

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 23, 2016. "Pirates and Princesses" was the theme of this week's "Spook-omotive" train and your MOW Team joined the fun, embodying the pirate spirit of the CSRM's early days. So, let's get this treasure-filled update underway before it ends up in "Davy Jones's Locker."

Cliff Hayes, Anthony Filamor, Joe Margucci, Weston Snyder, Chris Carlson, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, Harry Voss, Matt McCracken, and Alan Hardy crewed the MOW galleon on Tuesday. Last week, the back-hoe's steering gear went kablooeey. Chris and Gene identified the problem and removed the offending parts. The back-hoe is only 40 years old (which is 96 in human years) so parts do tend to wear out. New parts have been order which will allow for its restoration. Meanwhile, at the Switch 1 Turnout rebuild project in Old Sacramento, the Team is making additional repairs before the area is re-paved by replacing corroded bolts at some joints. Weston and Matt jack-hammered out a little concrete around one of the joints. Mike H. and Joe pulled spikes around the joint-bar. Then Cliff used a cutting torch to torch-off the bolts. Matt and Weston pried-off the joint-bars, cleaned-out and greased the web of the rail. Joe and Matt used new bolts to reassemble the joint and, like that, the Team had completed its mission. Rebuilding a rail-joint was a good experience for all.

The mighty Weed Team spent another enchanting day down on the Hood Line. Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, and Ed Kottal chopped, sliced, cut, and whacked their way through areas of the line where the green-foe dared to occupy. High branches were severed with pole-saws. Nearer to the ground, loppers and hand-saws were used to push back against the invaders. Their hard efforts were rewarded with lunch by the lake in the most tranquil of settings. If only this line could be rebuilt for passenger trains, the public would have access to this hidden gem of the Central Valley. For now, it is the domain of the Weed Team the marvelous work they do to maintain our right-of-way.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Heather Kearns, Ed, Joe, Matt, Weston, Mike H., and Anthony set sail for Old Sac. The Team would get a head-start for Saturday at the Switch 1 Turnout by pulling spikes and plates on the last tie slated to be for replacement. Then, they'd plate and spike a 15-foot long tie that had been inserted the previous Saturday. Heather was EIC. First, spikes were pulled. Mike H. and Ed used track-jacks to lift the frog slightly to relieve pressure on the plates so they could be removed easier. The tie that needed plating was slightly skewed, so track-jacks were again used in the horizontal position to shove the tie straight. The Team raged against the dying of the light long after the sun had dropped below the horizon. Despite having the pneumatic spike-drive available, the "New Kids of MOW" prefer driving spikes by hand. And, who can blame them? Interpreting old-fashioned railroading is part of our mission out on the line – something that no contractor will do. With the last spike driven, the Team went back to the Shops pleased with the evening's accomplishment.

Saturday was a big day with a big crew. The MOW pirate ship was manned by Alan, Josh Ilac, Joe, Mike Willis, Clem Meier, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Matt, Weston, Harry, Michael Florentine, Mike H., Frank Werry, and Jose Gomez – more Team members than doughnuts. So some pirates sacrificed for the good of the crew... Anyway, the plan of the day was to return to the Switch 1 Turnout project to pull one last 15-foot tie, insert the new one, plate and spike it. The hole to the west of the track would be filled in. Then, we'd ballast the turnout, raise it with track-jacks, level it, and tamp it. The Team arrived in Old Sac. and promptly raised the "Jolly Roger" flag over the work-site proving our bona-fides. Joe, on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, pulled out that last tie. Steve, Clem, Matt, Mike W., and Frank dug-out the crib. Mike F. on Big Green brought in the new tie which Jose and Weston placed using timber-tongs. Then, Mike F. wanted to try his hand at inserting the new tie with the 125. With Joe guiding him, Mike F. got the new tie in place. Mike H., Josh, Jose, Steve, Frank, Alan, Heather, Clem, and Mike W. began shoveling dirt back into the hole to the west of the track. Joe used the blue tractor to move and compact the dirt. Josh, Mike F., Clem, Weston, and Matt removed the gauge-rods we had installed early in the project to stabilize the turnout. Jose and Heather headed back to the Shops to find proper guard-rail plates. As noted last week, the contractor who built the switch years ago, used incorrect components. We've been correcting the contractor's mistakes. Things were going really well when, all of a sudden, there was an unfortunate interaction between the switch stand at Switch No. 2 (House Track) and the front-end loader. The switch-stand was obliterated and switch-rod bent. So, the Team's focus suddenly had to "switch" (pun intended) from the turnout project to rebuilding Switch 2. At the Shops, Jose and Heather located a replacement switch-stand in good condition while Steve and Mike F. sought a proper switch-rod. The replacement stand had an old SP switch lock on it. Fortunately, Mike F. just happens to carry an old SP switch-lock key with him (for good luck). Heather injected the head-block with special epoxy goo designed to bind split-ties together. Mike H., Alan, Mike W., and Mike F. removed the bent switch-rod. Then they brought in the new components and began the process of putting everything back together. Although it took a bit of time, the switch is fully functional again. In the grand scheme of things, this was a minor incident and your MOW Team is pretty darned good at rebuilding switches – as well as shifting focus on the fly as conditions warrant. With Switch 2 repaired and back in service, Steve, in the tamper, could now enter the work-site and tamp-up newly installed ties. With that, the Jolly Roger was retired and the Team returned to the Shops. Ballasting, raising, and leveling the switch will resume next week. Despite challenges, it was a good day and once again proved the flexibility and expertise of the MOW Team and its ability to adjust quickly to out of normal situations.

This coming week, the Team will gather on Tuesday and Thursday, as usual, to continue its good works. Meet at or before 5 o'clock in the Erecting Shop. Saturday, God willing and the creek don't rise, we'll finish-up work on the Switch 1 Turnout. 8 o'clock a.m. is the appointed time. Thanks as always to the amazing group of folks who donate their skills, time, and talents towards building a better railroad!

See you out on the line,

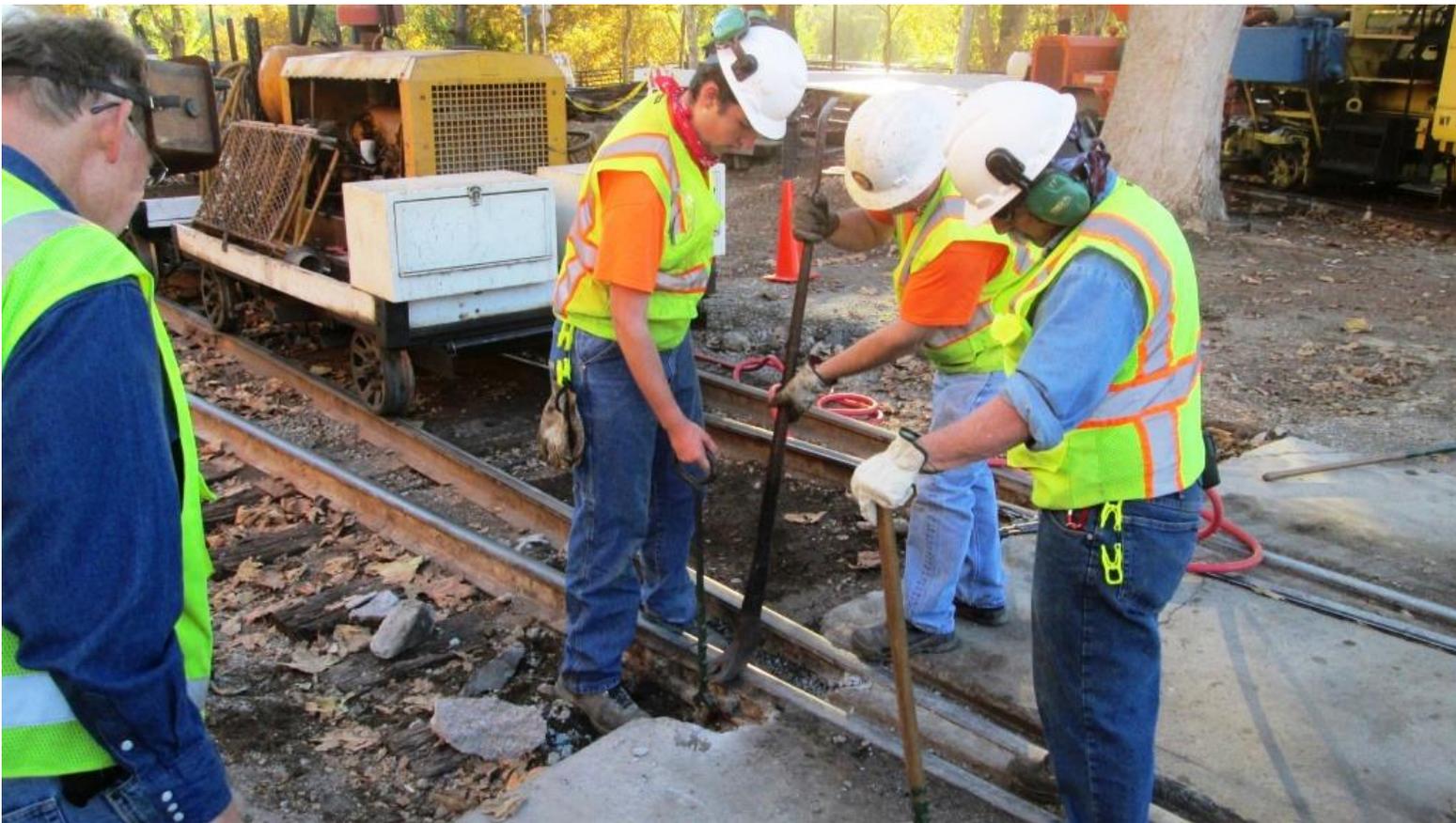
Alan, Chris, and Richard

P.S. Yo, ho, ho, and a bottle of rum – pictures 'o ye MOW Team band 'o pirates be found by clickin' on th' attachment.. Argh!

(1)



Weston and Joe remove a few bits of concrete from around the joint the Team was fixing



Weston employs the road-master tool on the head of the spike as Mike H. pulls it using the claw-bar



Cliff cuts a corroded bolt by focusing the heat of a volcano with his cutting torch



Weston and Matt use a lining bar to pry the joint-bar off the track



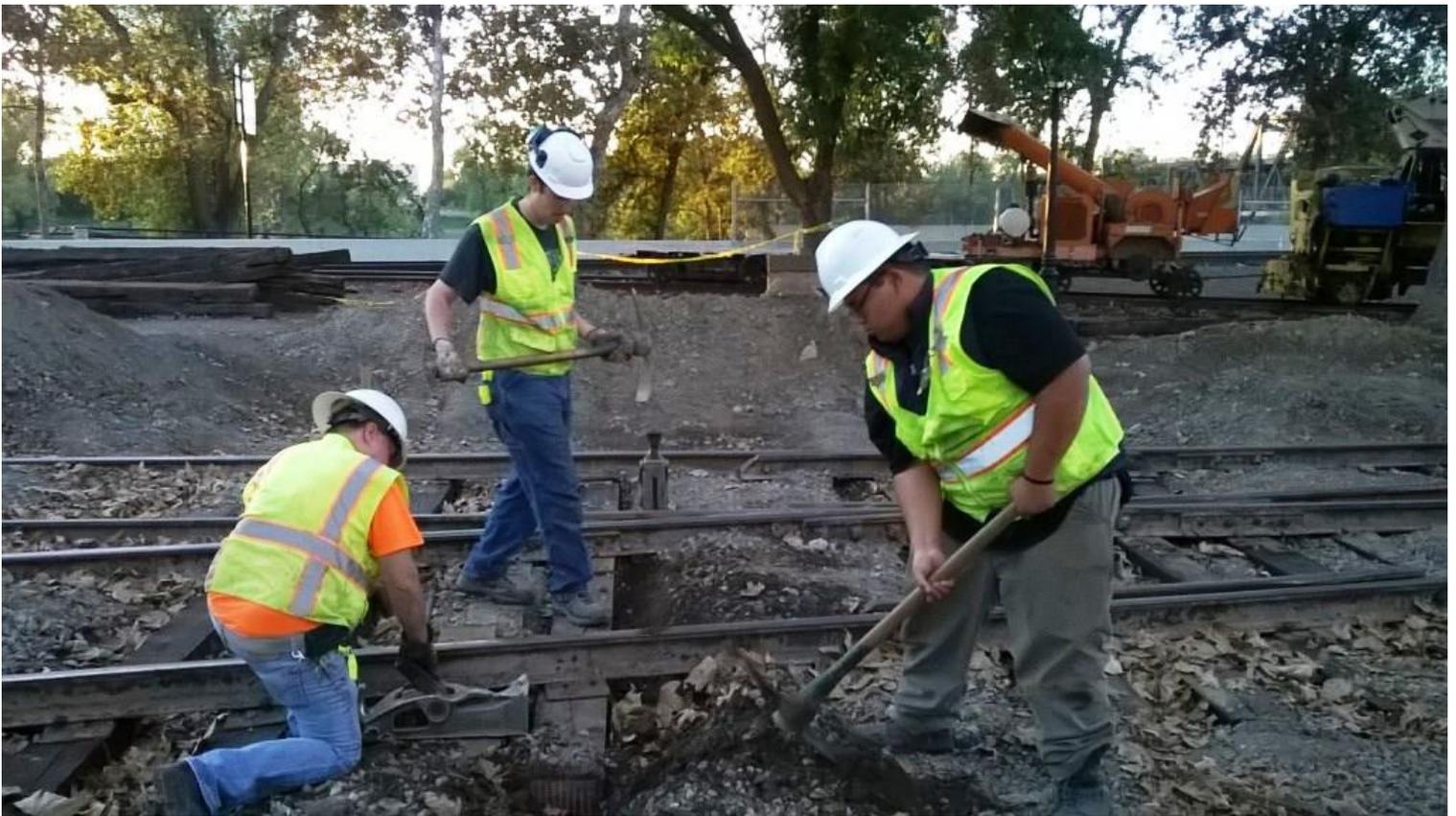
Joe and Matt tighten-down the new bolts



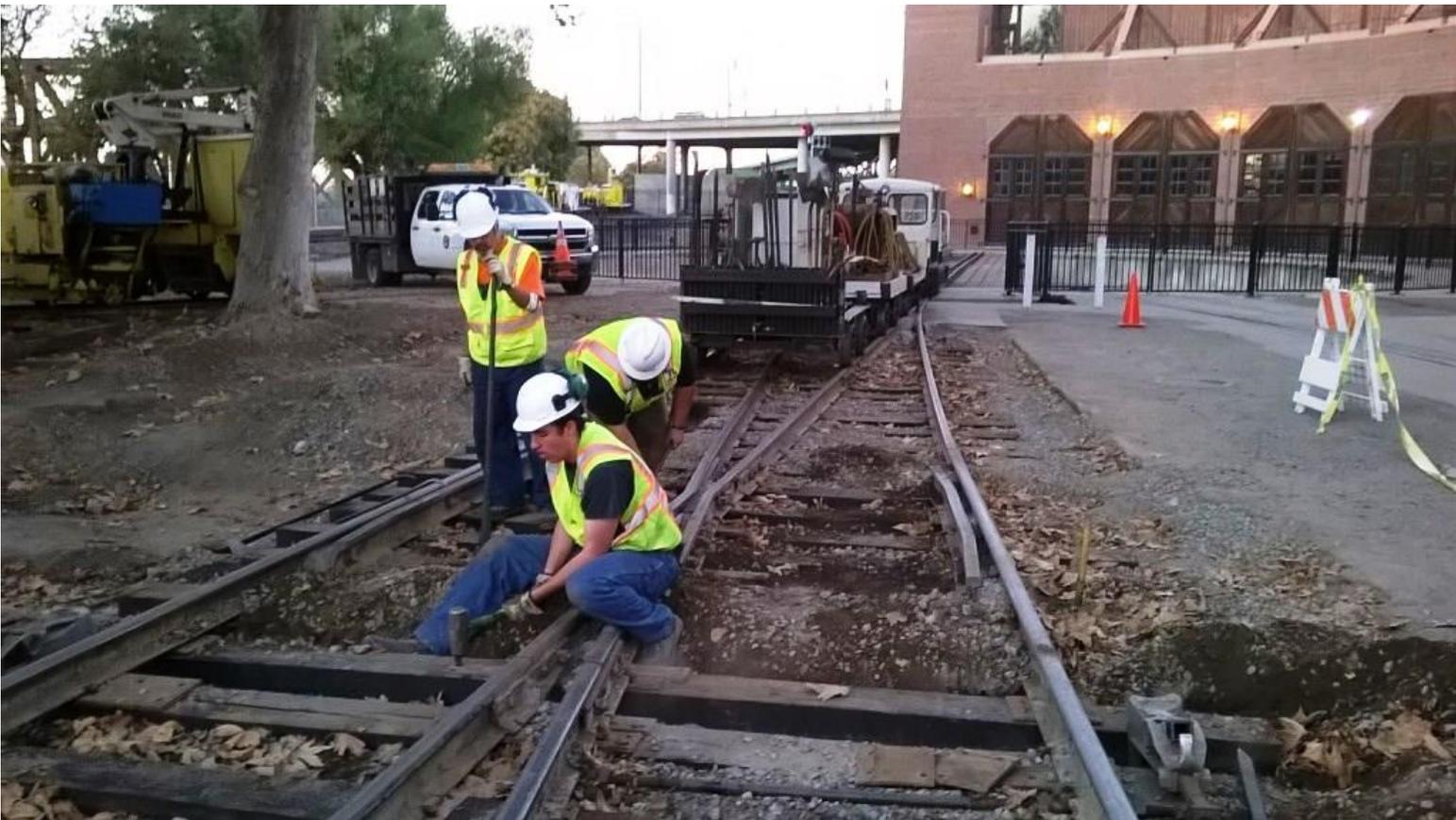
A lovely day by the lake: the Weed Team's idyllic lunch-time view along the Hood Line



Mike H. uses a track-jack to relieve downward pressure on the tie-plates for easier removal



Mike H., Weston, and Anthony place jacks horizontally to shove a catawampus tie wampus...



Anthony nips up the tie as Weston sets spikes



"Rage against the dying of the light..." Weston uses the road-master tool so that Matt, with the claw-bar can pull the spike



"Ahoy, mateys!" The *Jolly Roger* flies from the crane-mast of the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck



Joe uses the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger to remove that last tie slated for replacement at the Switch 1 Turnout



Steve and Mike F. dig a trench to give the tie a little more room to slide out



With the tie now removed, Matt, Steve, Clem, and Frank dig out the tie-crib



Mike F. brings in the new 15-footer with the Big Green Machine



Jose and Weston position the tie for insertion



With Joe as guide, Mike F. tries his hand at inserting a tie



Frank nips-up the new tie as Matt sets spikes



Weston drive a spike the old-fashioned way



Josh and Mike F. remove a gauge-rod



Joe grades the area to the west of the track with the blue-tractor



Jose, Heather, and Frank shovel more soil into the area being graded



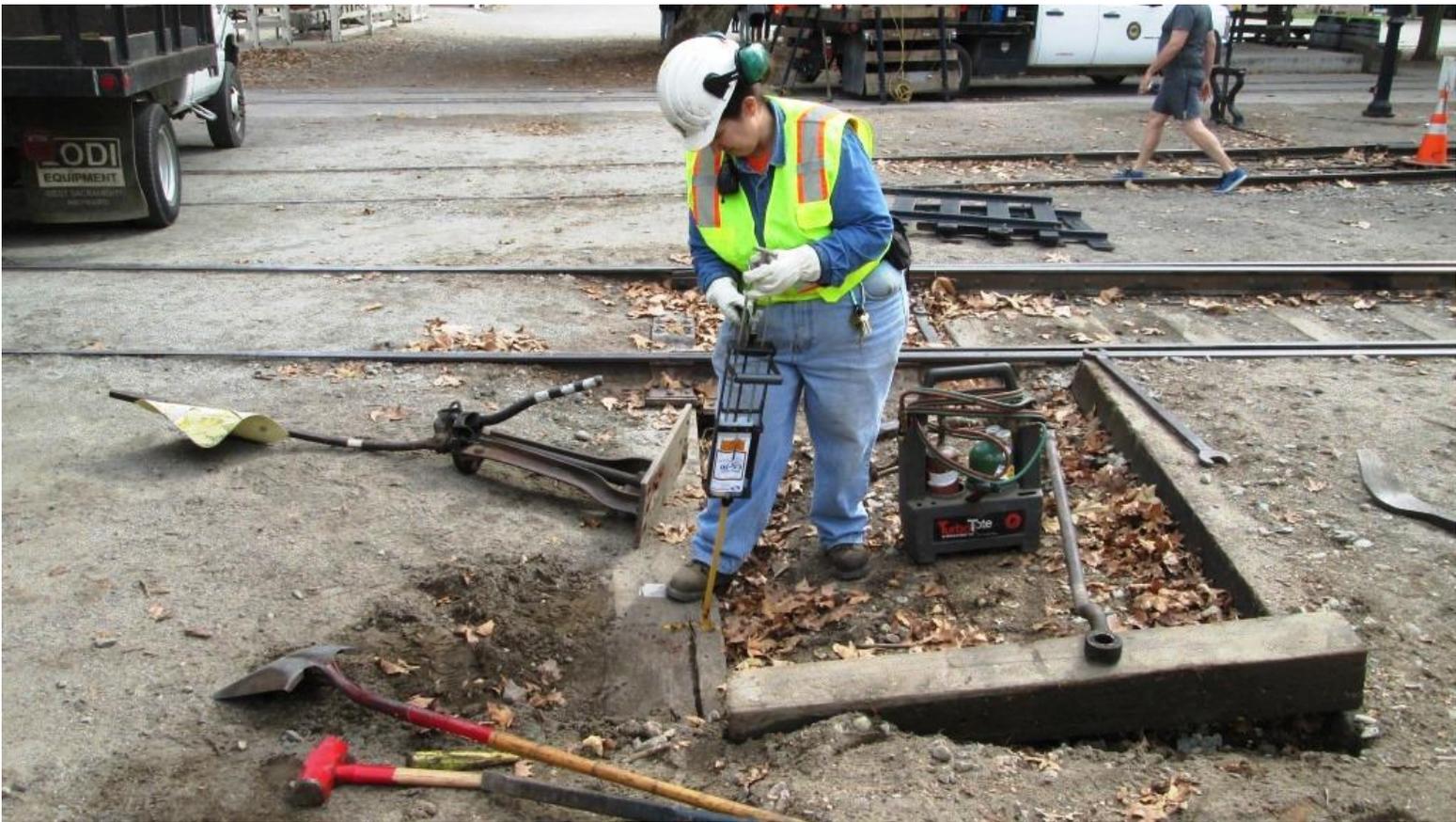
Joe makes another pass with the blue-tractor



Weston and Matt remove another gauge-rod



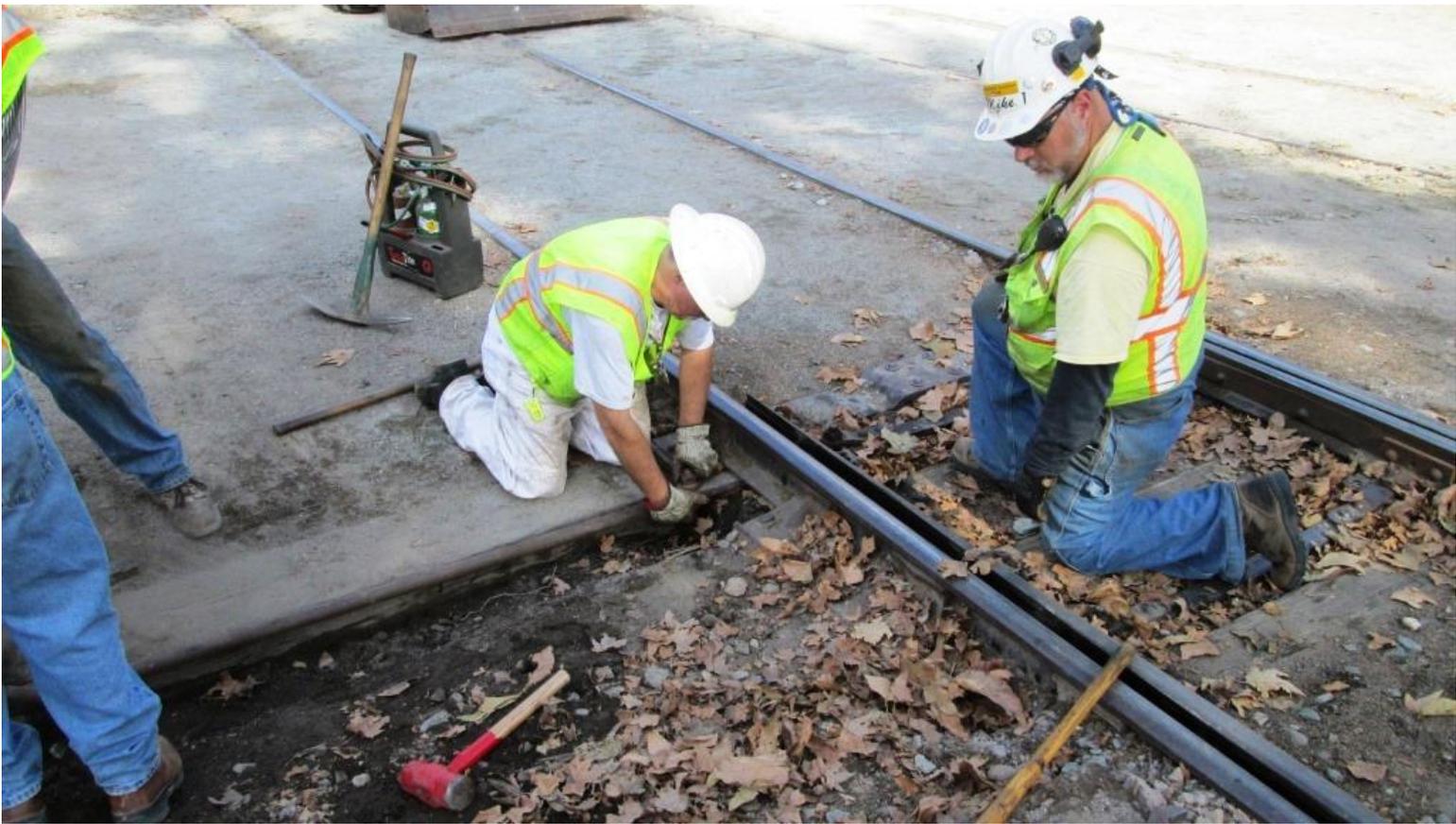
Following the "incident", Mike F. on Big Green loads the unfortunate switch-stand into the bed of Truck 14



Heather injects epoxy-goo into the shattered end of the head-block



Steve digs out the switch-rod side of the head-block to make room for the new switch-rod



Mike H. and Mike F. work to connect the new switch-rod to the connecting-rod under the switch-points



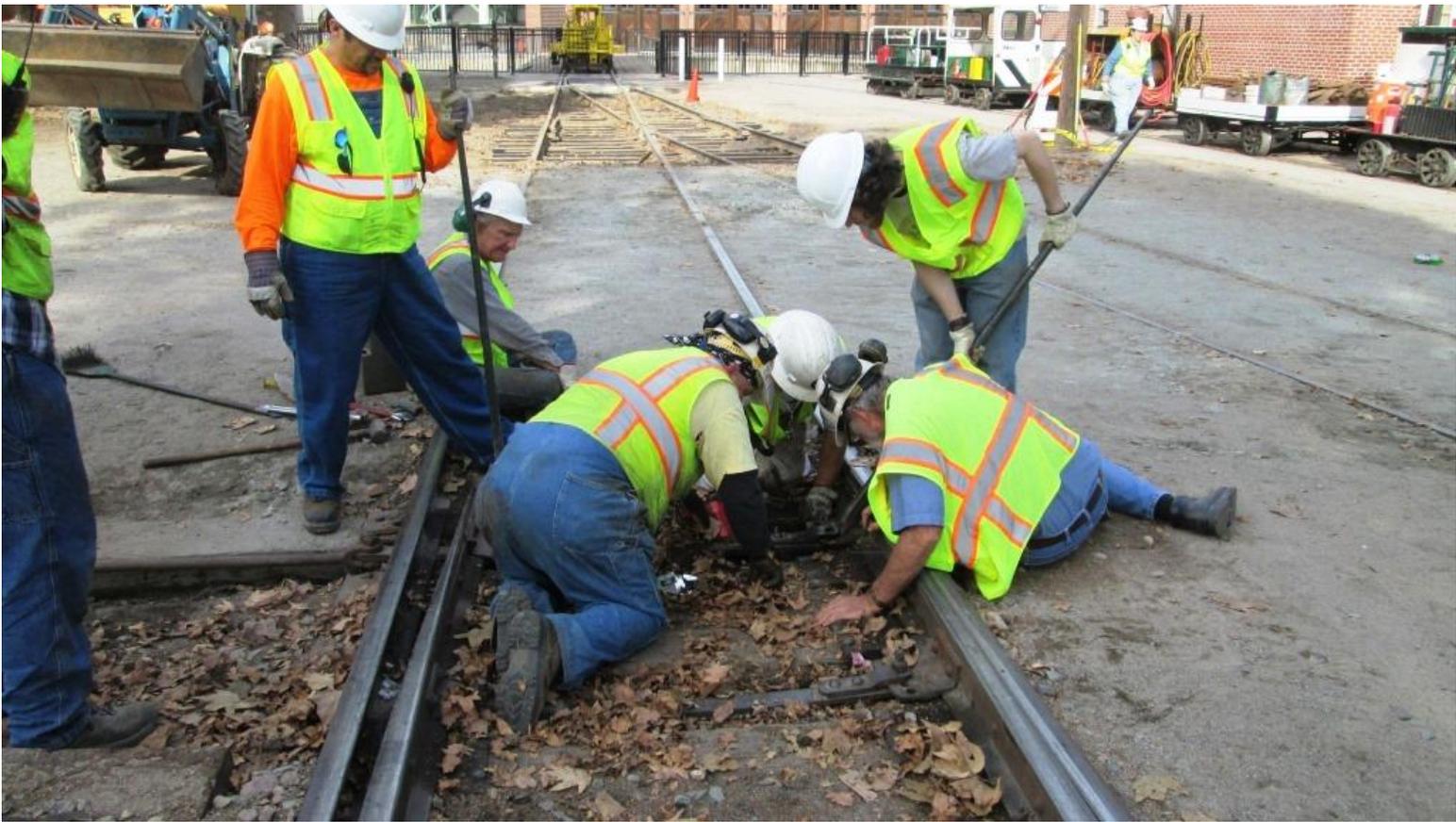
Jose, Mike W., and Steve line up the new stand and rod as Mike H. and Mike F. get it hooked-up to the connecting-rod



Weston and Jose set spikes at the base of the switch-stand



Now to adjust the switch to the new stand: Mike F., Mike H., and Alan adjust the position of the connecting-rod in relation to the transit clip



Matt uses a lining bar to lever-up a bolt from underneath the transit-clip and Mike F., Mike H., and Alan line up all the bolt-holes



Brakeman Elias Athanasiou sports the latest fashion trend hitting the railroad: the MOW safety-orange t-shirt



Meanwhile, back at the Switch 1 Turnout, Mike F. and Mike H. struggle to nip-up a switch-tie as Steve in the tamper tamps it up



It's looking pretty good: cleaned-up and ready for rock, the Switch 1 Turnout looks solid!



The mangled remains of the old switch-stand at Switch 2