

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 14, 2016. Lots and lots and lots of activity by the stellar volunteers of your MOW Team this week. So, let's not dawdle here any longer with verbose introductions – there's plenty of verbosity in the paragraphs that follow.

Pat Scholzen, Anthony Filamor, Jose Gomez, Mike Harris, Joe Margucci, Frank Werry, Gene Peck, and Heather Kearns populated the Erecting Shop on Tuesday. Pat and Gene finished up the restoration of the blue Ford tractor. Everything now works exactly as it should. They they certified and warrantied it for general operations. We're lucky to have such outstanding mechanics volunteering their valuable skills with our Railroad. It was time to return the scarifier-inserter to Old Sacramento and clear some room in the Erecting Shop for the man-lift which needs some mechanical attention. Conductor Frank and brakeman Heather planned the move. Joe brought the scarifier out onto the 560 Track. Over in Old Sac., Mike H., Jose, and Anthony got the Kalamazoo tug and man-lift ready to roll. As neither the scarifier or man-lift activate the signal system for crossing the UP Main, the Kalamazoo is used for that purpose. Mike H. engineered the tug as Jose took control of the man-lift. Needless to say, the operation went off without a hitch. Another excellent endeavor by your MOW Team.

The Mighty MOW Weed Team was back in action on Thursday. Mike Taylor was joined by Heather, Ed Kottal, and Steve Wilson on a journey of discovery to the Hood Line. First, the driveway leading up to the Weedies' container was in serious need of mowing. Steve and Ed deployed the field-and-brush mowers and challenged each other to a mower race. With the driveway thoroughly cleared, Mike T. led a reconnaissance mission down the line to assess the strength of the evil star-thistle empire. Star-thistle is nasty, nasty stuff and the Weed Team rebels are fighting to liberate the line from its oppressive clutches. Fortunately for all of us on the Sacramento Southern Railroad, the Weedies keep the dream of running trains between Freeport and Hood alive by continuing the fight for truth, justice, and the right-of way!

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, Joe, Frank, Weston Snyder, Jose, Pam Tatro, and Heather kept the MOW Team fully functional. Alan Hardy returned from a multi-week adventure following the route of the Great Northern Railroad through Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. He regaled with stories of vintage tie-tongs and wooly mammoths. Then, Frank and Joe fired-up the back-hoe and front-end loader to continue working the roadbed of the Firing Line Track that we're building in the Rail Yards. They did a great job giving us a head-start for Saturday by moving massive amounts of dirt. Jose and Weston modeled the vintage tie-tongs that Alan found on his trip. They are really quite unique artifacts. Alan took photos of Weston and Jose demonstrating their use for next year's Part 214 training. Then, they traded Green Machine duties to gather ties for our track project. Heather installed a new starter in the man-lift. It now works perfectly. Would you expect any less? Now, there are no more issues getting the thing to start-up. Indeed, Thursday was quite an evening.

It was a hot and sunny day. But fortunately for Alan, Anthony, Clem Meier, Steve Nemeth, Heather, Harry Voss, Joe, Ed, Michael Florentine, Frank, Mike H., and Harry Gbler, there were doughnuts-a-plenty to get Saturday started. It's always a great day when the MOW Team can welcome a new member. Saturday, Museum volunteer, Andrew Storck, joined the Team. Welcome Andrew! The Team headed straight out to the Firing Line Track. Mike H. deployed Big Green, Harry V. the back-hoe, and Mike F. the loader. A little hand-digging was necessary under the rails at the connecting point with the existing track under the freeway. Steve, Heather, Clem, Anthony, Ed, and Joe got right on that. Harry V. and Mike F. scooped up the dirt that had accumulated along the roadbed. Mike H. used Big Green to grab some ties. Andrew, Steve, and Alan then lined them up for insertion. It was time to place the assembled track back into position. Once again, "Simba," the Shops' 36,000-pound capacity forklift would be drafted. The SP 291 was blocking Simba's egress from the building so Chief Mechanical Officer, Al DiPaolo, Leonard Jones, and Frank moved it out onto the transfer-table. At the job-site, Leonard on Simba coordinated with Mike H. on Big Green and Mike F. in the loader to lift and move the track back into position. The power of hydraulics is amazing. Once the track was seated, a little shifting around was necessary to make everything line up. Simba was good for that, as well. Then, Leonard used Simba to place an additional panel of track to the east end. We still had a bit of a gap on the north rail where it connected with the track under the freeway. So, the Team employed the "rail-puller," a nifty device that can pull up to a quarter-mile of rail to close such gaps. Alan, Andrew, Frank, Joe, Mike F., and Steve all wanted in on the action as this device rarely gets used. After a bit of cajoling and pounding with the whacker-tool, the wedges and rail-clamps were in place. Andrew grabbed a lining-bar and began cranking on the on the puller. Sure as doughnuts on Saturday morning, the puller closed that gap in no time. It was now time for lunch which Alan provided. Hot-dogs all around! Harry V. operated the barbecue and the Team chowed-down. Many thanks to Alan! Following lunch, Harry G. and Ed took measurements of the newly laid track while the Team inserted ties with the section-gang machine. First, Frank, Steve, Joe, and Andrew installed a gauge-rod because the track was a bit too wide. Alas, the section-gang machine was acting up and would not release a tie once grabbed. This led to a frustrating delay. Meanwhile, Heather and Joe kept digging away to clear space for tie insertion further up the line. By 2:30, it had reached 100 degrees. Heavy work in that heat was wiping us out so the order was given to pack-up. Nonetheless, much progress was made. Many thanks to Al and Leonard for all their help. The use of Simba is a major time and labor saver and is greatly appreciated.

This coming week, the MOW Team will continue its great work on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o'clock. Thursday, the Weed Team will return to the Sutterville Line to continue pruning trees opposite the school. Meet by the turntable at 8 o'clock a.m. Saturday, we'll pick up where we left off last Saturday. God willing and a functioning section-gang machine, we'll complete this phase of the project. It's forecasted to be only about 90 degrees. Thanks to everyone for your hard work and dedication!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard



Brakeman Heather walks the point as Jose brings the man-lift over from Old Sacramento



Mike H. and Joe in the Kalamazoo waiting for a "green" signal indication



Joe gets right to work servicing the man-lift



Heather replaces the man-lift's starter



Frank in the back-hoe digs-out the area between the rails as Joe in the loader cuts away more of the roadbed



Joe in the loader works to widen the roadbed



Jose gathers ties with the Big Green Machine



Later, Weston puts the Green Machine back in the Boiler Shop



And, they're off! Ed and Steve and their racing field-and-brush mowers



Steve, Mike T., and Ed take one of the six 10-minute breaks per hour to which they are entitled...



Joe, Clem, Heather, and Steve dig away



Harry V. on the back-hoe clears out more of the roadbed



Andrew and Steve bring in a tie



Andrew and Steve slide a tie along the rails while Harry V. uses the back-hoe to level the ground



Mike H. on Big Green picks-up some ties while Mike F. in the loader cuts away the dirt berm beside the track



Anthony removes dirt along the tie-ends



Mike H. brings over some more ties for insertion



Harry and Ed take on some quick-fixes to the keeper-ring on the pivot pin of the back-hoe



Simba emerges from the Erecting Shop after Al, Leonard, and Frank got the 291 out of the building



With Big Green and Simba in place, Alan prepare to conduct the movement of the track



With Simba moved to the south, Leonard lifts the track as Mike H. on Big Green shoves the west end



Leonard on Simba brings in another panel of track



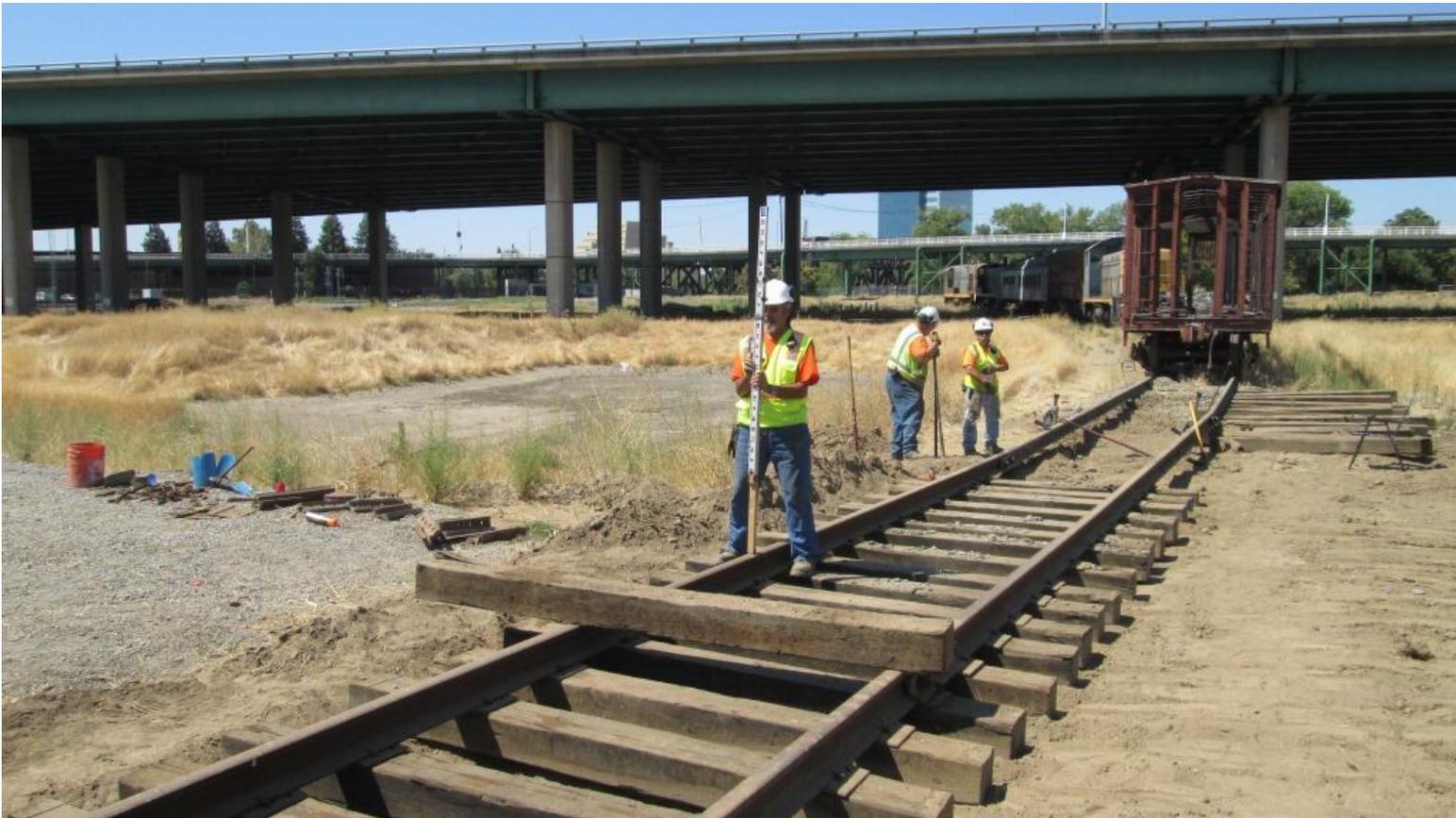
Break time. The loader serves a dual purpose as a bench...



Al and Leonard bring the 290 back into the Erecting Shop after Simba was put away



Harry G. sights the placement of the track



Ed handles the measuring stick that Harry G. uses to sight the height of the rails



Joe and Alan attempt to bolt the two tracks together. But the gap is too wide



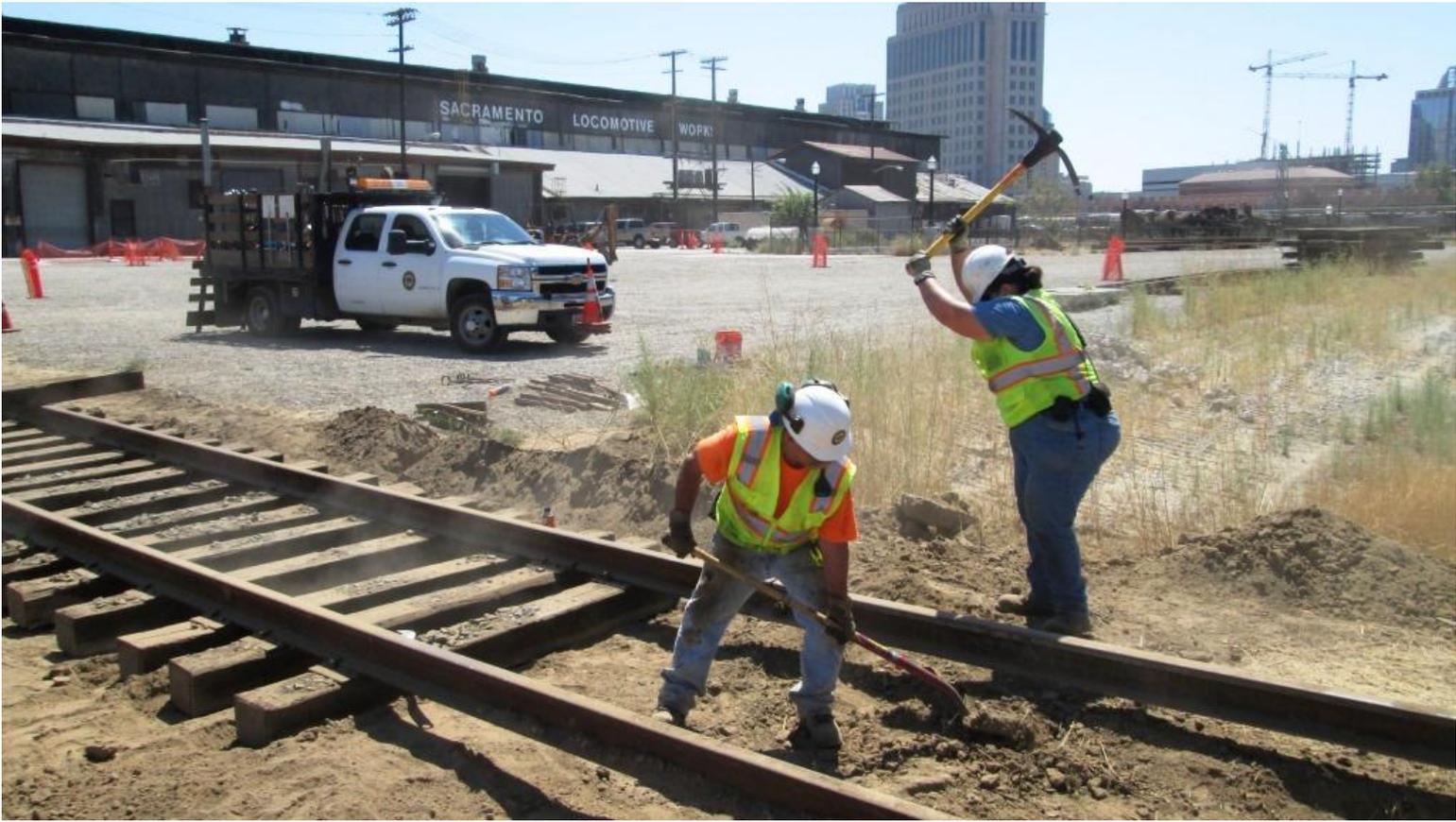
So, the rail-puller is set up



Andrew taps one of the wedges under the rail-clam with the whacker-tool



With the rail-puller set up, Andrew starts cranking to close the gap



Meanwhile, Joe and Heather keep digging...



"Get your red-hots!" Harry V. assumes command of the barbecue



Joe, Frank, and Steve install a gauge rod



Steve and Andrew tighten-down the rail-clamp on the gauge-rod



Frank measures gauge as Steve adjusts the gauge-rod. Mike F. and Harry try to get the section-gang machine to work



With the section-gang machine working – sort-of, Ed, Frank, and Mike F. start inserting ties



Time to put our toys away... Harry carries the section-gang machine back to the Shops as Joe its from swinging as the back-hoe turns



The day concludes with Uncle Alan's Story Time...