

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for May 3, 2015. This week, you MOW Team saved the railroad. Well, sort of. So, let's get right to it and start this update started before it gets any later!

Tuesday was an active day. In the morning, Frank Werry and Frederick Carr hopped into Truck 14 and headed to Rio Vista and the Western Railway Museum (WRM) to bring our tie-crane back to Sacramento. It had been on loan to the WRM for a decade or so. Now, it was time to bring it home. Frank and Fred met up with the folks from WRM and the trucking company engaged to haul it on a flat-bed. It took a bit of effort to get engine started, which was necessary in order to lower the boom. But they were successful and soon the tie crane was on its way back to Sacramento. Alan Hardy meet the caravan at the Shops and using the 15K forklift, unloaded the machine. It's now secure in the Erecting Shop ready to undergo some necessary repairs and renovations.

The mighty Weed Team was active on an exciting adventure as well on Tuesday. Mike Taylor, Heather Kearns, Dave Megeath, Joe Galipeau, and Dale Parker headed to Hood as the railroad's only ongoing effort to maintain the right-of-way on that line. The evil star-thistle empire, the Weed Team's most insidious foe, has managed to take over vast territory in the area. Mike commenced the campaign to liberate the line by spraying the star-thistle around the south end. Dave, Heather, Joe, and Dale loaded mowers and sundry equipment on the motor car consist to take on mustard patches from MP 11.2 to MP 12.0. Their spraying and mowing is taming the wilderness along the Hood Line. Chalk up another great success for the mighty Weed Team!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan, Heather, Pat Scholzen, Scott Morrison, Fred, Frank, Cliff Hayes, and Gene Peck were up to lots of good. Cliff and Fred are designing a system to make the out-board mirrors on the *Yellow Submarine* (ex-*USS Sea Tiger*) ballast vandal proof. Pat, Gene, and Scott began looking over the tie-crane to figure out what needs to be done to bring it up to snuff. Frank and Alan headed out on the line to tamp the area through Miller Park (between Switches 14 and 16). They gave the old-old tamper quite a workout and tamped an estimated 1,100 ties on Tuesday.

Thursday, Fred, Cliff, Frank, Heather, and Alan carried on with the MOW Team's noble mission. Cliff and Fred continued working on integrating anti-vandalism window shields on the *Yellow Submarine* with a means by which the out-board mirrors can be protected. Frank finished up work on the A-5 motorcar. The A-5 is destined to become the Interpretive Handcar Program's primary head-end power. Heather headed over to Old Sacramento with two drums of red-diesel to fuel-up the track machines stationed over there in preparation for our Saturday adventure out on the line.

On Saturday, the Team had to call an audible. We had planned on going back to work on brining the Miller Park Siding up to Class 2 track standards. But, we got a desperate call from the SSRR Crew Center. They were on the brink of canceling trains because they were short of crew and needed our help. Canceling trains? That's crazy talk. So, once again, your MOW Team saved the day by sending our folks over to help crew the train. But, that left us slightly short-staffed so, the decision was made to postpone the Miller Park operation until next week. No need to worry, however. There were plenty of doughnuts on hand which were on the premises by 6:30 a.m. Soon thereafter, Alan, Michael Florentine, Steve Nemeth, Scott, Mike Miller, Pam Tatro, Clem Meier, Mike Willis, Chris Carlson, and Harry Voss were enjoying the bounty of the pink box. The new plan was to split into two teams. Chris, Scott, and Harry on Team Tie-Shear, would remain in the Shops and install the "kicker" cylinder, while Steve, our Designated Supervisor of the Grease Bucket, would lead "Team Grease Bucket" over to Old Sac. to service the switches. Every year, the switches need to be lubricated, adjusted, and serviced – a task we had yet to do this year. Steve, the three Mikes, Pam, Clem, and Alan began digging muck and debris that had accumulated around the various switches. At Switch 2, the House Track Switch, they noticed that the gauge-plate on the head-block had become catawampus and needed straightening. The Team pulled the spikes on the plate and managed to get it back into correct alignment by brute force of human muscle. By the end of the day, Team Grease Bucket had managed to service Switches 1 through 7 all while dodging locomotives and switching moves by the train crews. Over in the Shops, Scott and Chris got the kicker cylinder installed on the tie-shear. This was quite a task, indeed. But, they got it in place and tested. This hydraulic cylinder has been completely rebuilt and was the last piece of the puzzle to get in place for finishing work on the shear. It's now ready to deploy, which it will next Saturday. Despite the complete change in plans, it was a very good day for the Team.

Tuesday, the mighty Weed Team will spend the day taking on invasive species along the SSRR Mainline. The evening Shops crew will gather yet again on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock. Saturday, the Team will head down the line to re-start the work on the Miller Park Siding. Although last Saturday's plans were revised, in seriousness, the MOW Team is always ready and willing to help out on the Railroad. After all, it's why we're out there – no train, no need for track. To the fantastic volunteers, thank you very much for your flexibility, resilience, and dedication.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Upon their triumphant return from Rio Vista with their prize, Frank and Fred stand beside the tie crane



Frank and Alan tamp the Mainline through Miller Park



Heather operating the pump for fueling the tamper



Cliff working on his designs for security shields



Frank finishing up work on the A-5 motorcar



Chris and Scott install the kicker-cylinder on the tie shear



Designated Supervisor of the Grease Bucket, Steve, manages "Team Grease Bucket" as work begins on Switch 2



Stand back! Mike F. has the grease brush and is on a rampage!



Mike W. removes debris from between the points and stock-rail



Hmmm. Something's amiss. That gauge plate looks a bit off-kilter



Yep, the gauge-plate is askew



That's better. Team Grease Bucket makes it right!