

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for April 23, 2017. Work on the railroad to the zoo has begun! That's right. The track between Baths and Sutterville Road is being rebuilt. So, without further ado, let's get you up to date on all of your MOW Team's activities.

Tuesday, Pat Scholzen, Matt McCracken, Gene Peck, Harry Voss, Mike Harris, Alan Hardy, Heather Kearns, Chris Carlson, and Frank Werry all made their ways to the Shops for an evening of MOW fun. Heather and Chris continued working on the front-end loader which has been out of service for a few weeks. The problem seems to be electrical in nature. On a machine like this, there is a maze of wires. But, Chris thinks he's identified the problem. Harry replaced the broken toolbox that is kept in the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck with a new one and organized the tools. Outside, work on the Switch 19 frog continued. You'll recall that we've experienced some challenges getting the newly milled wing-rails to fit within the frog's structure. So, Alan, Mike H., Matt, and Frank took it apart again to get a better look at trying to find the hang-up. First they tried loosening the bolts and adjusting the wedges (with a sledge-hammer). But, that didn't work. So, Frank, Mike H, and Matt removed all the bolts and freed the rails from the frog's structure. Mike H. brought in the forklift and Matt, Frank, and Alan lifted the rails onto the forks. They were taken to the Erecting Shop where Alan and Mike H. used grinders to grind-down the areas where we think the rails are binding. What we thought would be a rather simple project has turned slightly more complex.

The mighty Weed Team made significant progress of the aesthetic sort on Thursday. Mike Taylor, Heather, and Ed Kottal spent the day out on the line removing weed debris from the right-of-way. Mostly due to the seemingly never ending rain, weed spraying was delayed this year. By the time the weeds got doused with magical blue-brew, they were tall, dense, and reaching maturity. The blue-brew certainly did the trick but, the gnarly brown weed-stalks remained standing making for a rather ugly looking right-of-way. So, Mike T., Ed, and Heather used the field and brush mowers to chop the remains to tiny bits from Broadway past the north Miller Park turnout and from the Setzer turnout southward to the end of the overarching oak canopy and on the north side of the Sutterville Road crossing. Heather was able to clear a fair bit of track with a leaf blower near Mile Post 2.0. It is undeniable. The line looks considerably better thanks to the dedicated efforts of our mighty Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Joe Margucci, Kyle Blackburn, Frank, Harry, Alan, Heather, and Weston Snyder kept the home fires burning on Thursday. While Joe worked on restoring the tractor to service, Harry began organizing tools on the tool-caddy. Over the past few months, our rail-mounted tool cart and the tool caddy had become disheveled messes of mixed up tools. As Harry got the caddy organized, Heather, Frank, Kyle, and Weston headed to Old Sacramento to stock the motorcar and tool-cart with the necessary and proper tools. Then they headed back to the Shops where Kyle worked on restoring the vandalized whistle-boards by drilling bolt-holes in a new post onto which they'll be mounted. Weston painted a replacement switch target for one tagged by misanthropes and malcontents down the line. With that, "Quitting Time, USA!" was announced bringing to a close a very productive evening.

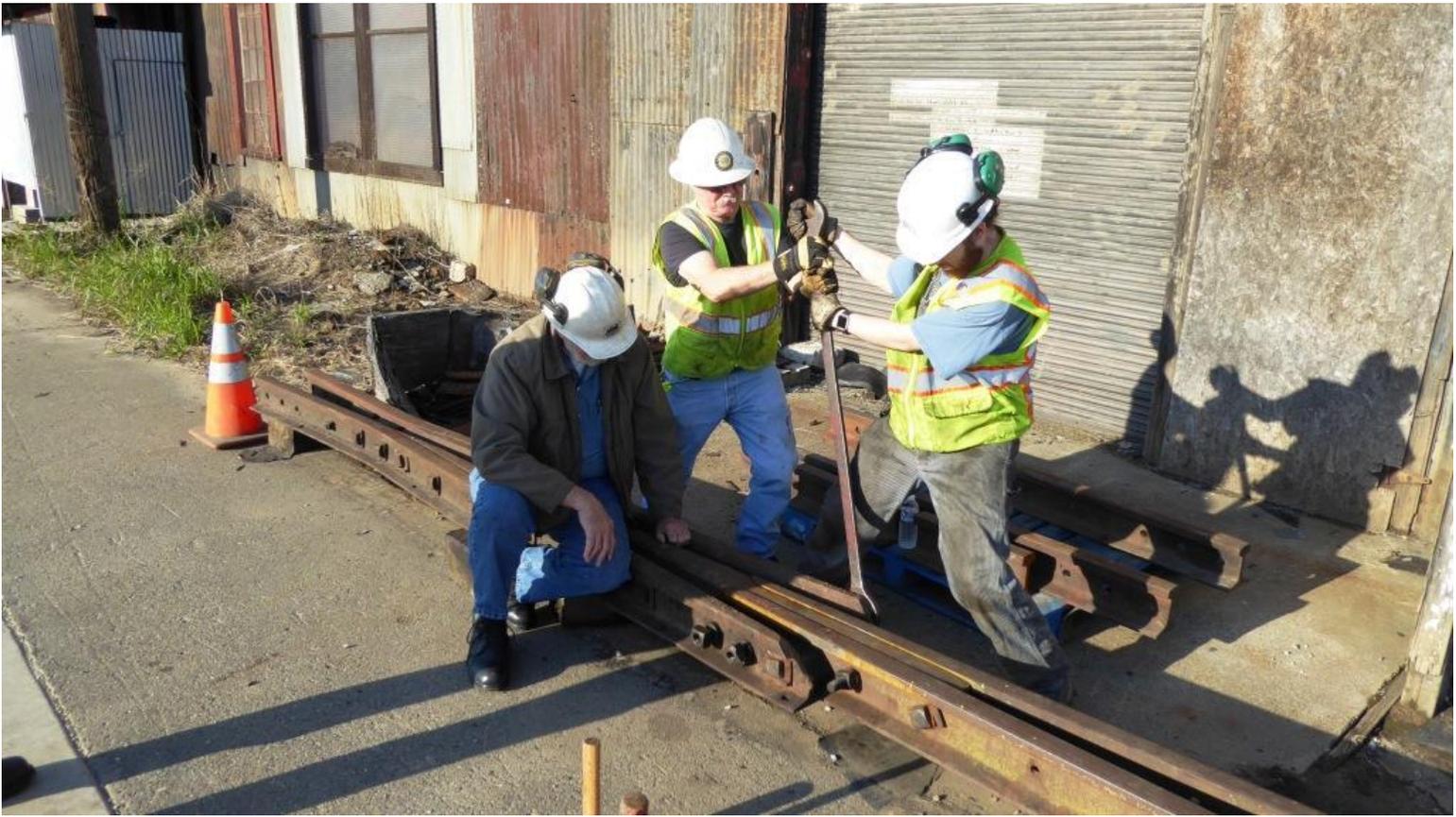
We're building a railroad to the zoo. Yes, the MOW Team got the green signal indication to start restoring the line between Sutterville Road and Baths. But, before any work could begin, Alan, Clem Meier, Michael Florentine, Mike H., Steve Nemeth, Heather, Harry, Frank, Matt, Ed, Jose Gomez, and Pam Tatro demanded their rights to doughnuts not be denied. After "sugaring-up," the Team would split into groups for the morning activity. Chris led the crew that headed down the Sutterville Line. He, Jose, Mike H., and Matt started by marking bad ties – 280 in this first round – then they deployed the spike-puller to, as you might guess, pull spikes. The rest of the gang, Pam, Ed, Frank, Alan, Clem, Mike F., Steve, Heather, and Harry headed down to Setzer to fill yet another dumpster with dead-ties. Steve ran Green Machine 2 (GM2) and Harry took out the back-hoe. Alan fired-up the tie-crane and brought it down, as well. At Setzer, Mike F. was our load-master and spent most of the morning inside the dumpster arranging the tie debris in order to maximize space. Heather, Frank, Clem, Pam, and Ed filled the back-hoe's bucket with small debris while Steve on GM2 dug into the pile with the forks to scoop up solid ties pieces. Alan used the tie-crane to stack dead ties to make it easier for Steve on GM to pick up. In an amazing feat of efficiency, the Team managed to fill yet another dumpster and, diminish Tie Mountain to a mere hillock.

After lunch, Team Tie-Disposal headed down to Sutterville to join Chris and his crew. Bev Ratzloff and Anthony Filamor joined in for some Saturday afternoon MOW fun. Spike pulling continued with Matt, Mike H., and Jose operating the spike-puller. Bev, Steve, Mike F., and Anthony gathered all the spikes that had been pulled into neat piles as they were still in pretty good shape and reusable. Over 1,100 spikes had been pulled and we didn't want to lose control of them. Steve continued marking bad ties. Ed and Anthony used sledgehammers to remove rail-anchors around the ties being pulled. Jose, Matt, and Mike H. soon reached Sutterville Road with the spike-puller. With all the spikes pulled, next week, the tie-changing can commence in earnest. Alan used the tie-crane to pull the spike-puller back to Baths where Harry was waiting with the back-hoe to lift it onto its cradle. The Team then waited for the 4 o'clock train to complete its run-around at Baths. Once the train had cleared the tracks at Baths, the "high-ball" was sounded and the MOW work-train headed back to Old Sacramento and for the big put-away. It was a good day of great accomplishment and a fine start to the Sutterville Line rebuild.

This coming week, the Team will gather as usual on Tuesday and Thursday in the evenings at the Shops. The Weed Team will head out on the line again on Thursday starting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, heavy-duty work begins down on the Sutterville Line to the Zoo. Meet for doughnuts at the Shops at 8 o'clock a.m. Thanks very much to all of the hard working dedicated volunteers of the MOW Team!

See you out on the line,

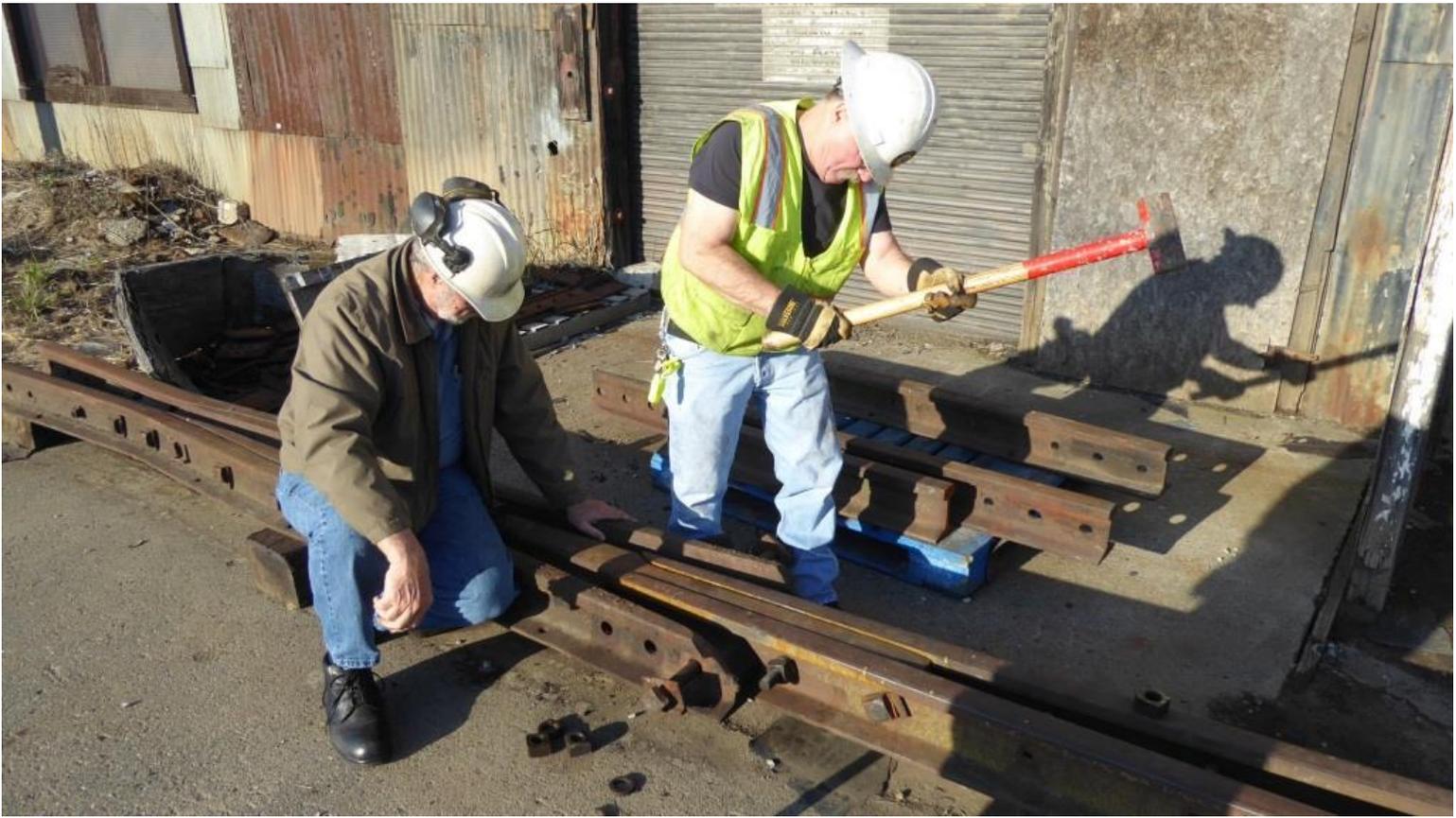
Alan, Chris, and Richard.



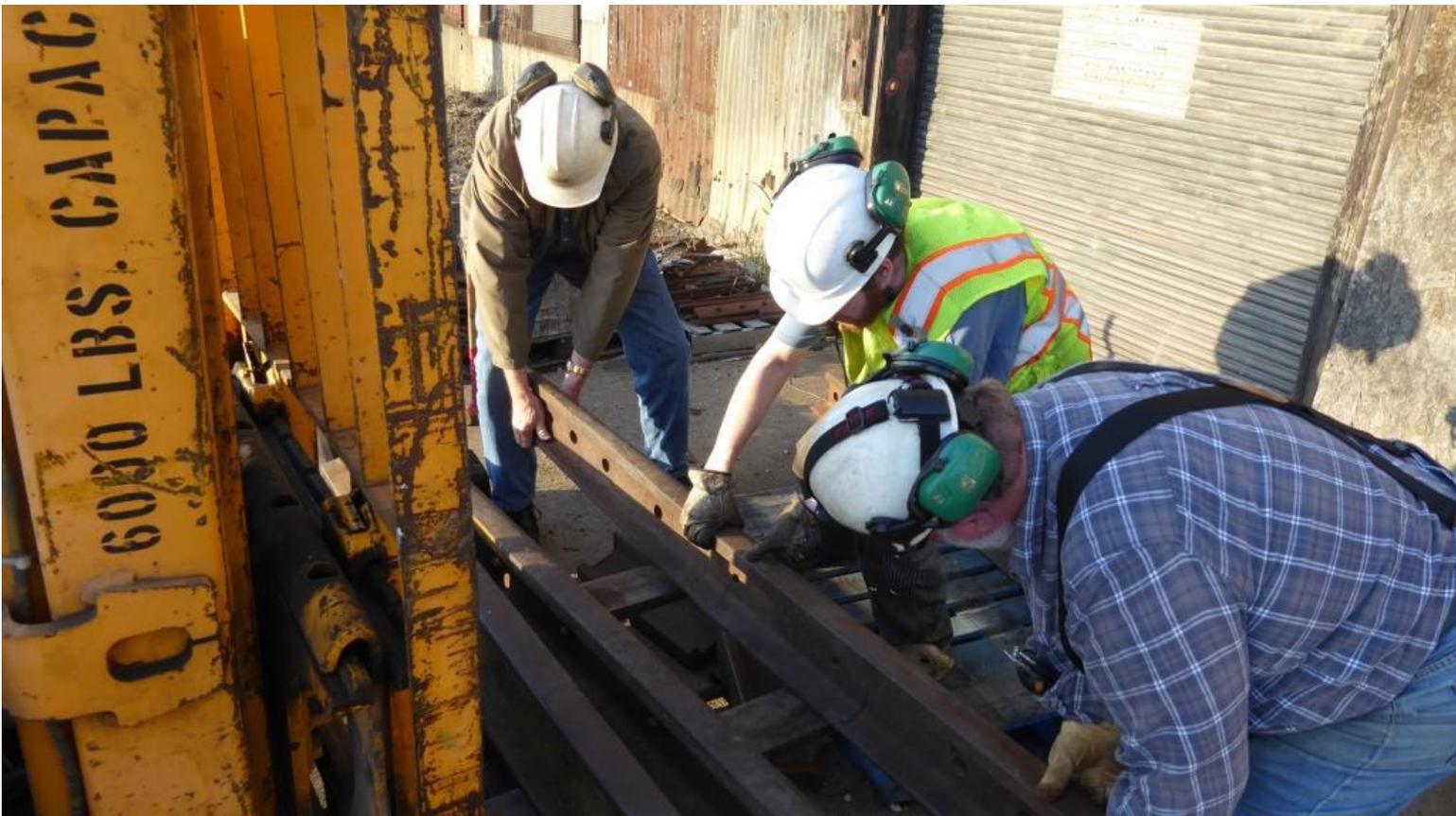
Alan watches the gap in the rail as Mike H. and Matt use double-headed power to loosen a bolt



Management lends a finger to the effort...



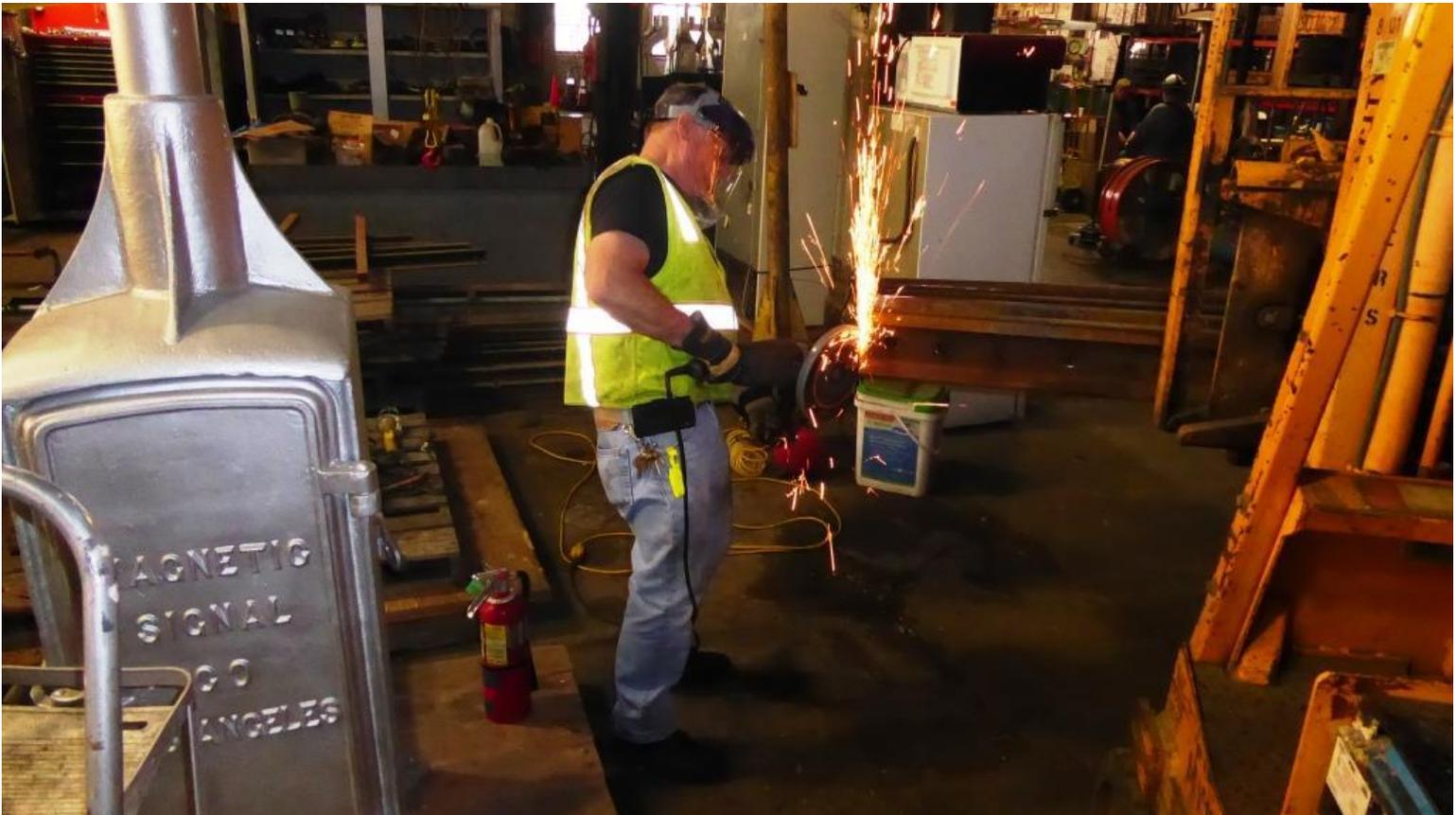
Mike uses the sledgehammer in an attempt to convince the frog to fit together



Alan, Matt, and Frank lift the wing-rail onto the forklift



Heather and Chris in the front-end loader attempt to work their ways through the maze of wires



Mike H. grinds away at the point of the milled wing-rail



Kyle and Weston bring order to the chaos in the container



Kyle drills bolt-holes in a post onto which the whistle boards will be affixed



Weston demonstrates his skills at the “target throw”...



Frank, Pam, Clem, and Steve load the back-hoe's bucket with small tie debris



Mike F., as load-master, was king of the dumpster!



Alan in the tie-crane sorted solid tie pieces into piles for GM2 to pick up



Pam, Clem, and Frank straightened out the ties Alan sorted for GM2 to come and get



Harry brings the back-hoe in from the other side and scoops up a load of tie debris in the bucket



Steve grabs a pile of dead ties assisted by Clem, Pam, and Mike F.



Steve was envious of all the fun Mike F. was having in the dumpster so, he decided to climb in



Harry brings in the next load



Although Steve had more fun than humanly possible inside the dumpster, he soon returned to his trusty steed, GM2, to dump more ties



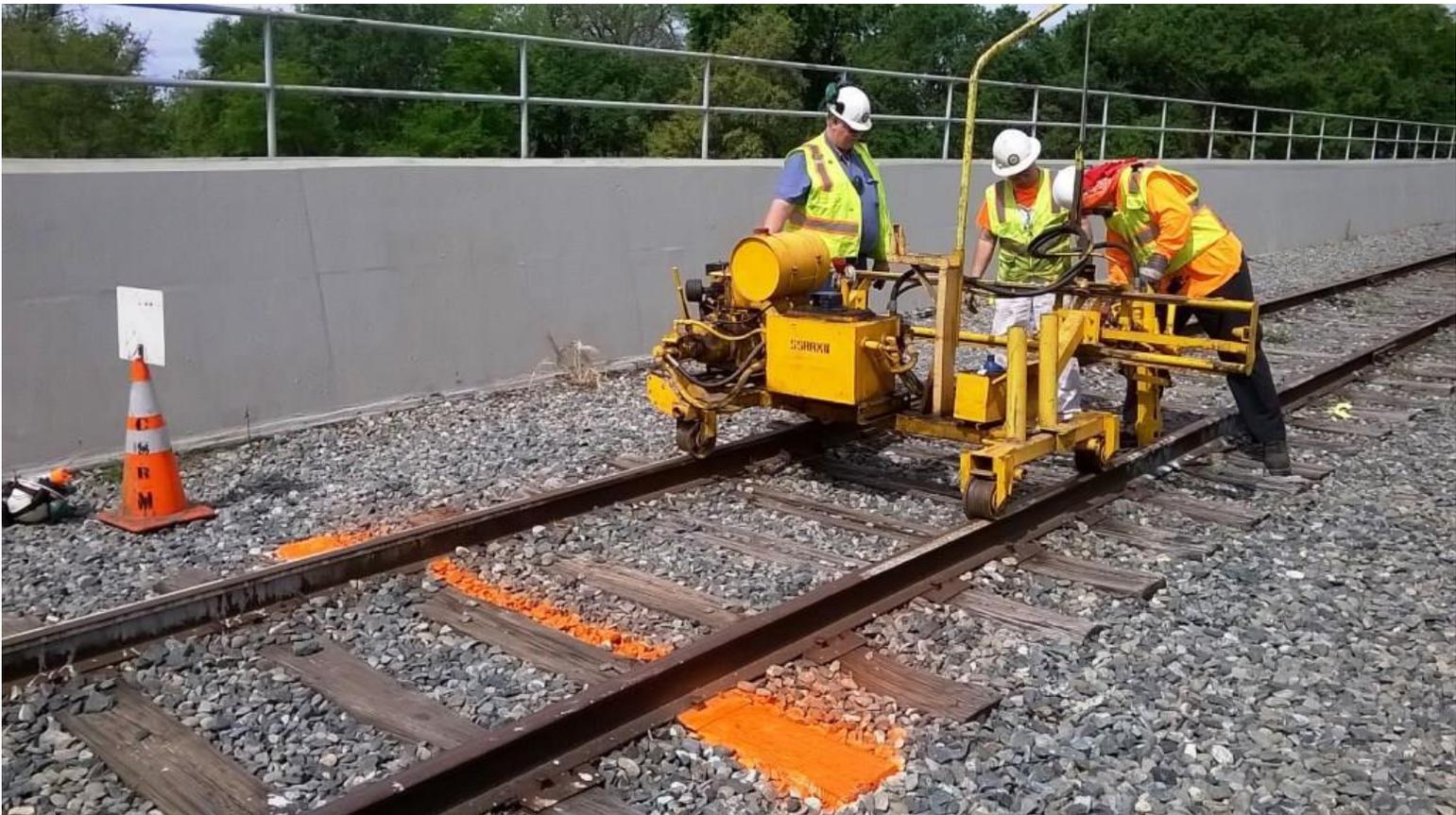
Harry scoops up the last of the tie-pile



Ed and Frank toss that final few tid-bits of ties into the back-hoe's bucket



That's it. That's all that's left of Dead Tie Mountain



Meanwhile, just south of MP 3.10 (orange tie), Chris, Mike H., and Jose pull spikes with the spike-puller



Working their way down the hill, Jose, Mike H., and Chris pull spikes



Slowly but surely, the spikes from 280 ties were pulled on Saturday



Ed knocks-out rail-anchors next to the ties being pulled



Steve continues marking bad ties while Mike F. collects spikes and tie-plates



Anthony knocks out a couple rail-anchors



Now near the bottom of the hill, Mike H. and Jose keep right on pulling spikes



Jose passes the puller's work-head over to Matt who pulled spikes on the east rail



Time to put our toys away – Alan brings in the tie-crane to lift the spike-puller's work-head off to be stowed



Did somebody say, "Doughnuts?"



Across Sutterville Road, the track is in bloom. Quick, get some blue-brew!



Heading back up the hill, Jose, Mike F., Steve, and Chris pick up spikes and tie-plates



All dress up and nowhere to go: the Team waits for the 4 o'clock train to complete its run-around at Baths