

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 27, 2013. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," for your MOW Team this week – best in that we got a great deal of good work done. Worst in that the Sacramento Southern Railroad family has lost one of its most valued members. Eric Peak, our Road Foreman of Electrons, the fearless co-leader of the Car Department, a conductor, brakeman, fireman, genius, bright visionary, and overall great friend. So many members of the MOW Team also volunteer with Car Department that we often worked as one unit, making Eric as much a part of our team as were of his. He made so many things possible on our railroad just through pure skill, determination, optimism, and his vibrant personality. He is irreplaceable and will be sorely missed.

Tuesday, the Shops were buzzing with activity. Pat Scholzen, Heather Kearns, Cliff Hayes, Michael Matsumura, Brian Cameron, Alan Hardy, Gene Peck, Harry Voss, Frank Werry, and Chris Carlson (in sign-in order) were working on projects left and right. Chris and Heather headed over to Old Sacramento to deal with an electrical issue on the A-4 motorcar. Frank, Brian, and Michael headed down to Clunie to mark the fouling and clearance points on the Clunie Siding. Harry and Pat got the rail-rod's engine running again.

Thursday, Mike Harris on the Big Green Machine headed out into the rail yards to move more rail from the area about to be dug-up for environmental remediation over to our new materials yard by the tunnel. Frank conducted a track inspection of the Old Sac. Yard and then installed several new fuses in the SSRRMW 51 motorcar. Heather and Harry spent the evening doing that unenviable but necessary task of cleaning our area in the Shops.

Saturday, a small but happy crew showed up early at the shops for a double ration of doughnuts. Servicing switches was the order of the day for Clem Meier, Steve Nemeth, Harry, John Rexroth, Mike Florentine, and Chris. Steve was excited for the opportunity of being EIC of the grease bucket. However, to paraphrase Robbie Burns, "The best laid plans of MOW and men often go awry." Our trusty track inspectors had been noting the excessive amount of organic debris burying the track in the vicinity of Switch 16 (South Miller Park Siding) which restricted their ability to see the condition of the track beneath. Clem, using the wind machine, was able to clear out most of the dead leaves and needles revealing a bit of problem. Dry-rot had settled into several ties coming out of the switch allowing the rails to spread apart slightly. We could see that the spikes were not effectively restraining movement of the rail. So, we abandoned our switch servicing routine and set into motion a triage plan for the track.

As it was nearly 11 o'clock and time for the Spook-o-motive to descend upon us, we switch our track protection from "exclusive track" to "look-out" protection. Mike, Steve, and John began digging out the ballast between several ties while Chris started prepping gauge-rods for installation. Harry was busy attempting to trouble-shoot problems with the MW-51 motorcar and Clem was our look-out. SSRR 2030 engineer Jeremy Levish understood the situation and was very helpful in keeping us informed as to the location of the train throughout the day since we were working on the mainline. We got the gauge-rods installed and lifted our temporary speed restriction through the area. After lunch, we returned with the tamper and tamped the dickens out of the area to reduce the "pumping" of the track under load. We then focused our attention on a nearly identical area that our trusty track inspectors had identified just slightly north at Mile Post 1.85. Again, we coordinated our efforts with the train and managed to bring this area back into compliance at least for the remainder of Spook-o-motive. The solution to the issue is to replace about two-dozen ties at both locations before Polar Express and the monster engines roll through the area. So, guess what we're doing next Saturday?

This coming week, the Weed Team will wage war against the vegetation invasion on Tuesday starting at 8:30 a.m. in the Shops. It's always an adventure with the MOW Weedies so, come and join the fun. Bring a hearty lunch! In the afternoon and evening, the crew will meet at the Shops, as usual, for more MOW fun. Restoring the A-6 motorcar to operation is the highest priority right now. Thursday, the Team will gather at 5 o'clock p.m. and stage for Saturday's fun. On Saturday, you guessed it, we're changing ties in the vicinity of MP 1.85 to 1.96. Your help is needed and appreciated.

We'll see you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Chris making repairs to the MW 51 Motorcar



Michael marking the fouling point on the Clunie Siding



John, Chris, and Steve, executing the triage plan for the track



Chris adjusting a gauge-rod as Mike digs under the rod that Steve is installing



John demonstrates his supervisin' skills as Mike digs



Engineer Steve at the throttle of the A-4 Motorcar consist following the train as it pulls out of town.



Chris controlling the tramper while Mike manually activates that actuators



Chris and Steve judge the effort of the tamper in stabling the area at MP 1.85