

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 6, 2014. Your MOW Team faced a bit of winter, spring, and summer all in one week. So, before we get washed away by a deluge, let's get this update up and running.

It was raining cats and dogs in the Boiler Shop on Tuesday. In fact, Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Harry Voss, Alan Hardy, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, and Cliff Hayes needed to take shelter around a warm barbecue by the south-west roll-up door – one of the few relatively dry areas in the building. Not much could be done under such an inundation. So at Maintenance of Way, we turn lemons into lemonade. Pat, our Road Foreman of the Barbecue, sparked up his appliance and performed impromptu culinary magic on some bratwurst and pork-loin. A few other goodies were gathered up by the other Team members to enjoy for a well deserved evening of camaraderie. Now, that's what I call teamwork!

By Wednesday, the clouds had dissipated. Golden Apollo harnessed his chariot and drove the sun across the sky, providing perfect conditions for the Mighty MOW Weed Team to set off on a mission of death and destruction for all those pesky weeds infesting the line. Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, Heather, and Frank finished spraying the SSRR Mainline and the Setzer Line through the tunnel, to the Setzer turnout. Vibrant greens will shortly fade to shades of yellow, gold and brown. Beautiful, simply beautiful. Indeed, the Weedies deserve two gold stars each for their efforts and patience!

By Thursday, the Shops were drying out. Cliff, Mike Harris, Heather, Conductor Frank, and Alan all stopped by to accomplish great things. The goal for the evening was to return the man-lift to Old Sacramento. Two weeks ago, the man-lift limped over to the Shops after a catastrophic failure of a major engine component. Folks, we were facing a career-ending catastrophe for this vital machine. But, that just made the stakes more interesting for our crack machinations (Gene, Pat, Cliff, Mike H., Fred, Heather) who managed to turn disaster into victory and make the necessary repairs in near record time. The man-lift now has a new lease on life and is ready for duty. With it working like new, Mike H. took control for its journey back to Old Sac. Conductor Frank opened successful negotiations with Omaha for a green light across the diamonds. In no time, we had it spotted on the Business Car Spur. Also on Thursday, Alan installed the re-machined bracket to hold the east Whisker Track rail in place on the gauge plate. Cliff began the important task of cutting up old ballast regulator wings and plow as scrap. It's amazing what volunteers, with such diverse skills and dedication, can accomplish.

The light of 10,000 suns greeted our crew on Saturday morning. Yep, we fired up the light-plant to make sure that nobody missed seeing the two pink boxes of doughnuts awaiting consumption. Really, Harry Gobler, John Chandler, Mike H., Harry V., Alan, Heather, Dave, Pam Tatro, Steve Nemeth, Kent Ransom, Frank, Fred, Chris Carlson, and Mike Florentine didn't need any help finding the doughnuts. The plan for the day: continue jacking, ballasting, and tamping the new Whisker Track north of the turntable. Steve hopped on the Big Green Machine, Frank took control of the dump truck, Mike H. the front-end loader, and "Hot-rod" Harry V. tamed the back-hoe. As this was the first day of the 2014 SSRR operating season, we had to coordinate with our friends on the train crew who were using the turntable to switch out the locomotive and El Dorado. Using train coordination, we brought tamper towing the ballast hoppers into position. Frank and Mike H. brought rock over in the dump truck. Harry V. in the back-hoe loaded the ballast hoppers. Harry G. with his surveyor's transit, directed the raising of the track as Mike F., Kent, Fred, Pam, Dave, and John set the jacks, jacked the track to the appropriate level as indicated by Harry G., spread ballast from the hoppers, shoveled, shifted, and hand tamped the rock for structural support to the track before bringing the tamper in and tamping the track. This process was repeated over and over throughout the day. It was a very labor intensive job. Man, did we give the turntable a work-out. By the end of the day, we had the track nearly raised to its final level. We still have a bit of work to do before it will be serviceable. The west rail needs to be raised slightly. And the whole thing needs to settle a bit. But, the important thing is, we're right on course and ahead of schedule. The crew did a magnificent job and we retired to the Shops feeling very good about the work we did.

Speaking of the schedule, the south end of the Boiler Shop will be active on Tuesday afternoon and evening as usual. Thursday, we'll roll-up the roll-up door at 5 o'clock. Saturday, the clarion call of the doughnuts will sound at 8 o'clock a.m. Come on out if you, too, want to make a difference. Our volunteers do fantastic work. Many, many thanks to everyone who helps in keeping our railroad running by making sure there's a track for the trains to run on!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Alan, Harry V., Frank, Cliff, Heather, Gene, Pat, and Fred enjoy yummy goodness on a wet an wooly night



The man-lift is brought out for a ride on the Transfer Table



Mike H. pilots the man-lift across the diamonds to Old Sacramento



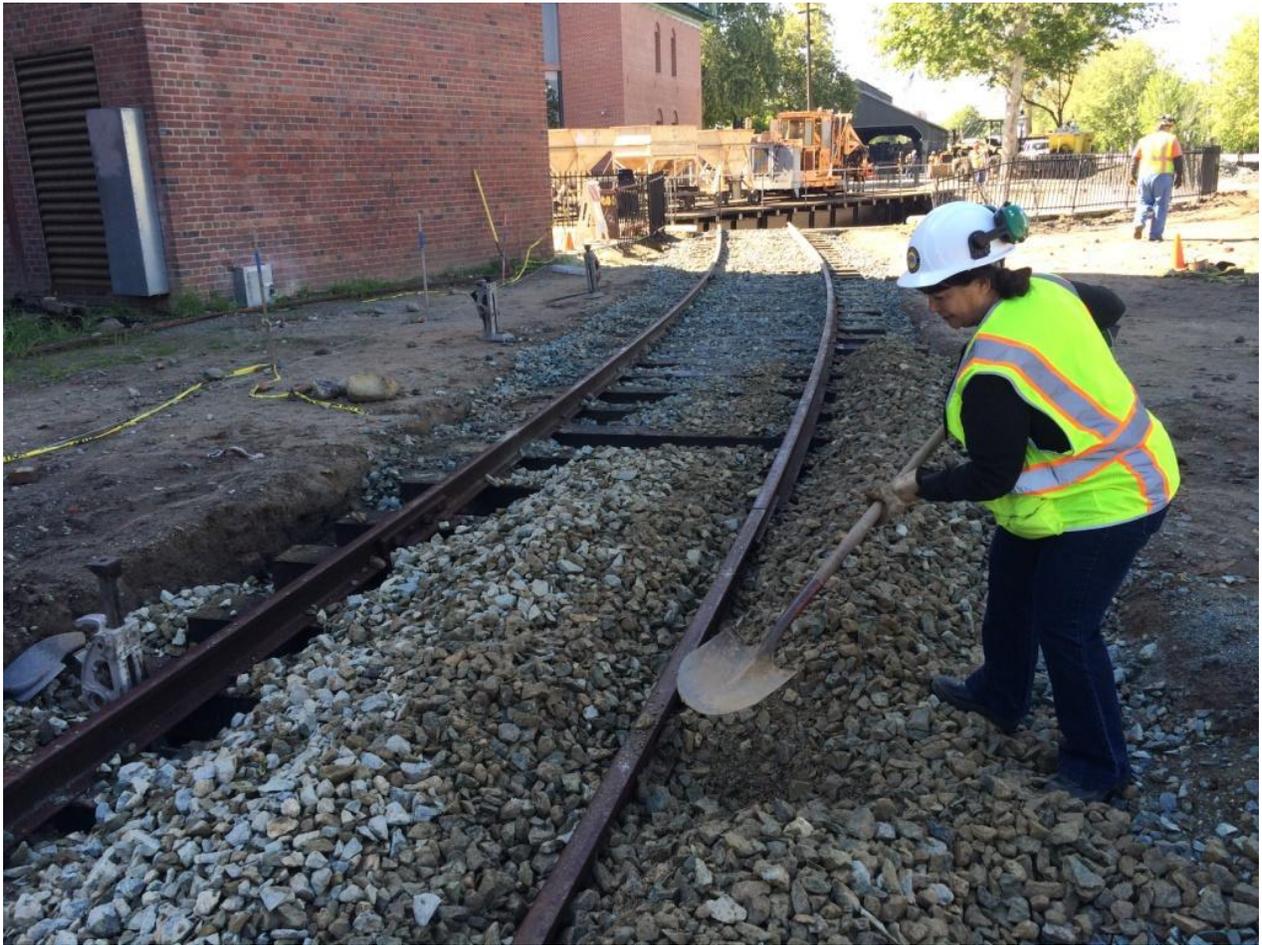
Cliff cuts up a wing from the old regulator



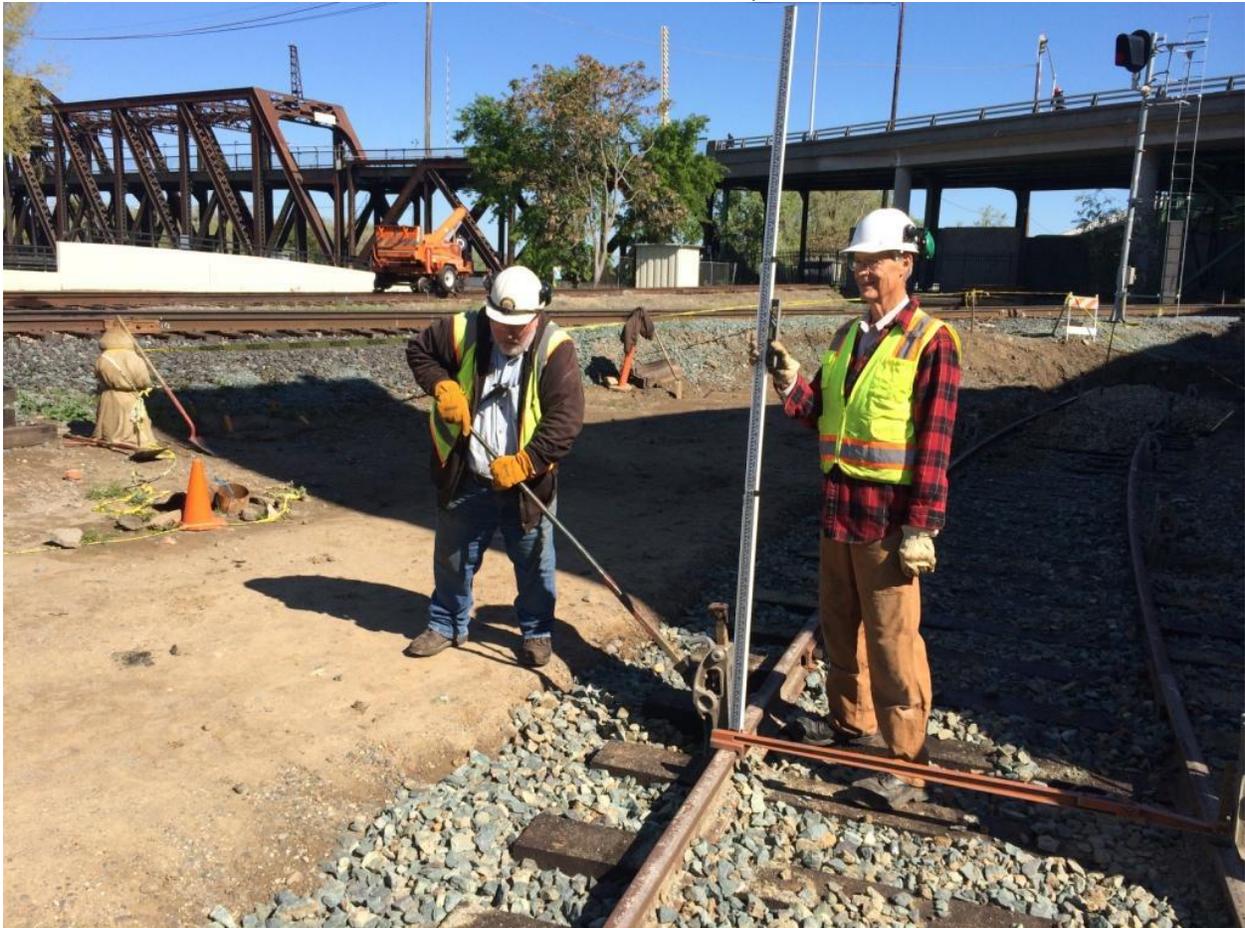
Kent, Steve, Fred, and Mike F. reporting for duty



Alan and Mike F. ballast the north end of the Whisker Track



Pam makes it look easy



Frank adjusts the jack as Kent hold the measuring stick from which Harry G. is sighting his bearings



Harry G. takes a reading on the level of the track while Chris watches his crew accomplishing their tasks like pros



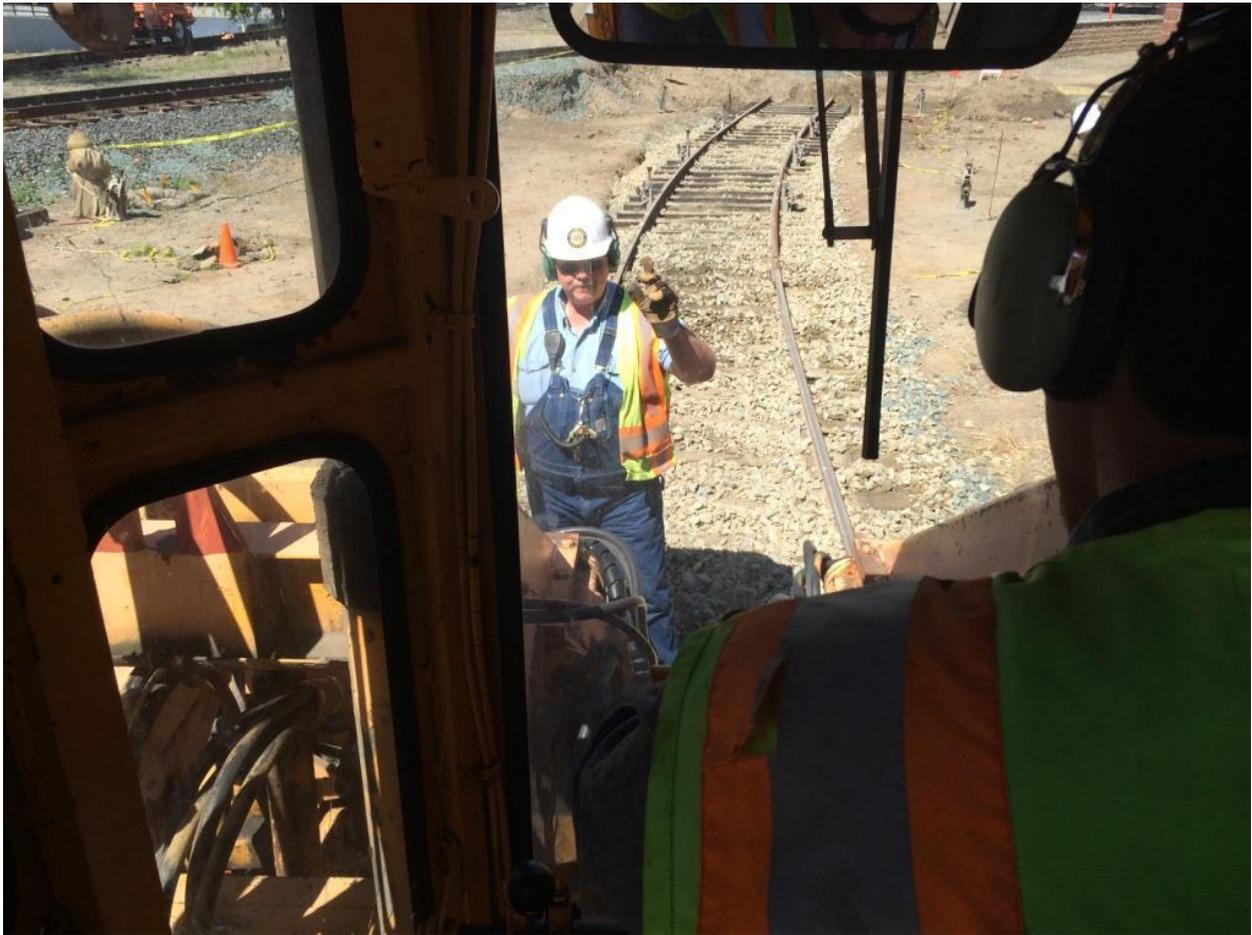
Mike F. and Mike H. struggle to jack the track as Alan measures track level



John, Steve, Mike H., and Frank spread ballast in anticipation of the tamper's arrival



"Hot-rod" Harry V. brings a load of ballast to reinforce the south-west end



John at the controls of the tamper while Chris directs the movements from the ground



By the end of the day, the Whisker Track is looking pretty good!