

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for February 2, 2014. It was a hot time in the ol' Boiler Shop this last week – sparks were a flyin' and flames a throwin'. So, let's get this update started before that fire goes out.

Tuesday, the mighty MOW Weed Team returned to the Hood Line. Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Joe Galipeau, and Pat Scholzen spent the day spraying chemical defoliant along the stretch of track between Hood Franklin Road and the south-most trestle. The target: blackberry vines. The mission: to impede their constant encroachment on our right of way. While defoliating blackberry vines, the Weedies saw lots of wildlife – blue herons, white egrets, ducks, and geese. What they saw demonstrates why restoring this line is so important. Our line runs right through a major wildlife refuge and provides the only access to it. It's a beautiful area and a potential major tourist destination. Fortunately, our Weed Team is keeping it open and accessible and they deserve our gratitude. After all, every day is one day closer to Hood.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, Cliff Hayes, Gene Peck, Fredrick Carr, Frank Werry, Harry Voss, and Mike Harris kept the sparks flying by continuing the dismantling of the ol' bucket o' bolts ballast regulator. They managed to remove the forward plows. Also, Heather fabricated a new break lever for the A-6 motorcar which is in the shops having its generator replaced by an alternator. This modification will save money – and batteries.

Thursday, flames were flying like nobody's business. Cliff, Heather, Alan, Mike H., Frank, and Harry stripped down the last remaining apparatuses on the old regulator. First, Alan, Mike, Frank, and Harry brought the gantry crane to the south end, and with the assistance of Chief Mechanical Officer Al DiPaolo, lifted the remains of the regulator to a new bay. Many thanks to Al for his help! Then, our master metal-worker/welder, Cliff, used his artistry to start cutting off the wing-mount and hydraulic rams. At times, it looked as if the Olympic torch was lit in the Boiler Shop as flames would pop-up in the most unexpected places. At times, it looked as if the old machine was on fire. But fear not. But, fear not. Everything was under control. By evening's end, everything, including the deck, was removed and we were all pleased with the progress.

Now, at MOW, we are nothing if not green. We're strong supporters of the environment which is why we use so many natural products, such as petrochemicals, in our operations. Reduce, reuse, and recycle is a motto by which we live. So, with that in mind, we've decided to repurpose the old regulator as a tug. The engine is still good and it's a four-wheel drive vehicle. Stripped down to just a frame, engine and cab, it will make a very powerful tug – able to pull full ballast hoppers up the Setzer Grade. The redundant hydraulic systems will be repurposed to run hydraulic tools. Environmental sensitivity, fiscal responsibility, and mechanical creativity are building a better railroad for all. The regulator is dead. Long live the tug!

Saturday, Chris Carlson, Frank, Taka Blackburn, Harry, Mike H., Fred, Pam Tatro, and Heather all gathered with expectation of doughnuts. With expectations met, we headed out on the line. The primary mission was to accumulate all the material necessary to build the whisker-track to the north of the turn table. The secondary mission was to start disposing of old ties by loading them in a dumpster spotted at Setzer. So, off to Setzer we go. With Mike H. in the loader, Harry in the back-hoe, and Chris on Big Green, Frank and Pam in the Tamper (which served as our head-end power for pulling flatcars of rail up the Setzer Grade), and Heather in the Manlift (as the north-end power once up the hill), the Team managed to collect and load the necessary rail. Fred and Taka did an amazing job heading up the team's efforts that removed an entire pile of dead ties into the dumpster for disposal. That was hard work, folks, and they managed to fill a 40-foot dumpster with dead ties in an organized fashion. Taka and Fred get two gold stars each! In the afternoon, we continued by digging into the big pile of dead ties. Then we formed a "bucket brigade" to collect tie-plates from a pile way in the back of the yard for loading. By the end of the day, we were sore and reciting another of our mottos: "Why pay to join to a gym when you can volunteer with MOW?" We got a lot of good work done. Many thanks to the incredible dedicated volunteers of the mighty MOW Team!

The Weed Team is taking Tuesday off. It's well deserved. Stay tuned for further updates. However, the Shops crew will be meeting in the afternoon and evening on Tuesday. Conversion work on the tug will continue. Thursday, the Team will meet up at 5 o'clock in the Boiler Shop. Saturday, doughnuts will be served starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Be there or be square. Again, thanks to all our volunteers and supporters. Always remember, no track, no trains.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



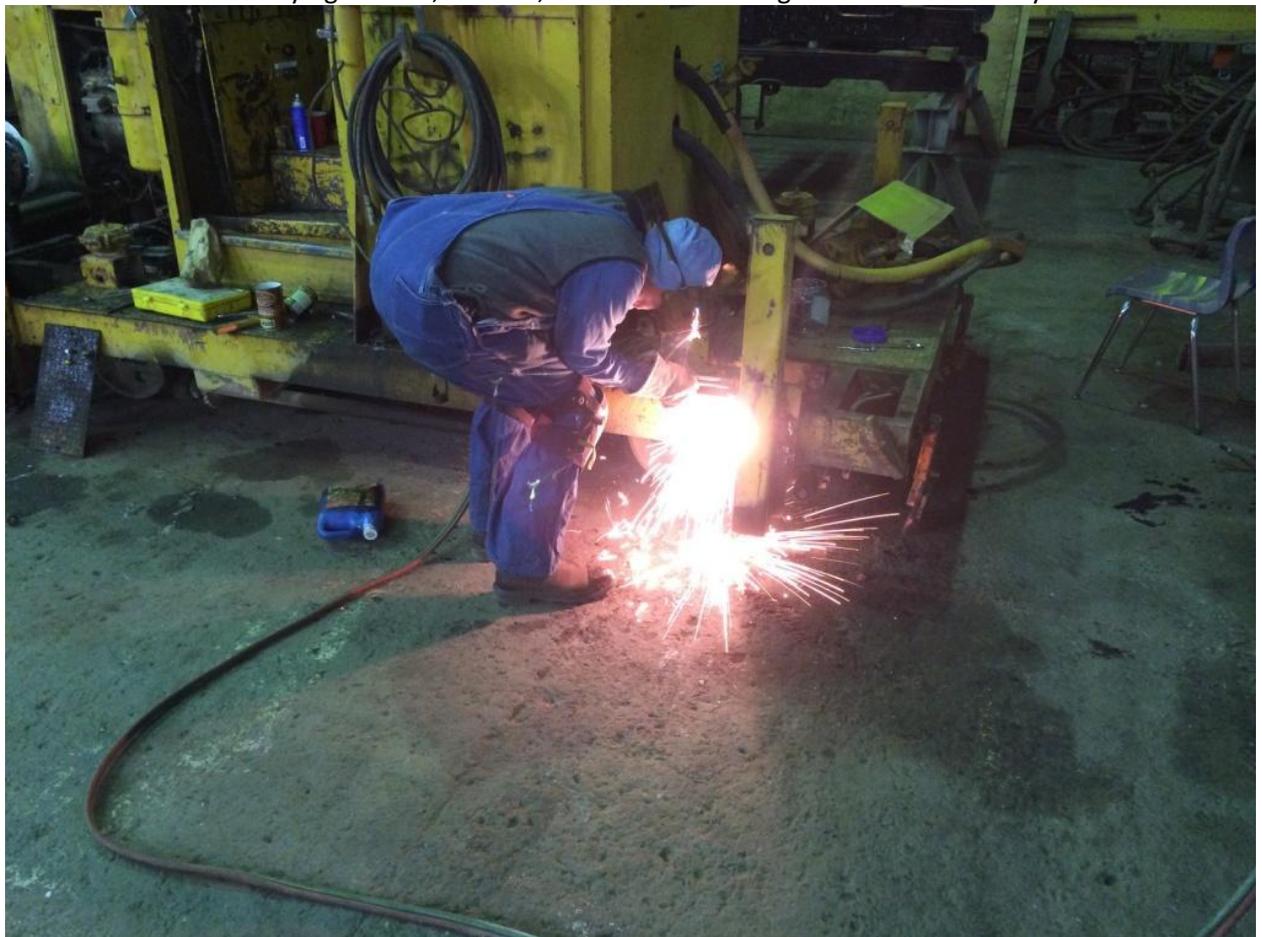
Pat, Joe, and Mike set up to spray blackberry vines at Hood.



Alan and Fred remove the plow from the regulator



"It's flying!" Frank, Mike H., and Al move the regulator into a new bay



Cliff begins cutting off the supports for the wings



The Olympic torch is lit!



Mike pulls the last of the deck-plating. Conversion can begin. The regulator is dead. Long live the tug!



Fred organizing the dead ties in the dumpster to maximize capacity



The view from Big Green as Taka and Chris load dead ties into the bucket.



Taka and Frank remove spikes and tie-plates from the dead ties



Chris on Big Green digs into the pile of dead ties