

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for October 30, 2016. With the advancement of fall comes the diminution of the evening light. Still, your MOW Team plows ahead on its path to progress. So, let's not derail this progress by further delaying this update.

Weed Team Captain Mike Taylor spent Tuesday afternoon at Hood mowing weeds located near the Weedies' storage container. Then he pruned a couple of trees before heading back to the Shops where he was joined by Pat Scholzen Cliff Hayes, Weston Snyder, Joe Margucci, Anthony Filamor, Matt McCracken, Harry Voss, Gene Peck, and Frank Werry. In Old Sacramento, Mike T., Joe, Weston, Anthony, Matt, Harry, and Frank gathered for a little nighttime railroading fun and to work on the man-lift. Sometime last week, Vandals and Goths managed to steal its 12-volt 4D battery, damaging the battery-box in the process. Heather procured a replacement. Matt and Weston lifted the weighty battery into position and Joe hooked it up. Once running again, the man-lift was taken to the Shops where Cliff could work his metallurgic magic repairing the battery box. Mike T. piloted the man-lift across the UP Main while Frank, Matt, and Joe followed behind on the A-6 motorcar (to trigger the interchange signal circuits). Joe, Mike T., Matt, and Weston secured the man-lift in the Erecting Shop while Frank returned the A-6 to Old Sac. Meanwhile, you'll recall from last week that the back-hoe suffered a steering-mechanism failure. Well, the parts for restoring the back-hoe's to service came in and Pat, Gene, and Cliff got right to work putting it back together. By evening's end, they had the machine working as it should and able to turn on a dime.

*With hey, ho, the wind and the rain*, the Team decided to stay close to home on Thursday. Joe, Matt, Anthony, Frank, Heather, Ed Kottal, and Cliff made the best of it. Cliff and Ed built a more secure battery-box for the man-lift. Cliff works magic with metal and managed to build a vault-like securing system for the battery. Joe installed an upgraded alternator in the man-lift. The old one just didn't have the oomph any longer to keep the battery well charged without keeping the engine RPMs high. It was a good evening to bring some of the steel signal-cabinets given to us by the Western Railroad Museum inside the Boiler Shop where they would be used secure tools and equipment. Anthony hopped up on the Big Green Machine. Matt handled the yellow Hyster forklift. Anthony brought the rather wide cabinets over to the Boiler Shop where Matt grabbed them with the Hyster. With Frank guiding from the ground, Matt skillfully maneuvered the cabinets through the building around what can only be described as an obstacle course. With the cabinets inside and battery box fixed, the Team declared it a successful evening.

Saturday, the MOW Team and our good friends with the Signal Department worked together to install 400 feet of underground conduit and wire for several new receptacles being located west of the Central Pacific Freight Depot (CPFD) platform as part of a new battery charging system for the SP 290 and 291. Two Teams require two boxes of sugary doughnut goodness. Joining the fun were Alan Hardy, Joe, Pam Tatro, Ed, Harry, Clem Meier, John Rexroth, Michael Florentine, Heather, Anthony, Matt, and Chris Carlson from MOW. Gary Rannefeld, Dennis Gallagher, Carl Clayworth, and Jim Atkins made up the Team Signals contingent. In addition to the work at the CPFD, Alan led a crew at the Switch 1 Turnout to ballast, jack, raise, level, and tamp the tracks. All electrical power was out in the Boiler Shop, so it was a bit of a challenge getting the truck and back-hoe out of the building. But, Clem, Joe, Mike F. and Heather managed to figure it out. Soon, the Teams headed to Old Sac. where Mike F., Joe, Heather, John, and Anthony joined Gary, Jim, Carl, and Dennis of Team Signals at the CPFD. Pam, Harry, Clem, Matt, and Chris worked with Alan at the Switch 1 Turnout. At the CPFD, the Teams needed to dig nearly 400-feet of trenches from the electrical cabinet by the boardwalk at K Street, under three tracks, to the electrical connections at the Platform then make a 90-degree turn and dig for about 300 feet parallel with the Platform Track. Joe, Heather, John, and Mike F. worked like human "Ditch-Witches" digging and shifting ballast to provide a secure placement for the conduit. Gary, Dennis, Carl, and Jim installed the conduit then fed wires through it and tied them into the various receptacle boxes. Two electrical vaults needed to be sunk where the plug-in stations would be housed. Team Signals borrowed Harry and the back-hoe to dig holes sufficient enough for the electrical vaults to be placed. Throughout the day, the MOW/Signal Teams put on quite a show for waiting passengers and crew at the CPFD. Several were anxious to join in the fun, including Spook-o-motive conductor, Elias Athanasiou, who grabbed a shovel while in full conductor garb to help out. By day's end all 400 feet of conduit had been installed and covered. You can hardly tell that any ground had been disturbed. It looked great and will make charging the 290's and 291's batteries much easier. A professional contractor couldn't have done the job any better!

Meanwhile, over at the Switch 1 Turnout, Chris on the blue-tractor further graded the ground to the west of the track as Pam and Clem assisted with shovels. Then, Chris, Ed, and Pam fired up the Tamper as well as the Kalamazoo tug which would pull the hopper-cars filled with rock. With Ed at the throttle of the Kalamazoo, Alan and Matt ballasted the two tracks converging at Switch 1. Then, Clem, Pam, Chris, and Alan dug pockets for jacks to be placed. They cranked on the jacks and raised the turnout to take-out the "dip" just to the north of the I Street bike-path. Chris and Pam traded off tamping duties in the tamper to secure the tracks at the new level. Once tamped, a quick survey determined that a second application of rock was necessary because so much of the first application of rock had been sucked under the ties when tamped. So, the operation was repeated. Joe joined them in the afternoon and soon more rock was dropped, jacked, and tamped. With that, the Team declared Turnout project done. It is solid and can be safely covered by concrete for another 40-years. With that, the Team packed-up and headed back to the Shops where they discovered the Boiler Shop had been closed down by the State Parks' Rangers due to the electrical issues. So the Team had to figure out how to stow the truck and equipment in the Erecting Shop which is already chalk-a-block full of rolling stock and locomotives. Soon, they had a plan. John did a masterful job backing the truck into the building at a very sharp angle. It was tense for a few minutes but, again the Team persevered. It was a great day of significant accomplishment. Thanks to all those who participated in the joint-convention of the MOW Team and Team Signals.

This coming week, the MOW Team will meet at the usual times on Tuesday and Thursday – at or before 5 o'clock. Thursday, it's "ho-ho-ho!" and "hot chocolate!" for the Mighty Weed Team which will commence its annual tree-pruning adventure along the SSRR Mainline to make sure that the Polar Express Santa's Village can make its journey south to the North Pole without incident. So, if you're available on Thursday, join Mike T. and the Weedies at 8:30 over at the Erecting Shop. On Saturday, the MOW Team will gather for more MOW fun and doughnuts at 8 o'clock a.m.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Gene and Cliff shimmy under the back-hoe to repair the steering system



Joe checks the grounding-wire of the man-lift



Weston, Joe, Matt, and Harry get man-lift's battery installed



Anthony on Big Green takes a signal cabinet over to the Boiler Shop...



...Where Matt took them inside and put them in place



Cliff uses a grinder to finish work on the man-lift's battery box modifications



Cliff with the modified battery box vault



Pam and Ed deploy the motorcar consist



At the CPFD, the Team gets to work digging under the tracks for the conduit installation



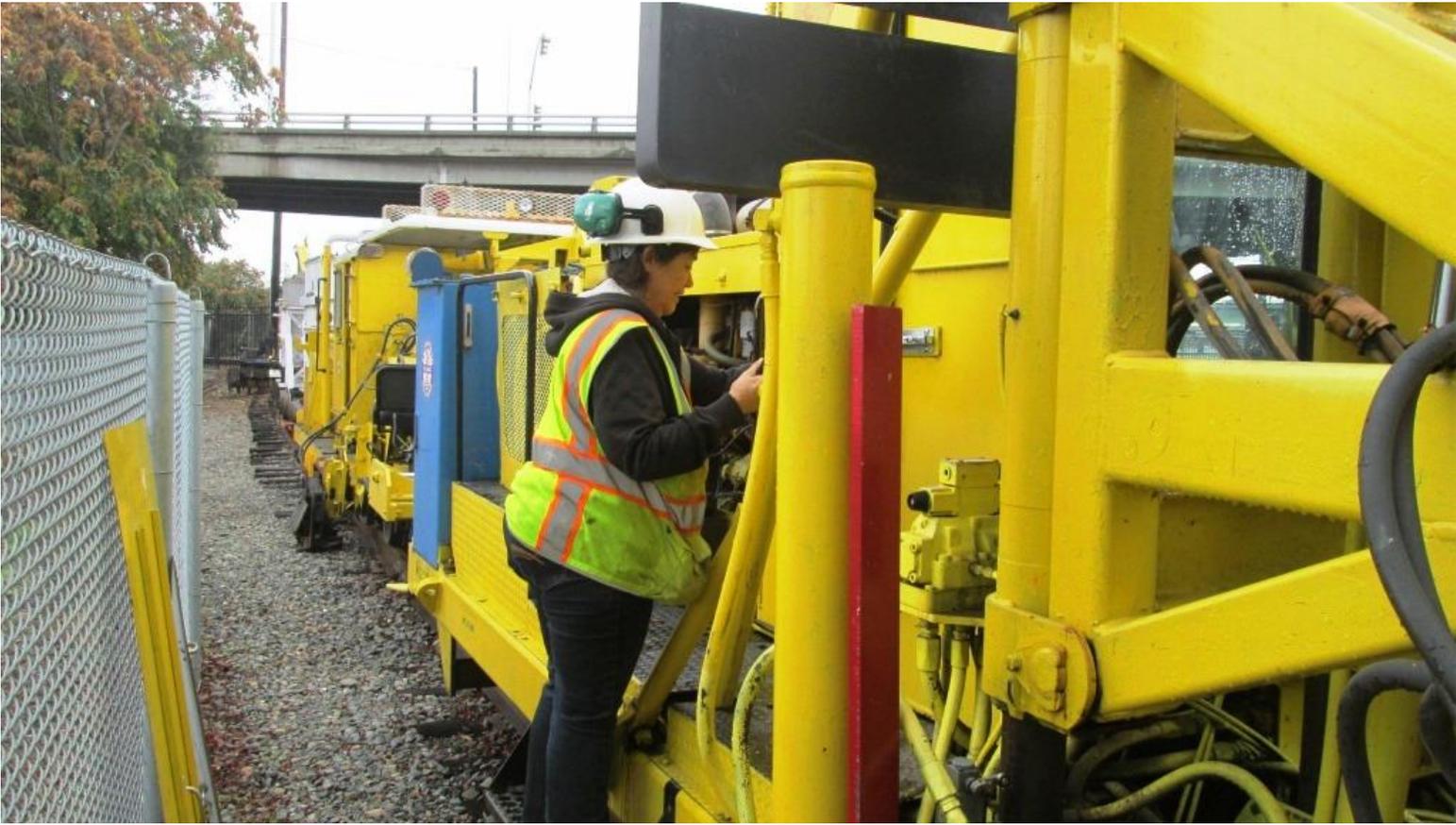
John, Heather, and Mike F. dig



Joe and Gary confer about trench depth



Pam and Clem do some clean-up work to the west of the Switch 1 Turnout



Pam gets the tamper opened up



Ed pilots the Kalamazoo as Alan and Matt drop ballast



Alan and Matt continue the ballasting work



Jim and John keep on trenching



Carl and Dennis splice-in a junction-box



Joe, John, and Gary dig the trench from the junction-box under the Platform Track



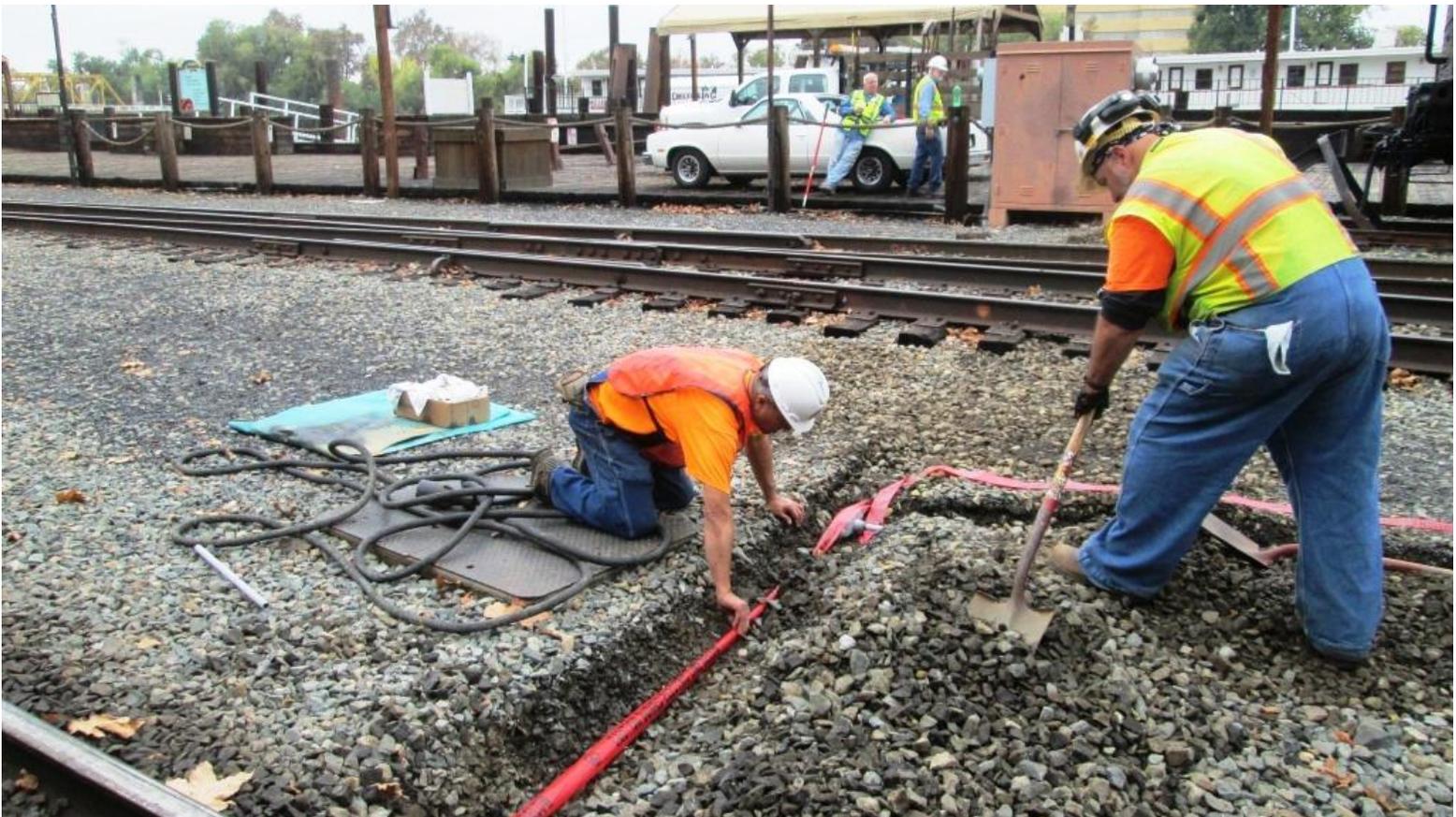
At the Turnout, Clem and Alan work with Chris and Pam in the Tamper while Ed, Harry, and Matt spread-out the rock



Clem and Alan work with Pam in the tamper to tamp around all the diverging rails



The tamper tamps rock under the ties



John covers the conduit with red warning tape as Mike F. begins filling in the trench



Joe and Heather continue digging the trench north along the Center Siding adjacent to the CPFD



"Spook-o-motive" Conductor Elias Athanasiou couldn't resist joining the fun!



Jim and Dennis extend the conduit



Here comes Harry on the back-hoe!



Mike F. breaks-up the clumps as Harry digs a hole for the electrical vault



Heather and John keep on digging



Dennis directs the placement of the electrical vault which Anthony sets in the ground



The Team waves to the passengers on the "Spook-o-motive" as it pulls out of town



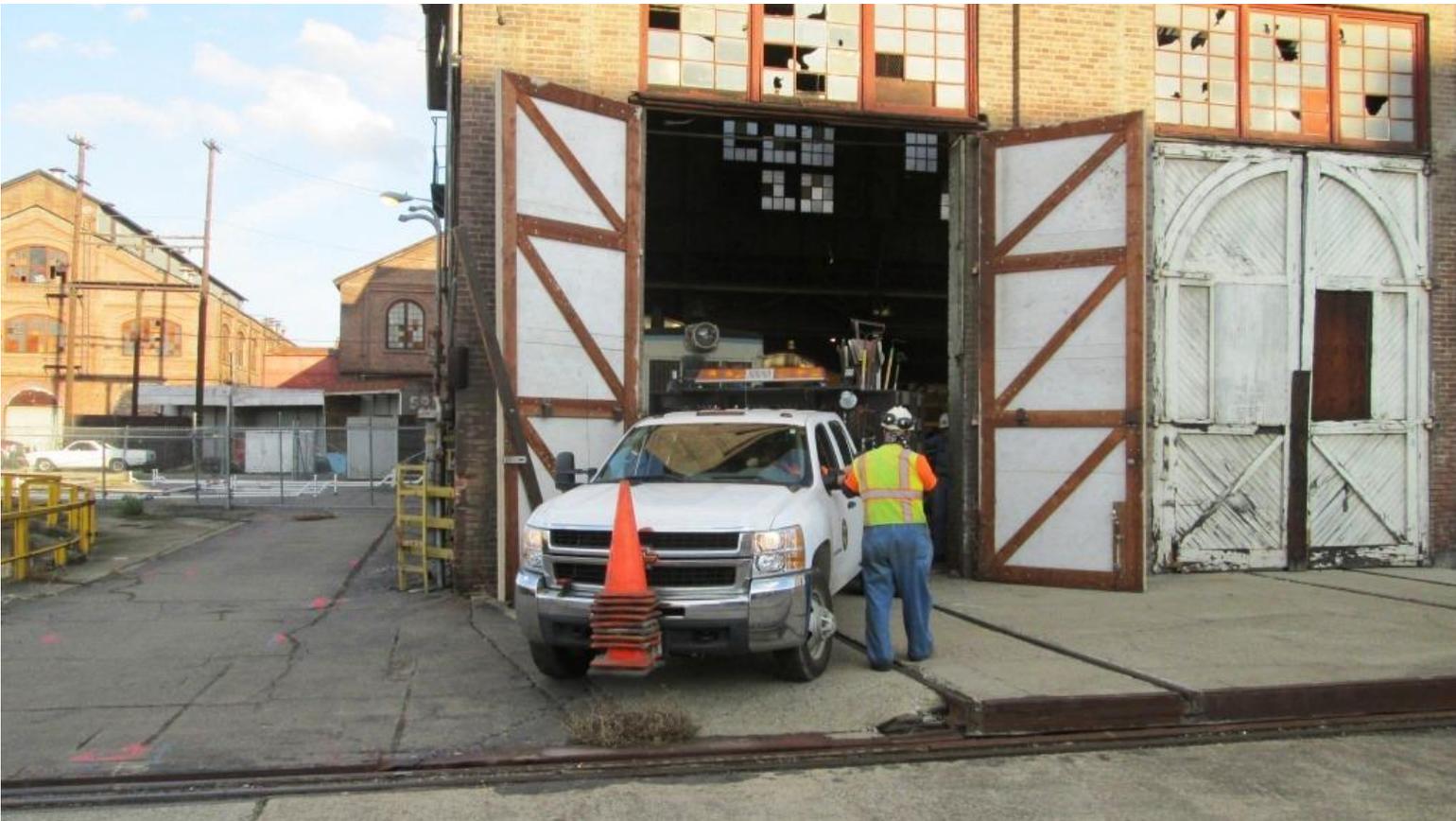
At day's end, one could hardly tell that any ground had been disturbed at all



After the second application of rock and tamping, the Team spreads out the ballast to prevent mounding



Harry takes the back-hoe into the Erecting Shop



Mike F. helps guide John in the truck as he maneuvers it into the Erecting Shop