

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for March 12, 2017. It was the last week of dark evenings with the onset of Daylight Saving Time on Sunday. What better way to celebrate than a little nighttime railroading? So, before it gets dark again, let's get this update started!

They say there's no "I" in "team" but, Tuesday, Mike Taylor was a Weed Team of one. Mike T. spent the day working on the Weedies' equipment then taking out the backpack weed-sprayer to spray the magical blue brew that turns green weeds to decaying brown biomass along the 560 Track between the Shops and the double-diamonds at the UP Main. Furthermore, he sprayed areas around the Shops buildings. This kind of behind-the-scenes dedication is what keeps our railroad rolling. Many thanks to Mike T. for a job well done!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Pat Scholzen, Alan Hardy, Frank Werry, Joe Margucci, Heather Kearns, Matt McCracken, and Chris Carlson gathered for some good ol' fashioned MOW Team fun. Alan and Pat continued painting the derrick-car a happy shade of MOW Team safety yellow. Frank began cleaning-up the little tractor that the Team is restoring to operation. Then he and Matt worked on rail-rod, a small two-person self-propelled rail car. The centrifugal clutch isn't clutching the way it should. Next, Frank, Joe, Matt, and Chris got to work re-plumbing of the hydraulic lines to the main shear lift-cylinder on the tie-shear. Joe climbed on top of the machine and Matt worked from within its deep reaches. They got most of it hooked-up. It will take just one more evening of effort to restore the shear to operation. With Part 214 training now done for 2017, piles of old extra exams and outdated manuals were thrown out. The rest of the updated Part 214 materials were organized and packed away ready for next year. Yes, a good deal of good got done on Tuesday by a good – no – great crew!

Thursday, the Team celebrated impending end of Standard Time by heading over to Old Sacramento for some nighttime railroading. While Alan represented the MOW Team at meetings about the work to the SSRR tracks by the City which is upgrading the J, K, and L Streets crossings, Heather, Ed Kottal, Mike Harris, Frank Werry, and Joe re-arranged all the equipment up on the old 150 Track so that the Team wouldn't have to spend time on Saturday morning switching everything into the appropriate order. The tamper, Kalamazoo tug, Jackson 125 tie-exchanger, and scarifier-inserted all needed to be switched around. Then Joe, Mike H., Frank, and Ed installed a new battery in the tie-crane. Once back at the Shops, the Team loaded the track-jacks and other equipment we'd need out on the line for continuing the big track-raise on Saturday. With that, the Team retreated to the Erecting Shop where the "quittin' time USA" call was sounded.

Saturday morning, the doughnuts were on scene even before Alan, Joe, Harry Voss, Mike Willis, Heather, Frank, Matt, and Michael Florentine. That meant that everyone was sugared-up before the briefing. Continuing the big track-raise was the plan for the day. Harry climbed on the back-hoe and Frank took out front-end loader and headed to Setzer as the plan called for spreading more rock in the work area. We'd need to take the ballast-regulator with us so Conductor Heather negotiated its quick crossing from the Shops over the UP Main with the dispatcher in Omaha. Mike F. piloted the Kalamazoo tug pulling the hopper cars, Alan handled the tamper, Matt ran the motorcar pulling the work-train, and Mike W. managed the truck. To make things even more fun, the Signal Department would be inspecting the grade-crossing warning system at Broadway. Team Signals' foreman Jim Coviello, Mike Gaulke, Ed, Jose Gomez, Joe Galipeau, and Dale Parker operated within the MOW Team's work-limits. As the area being raised is within the north approach to Broadway, close coordination with Team Signals was necessary. Of course, the two Teams worked exceedingly well together. At the job site, Mike W. and Alan deployed the spot-board as Joe, Heather, and Matt dug pockets under the rails for the jacks to be inserted. Alan started at the "hound" measuring the raise as Heather jacked-up the west rail. Then, she and Mike W. leveled the east rail. Mike W. then took a turn behind the "hound" as Joe jacked the track-jack. This process continued down the line until Team Signals had completed its work at Broadway. Jim then took the Broadway system out of service so that Alan could bring the tamper into Broadway approach. As he tamped the track to the new level, Mike W. and Joe pulled jacks. At Setzer, Frank and Harry filled the hopper cars with rock. Mike F. pulled them up the Setzer grade and shoved them to the work-site. Frank and Alan disgorged the rock from the hoppers onto the track. Then, the ballast regulator was brought in. At 31,000 pounds, the ballast regulator had no problem plowing the rock to spread the rock evenly between the rails.

After lunch, the Team continued with the raise. Ed joined the Team in the afternoon having changed hats from his morning service with Team Signals. He, Joe, and Frank set jacks while Heather took on the "hound" and measured the raise. Matt took the center seat in the tamper and, with Mike F. guiding from the ground, tamped the track to the new level. After the run-off between the new level and old was built, Harry brought in the back-hoe into which the track-jacks were loaded. The Team packed-up its tools and equipment and headed back to town. Jim and Dale restored the Broadway grade-crossing warning system to operation. Again, Heather took on the role of conductor and conducted the ballast regulator back across the UP Main for put away in the Shops. But, first, the San Diego and Arizona Eastern 1003 Ford Model AA rail-mounted fire-truck needed to be switched out as it is being delivered to the Auto Museum for display on Tuesday. Ed ran it out onto the transfer table so that the regulator could be moved into the Erecting Shop first. With that, the Team called it a day.

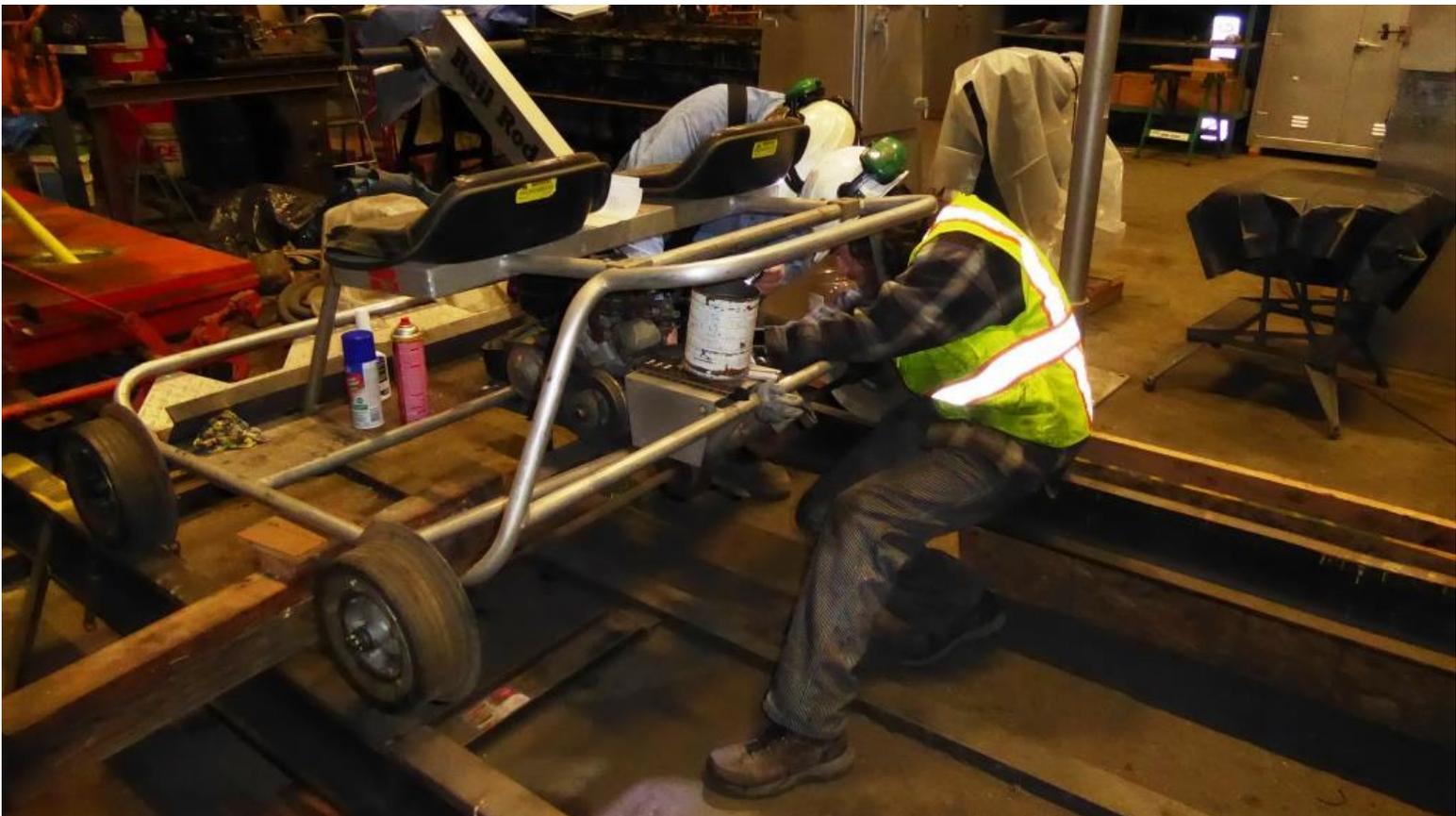
This coming week, the Weed Team will be going to Hood to cut oak seedlings and mow a bit mustard. Meet at the Shops at 8:30 a.m. Also on Tuesday morning, the fire-truck will be moved to the Auto Museum. We need help loading it onto the trailer and getting it over there. If you're available, please meet at the Shops at 9 o'clock a.m. The evening crew will gather at or before 5 o'clock. The same goes for Thursday evening. Saturday, 8 o'clock a.m. is the call time for doughnuts and more track raising. It was a good week and great time working with our SSRR Track Programs brethren from the Signal Department. Many thanks to everyone for your tremendous dedication.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



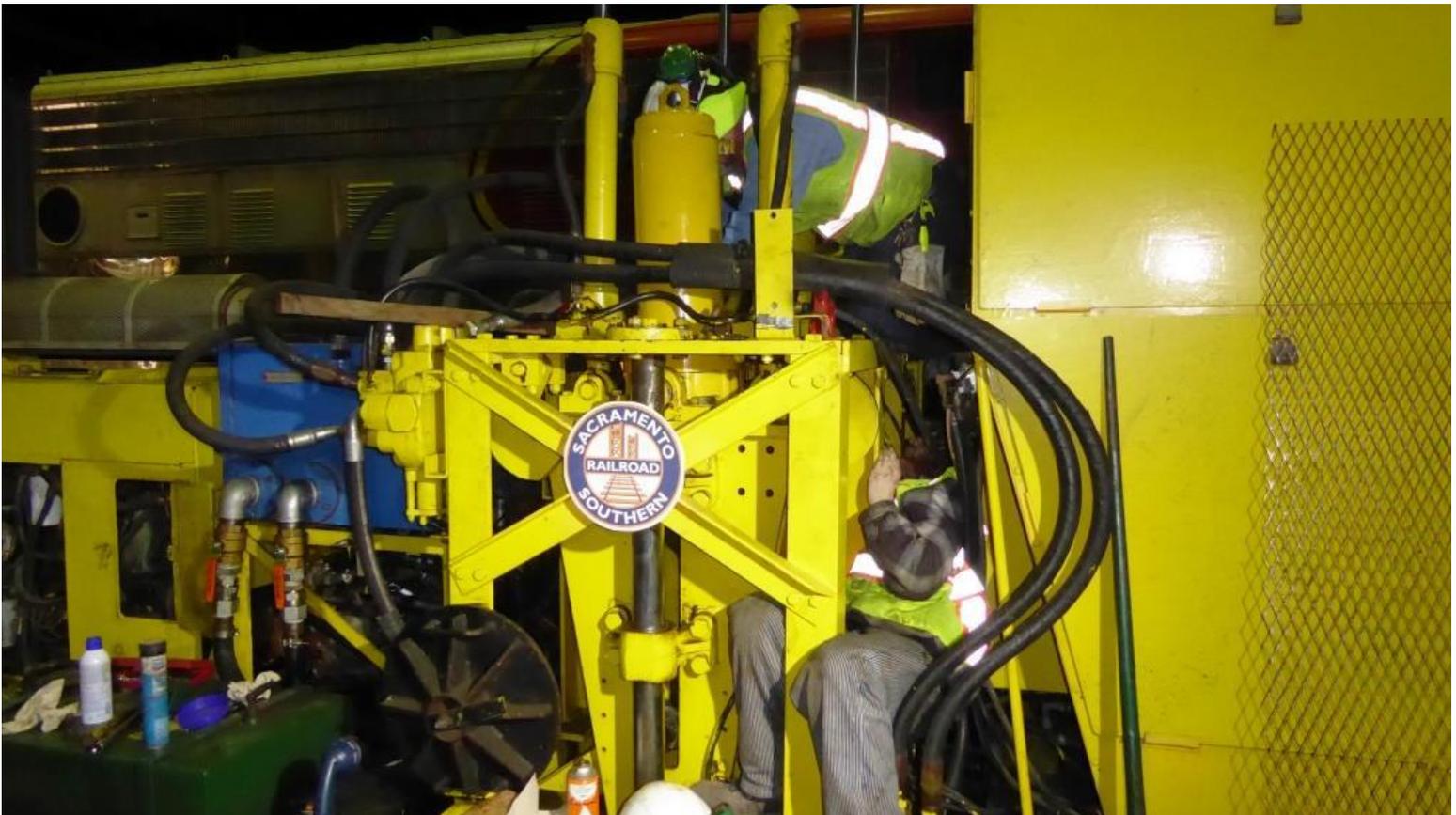
Frank starts cleaning up the little tractor which is being restored to operation



Frank and Matt determine that the centrifugal clutch is the problem with the Rail Rod



Joe and Matt work on the re-plumbing of the tie-shear



The tie-shear wasn't designed with ease of maintenance in mind...



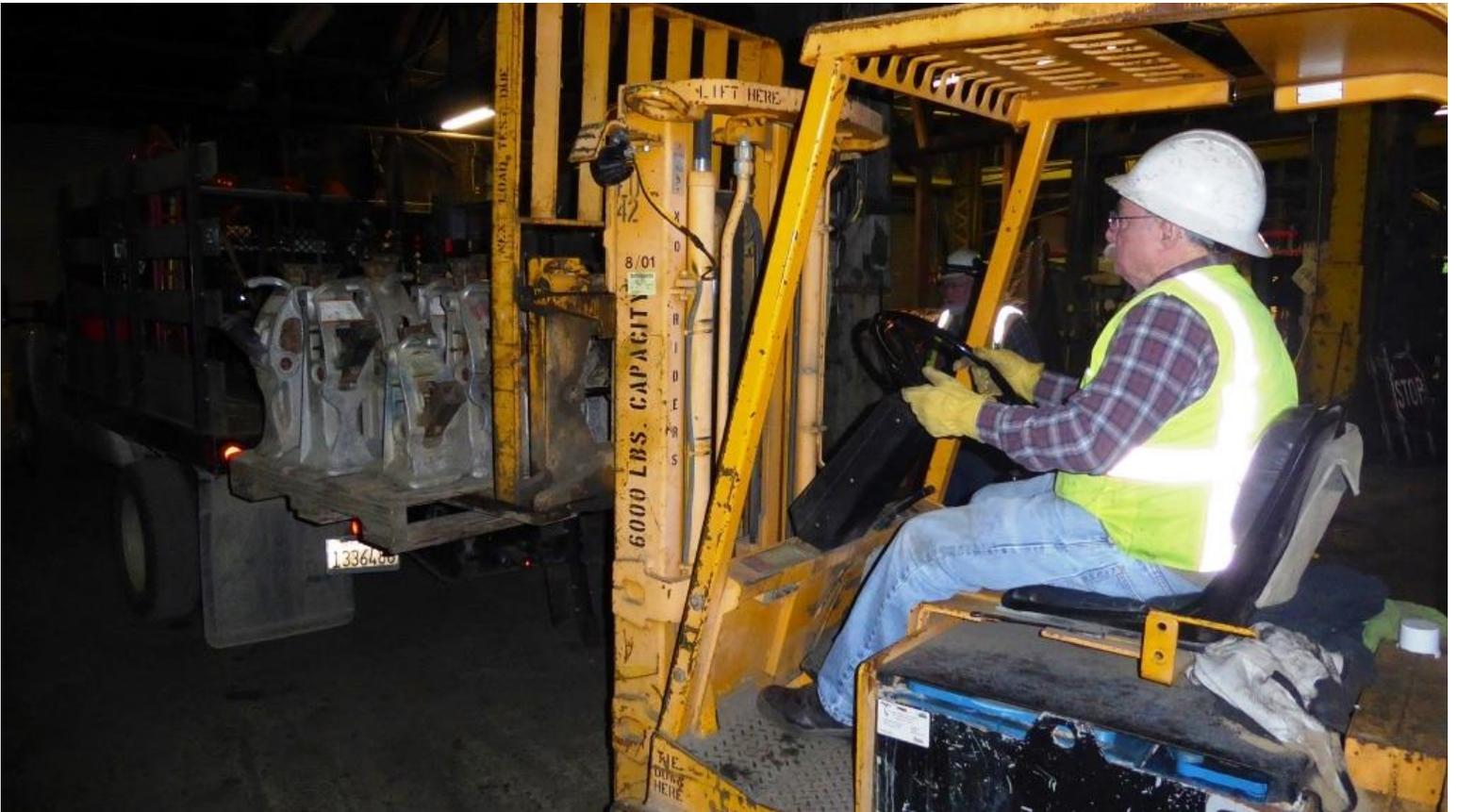
Mike H., Ed, and Frank install a new battery in the tie-crane



Heather and Joe glow in waning evening light as they open up the tamper



Looking like a beast from Jules Verne novel, the tamper is switched-out for the Kalamazoo and hopper cars



Mike H. loads the track-jacks into the back of the truck as we prepped for Saturday



The view from the cab of the ballast regulator as Conductor Heather negotiates for a green light



Mike W. retrieves the spot-board



Mike W. gets a track-jack ready to place under the base of the rail



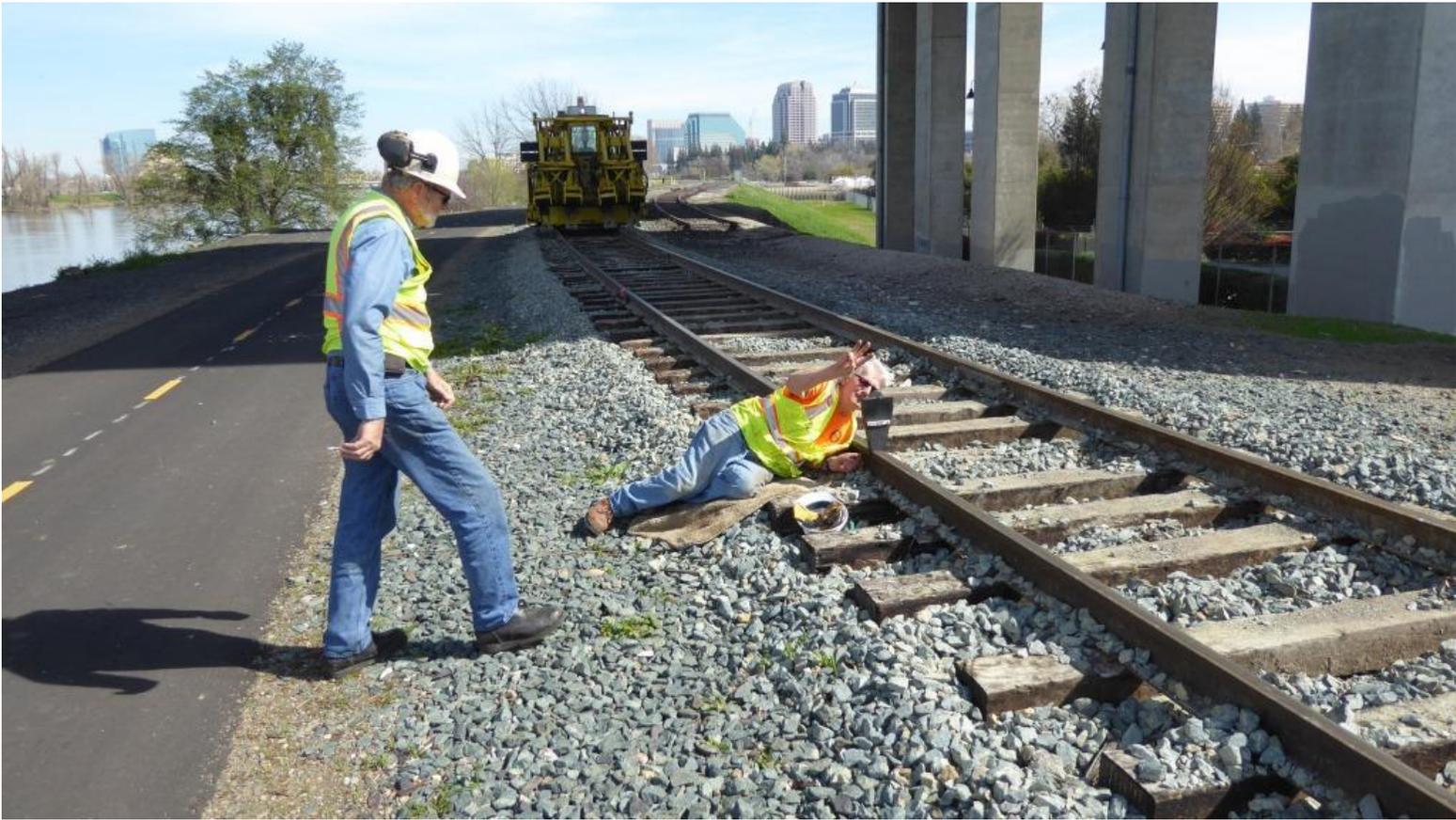
Alan sets up the spot board



Matt and Heather dig pockets under the base of the rail for jacks while Alan sets up the spot-board



Alan behind the "hound" as Heather jacks the east rail level with the west



Mike W. takes a turn behind the "hound" and signals to Joe...



...To crank on that jack three more times



Mike W. checks the track-level as heather and Matt raise the east rail



Meanwhile, down at Setzer, Harry and Frank load rock into the hopper-cars which will be moved to the job-site by Mike F. in the Kalamazoo



Mike F. behind the throttle of the Kalamazoo keeps a close eye on Frank who is dropping rock from the hopper-cars



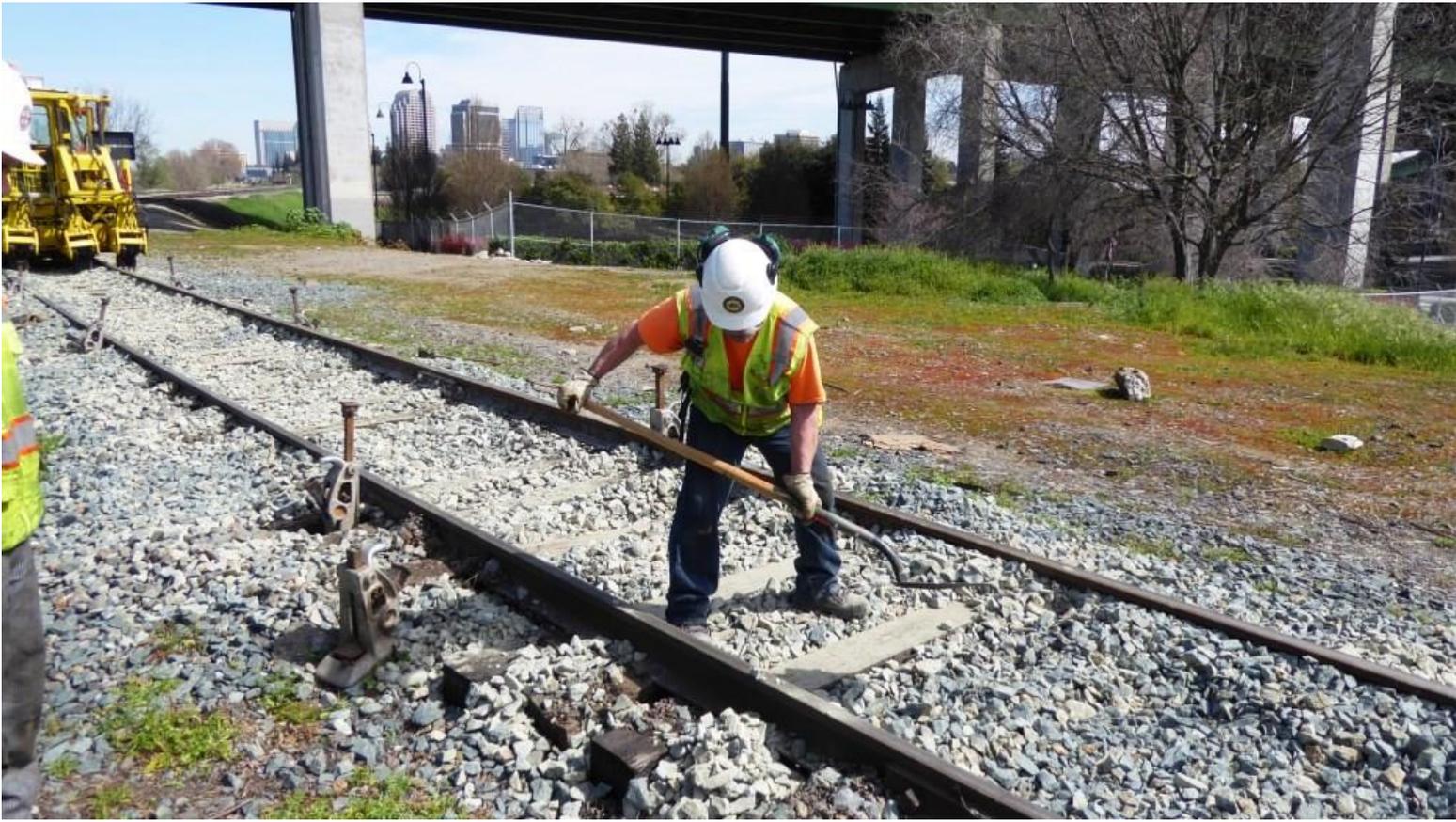
Frank controls the rate of rock flow



Mike W. pulls a track-jack as the tamper approaches



Harry checks the radiator of the Kalamazoo



Joe removes rock from on top of the ties so that they can be seen from within tamper



Frank and Alan drop ballast rock from the side-dump car



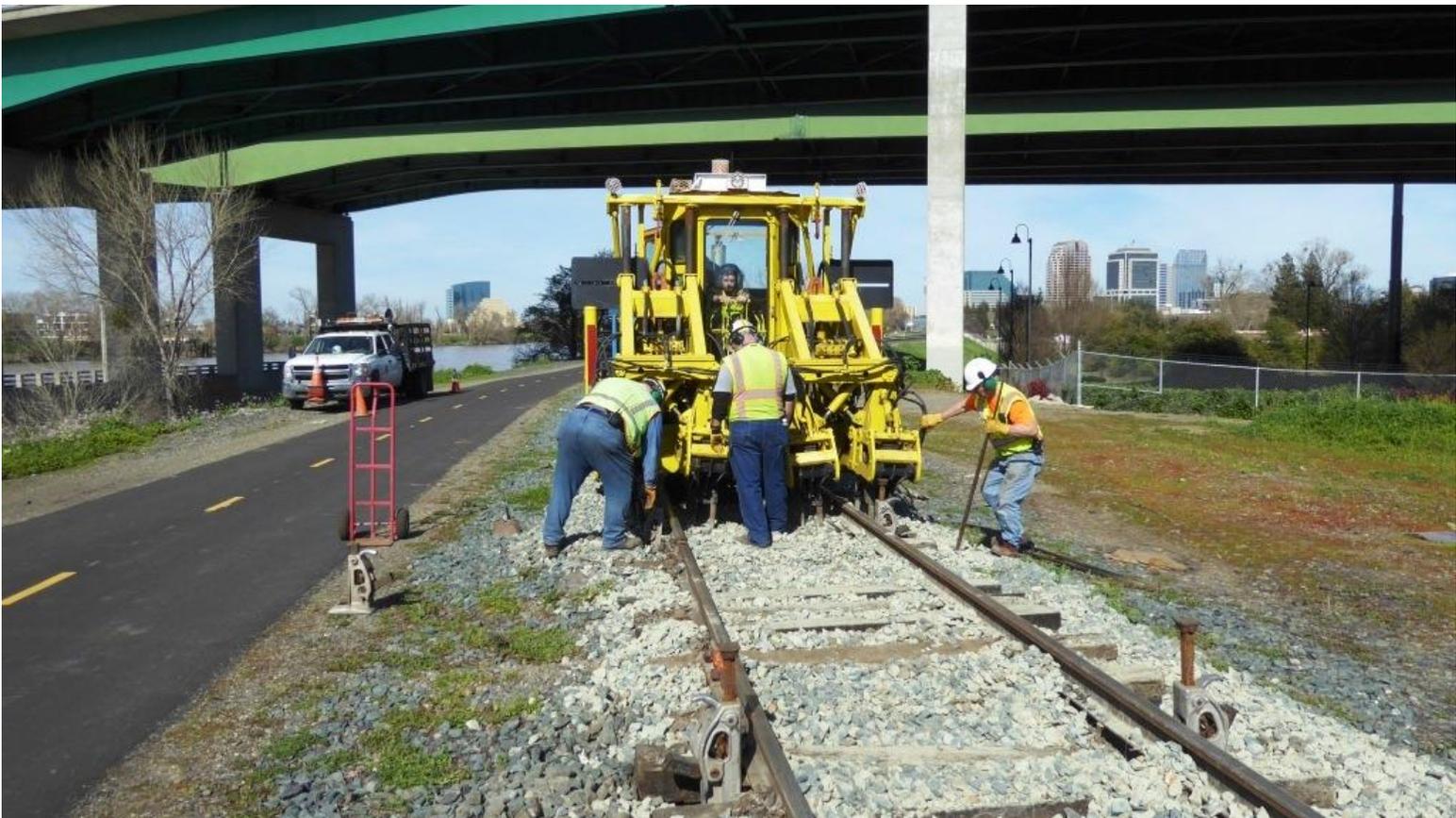
Alan takes a ride as the ballast regulator plows the rock evenly between the rails



Heather measures the run-off and signals to Ed and Frank on the track-jack



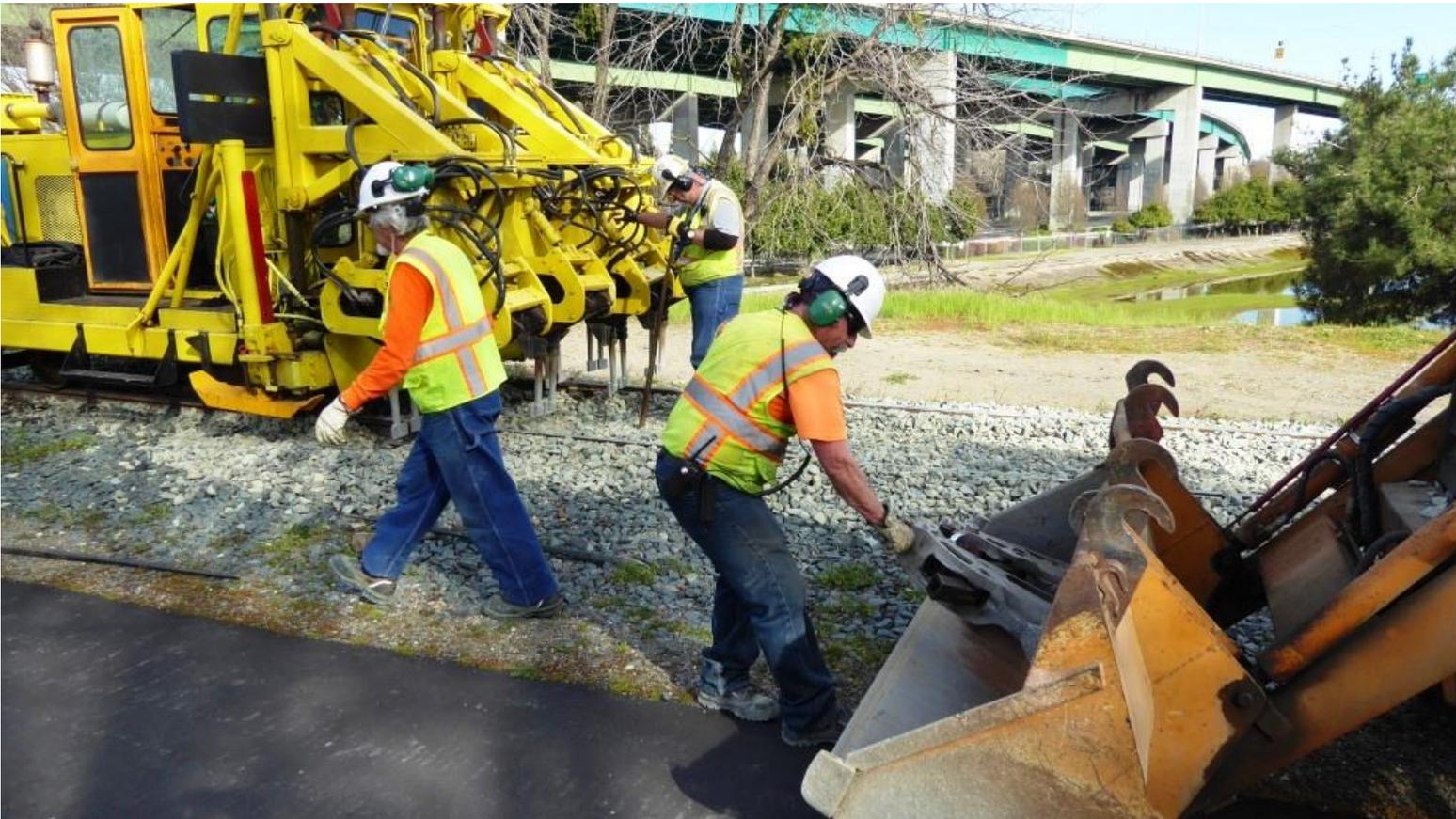
Frank and Mike W. pull jacks as Matt in the tamper approaches



Frank and Mike W. pull jacks as Mike F. guides Matt in the tamper



Alan and Joe crank on the final jack of the day as Heather signals from behind the "hound"



Joe loads track-jacks into the bucket of the back-hoe



Ready to roll: Harry and Frank on the back-hoe and front-end loader



The ballast regulator is ready to cross the UP Main back to the Shops as Conductor Heather opens a new round of negotiations with Omaha



One last task of the day: Joe, Ed, and Frank get the fire-truck started so that it can be switched-out for the ballast regulator



Ed engineers the fire-truck out onto the transfer table