

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for August 3, 2014. What a difference a week makes. We were cookin' with Crisco this week. Nearly everything went off without a hitch – well almost. So, let's not tempt any hitches by dawdling here. Let's get this update going.

There was no dawdling in the Shops on Tuesday when, Alan Hardy, Pat Scholzen, Frederick Carr, Joshua Ilac, Matt Blackburn, Harry Voss, Gene Peck, Mike Harris, and Heather Kearns were on site. As the Mighty Weed Team is on hiatus for the dog-days of summer – or perhaps, the purple-marten days of summer – work progresses on repairing and maintaining its vital equipment. The big goal on Tuesday was to finish up with work Weed Team's chipper. Matt, Josh, and Heather adjusted the newly sharpened blades for peak performance. Meanwhile, Mike H., Alan, and Gene focused on the engine of the Kalamazoo. Fred led a team down to Switch 20 to replace the adjustable brace wedge that had somehow worked its way out. It was a good evening of progress on the vital equipment that keeps the MOW Team humming.

With work on the chipper now complete, Thursday's goal was to get it out of the Shops and back over to Old Sacramento. Heather, Alan, Josh, Matt, Mike H., Frank Werry, and Chris Carlson made up the crew. Alan kept busy by building new rail-sweeps for the Kalamazoo. Mike H. and Chris continued re-plumbing its hydraulic system. Heather handled the finishing touches on the chipper. Frank, Josh, and Matt headed over to Old Sac. to move the scarifer-inserter off the North Turntable Lead and prepare it for use on Saturday. However, the man-lift was blocking it in. Here's where we ran into a little hitch. Despite our best efforts, the man-lift would not start. So, it was on to plan B. The A-6 motorcar was deployed and sent over to the Shops to grab the chipper and bring it back Old Sac. Conductor Frank negotiated a quick "green" signal indication with the UP dispatcher in both directions for a successful round trip. Meanwhile, Chris, Alan, Heather, and Mike H. brought the new-old tamper out of the building and onto the Transfer Table Lead to test the squeeze motors which Chris had repaired the previous Saturday. Chalk-up another success for the MOW Team!

On Saturday, the doughnuts arrived an hour earlier than usual with a 7 o'clock call time. Heather, Alan, Frank, Fred, Clem Meier, Harry, Matt, Pam Tatro, Michael Florentine, and Josh arrived early to beat the heat. Our trusty track inspectors, who, by the way, are out inspecting our mainline twice weekly, identified a nest of bad ties in the Miller Park area that had become a concern. So, it was off to Miller Park. Matt, Josh, Pam, and Heather headed directly to Old Sacramento to set up our work-train consist and start up the old-old tamper. Chris, Frank, Fred, and Mike F. headed to the work site in our trusty Chevy Truck along with the section-gang machine. By 8 a.m., everything was in place. Frank, Heather, Pam, and Josh began pulling, spikes, plates, and anchors, while Matt, Fred, Heather, and Mike F. began digging out the rock necessary around the ties for Chris with the section gang machine to grab them. Our goal for the day was to replace at least six ties, the minimum number necessary to clear the defect. But, the minimum is never good enough for the MOW Team. By train time, we managed to exceed our goal by replacing 13 rotten ties. Fortunately, only a few ties disintegrated as they were pulled. Most came out in big enough pieces for us to remove relatively quickly. Nothing broke down. Everything worked as it should. Most importantly, it was a great team of volunteers who really know what they're doing and enjoy working together despite tough conditions. The whole Museum community should be proud of these folks and the work they do.

In the afternoon, Alan, Chris, Fred, and Frank continued working on the Kalamazoo and new-old tamper in the Shops. Fred figured out a way to used compressed air to help trace the hydraulic lines. Clem and Harry began servicing and repairing the Interpretive Handcar Program's speeder. Alan welded-up pins to hold the jacking system in place on the new-old tamper. Chris and Harry went over to Old Sac. to diagnose and possibly repair the man-lift. Somehow, water got in to the starter. Heather and Josh finished installing rail anchors around the ties we replaced in the morning. Then they took the old-old tamper down the line to straighten a few catawampus ties and tamp-up a few low spots. It was a great day, indeed, and when things go well, the sense of accomplishment is a reward in and of itself.

For the week ahead, the Erecting Shop's doors will swing open at 5 o'clock on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Saturday, we'll plan on doughnuts at 8 o'clock. If we need to move the time forward, we'll send out another notice. Again, thanks to all our volunteers and supporters who helped make this week such a great success!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard



Heather, Matt, and Josh make the final adjustments on the Weed Team's chipper



Alan cutting angle-iron to make rail-sweeps for the Kalamazoo



Mike H. working on the Kalamazoo's engine



Fred loosening the bolts on the keepers in order replace the adjustable brace at Switch 20



Conductor Frank, brakeman Josh, and engineer Matt on the A-6 in the approach circuit waiting to cross on signal indication



Fred, Josh, Chris, Frank, and Heather begin correcting the tie defect



The MOW Team at work: Fred, Pam, Chris, Josh, and Frank prepping and pulling ties



Mike F. and Chris work a rotten tie out from under the rails



Dig, dig, dig. Mike F. and Chris try to keep the ties from disintegrating when being pulled



Mike F. with the pneumatic spiker while Heather nips the tie



Alan brings in the tamper



Josh pounds a rail anchor into place