

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for November 3, 2013. Amazing things were accomplished this week by a dedicated crew of volunteers. Considering the “back-breaking” (literally for some of us) work we do, one might argue that our crew deserves a “double hours credit” bonus. But, before we get carried away with crazy ideas, let’s get to the update, double time...

The mighty MOW Weed Team was out on Tuesday taking on the plant world. Capt’n, Mike Taylor with his brave Lieutenants, Heather Kearns, and Dave Megeath, redoubled their offensive against the green menace infecting our line. First stop, Q and R Streets where cottonwood saplings threatening our right-of-way were terminated. Next, a salvo was launched against the evil tobacco-weed by the Santa Fes. Then, it was a full-frontal attack on trees and weeds occupying the impassable Sutterville Line south of Mile Post 3.1. Multiple chainsaws and the chipper worked overtime. Progress was made but the war is far from over. The MOW Weedies do a tremendous job. It’s hard work but, Capt’n Mike makes it fun – and tasty with special Weed Team chocolaty treats he brings along. Come on out and join this vital team!

Meanwhile, Pat Scholzen, Chiff Hayes, Frank Squire, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Frank Werry (in sign-in order) kept things going back at the Shops. Mike H. and Frank W. were given the double-difficult duty of moving the A-6 motorcar, which was buried behind the “new-old” tamper, and relocating it to the rail-lift behind the tie-shear. They demonstrated their incredible skills at planning and executing this very complicated move in very tight spaces. Frank S. and Heather headed over to Old Sac. to recover the MW51 motorcar which needs its radiator repaired. With the early setting sun, this proved a challenge in the dark. But, to no one’s surprise, Frank S. and Heather’s completed the mission without complication.

Thursday, Harry Voss and Heather were on hand to get things ready for the upcoming tie-change challenge on Saturday. Harry serviced the section-gang machine and double checked it to make sure it would start up on demand. He and Heather loaded it onto the bed of our trusty Chevy Truck and then loaded a bundle of ties onto the Green Machine for Saturday.

A double ration of doughnuts greeted Clem Meier, Heather, Steve Mathias, Frank W., Kevin Hecteman, Michael Florentine, Mike T., Harry, and Chris Carlson on Saturday morning. Our mission was to correct a defect logged by our trusty track inspectors at MP 1.85 where consecutive ties under a segment of track, including under a joint, had deteriorated to the point we had to change them – or else. We knew this was going to be a doubly challenging defect to correct as most of the offending ties were little more than splinters, requiring them to be dug out by hand. Kevin skillfully piloted the A-4 motorcar consist while Heather handled the scarifer and Frank followed with the tamper. Once on site, Harry and Mike F. unloaded the section-gang machine and shoved it by hand the quarter-mile or so to the work-site (which was in an area inaccessible by truck) while Steve, Mike T., Clem, and Chris pulled spikes, nipped the rails to remove the plates and began digging. Our worst fears came to pass when the section-gang machine crushed the splintering ties, forcing us to break them up by hand with an adze and Mattocks. We were doing, by hand, what the tie-shear could have done in mere minutes. Once we got the offending ties removed, Heather in the scarifer came in to dig out the cribs and use the inserter pull new ties under the rails. Then the team plated, nipped, and spiked the new ties. Frank brought in the tamper and tamped up the area. In the end, we dug-out and changed 15 ties. Considering our goal for the “off season” is between 500 and 700 ties, we are in desperate need of improved mechanization. Our friends at CSRM Foundation and State Parks are working right now to make that a reality. That said, the incredibly hard labor undertaken by the MOW Team on Saturday is a testament to the dedication of our amazing volunteers, without whom, the trains couldn’t run. Always remember, no track, no trains...

For the week ahead, the mighty MOW Weed Team will be taking on the invasive species along our line. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday. In the afternoon and evening, the crew will meet at the shops as usual. Getting the A-6 running is the top priority. ***SPECIAL EVENT: Thursday, the State Parks Commission will be riding a special train and, as your MOW Team is the most dynamic department of the railroad, they have requested a demonstration of our talents. Therefore, we are calling out a crew for Thursday to meet at the Shops at 1 o’clock. Please let me know if you’re able to join this special event by responding to this e-mail. We’d really appreciate your help and participation with this opportunity to demonstrate what we do.***

We’ll see you out on the line.

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



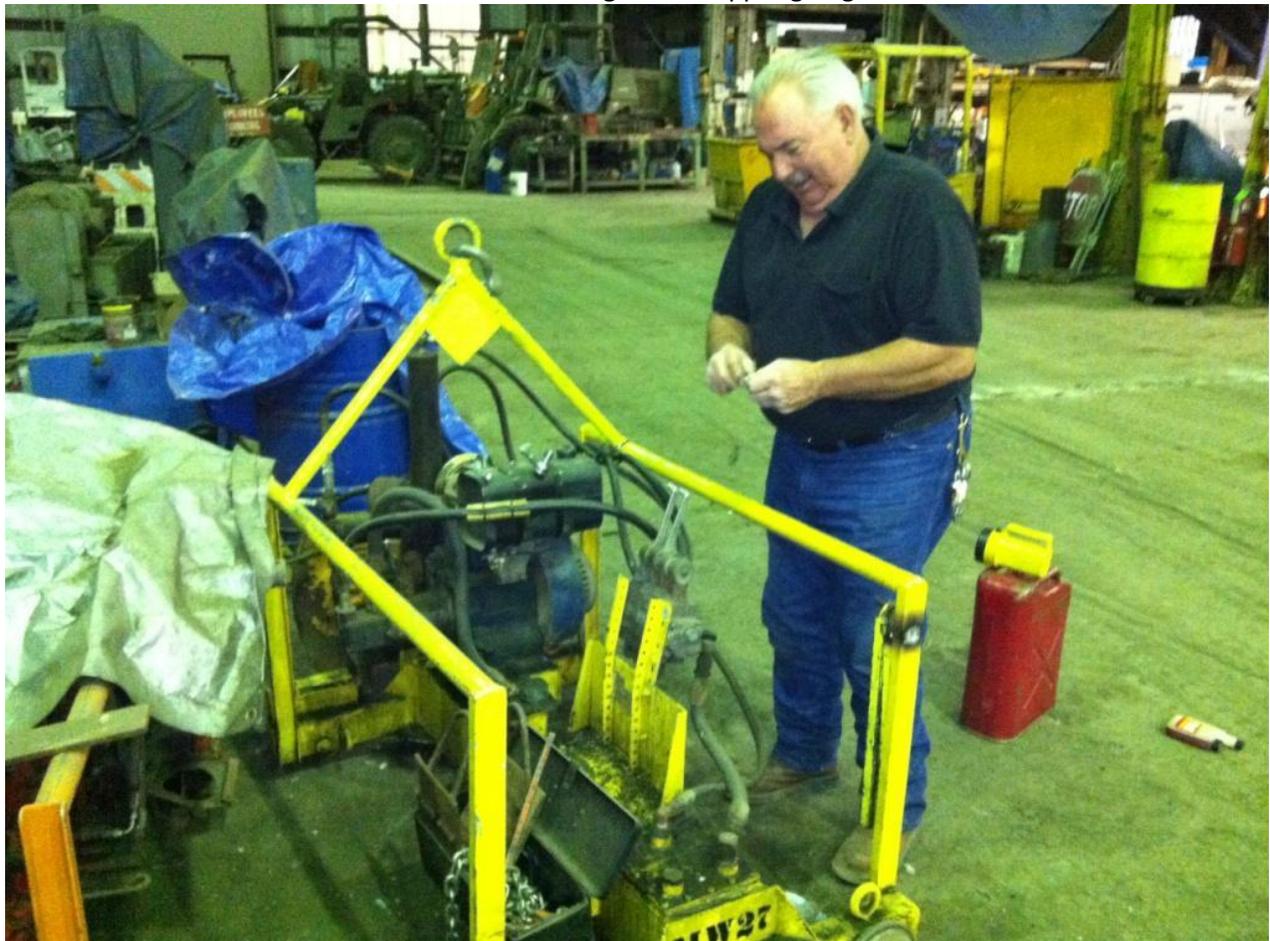
Dave and Mike survey the situation on the Suttersville Line while Heather gets right to work



Heather of the Weed Team attacking the enemy



Dave and Mike get the chipper going



Harry makes sure the section-gang machine will be working fine for Saturday



Mike T. chops away at a rotten tie while Mike F., and Chris use nippers to break-up chunks of dead tie



Richard uses the adze to scoop up ballast. That's what it's for, right?



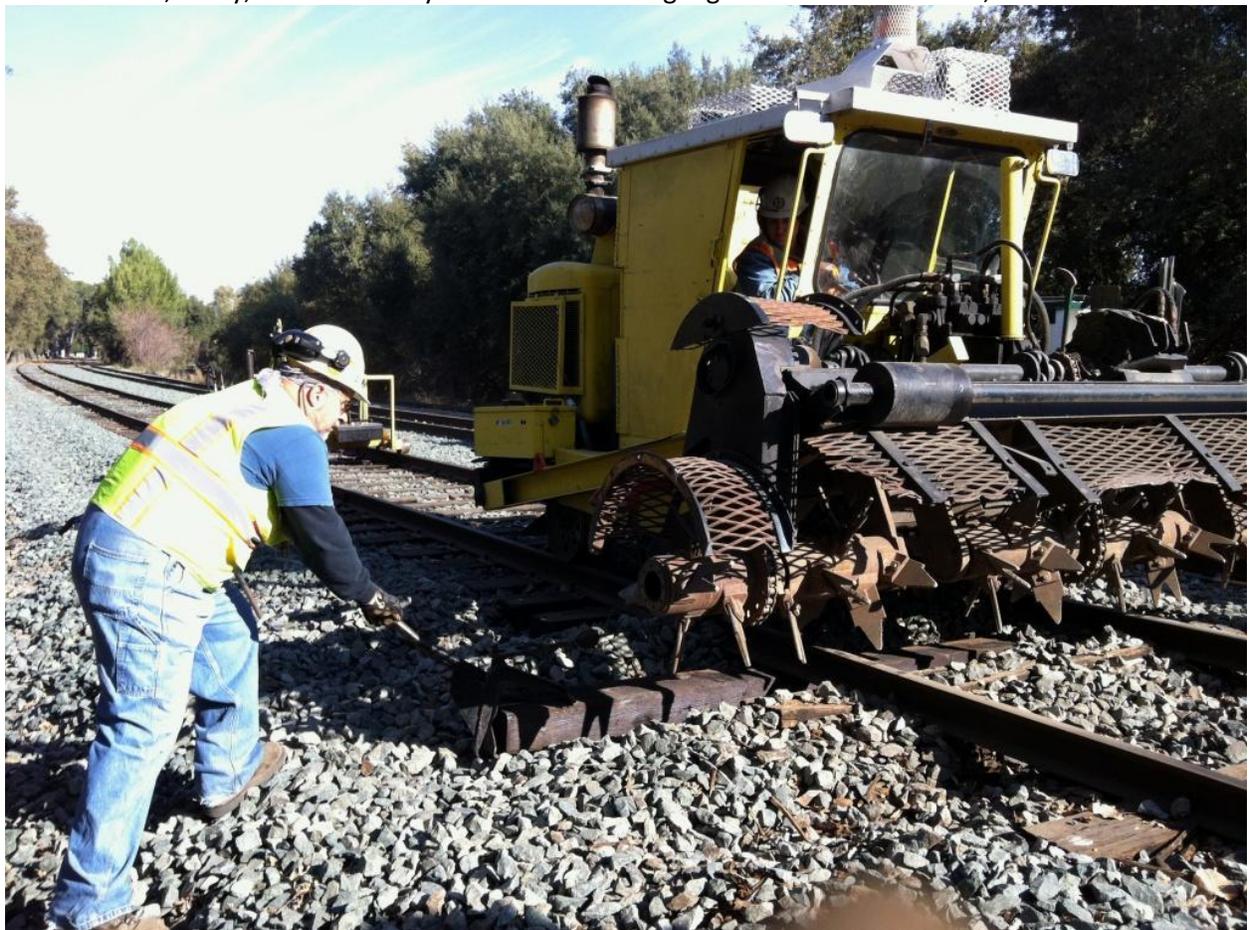
Heather uses the nipper to rip up a rotten tie



Heather and Steve work as a team at correcting a defect under a joint



Chris, Harry, and Mike F. try to use the section-gang machine to crush – er, remove a tie



Mike guiding the insertion of a new tie with Heather at the controls of the scarifer-inserter



Frank, Mike F., Steve, and Kevin secure the new ties



A good day culminates with loading the section-gang machine back onto our trusty Chevy Truck