

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 19, 2018. The “hero’s quest” is a universal theme of literature throughout history. Similarly, the heroes of the MOW Team are on a quest to build a better railroad. So, here are the details from this week’s MOW Team quest.

The quest commenced on Tuesday with Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Chris Howard, Matt McCracken, Joe Margucci, Taka Blackburn, Cliff Hayes, Kyle Blackburn, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, and Samantha Houch. Cliff, Pat, Samantha, and Gene continued building anti-vandalism shields for the rail-mounted spike-driver. Kyle and Mike H. replaced the wonky ignition switch on the Kalamazoo tug. To fit the new one, Kyle had to get the big-drill out. Joe installed shunts on the A-5 motorcar’s wheels. This will make it possible for the A-5 to trigger the signals grade-crossings. A couple weeks ago, our trusty track inspectors took Switch No. 15, the Setzer Spur/South Miller Park Siding switch, out of service after identifying some concerns. So, Mike H., Taka, Matt, Chris, and Heather loaded the MOW Team’s bag of tricks in the back of the truck and headed down to Miller Park to reactivate that switch. First, Chris and Matt stopped on the Siding to replace broken bolt identified by our inspectors. At Switch 15, Taka, Matt, Heather, and Chris used shovels, brooms, and mattocks to clean out debris and dig out the connecting rods. Taka dug out the rock from under the switch-rod that was impeding throw. Chris slathered grease all over every moving part. Then, Heather and Chris used the switch-stand twisting tool (technically known as a rail-anchor applicator) and gave the switch-stand a mighty twist to re-center its throw. Taka then tested the throw of the switch a number of times and declared it fixed. With that, the Train Order declaring Switch 15 out of service was annulled. Yea us! Indeed, the Team did a fantastic job on Tuesday keeping the railroad rolling!

Thursday, Jim Bays of the SSRR Restoration Shop continued his yeoman effort at milling new wing-rails for the frog at Switch 19. This is proving to be an incredibly challenging project and the MOW Team thanks to Jim for his help. Mike H. took repaired the Weed Team’s malfunctioning chainsaws. You know the old saying, “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.” Well, on Thursday, while the stodgy titular manager of MOW attended the SSRR Management Committee Meeting, Heather, Chris, Jack, Jack Shrive, Joe, Kyle, Taka, Ed Kottal, Kevin Hecteman, and Matt, decided to take the Rail-Rod out for a test-run through Miller Park. The Rail-Rod is like a go-cart on rail-wheels. While the A-6 motorcar was out of service, the Team restored it for our trusty track inspectors to use. Its restoration took longer than expected but, it’s working now. At Miller Park, they took turns running the Rail-Rod up and down the line. Between runs, they made various mechanical adjustments to the machine. Everyone had a blast! Jack summed up the Team’s view by calling the Rail-Rod, “The most fun piece of rail equipment I’ve ever experienced.”

Saturday morning, Joe and Mike F. arrived early and got the MOW Team’s work-train out of the Erecting Shop and over to Old Sacramento. Alan, Chris, Bill Hastings, Steve Nemeth, Mike Harris, Bev Ratzlaff, Matt, Kyle, Ed Moriarty, and Heather found the pink box and distributed its contents amongst themselves. The Team took-on two projects on Saturday. Alan, Mike H., and Chris headed to Old Sac. and continued work on the new switch. Heather, Bev, Ed, Steve, Mike F., Matt, and Bill headed down to Setzer with the Kalamazoo and a couple flatcars to pick-up two sticks of rail for Jim Bays to use for milling wing-rails for the Switch 19 frog. On Friday, he and Heather had identified a couple suitable rails. Mike F. took the back-hoe and Steve the Big Green Machine (Big Green). Matt and Bill piloted the Kalamazoo and Ed M. handled the A-6. At Setzer, Ed, Bill, and Matt found the needed rails. Mike F. used the back-hoe to yank them out of the rail pile. Then Steve on Big Green loaded the rails onto the flatcars. While there, Mike F. filled the ballast-hoppers as we need more rock at the switch we’re building in Old Sac. As Mike F. filled the cars, Steve used Big Green to dump a bunch of dead ties from the dead-tie pile in the dumpster down there. Steve managed to fill the whole dumpster and made a huge dent in the dead tie pile. Matt and Bill in the Kalamazoo shoved the filled hoppers and flatcars back to town as student brakeman, Bev, call the shove. She got all “2s”.

Meanwhile, back at the switch, Alan, Mike H., and Chris were determined to get the guard-rail installed on the diverging track. This gave the Team a chance to use our brand-new hydraulic rail-drill. Alan and Mike H. measured out the placement of the guard-rail. Mike H. and Chris then set up the rail-drill. This nifty device is so much easier to use than our old gas-powered drill. It cut new bolt-holes through the rail like nobody’s business. With the holes cut, Chris and Mike H. shimmed the guard-rail into place, slid in the blocks, and bolted it down. Then, the challenge began. Critical measurements between the point of the frog and the guard-rail flangeway called “guard-face” and “guard-check” were way off. After much head-scratching, Alan, Chris, and Mike H. took the guard-rail apart again and made some adjustments. Part of the solution was to install plates under the guard-rail. By now, Team Setzer had returned and joined in the fun and brought Kyle with them. Steve, Matt, Heather, Kyle, and Mike F. began the process of figuring out the puzzle of which plate goes where. After much trial-and-error, the correct plates were identified. Track-jacks were employed so that the extra-thick plates could be placed. Next, Matt, Heather, and Kyle put the guard-rail back together. Alan took new measurements and, voilà, everything was spot-on. So, the Team decided to try it out. Mike F., Kyle, Bill, Mike H., and Steve shifted the points to the diverge, and clamped it in place. Matt fired up the Kalamazoo and, with Kyle as his switchman, switched the entire MOW Team work-train onto the 150-Track and through the diverge for the very first time. Kyle handled the tricky move (as the track comes to a sudden end) relaying signals to Matt who skillfully piloted the Kalamazoo. The guard-rail did exactly what it was supposed to do and pulled the consist into the correct flangeway on the frog with no wheel contact at the point. A great success to say the least! With that, the Team packed up its wares and headed back to the Shops very pleased by the progress they experienced on their great and heroic quest.

This coming week, the MOW Team will continue the quest on Tuesday and Thursday starting at or before 5 o’clock. The Weed Team will trim more trees on Thursday starting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, more heroism starts at 8 o’clock a.m. in the Erecting Shop. To all the wonderful folks of the MOW Team, thank you for all your efforts and dedication. You make the hard work fun!

See you out on the line,

Alan and Richard.



Cliff spent Tuesday evening working on anti-vandalism shields for the rail-mounted spiker – but first, he fixed a chair...



"It's so cute!" Matt is thoroughly impressed by one of the new mini gas-can the Team has acquired





Matt and Chris replace a broken bolt on the Miller Park Siding



Taka and Matt clear obstructions from around the connecting rod





Chris slathers switch grease all over the place



Chris and Heather use the switch-stand twisting tool to give the stand a good, old fashioned twist





Taka now tests the throw of the switch and gives it a big thumbs-up



It lives! Chris, Matt, Taka, and Heather are pleased with their accomplishment





Back in Old Sacramento, Heather restores the A-6 motorcar's bling



Kyle gets out the big drill to enlarge the hole in the dash of the Kalamazoo to fit a new ignition switch





Samantha shows the work that she and Cliff did on one of the spiker's anti-vandalism shields



Joe affixes new shunts to the A-5 motorcar's wheels





Jim Bays works on milling a new wing-rail for the frog at Switch 20



Kyle, Chris, Jack, and Taka deploy the Rail-Rod





Jack, Kevin, Kyle, Ed, Taka, and Chris watch Heather troubleshoot an issue they found with brake/clutch



Jack, Ed, and Chris get the Rail Rod ready for its second test run





Taka switches the A-6 onto Track 3 as Ed closes up the turntable after returning to town following the “time trials” for the Rail Rod



At Setzer on Saturday morning, Matt and Bill locate the necessary sticks of rail





Mike F. on the back-hoe yanks the first stick out of the pile



Heather, using a rail-fork, rolls the next stick of rail so that the rail-tongs can grab it





Mike F. pulls the next stick out of the pile



Ed M. hooks the rail-tongs to the stick of rail for Steve on Big Green to lift onto the flatcars





Ed M. guides the stick of rail as Steve skillfully maneuvers through the obstacle course known as Setzer



Now Bill guides the next stick of rail





Mike fills the hopper cars with ballast rock



While down at Setzer, Steve dumps dead-ends into the dumpster





Meanwhile, back in Old Sac., Alan and Mike H. take precise measurements for the placement of the guard-rail



Chris and Mike H. set up the new hydraulic rail-drill which is so much easier to use than the old gas-powered drill





In a matter of moments, the drill bit is spinning and punching its way through the web of the rail



Before heading down to Setzer, Steve on Big Green and Mike F. bring in the guard-rail





Lots going on in this picture: Granite Rock 10 is being fired-up, the El Dorado is moved on the turntable, Mike F. is ready to place the guard-rail, while Mike H., Chris, and Alan drill bolt holes in the web of the diverging rail

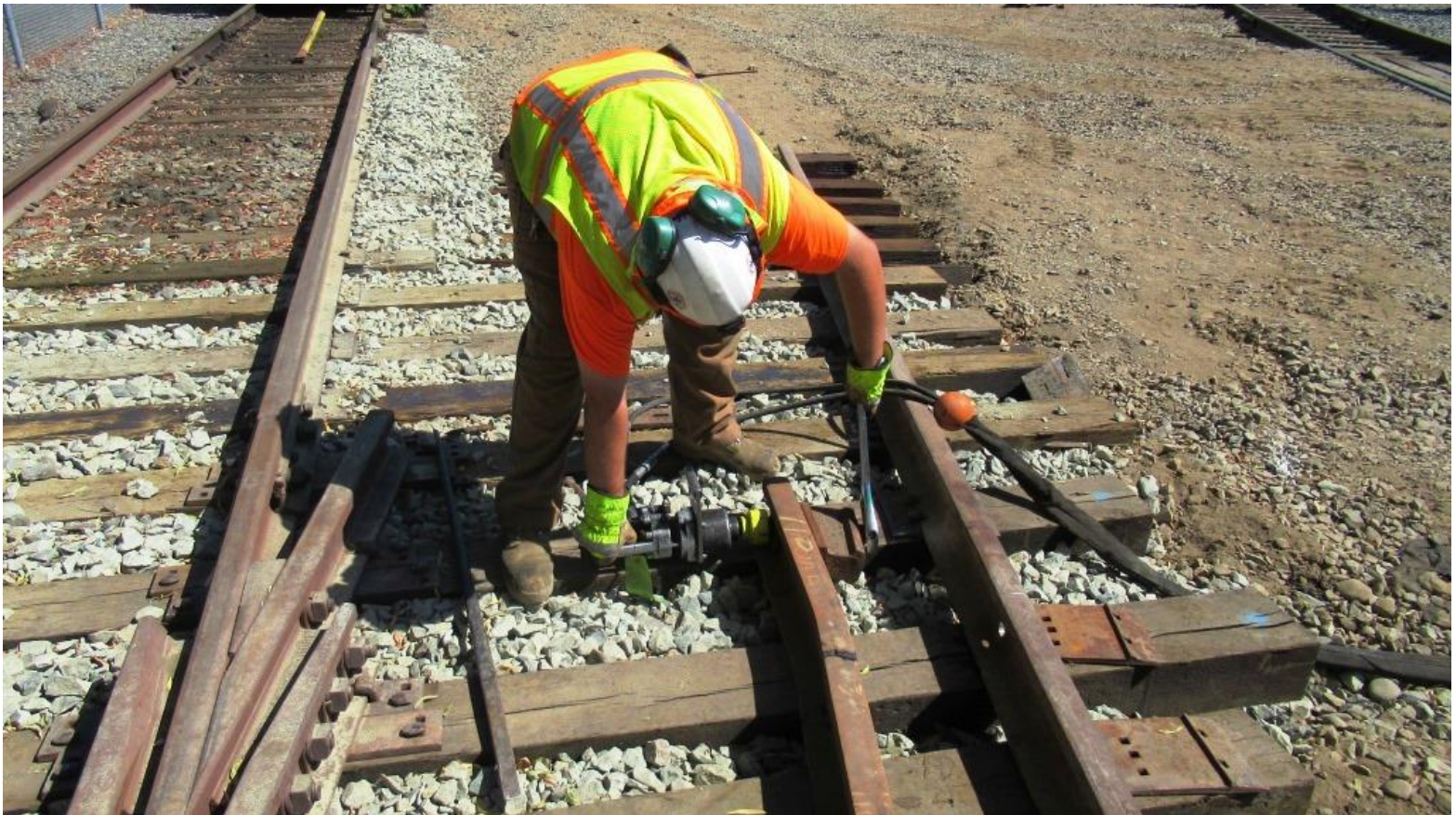


Mike H. and Chris drill the next hole





Chris and Mike H. shimmy the guard-rail into position



Chris uses the hydraulic impact wrench to remove the block on the guard-rail





Professional Engineer Mike H. understands leverage and how to use it to his advantage



Chris uses the hydraulic impact-wrench to tighten-down the bolts on the guard-rail





Chris and Alan checking *guard-face* and *guard-check* measurements and found that something wasn't quite right



With Team Setzer back in town, Heather, Matt, and Steve lend assistance to getting the guard-rail into the right position





Kyle acts as loadmaster for Steve on Big Green as they grab a pallet of plates for the guard-rail



Kyle sights the bolt-holes to line everything up with Heather and Matt's help





With everything now fitting together, Matt uses the hydraulic impact wrench to tighten down the bolts



Time for the real-world test: Mike F., and Kyle lever the switch-points over to the diverging track as Steve, Bill, and Mike H. clamp it





Matt skillfully maneuvers the work-train through the new guard-rail for the first time



Mike F. keeps a close eye on the wheels as they roll into the correct flange-way on the frog





Bill confirms that the guard-rail is doing what it's supposed to do



Yea! It works! And, nope, the train did not fall off the tracks!