

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 26, 2015. It's that time of year again when darkness descends earlier, there's a chill in the air, and even a bit of water falling from the sky. Despite these challenges, your MOW Team soldiers on. So, before darkness descends on us here, let's shed some light on this update!

The mighty Weed Team was whacking weeds all day Tuesday down on the Sutterville Line. With the man-lift out of service, Mike Taylor, Joe Galipeau, Heather Kearns, and Dave Megeath used chainsaws and loppers to take their frustrations out on anything growing in within the right of way. The chipper is working like a charm since newly sharpened blades were installed a few weeks back and Joe was having more fun than humanly possible grinding green branches into brown bits. The man-lift has since been repaired. So, the Weedies will be taking it out on the line this coming Thursday in order to clear the way for Santa's Village to travel on its *great circle route* south through Miller Park to the North Pole at Baths...

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Cliff Hayes, Pat Scholzen, Alan Hardy, Frank Werry, Harry Voss, Mike Harris, and Gene Peck brought brightness to the dark – literally. Cliff is re-making a larger ballast hopper that can be mounted on rail-wheels and put on a light show welding it together. Pat and Gene worked with him on that project. The new gear-box for the swivel mechanism on the man-lift arrived and Mike H. spent the evening working on its installation. Mike T., Heather, and Frank assisted on this tricky operation which involved moving the hydraulic motor that powers the system. Later, Frank and Harry traveled over to Old Sacramento to install a file organizer in the MOW container where our track inspectors can keep their multitude of official forms in order. This required drilling through the steel walls of the container which proved interesting.

Thursday, our trusty track inspection team, Ed Moriarty, Frank, and Alan, conducted a survey of the track and marked which ties will be pulled in the first phase of our big tie-replacement operation. The tie replacement project will be done in phases with the goal of keeping the line in service while this process is underway. Over the first mile and a half of track, 80 will be replaced in the first phase. The plan is to start on Saturday, November 1st. We'll spend the day just pulling old rotten ties out of the ground. Over the following weeks, we'll install the new ones, plate, spike, and tamp them.

In the evening, Gene, Alan, Frank, Mike H., and Heather got together for more work in the Shops. Cliff and Gene began cutting down the legs of the ballast hopper so that it will fit on the deck of the track-mounted platform built for it. Cliff put on quite a fireworks show with his cutting torch. Mike H., Frank, and Heather finished up work on the man-lift swivel gear making the final adjustments. As the new gearbox is slightly larger than the one it replaced, it was necessary to move the various components that allow the arm and bucket to swivel in order to make everything fit. The machine has been tested and certified for operation on the Mainline – just in time, as the Weed Team will be using it this coming Thursday.

Saturday, there were enough doughnuts for the entire crew to get a triple ration (thanks to Harry). Pam Tatro, Frank, and Harry made up a small but gallant crew on that rainy morning. Since Frank is our resident conductor, we decided to take the man-lift back over to Old Sacramento and clear out some space in the Erecting Shop to store the Interpretive Handcar Program's speeder which Clem Meier restored to operation. After spotting everything on the North Turntable Lead, Frank and Pam headed back to the Shops where they worked with Harry on getting the rail-mounted spike-puller up and running. We haven't used it since 2012 when we pulled out the track leading into the old Amtrak depot. Alan was working with the new docent class which was given a tour of the shops and took a ride on the transfer table. We did our best to recruit as many of them as possible. After lunch, those who remained took care of some minor housekeeping duties in the Shops.

Speaking of this week's schedule, the Weed Team will be working on **Thursday**, not Tuesday. Meet at the old shop or Old Sacramento at 8:30 a.m. Looking ahead, you will have opportunities to work with the Weedies on both Tuesday, November 4 and Thursday, November 6. The evening Shop crews will meet on Tuesday and Thursday at 5 o'clock. The primary goal is to stage for Saturday's operation. Calling all hands: over the next three weeks, we're going to be busy as beavers changing ties out on the line. You won't want to miss it. If you've completed Part 214 training for this year, be at the Shops bright and early Saturday morning. **Doughnut call is at 8 o'clock a.m.** for this historic opportunity. We're going to try to get as much of it staged during the week as possible so we can get out on the line quickly. We really need your help.

Thanks to everyone and we'll see you out on the line this Saturday!

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Joe having more fun than humanly possible shredding tree limbs to tiny bits



Mike H. and Heather working on the swivel-gear of the man-lift



Trusty Team Track Inspection Ed, Frank, and Alan, were out on the line checking gauge in an area with a couple of skewed ties while marking bad ties for the big tie replacement push



Success! The new swivel-gear works! Frank and Mike H. deploy the bucket and test the repaired system



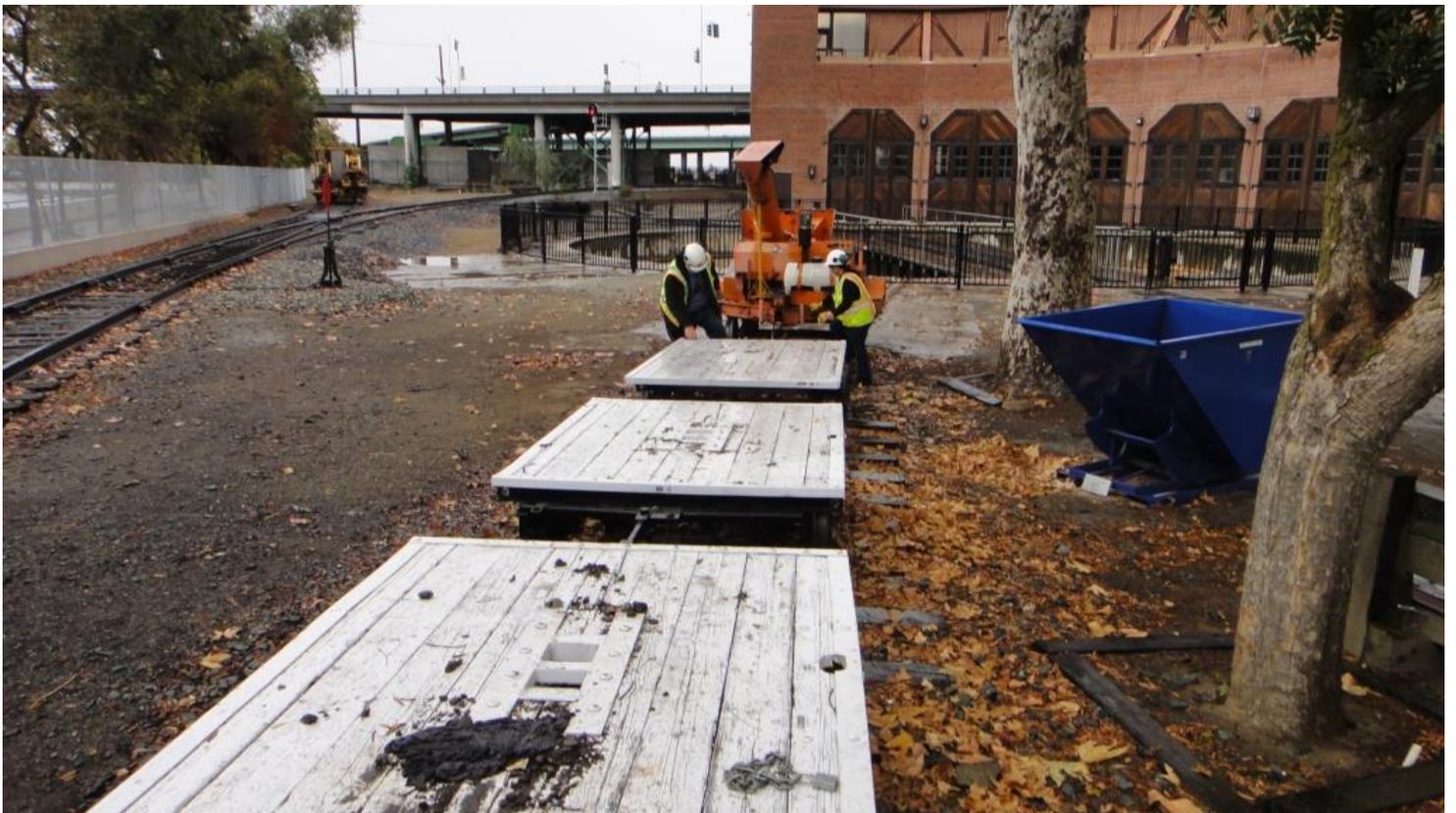
Is it the Fourth of July? No, it's Cliff cutting down the legs of the new ballast hopper preparing it for its rail wheels



Pam and Frank moving the Interpretive Hand Car Program's speeder from the Boiler Shop to the Erecting Shop over the Transfer Table



Conductor Frank moving the man-lift south on the Transfer Table



Frank and Pam reposition and secure the chipper and flatcars before the stowing the man-lift on the North Turntable Lead



With great effort, Harry managed to get the spike-puller started



Alan twiddling his thumbs as the band-saw cuts through a length of steel