

Greetings,

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 11, 2018. Despite the obstacles thrown in front of us, your MOW Team continues to try to fulfill its mission of maintaining the railroad to federal Class 2 standards. So, let's try to keep motivated and get this update started.

The mighty Weed Team commenced the MOW week by taking its bag of tricks out on to the line Tuesday. Mike Taylor, Frank Werry, Ed Kottal, and Joe Galipeau spent a long day hard at work mixing blue-brew and applying it to the invasive species that dare to grow within the right-of-way. The Weedies managed to take care of most of the detail work along the length of the excursion railroad. It's been a difficult year for the Weed Team in that inclement conditions have infringed on its ability to disperse blue-brew out on the line. Every time they've made plans for such, mother Gaia interferes. It's not the best of ideas to be spraying herbicides in the wind and rain. Nonetheless, the Weedies were quite successful on Tuesday. Many thanks to Mike, Frank, Ed and Joe G. for their persistence.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Joe Margucci, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, Matt McCracken, Heather Kearns, and Frank gathered for the evening crew. The Team had the great pleasure of welcoming a new member on Tuesday. Jack Shrive is a graduate from a recent docent class and has decided to volunteer his time in the most productive way possible: with the MOW Team! Welcome aboard, Jack! Since the MOW storage containers in Old Sac. were made unusable after the SP 6051 collided with them back in December, we've been storing our on-track equipment on Track 1 of the Central Pacific Passenger Station (CPPS). With the El Dorado returning to the CPPS later in the week, Heather devised a plan for moving some equipment to the Shops and other onto CPPS Track 2. Joe managed the switching plan, Matt acted as switchman, and Mike H. piloted the Kalamazoo. Heather was conductor and successfully negotiated a round-trip crossing of the UP with only one call to the UP Dispatcher in Omaha. The Team did a fantastic job and was able to complete round-trip transit in six minutes and 14 seconds. That's near record pace! Wow, it was a job well done by an excellent Team of outstanding volunteers.

Thursday, Alan Hardy, Chris, Joe, Ed, Mike H., Jack, Matt, Heather, and Frank brought the Shops to life. First, Heather, Joe and Chris made some vital repairs to the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. The mechanism that makes its horn "toot" had gone wonky. They soon took care of that problem. Back at the Shops, Alan, Chris, Joe, Ed, Mike H., Jack, and Frank began the process or reinstalling the tie-shear's hydraulic kicker cylinder. This is a massive cylinder that takes a concerted effort to manipulate. The cylinder was lowered into the pit. Then it was connected to a chain that slinked through the machine and held up by the forklift. Jack, Joe, and Mike H. worked in the pit under the machine while Ed, Frank, and Chris worked from above. Alan handled forklift duties. Slowly, they managed to get the cylinder in place and secured temporarily so that they could reattach the hydraulic plumbing. In the meantime, Matt climbed aboard Green Machine 2 (GM2) and headed to the north end of the Erecting Shop where we keep our new tie supply. He grabbed a couple of bundles and spotted them at the south end of the Boiler Shop where they can be loaded quickly on Saturday morning. It was an excellent evening of teamwork by an amazing Team of folks.

A great crew showed up on Saturday. Alan, Chris, Joe, Heather, Ed, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Michael Florentine, Steve Nemeth, Art Fluter, and Harry Voss were anxious to take on the day's task of tie-changing near Baths – and, of course, the doughnuts. The MOW Team received some devastating news this week. A decision from above was made to sell our rough-terrain forklifts, the Big Green Machines, because they do not meet California's tough air-quality laws. We were shocked to receive this news even though it appears this plan has been in the works for a while. Even a buyer has been identified. Somehow, word of this plan never got to us. At some point we're told, a replacement will be acquired. But, until then, we will have no heavy-lift capability. The Team was quite demoralized by this news which zapped our motivation. But the great volunteers of the MOW Team will persevere. Indeed, it's the camaraderie amongst the Team members that keep us coming back and we will overcome this challenge. While we still have them, Saturday, we made great use of the green machines. Mike F. and Steve climbed aboard Big Green and GM2 and loaded tie bundles onto flatcars. Bill, then, piloted the Kalamazoo pulling the work-train and Ed took on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger. At Baths, Clem, Steve, Chris, Art, and Bill pulled spikes on the ties to be replaced. Ed and Joe worked together pulling out the rotten ties with the 125. As the bad ties came out, Heather and Joe got them in line for Steve on GM2 to come in and pick up. Mike and Pam then loaded them onto the forks of GM2. Art, Bill, and Chris deployed the hydraulic spike-driver and drove spikes into the ties that didn't be spiked last week. This great Team was working like a well-oiled machine and, all morning, kept up a tremendous pace. With the quota of bad ties removed, Steve on GM2 took them to Setzer for disposal. Then, he returned to the work-site and lifted the new tie bundle off the flatcar. He positioned GM2 parallel with the track and slowly backed up as Chris and Ed rolled the new ties off the forks in line with the crib in which they to be inserted. Joe and Heather then placed them under the base of the rails. Ed fired up the 125 and began pulling them in. Using the 125's track-jacking system, Ed lifted the rails slightly for Chris, Heather, and Joe to insert tie-plates. Bill, Art, Harry, Mike F., and Steve joined forces to set spikes, nip-up ties, and drive spikes. For the final tie of the day to be spiked, Steve and Mike F. interpreted old fashioned track-gang railroading by using spike-mauls in a tandem spike-driving demonstration. At this point, the Team cleaned up the work-site and packed away the tools. Then, headed back to Old Sacramento where a good deal of switching, in coordination with a train crew which was moving equipment around the Old Sac. Yard, as well, was necessary to get everything put away. Indeed, it had been a great day of tremendous progress thanks to incredible volunteers of your MOW Team who, despite adversity, keep coming back to build a better railroad.

This coming week, the MOW Team will gather, as usual, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the Erecting Shop starting at or before 5 o'clock. With the onset of Daylight Savings Time, we may get out on the line in the evenings. Saturday, 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time for doughnuts and the continuing MOW adventure. Thanks to all the fantastic MOW Team volunteers for your continued dedication to our Railroad!

See you out on the Line,

Alan and Richard.



Weedies Joe G., Mike T., and Ed release their mighty potion of blew-brew on unsuspecting weeds



Tuesday's Team pulls equipment out of the CPPS



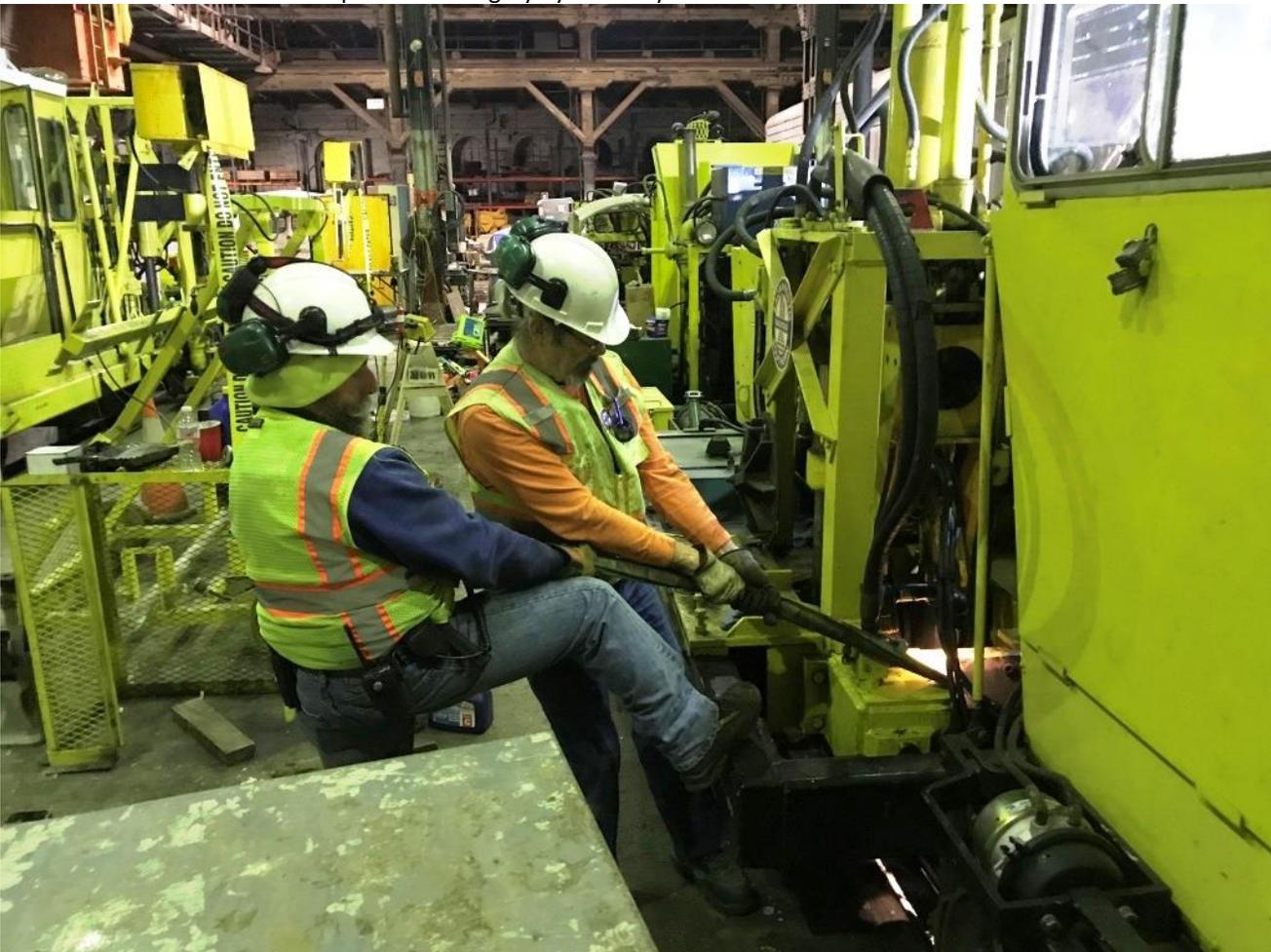
Joe goes over the switching plan with Matt



The equipment now nestled back at the Shops



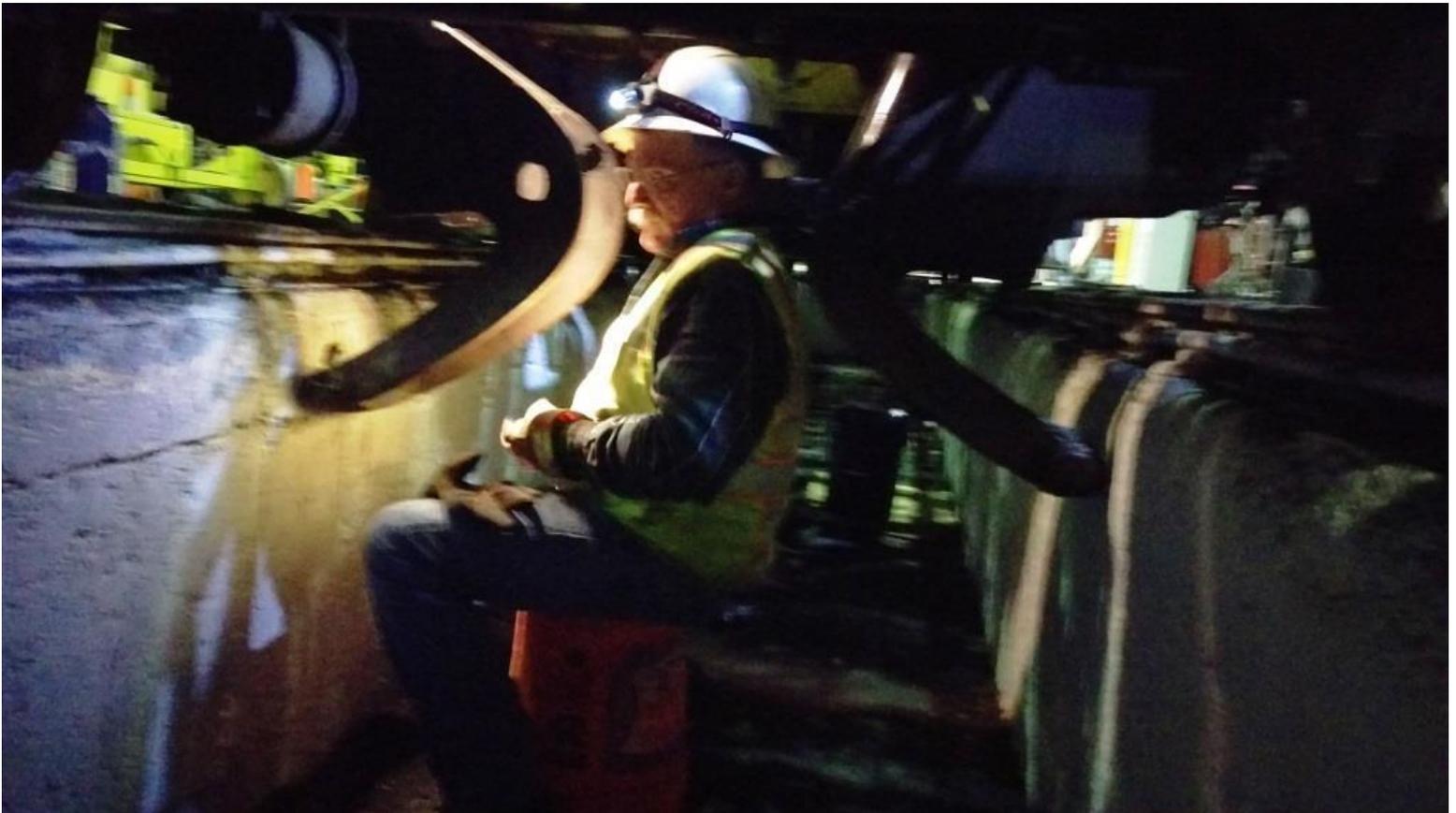
Alan on the forklift suspends the weighty hydraulic cylinder so that it can be connected from beneath



Joe and Ed combine forces to help maneuver the weighty cylinder into its position



Jack descends into the pit under the shear to assist Mike H.



Deep within the "pit of despair," Mike H. begins reattaching the cylinder



Matt, on GM2, moves in to grab a bundle of ties...



...Which, because of his skills and the machine's diverse capabilities, he does with alacrity



As the news of the impending disposal of our incredible Big Green Machines spread, Steve and Mike F. bring them both out for what may be their last working day on our Railroad. What a shame



But, they're not just for show. They are hardworking machines as Steve demonstrates when he brings in 2,000 pounds of ties



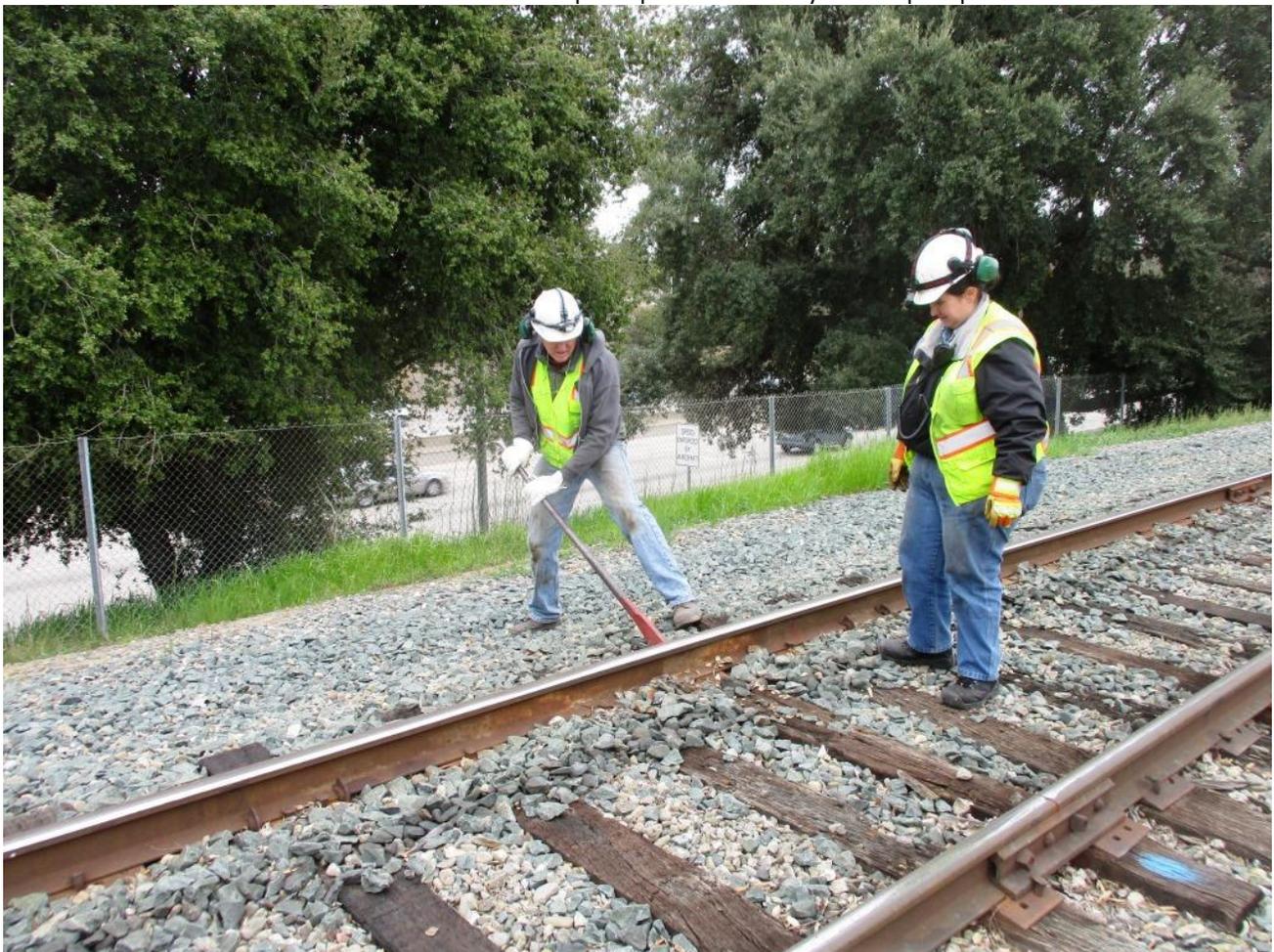
With ties now loaded on flatcars, Bill in the Kalamazoo shoves the MOW work-track across the UP Main



Art connects the hydraulic hoses to the hydraulic spike-puller



Art handles the hoses as Chris pulls spikes with the hydraulic spike-puller



Steve, of course, pulls spikes the old-school way



Joe trains Ed on the operation of the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger



Ed pulls-out his very first tie as the 125's operator. Yea Ed!



Art nips-up the ties as Bill drives spikes with the hydraulic spike-driver



As rotten ties come out, Steve on GM2 collects them for disposal. Pam and Mike F. help scoop them onto the forks



Clem removes rail-anchors near the extracted tie



Steve on GM2 takes those old rotten ties to Setzer for disposal. A shop forklift certainly couldn't do this kind of work



Is it lunch time? Ed deploys the pink box



Steve returns to the work-site to grab the bundle of ties for distribution along line



Oops! A little catawampus. No problem. A little shimmy-shake of the forks and everything straightened right out



Heather and Joe move old ties out of the way so that Steve on GM2 can come in to distribute new ties



Ed and Chris roll new ties off the bundle...



...Next to the cribs where they will be inserted



Heather and Joe get the tie-ends under the base of the rail



Ed pulls a new tie into place



As Ed uses the 125's track-jacks, Chris prepares to insert a tie-plate between the base of the rail and the tie



Steve sets spikes



Joe nips-up the tie, Bill and Art handle the hoses as Steve drives a spike with the hydraulic spike-driver



Ed makes sure the railroad's access road is clear of debris



They're at it again! Mike F. and Steve interpret old fashion track-gang railroading with their tandem spike driving technique



Steve brings in the remaining new ties and re-loads them on the flatcar as the Team prepares to head back to town



After disposing of more bad ties, Steve on GM2 climbs the grade at Setzer



One last task for GM2: take the "stinger," which we use to lift sticks of rail, back to the Shops