

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 12, 2018. Your MOW Team battled the smoke and heat, as well as a few trees, this week as it continues on the road to progress. So, let's clear the air right now by getting this update underway.

A brown smoky hue hung over the Rail Yards on Tuesday as Alan Hardy, Mike Harris, Joe Margucci, Heather Kearns, Cliff Hayes, Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Jack Shrive, Kyle Blackburn, Gene Peck, and Samantha Hauck arrived on scene. Pat, Cliff, Gene, and Samantha worked on shaping steel for building anti-vandalism shields for the ride-on spiker. Our master metallurgic magician, Cliff, tutored with Samantha on her metal-working skills while building a shield over the engine compartment. With the mighty Weed Team commencing its 2018 tree trimming season on Thursday, they'd need a couple of flatcars and the Kalamazoo to haul their equipment over in Old Sacramento. So, Alan, Mike H., Joe, Heather, Chris, Jack, and Kyle headed over for a big shuffle of machines and to rearrange everything for easier access. Chris gathered the flatcars from the temporary track at the north end of the Erecting Shop with the forklift which Jack pulled with the Kalamazoo. Conductor Heather conducted them across the UP Main. Alan fired up the tie-crane, which was spotted on the North Turntable Lead, and moved it out of the way. Mike H. got the tamper running. Kyle and Joe handled the switching. Jack and Heather positioned the flatcars on the North Turntable Lead with the Kalamazoo then grabbed the ballast hopper cars tied-down on the 150-Track and took them back to Setzer. Chris hopped on the Jackson 125 tie-exchanger to move it off the 150-Track followed by the scarifier and Mike H. in the tamper. The tie-crane then moved up the hill behind the tamper, 125, and scarifier. Everything was now set up for a quick and easy departure of the Weed Team on Thursday morning.

Indeed, the mighty Weed Team reconvened from its Summer Recess on Thursday and opened tree trimming season. Mike Taylor, Dave Wolf, Dave Megeath, Ed Kottal, and Steve Wilson reassembled with great fanfare. The Weedies gathered their necessary materials and headed south to Mile Post 2.8. Dave M. climbed into the man-lift's bucket and took a flight over the SSRR Mainline like a purple martin in spring. As Dave M. sliced and diced through wayward branches, Mike T, Dave W., Steve, and Ed grabbed the debris and ran it through the chipper. They tackled ground-level bushes, as well. Indeed, it had been a great start to the 2018 tree trimming season for the amazing all-volunteer Weed Team.

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Alan, Heather, Chris, Joe, and Mike H. were ready for the evening's activities. It was really hot and smoky on Thursday. So, the Team worked inside on organizing the rail-mounted materials car, which frankly, was a mess. Joe, Chris, Alan, and Mike H. began by sorting rail-anchors by rail-weight. Next, they took on organizing tie-plates and joint-bars by size. Because they were becoming overwhelmed by the fun, Mike H., Joe, and Chris decided to dampen their enthusiasm by heading out on the line to take precise measurements of the frog at Switch 20. As you may recall, Jim Bays of the Mechanical/Restoration Shop is crafting new wing-rails for the Switch 19 frog and these measurements were needed to assist in this project. While at Bath, Joe pointed to a couple upstanding spikes, so he and Chris pounded them into place. With the evening light fading, they headed back to the Shops to cool down and thus, concluded another successful evening.

Heather, Joe, Pam Tatro, and Michael Florentine deserve special commendation for arriving extra early and sacrificing their doughnuts in order to set everything up for the day's work on the new switch behind the Museum. That's right, instead of doughnuts, Heather opened the Kalamazoo and brought it over to the Shops as Joe, Pam, and Mike F. got the work-train out on the transfer table and ready to roll. Well, not to worry, Alan, Mike Harris, Ed, John Rexroth, Harry Voss, Mike Miller, and Samantha saved some for them. Joining the Team on Saturday was Harry Gobler, our trusty professional engineer, who would survey the site of the new track diverging from the new switch. While Harry G. and Alan took sightings and levels of the job site, Mike H., Joe, Samantha, Pam, and Heather joined forces to become a human ballast regulator. They moved and spread tons of rock by hand to really dress the switch nicely. Mike F., Mike H., Mike M., Joe, Ed, Heather, and Alan got the head-block leveled, gauge plate positioned, and spiked. Then they set the special switch tie-plates and "rattle-brackets" that brace the stock-rail. Mike M., Mike F., Pam, Ed, and John began gauging and curving the diverging track. Track-jacks were employed to spread the rails into gauge. Spikes were set and driven. Of course, Mike F. had to defy modern technology and drive spikes the ol' fashioned way – by hand with a spike maul. As the Team gauged the frog off the guard-rail, the guard-rail needed to be plated and spiked. Guard-face and guard-check were measurements from the guard-rail to frog were confirmed and spiking began. Next, the Team located and arranged the proper "hook-plates" for use under the frog. There are two plates per tie with opposing hooks to hold the frog in place and maintain gauge. Each plate throughout the frog is a different length which proved quite the puzzle to put together. But, the Team figured it out and got the frog permanently secured. Once the frog was secure, work on gauging the diverging track could continue. Mike M., Joe, and Sam employed track-jacks again to spread the diverge into gauge from against the frog. The curve is started and in gauge and ready for construction of the adjacent track to begin.

Throughout the day, MOW Team members Jack, Kyle, and Matt McCracken, who were serving on the train crew, stopped by during their breaks for a little MOW fun. It became like a talk-show with different guests for each segment. They all took the opportunity to drive spikes and help as they could again proving the draw of working with MOW. With the switch now pretty much put together, the Team packed up its wares and headed back to the Shops. Heather took the Kalamazoo and MOW work-train over the UP Main. The Team is nearly done with construction of the switch. It is looking fantastic. In fact, it looks so good that one might mistake it for being built by professionals!

This coming week, the Team will gather on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock for evenings of MOW fun. Saturday, doughnuts will be on site by 8 o'clock for sure (likely much earlier). It is the people of the MOW Team that make it so special. These wonderful folks don't just volunteer but are great friends who love working together to build a better railroad. It's an honor and privilege to work alongside them all.

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Cliff and Samantha work on the forming a door in the security shield for the ride-on spiker (behind them)



Samantha brings the 4th of July to the Shops!



Kyle throws Switch 4 so that Alan can move the tie-crane off the North Turntable Lead



Mike H. brings starts up the tamper



In the red haze of a smoky Tuesday evening, Jack and Heather bring the Kalamazoo pulling flatcars over to Old Sacramento from the Shops



After depositing the flatcars on the North Turntable Lead, Heather and Jack in the Kalamazoo pick up the hoppers for their return to Setzer



Kyle and Mike H. switch the tamper and tie-crane around



Joe guides Mike H. in the tamper to its stopping point



And now, Joe directs Chris on the 125 to a stop



Organizing the materials car proved to be more fun than Joe, Mike H., and Chris could handle



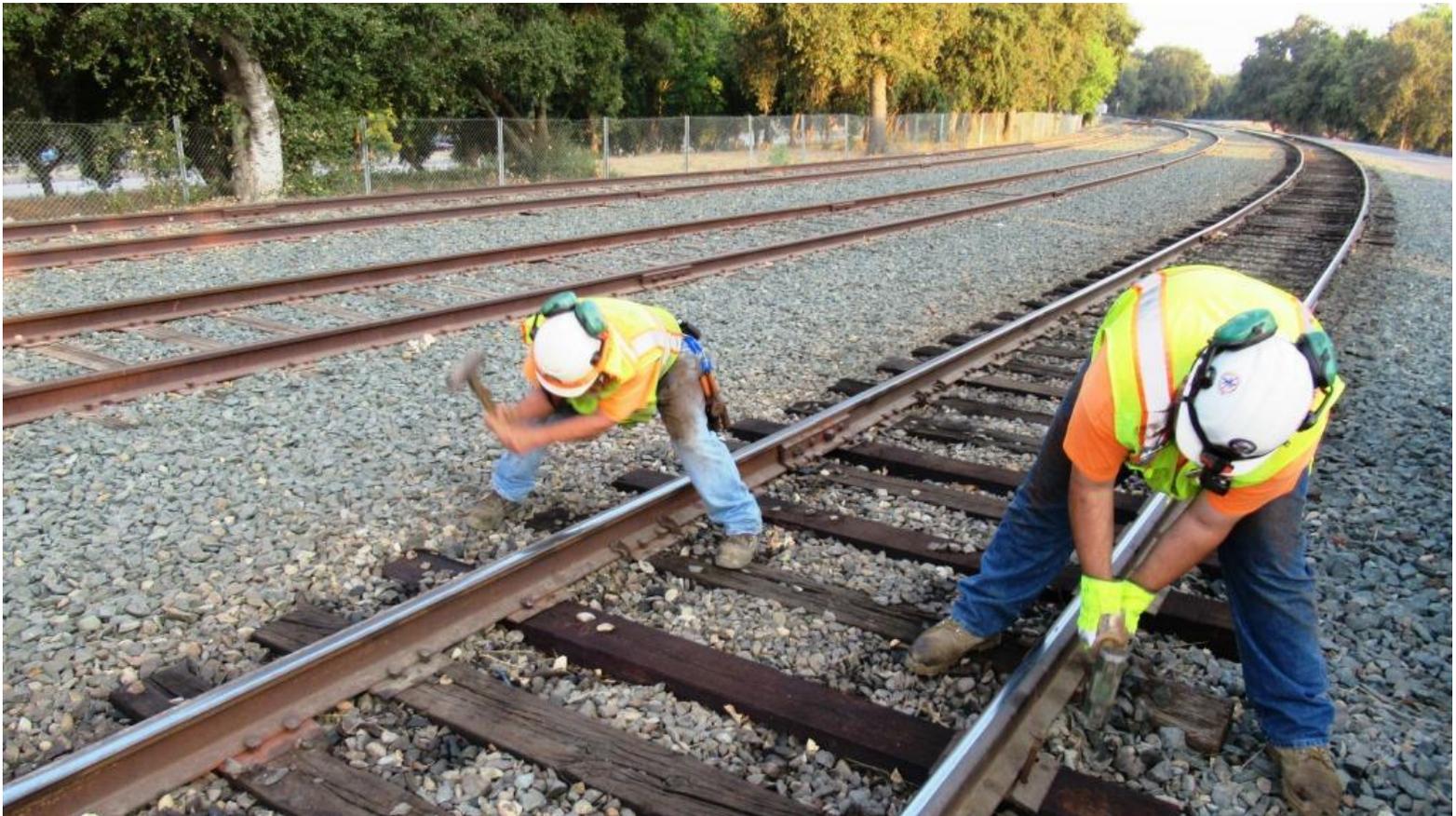
Thrill of sorting rail-anchors was so much fun that Mike H. and Chris decided they needed to save some of it for others...



Joe, Chris, and Mike H. take measurements of the frog at Switch 20, which is identical to that being restored at Switch 19



Why lookie there – Chris, Mike H., and Joe point out that the rail-spread is exactly what it's supposed to be!



After all that fun of sorting rail-anchors, Joe and Chris try to dampen their enthusiasm by driving spikes in the 100-degree weather



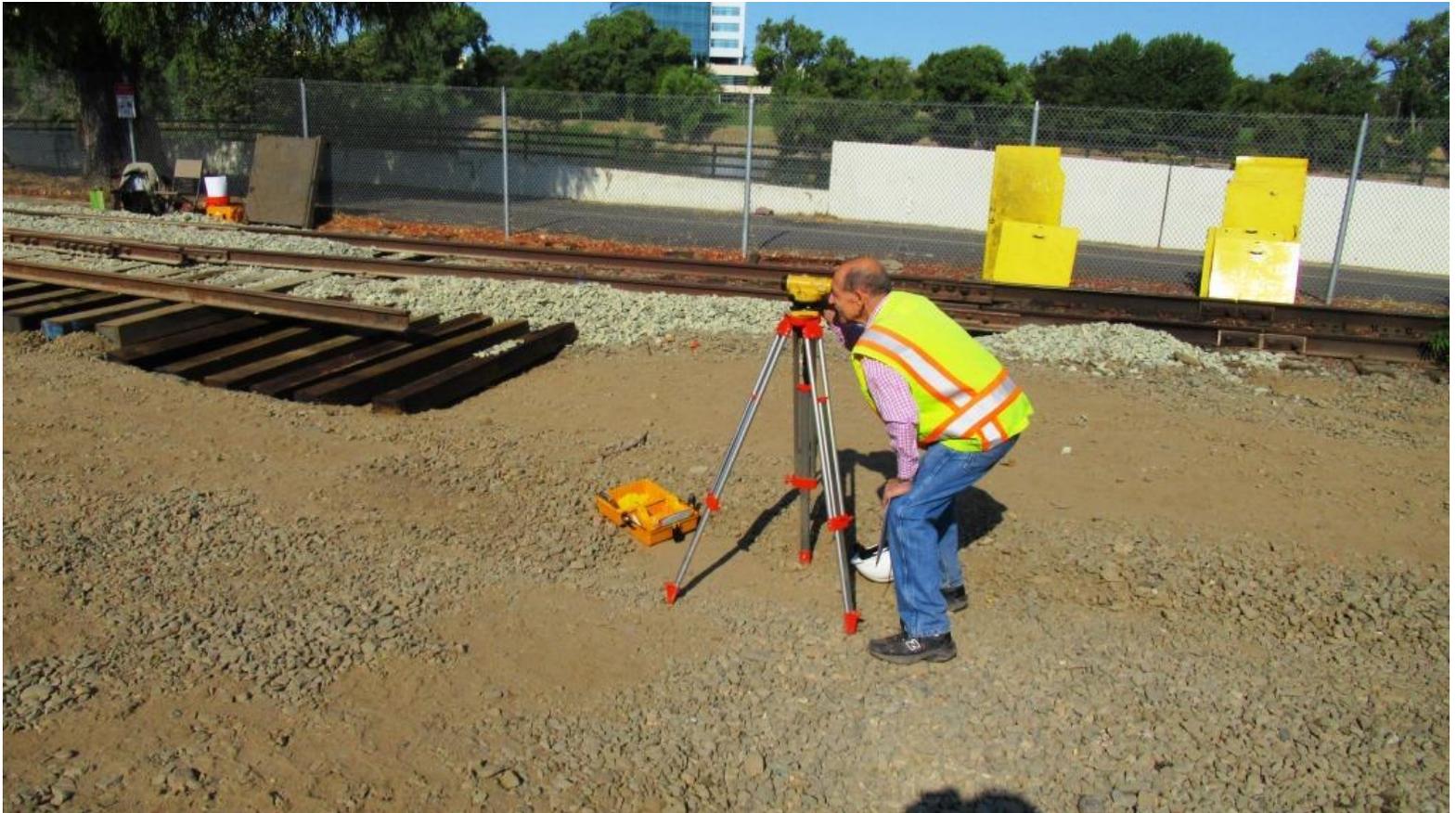
In the pre-doughnut light, Heather pilots the Kalamazoo across the UP Main to pick up the work-train at the Shops



Mike H. adds another pallet of switch-plates to the flatcar



Heather and Mike H. got a quick green signal indication as the Kalamazoo pulls the work-train to Old Sacramento



Harry Gobler takes sightings with the theodolite



After soaking the EIC by the first blow-down, the Granite Rock 10 corrected its aim towards the Kalamazoo and gave it a nice, hot bath



The GR 10's blow-down scoured dirt and oily grime off the Kalamazoo and work-train (and EIC)



Harry G. and Alan take measurements



Mike H. works as a human ballast-regulator



Alan, Ed, and Heather work on the positioning of the switch-points relative to the gauge-plate



Pam and Mike H. spread rock



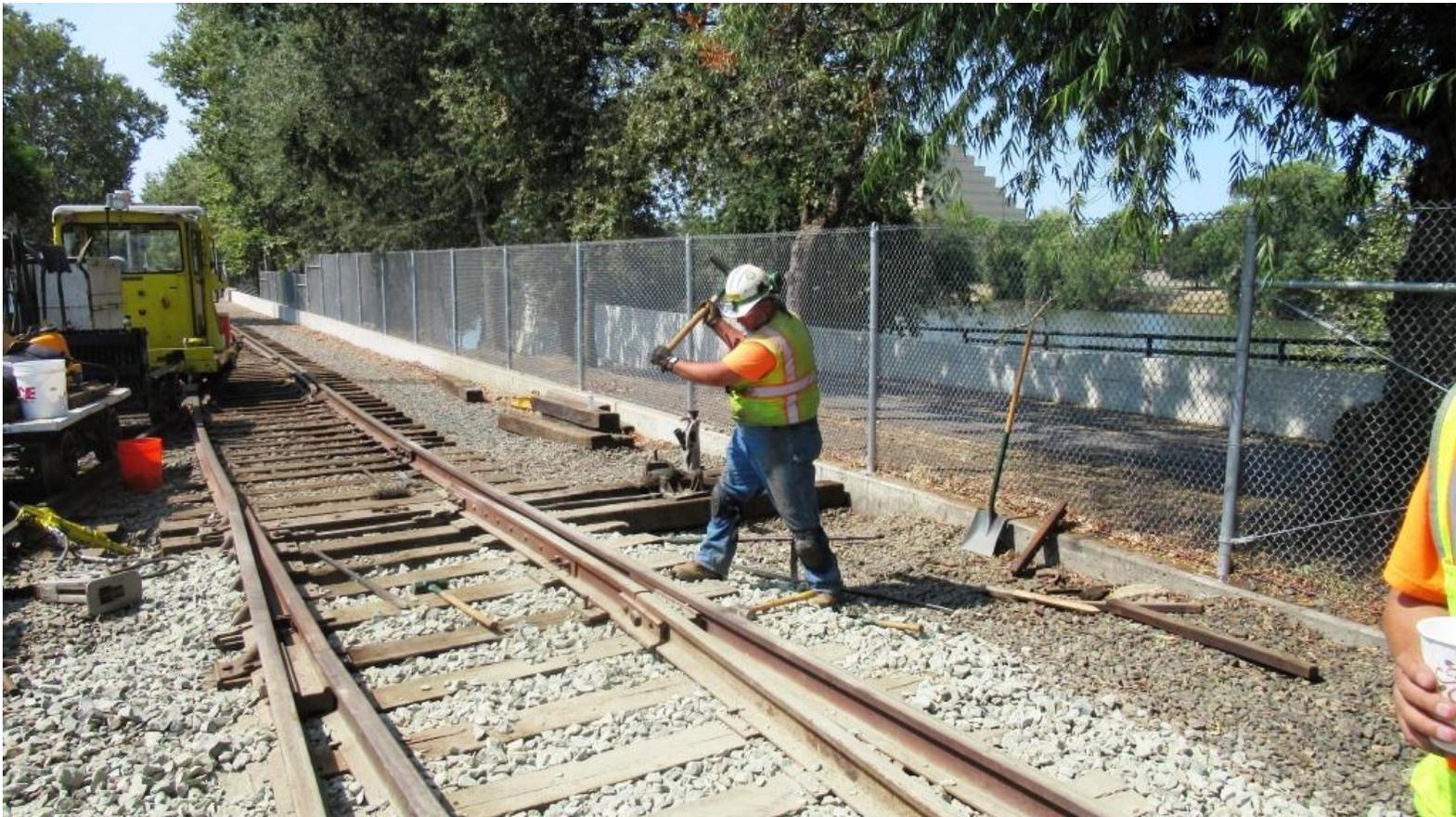
Mike F., Ed, Mike H., and Joe clear rock from under the switch-rod



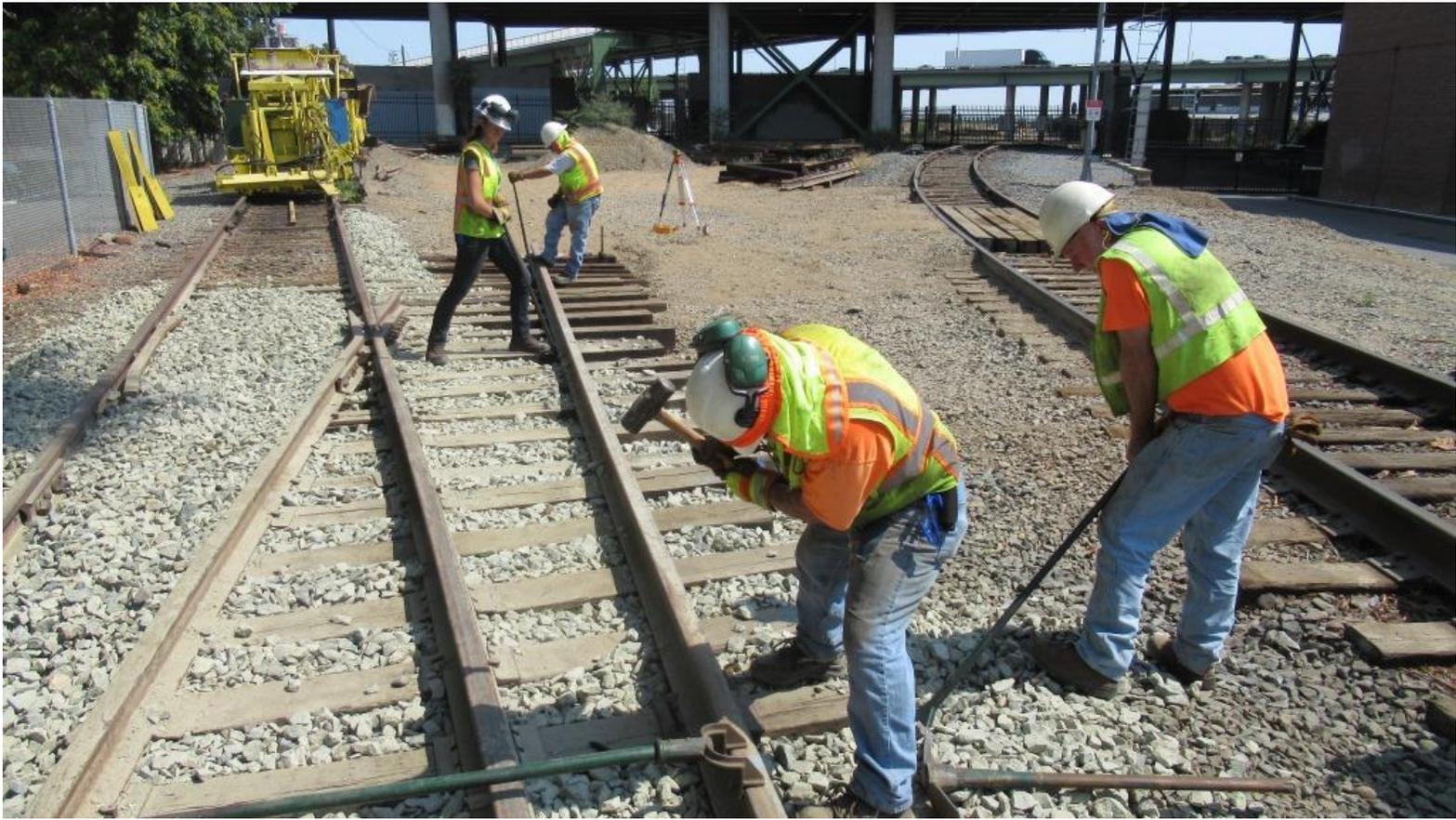
Mike M. uses a track-jack to lift the east side of the head-block as Alan checks for level



Batman keeps a close eye on Ed as he uses the hydraulic spike-driver to drive spikes



Mike F. again shuns modern technology for the tried-and-true method



Gauging of the diverging track begins, Mike H. and Samantha use lining bars to lever the rail out as Mike M. nips the tie for Joe who sets spikes



Mike M. uses the "Steve tool" to hold a spike as Ed gets ready to drive it with the hydraulic spike driver



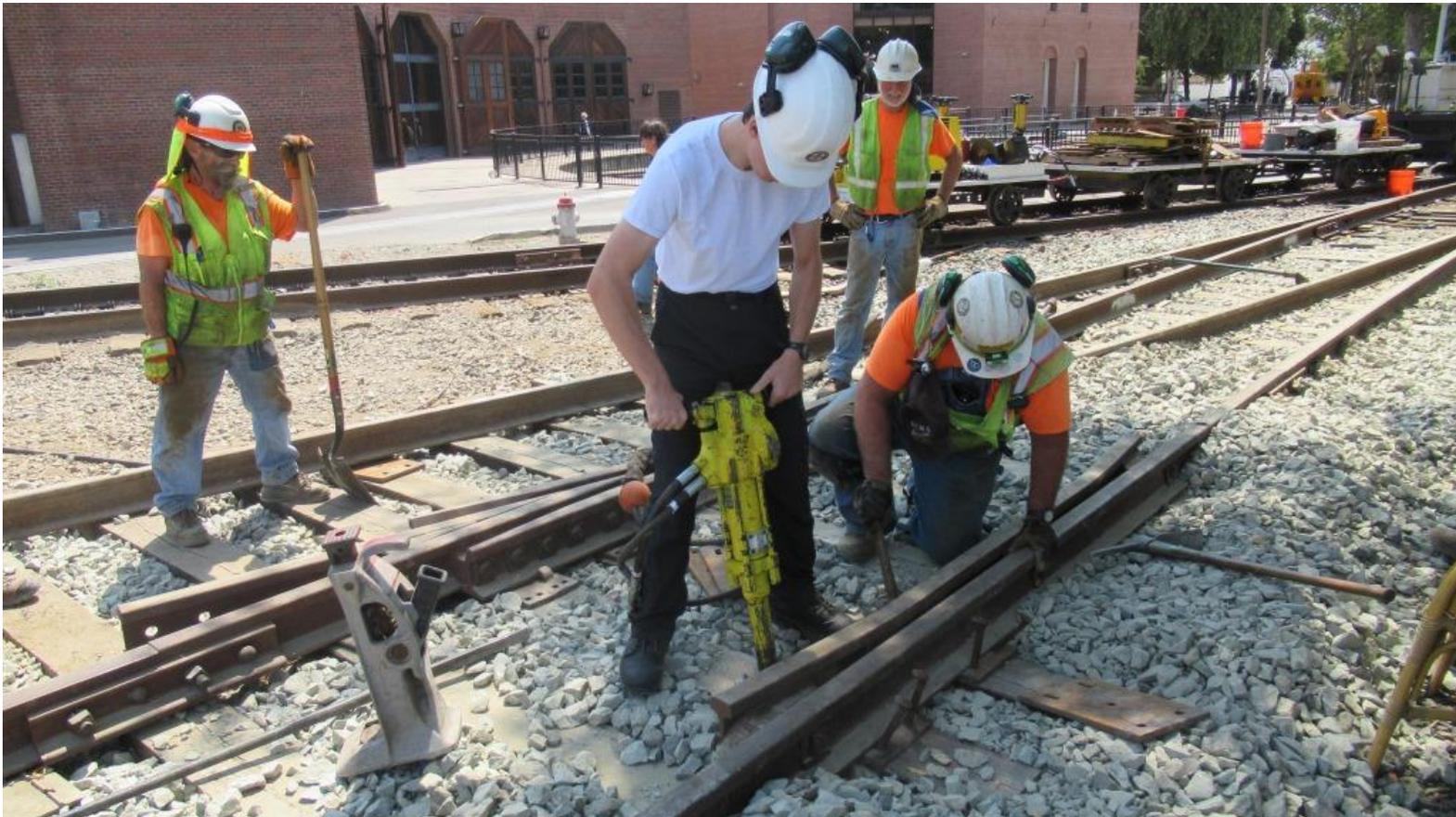
Ed drives spikes as Samantha and Joe spread rock



Putting a curve in rails takes effort and lots of force as demonstrated by Mike M. and Joe who use track-jacks to bow the diverging track



Jack, Mike M., Mike F., and Joe begin plating the guard-rail. Despite appearances, Jack is not about to “bonk-bonk” Mike M. on the head



Although serving as a car attendant on Saturday, Jack couldn't resist joining in the REAL fun of railroading



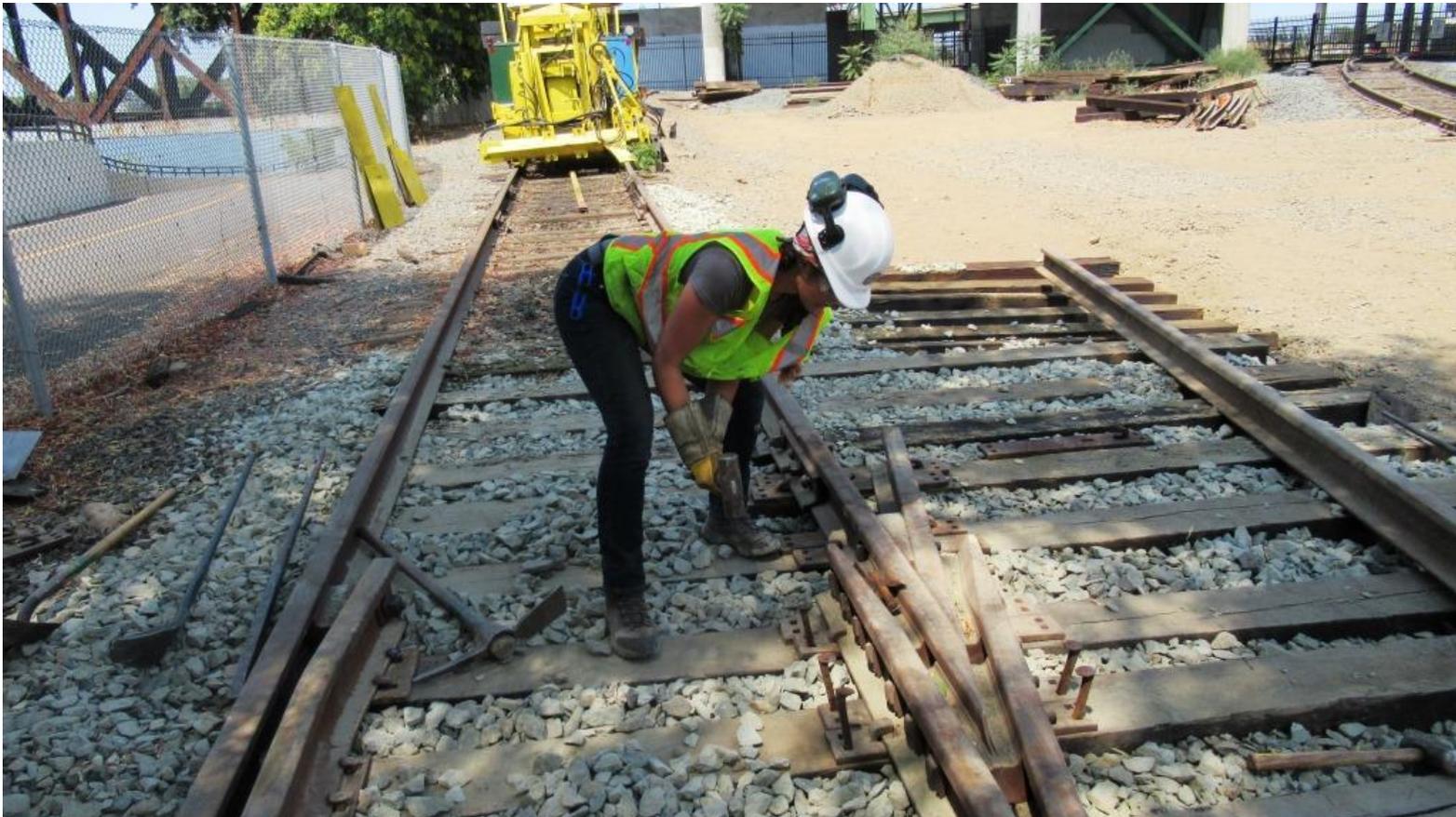
Mike H. and Joe share a funny as they work with Ed and Mike F. on figuring out the puzzle of the hook-plates for under the frog



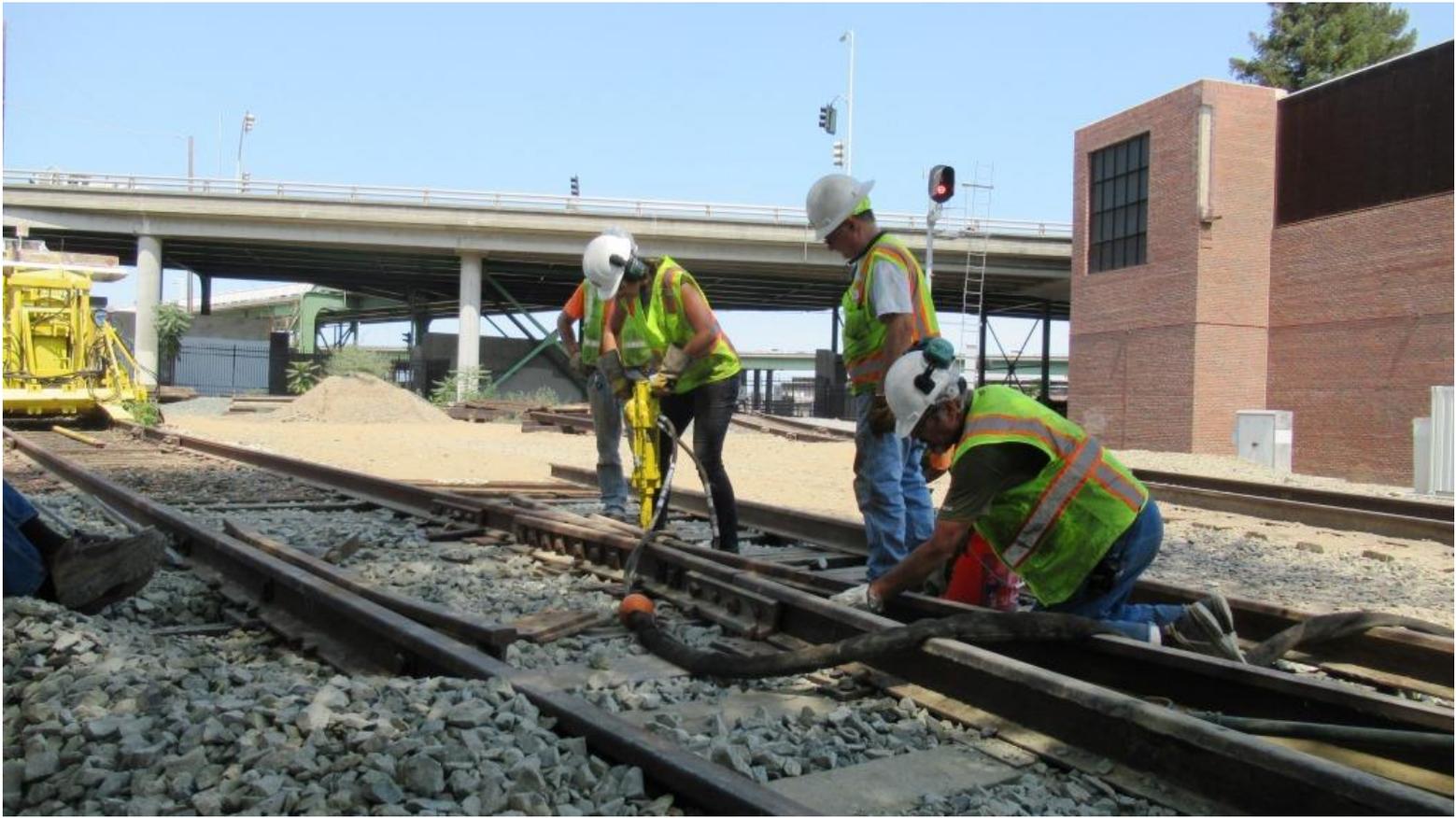
Mike F. checks the arrangement of the holes in the plates for under the guard-rail to figure out where each one goes



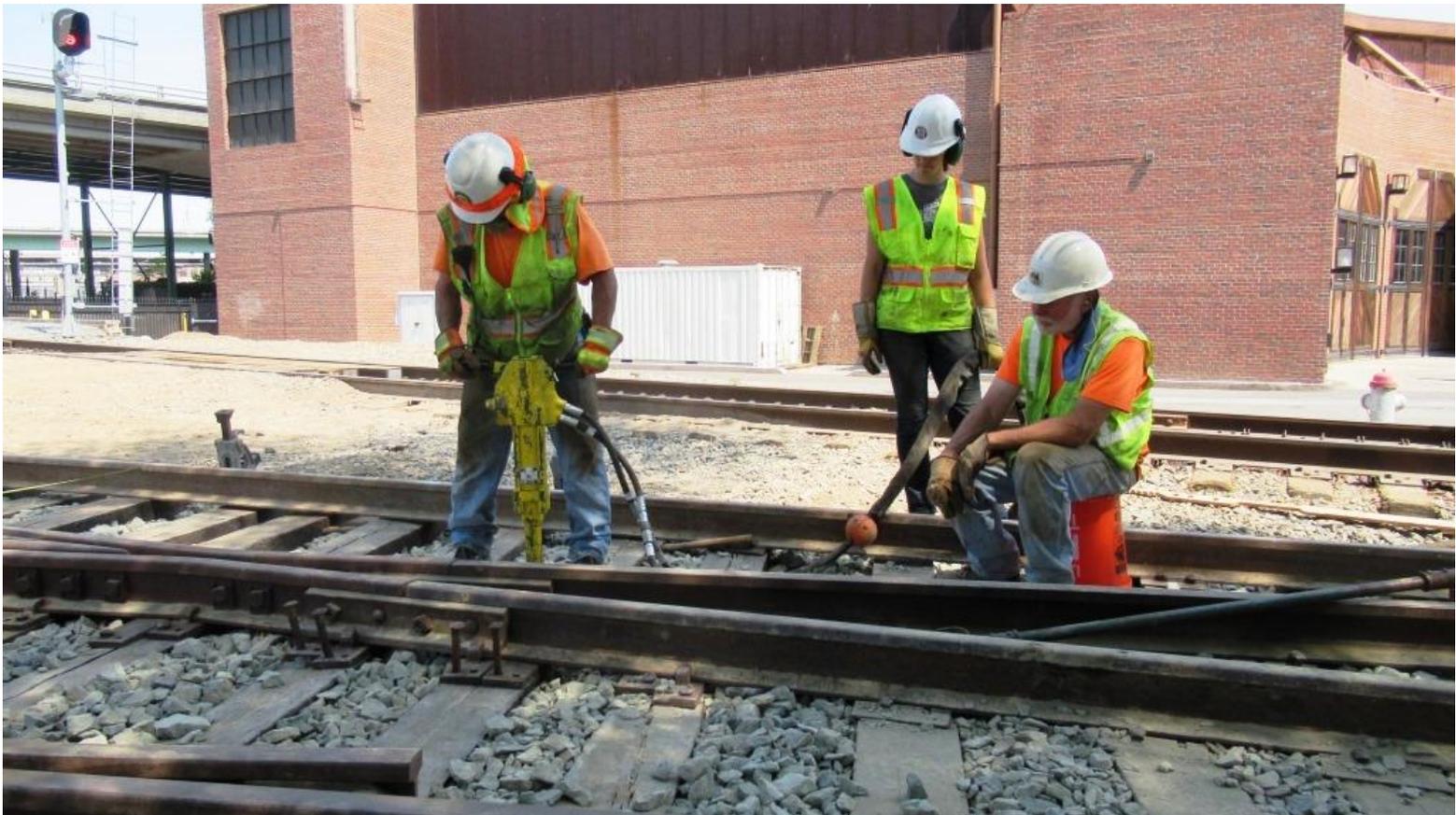
With the plates in place, Mike F. puts his back into nipping up the tie under the guard-rail as John drives spikes with the hydraulic spike driver



With the hook-plates set under the frog, Samantha sets spikes...



...Then uses the hydraulic spike-driver to drive them deep into the ties



Now Joe takes on the hydraulic spike-driver



Joe, Samantha, and Mike M. work on gauging the diverge off the frog while Mike F. show the hydraulic spike-driver how real spiking is done



Mike H. waves farewell under the green signal indication as Heather pilots the Kalamazoo and work-train back to the Shops