

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for June 21, 2015. It was an exciting week for your MOW Team. We welcomed a new member to the MOW mechanical family! More on that in a bit. But first, there's lots to update you on so, let's get started.

The mighty Weed Team poured their hearts out – with chemical defoliant – on Tuesday for a successful showdown with Equisetum Light Horse (a.k.a. “horsetail” plant) along the SSRR Mainline. Mike Taylor, Dave Megeath, and Heather Kearns donned their special protective suits and charged forth against the nagging sprouts. Indeed, the Weedies had a very successful morning spraying miscellaneous weeds, including the insidious puncture vine from R Street to Baths. For those of you who attended the Part 214 Training sessions last winter, you'll know that this Team of volunteers undergoes intense training and adheres to strict regulations regarding the application of defoliating agents. They are a dedicated Team, indeed, who do a fantastic job for our railroad.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan Hardy, Gene Peck, Mike Harris, Pat Scholzen, Cliff Hayes, and Scott Morrison had plenty to do. Scott, Alan, Gene, and Mike H. diagnosed what caused old-old tamper to break-down out on the line. Mike H. descended in the pit to work from beneath the machine while Scott and Gene worked from above. It didn't take them long to figure out the problem and it doesn't look good. Alas, the old machine will be side-lined for a good while. Cliff and Pat continued building protective shields for the tie-crane. They got the final engine shield built and installed. Although much got accomplished, it was a bit of a melancholy evening as we learned our “old-reliable” tamper will remain out of service for the foreseeable future.

A major milestone for the MOW Team was reached on Thursday. Delivered unto us was a *Nordberg Super “B” Spiker*, a machine that will automate the nipping and spiking process when changing out ties. The MOW Team, in concert with the CSRM Foundation, has been working quietly for nearly a year to acquire this machine. Its acquisition is the final step in the mechanization of the tie-changing process and will eliminate a highly labor intensive step, namely the nipping and spiking of ties. Thanks to Alan's persistence and the Foundation's financing, the machine belongs to us. We extend our sincere gratitude to Cheryl Marcell, CEO of the Foundation, as well as to all the Foundation's members, board, and employees who have demonstrated such support and confidence in the MOW Team. So, of course, in the evening Alan, Joe Rivera, Heather, Frank, and Mike H. wanted to take it for a spin. Getting it to move was the first challenge as the owner's isn't what one might characterize as “extensive.” But, as we began flicking and twisting unlabeled switches and valve-levers, we figured it out. Forward-ho! The Super B was on the move and headed south on the transfer table for some experimentation. Joe and Alan were at the controls. Frank and Heather spotted alongside the machine giving the blow-by-blow of what was happening. Mike H. climbed on top of the machine to make various adjustments. The result: two spikes were bent and several more driven. The machine needs a little work before it can be deployed on the line. But, it will prove a tremendous addition to the MOW Team fleet.

“All hands on spikes” was the plan for Saturday at Miller Park. Over 100 ties needed spikes. Gathering in the Shops were Harry Voss, Alan, three Mikes: Florentine, Harris, Miller; Conductor Frank, and Clem Meier. All hail Doughnutia, the goddess of doughnuts, who bestowed her blessings upon the Team with a large pink box. Matt Blackburn joined us a little later and demonstrated that he had listened during Part 214 training by *aggressively* seeking a job briefing. First up: moving the tie-crane and new-old tamper over to Old Sac. The tie-crane would be spotted on the 150 Track while the tamper sent out on the line along with scarifier, Kalamazoo tug, and A-6 motorcar work-train. At Miller Park, Mike H., Clem, Matt, and Mike M. started by setting spikes. Mike F. and Frank deployed the pneumatic spikers. Harry piloted the A-6 shoving the air-compressor while Matt and Clem guided the hoses. Those spikers weigh over 60 pounds each and hauling them up and down the line is a chore in and of itself. Throughout the day, everyone took turns setting spikes and spiking. Kneeling on rock (which gets hot really fast), to set spikes by hand tie after tie after tie, is a time consuming and cumbersome process. So, the Team is very much looking forward to the Super B spiker coming on line. In the afternoon, the rail-lifter was deployed for the plating of about a half-dozen ties that got missed when old-old tamper broke-down on top of them. A bit later, the process of leveling the track began. There is a bit of a cross-level issue at Miller Park where the west rail is lower than the east. The new-old tamper has a jacking system that can fix cross-level issues. Alan operated the tamper while Mike M. and Mike H. guided him from the ground. It was a very hot day but, by late afternoon, over 240 spikes were set and driven. We're heading into the final furlong of this project. About 30 ties need to be spiked. Then, we'll bring in the formerly pink ballast regulator to fill in all holes with rock and “dress” the ballast after which, tamper will finish leveling the track. At that point, the line will be ready to reopen. It's been a long, difficult, and often frustrating project. But, in the end, it will be worth it. The track through Miller Park will be stronger, more stable, and most importantly, provide much safer conditions for our volunteers and passengers.

The MOW Team sends a big shout-out to our good friends to Joe Galipeau, Mike Gaulke, Al Utzig, and Paul Helman of the Signal Department. As we are working within the south approach at Front Street, the system must be deactivated and operated manually for the trains. The Signal Department's support has been critical to this project. Many thanks to Dale Parker and the Signals Team for their help!

This week, Tuesday and Thursday Shops crew will gather at or before 5 o'clock p.m. Saturday, it's back to Miller Park. Meet in the Erecting Shop at 8 o'clock a.m. There's proverbial light at the end of the Miller Park tunnel. Many, many thanks to the mighty volunteers of the MOW Team. You've all gone “above and beyond” on this project. You and the entire railroad can be proud of your accomplishments.

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



Mike T. and Dave prepare for their showdown with *Equisetum Light Horse*



Dave takes aim...



Cliff cutting metal screening to form a. engine shield for the tie-crane



Mike H. in the pit under old-old tamper diagnosing the cause of the recent unpleasantness...



Scott reviewing the old-old tamper's schematics



The Super "B" arrives at the Shops



Joe and Alan take the Super B out for a spin



Conductor Frank send the tie-crane and new-old tamper over the UP Main to Old Sacramento



Mike M. struggles with all his might to roll a tie up-hill end-over-end. Now that's dedication!



Red zone! Harry adjusts the A-6 motorcar's brakes



Signal Department's, Joe Galipeau, Mike Gaulke, and Al Utzig manned the Front Street grade-crossing warning system



Synchronized-spiking: Frank and Mike F. take the first spiking shift. Those things weigh 60 pounds each – plus hoses...



Matt nips the tie up as Mike F. resets a spike that had been out of position



Spike team two: Mike M. and Mike F. handle the spikes. Mike H. and Clem handle the hoses



Here come da train! SP 6051 on the Miller Park Siding passes our work site



Spike-team 3: Frank and Mike H. get the call...



Matt, Clem, and Mike F. take one of their legally required six 10-minute breaks per hour...



Mike F. and Frank use the rail-lifter to insert tie-plates



Matt, Mike H., Mike F., and Frank return the rail-lifter to its carriage



Leveling the track: the new-old tamper has a track-jacking system with which proper cross-level can be achieved