink – formerly safety orange that has faded to pink – but pink nonetheless. By 1 o'clock, the regulator, dubbed the "*SSRR Sea Tiger*" after the pink submarine in the film, "Operation Petticoat," was on-spot in its new home inside the Boiler Shop. In the afternoon, the *Sea Tiger* set course for the 560 Track and some trial runs. For the first time in years, we have a working ballast regulator with a broom (that kicked up a dust storm of Saharan proportions). Bringing this machine to our railroad has been an arduous process and the credit goes to Alan for his persistence, perseverance and planning. Also to Dana Jones, District Superintendent, and Kathy Daigle, Director of the Foundation, who both supported us at every turn and helped navigate the process with some very creative solutions to the stumbling blocks we encountered. This machine marks a new chapter in the history of the SSRR Track Programs and is a major step forward in improving our productivity out on the line in building a better railroad.

Saturday, Alan, Harry, Frederick Carr, Frank, Dave, Heather, Clem, Mike Miller, Michael Florentine, Chris, Steve Nemeth, and Pam Tatro (in sign-in order) devoured the contents of two pink boxes before firing-up our new pink machine. We're still working to complete the walking-path project along the 560 Track as mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission. Work on this project has involved heavy manual labor with the hand-grooming of rock with rakes and shovels. But, with a functioning ballast regulator in action, much of this process is now automated. Yes, we still needed to dig and rake rock in those areas around Switch 103, the approach circuits, and where the 560 and Transfer Table Lead converge. But this machine is already proving its worth by reducing the heavy manual labor involved in maintaining the railroad which is a good thing. Steve on Big Green and Mike F. in the Loader filled ballast hoppers with rock, Pam and Frank on the A-6 transported it for spreading as directed by Alan, and Captain Chris of the *Sea Tiger* then leveled the paths and broomed the track. Mike M., Dave, Fred, Heather, and Clem did hand work necessary in those hard to reach areas while Harry was our mechanic on hand. It was a great crew and great day! Many thanks to all.

Now for the week ahead. Tuesday, the Team will gather in the afternoon and evening for some exciting MOW fun. On Thursday crew will meet at 5 o'clock. Saturday, we'll open the pink boxes at 8 o'clock a.m. We're pretty close to being done with the path project so a new MOW adventure may be at hand. Don't forget about the **Part 214 seminar on Saturday at 9 o'clock in the East Theater**. Thanks again to all our noble volunteers and supporters! We're making great progress!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Loading the "Sea Tiger" onto the flatbed truck at WRM



The regulator arrives!





Safe and sound!



The *Sea Tiger* on its trial runs





Yes, the broom works!

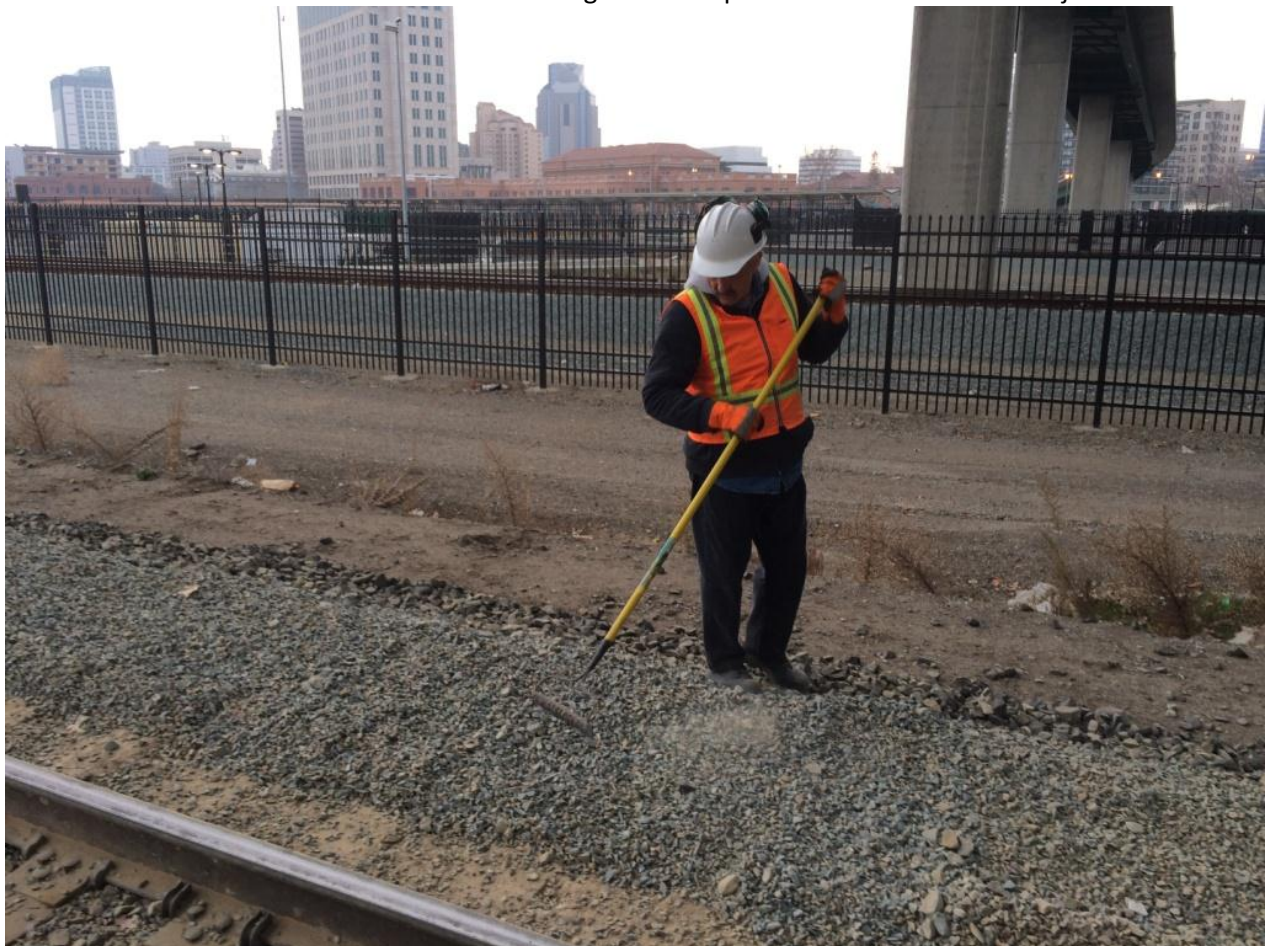


Steve on Big Green moves a ballast hopper onto the track





Dave and Mike wonder if the new regulator has put them out of a volunteer job...



Fred competes with the new ballast regulator





Mike M. and Heather break down the windrows



Generational differences: the *Sea Tiger* and the *o' bucket o' bolts* on the transfer table.