

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for December 8, 2013. "Mister Snow Miser" tightened his clutch around our railroad last week sending a blast of arctic air south to the North Pole, making Polar Express a little more authentic. But, a little "Mister White Christmas" didn't stop your MOW Team from accomplishing great things for our railroad. So, let's keep warm by staying active and firing up this update right now.

Tuesday, the mighty Weed Team headed south to the Hood Line again to take on the green menace. Mike Taylor and Dave Megeath were busy clearing brush and using defoliant to free our line from any vegetation obstructions. According to Dave, "Ye old motor car consist stays on the rails and hardly anything falls off when transiting at a moderate rate of speed." Keeping that line maintained is tremendous task that, one that the Weedies do very well. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. The Weed Team's always looking for new volunteers. Come on out and join the fun!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Gene Peck, Pat Scholzen, Harry Voss, John Chandler, Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, Frederick Carr, Mike Harris, and Chris Carlson warmed the building with their bright personalities (and the propane heater). Alan was working on restoring the track surfacing system on the "new-old" tamper. Fred has almost completely rebuilt the hydraulic tank. Chris repaired a rather significant leak that developed in the fuel line. Pat, Gene, Mike H., and Harry got the temperature gauge installed on the MW51 motorcar as well as making other adjustments its return to service. Heather continued cleaning up the Shops and John provided commentary on all the exciting activity. It was a good evening with good folks accomplishing great things.

Thursday, Polar Express was in full swing again, shipping pajama-clad kiddies south for their encounter with jolly ol' St. Nick. Over in the Shops, Alan and Heather made up the Thursday crew and continued work on the "new-old" tamper's surfacing system. As several of our Team were working Polar, and with "Mister Icicle" descending on the Shops (coupled with the fact that we ran out of propane), we decided to shut down a bit early. We're nothing if not wise...

Saturday morning, icy ground greeted your MOW Team which meant we needed extra doughnuts to warm us up. Chris Carlson, Pam Tatro, Harry, Fred, Frank Werry, Heather, Steve Nemeth, Michael Florentine, Alan, and Clem Meier faced-off against "Mister Ten Below." We spent a good part of Saturday preparing for the arrival of the rock and ballast for the new toe-paths along 560 track over in the yards. We headed out for the Setzer Yard where we store our ballast hopper cars in our trusty Chevy Truck, the loader, and the A-6 motorcar. After switching out the hoppers in order to get the two side-dump cars, Steve, as EIC of the A-6, headed back up the line to Old Sacramento with Heather, Mike F., and Frank. Then we used the loader to load-up the dump bucket accessory for the Big Green Machine which is also stored down there. With Conductor Frank on the team, we have freedom to move equipment back and forth across the UP Main at our discretion. So, back in Old Sac., Chris and Heather fired up the regulator and, with Conductor Frank liaising with Omaha, we took it along with the A-6 towing the ballast hoppers across the UP Main and over into the yards.

In the afternoon, Steve, on Big Green, moved the hoppers off the 560 track to a spot under the freeway. We moved the regulator onto the transfer table to make way for the MW51 motorcar which was headed back to Old Sac. along with the A-6. There was a slight delay in that cold had played havoc with some of our batteries. Also, the carburetor on the 51 needed some, ahem, "adjustment." But, those issues didn't delay us for long. Once again, Conductor Frank conducted us across the double-diamonds while Mike moved the regulator inside the building. As the crew moved the equipment back over the UP Main, Fred set off with our pallet of orange cones to line the road leading into the Shops. With so many changes out the yards, visitors were getting confused and heading off-road, often sinking in the soft surface.

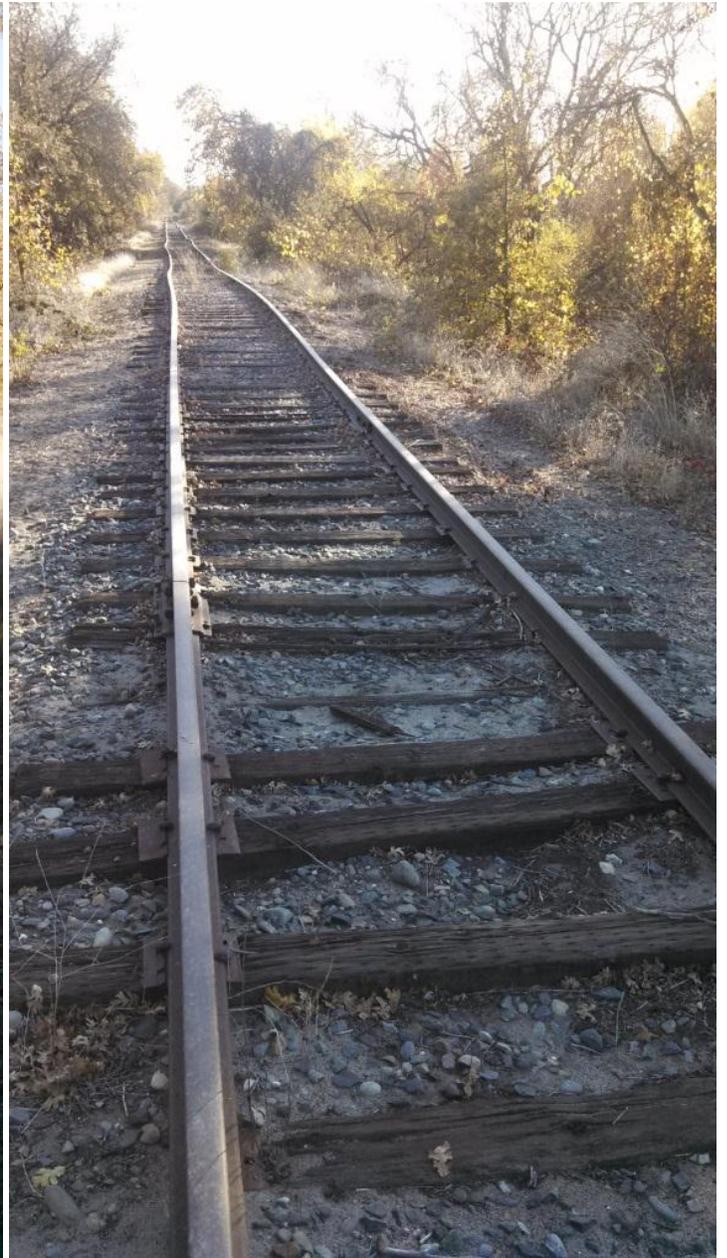
Tuesday, the Weed Team will be meeting for a Shops day. The rest of the MOW Team will be meeting in the afternoon and evening to continue their valiant efforts. Please note: we're **cancelling Thursday night's gathering** as many of our regulars are giving their all on Polar Express. So, **no MOW on Thursday**. Saturday, on the other hand will be a busy day. If the rock arrives this week, we'll be starting the effort to build the toe-paths along the 560 track. If it doesn't, we have plenty of other stuff to do. Don't you worry. It promises to be an exciting day with lots of activity to keep us warm.

Happy hot chocolate and see ya out on the line!

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike T. in the motorcar on the Hood line
(Photos courtesy of Dave Megeath)



The Hood Line, itself.



Alan welding the surfacing system for the “new-old” tamper together



Gene connects up the new temperature gauge while Pat and Harry supervise...



Fred using the wire-wheel on a component of the hydraulic tank



Alan and Chris work on the "new-old" tamper's jacking system



Frank, Clem, and Harry work to switch out the side-dump hoppers



The Team putting the consist together



The regulator crosses over the UP Main for the first and perhaps last time...



Conductor Frank, engineer Steve, and brakeman Mike F. bring the hoppers across