

Greetings!

This is your Maintenance of Way Team update for September 25, 2016. With the autumnal equinox on Thursday, summer 2016 faded into history. But, the arrival of fall hasn't slowed-down your MOW Team. So, let's not slow down here by delaying this update any further.

When the word, "jackhammer" is sounded, MOW Team members' ears perk-up. Such was the case on Tuesday as Heather Kearns, Pat Scholzen, Joe Margucci, Anthony Filamor, Weston Snyder, Mike Harris, Gene Peck, Frank Werry, Steve Nemeth, and Chris Carlson arrived at the Shops. The jackhammers were deployed and everyone was thrilled at the prospect of more concrete cracking in Old Sacramento. Early-birds Joe and Anthony loaded-up the truck with the necessary implements and headed on out. Over in Old Sac., Anthony and Joe fired-up the compressor and, as the hammers started jacking and dust flying, Steve, Weston, Frank, and Mike H. couldn't resist the clarion call. Soon, the remaining concrete to the west of the track was splintering and shattering. The Team all took turns on the jackhammers as well as picking up the concrete chunks for disposal in the dumpsters. By 6:45, we were losing the light but, had removed two-thirds of the remaining concrete. Then, it was noticed that everyone on the Team, save one (we won't mention Steve's name), was properly attired in the MOW Team's orange t-shirt (the latest fashion rage amongst the kids). So, after an appropriate amount of teasing, the Team packed-up and returned to the Shops. It was unanimous. There's no better way to spend an evening than quality time with jackhammers.

The mighty Weed Team convened on Thursday for another adventure on the Hood Line. Mike Taylor, Steve Wilson, and Anthony packed up the MOW Team's trusty Chevy Truck and headed out to maintain that lonely line. At Hood, the Weedies continued pruning trees that have lacked attention for a very long time. Should a ghost-train try to make its way between Hood and Freeport, it may encounter some less than ideal track conditions but, will touch nary a branch on its journey thanks to the Weed Team. Folks, for 30-plus years, Mike T. has worked to keep the Hood Line accessible in pursuit of our collective dream of running trains down there someday. So, next time you see him, let him know you appreciate his efforts and those of the mighty Weed Team. As Mike T. often says, "Every day is one day closer to Hood."

Meanwhile, back at the Shops, the jackhammers were jumping at the opportunity to head out again. Anthony, Heather, Joe, Mike H., Frank and Weston were determined to get the remaining concrete removed. These folks churned up more dust than a Sahara sand-storm. But, by evening's end, the Team had utterly defeated obstinate cement. Over at the Shops, Mike T. took on the tree-of-heaven seedlings and saplings that had sprouted from between the strong-back slots along the transfer-table runway. The transfer-table runway is now free from the grips of an unwanted foe. Heather worked around the Shops taking out the garbage and tidying things up. Then, she filled jerry-cans with red-diesel. Indeed, Thursday's activities proved that the terms "volunteers" and "accomplishment" are synonymous.

A double dose of doughnuts brought sunshine and happiness to the Shops on Saturday morning. Thanks to Tom Freeburger and Josh Bailey, the Team was treated to a second pink-box that would serve Alan, Joe, Clem Meier, Mike Willis, Heather, Steve, John Rexroth, Chris Carlson, Frank, Michael Florentine, Jose Gomez, and Andrew Storck throughout the day. Saturday's plan was to clear out the remaining debris and uncover the ties to get a better gander at them. Additional gauge-rods would be installed. Also, we'd begin removing the soil-cement to the west of the track. After a lengthy job-briefing that included a discussion of GCOR 1.20 (as the locomotive would be entering our work limits throughout the day for water), Frank took the front-end loader over, Chris handled the back-hoe, and Mike F. piloted the Big Green Machine. First up, Mike F. used Big Green to reposition the dumpsters which were in our way. Andrew, Frank, Joe, Alan, John, Steve, Clem, Mike W., and Jose took up shovels, hoes, and picks to clear off dirt and debris from the ties. Soon, the Team gave way to the El Dorado and then the Granite Rock 10 which needed water. With the blue-flag up on the engine, the Team went right back to work clearing dirt away from the ties. Frank brought in the loader and Tom and Josh filled its bucket with more debris. Amazingly, Mike F. and Joe found tie that was still good! Chris and Alan marked the ties slated for removal and replacement. Then, Andrew and Alan measured them to get a count of the number of ties of various lengths we'd need to procure. In order to replace these ties, some of which are 16 feet in length, a trench needed to be dug at least 15-feet by eight-inches deep to the west of the track. Jose, Josh, Joe, and Frank used the jackhammers to break-up the soil-cement so that the back-hoe and loader could dig it out easier. Talk about a dust-storm. The Team tried to spray it down with some water but the spigot failed to produce any pressure. Oh well. Chris and Frank then dug-out a trench big enough for the Team to start pulling ties. In the meantime, Joe, Steve, Mike F., Andrew, and Heather installed gauge-rods to provide extra structural support for the track. Manager of Track Programs Emeritus, John Chandler, paid the Team a visit which brought a sudden halt to almost all work. All except for Heather, who kept right on working while the rest of the Team engaged in a major power-chatting marathon. Once all the chat got boring, Steve, Mike F., Joe, and Andrew joined Heather in installing gauge-rods. The day's final activity was to jackhammer off the remaining concrete stuck between the bolts on the frog. Steve, Chris, and Frank made quick work of it. Then Steve on Big Green moved the dumpsters into position to be picked-up. With that, the Team was plum-tuckered and headed back to the Shops to put things away. We made great progress and, if new ties arrive this week, we'll begin pulling the old ones out next Saturday. The MOW Team sends a big thank you to the fantastic train crew for working with us throughout the day to keep both teams rolling as we all work together to build a better railroad!

This coming week, the Team will gather on Tuesday and Thursday at or before 5 o'clock p.m. in the Shops for more MOW fun. The Weed Team will head south of the I-5 Bridge for more vegetation on the Sutterville line starting at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday. Saturday, the promise doughnuts beacons at the Shops starting at 8 o'clock a.m. Many thanks to everyone for all your great efforts!

See you out on the line,

Alan, Chris, and Richard.



On Tuesday, Anthony and Joe were the first to heed the clarion call of the jackhammer



Then Weston arrived



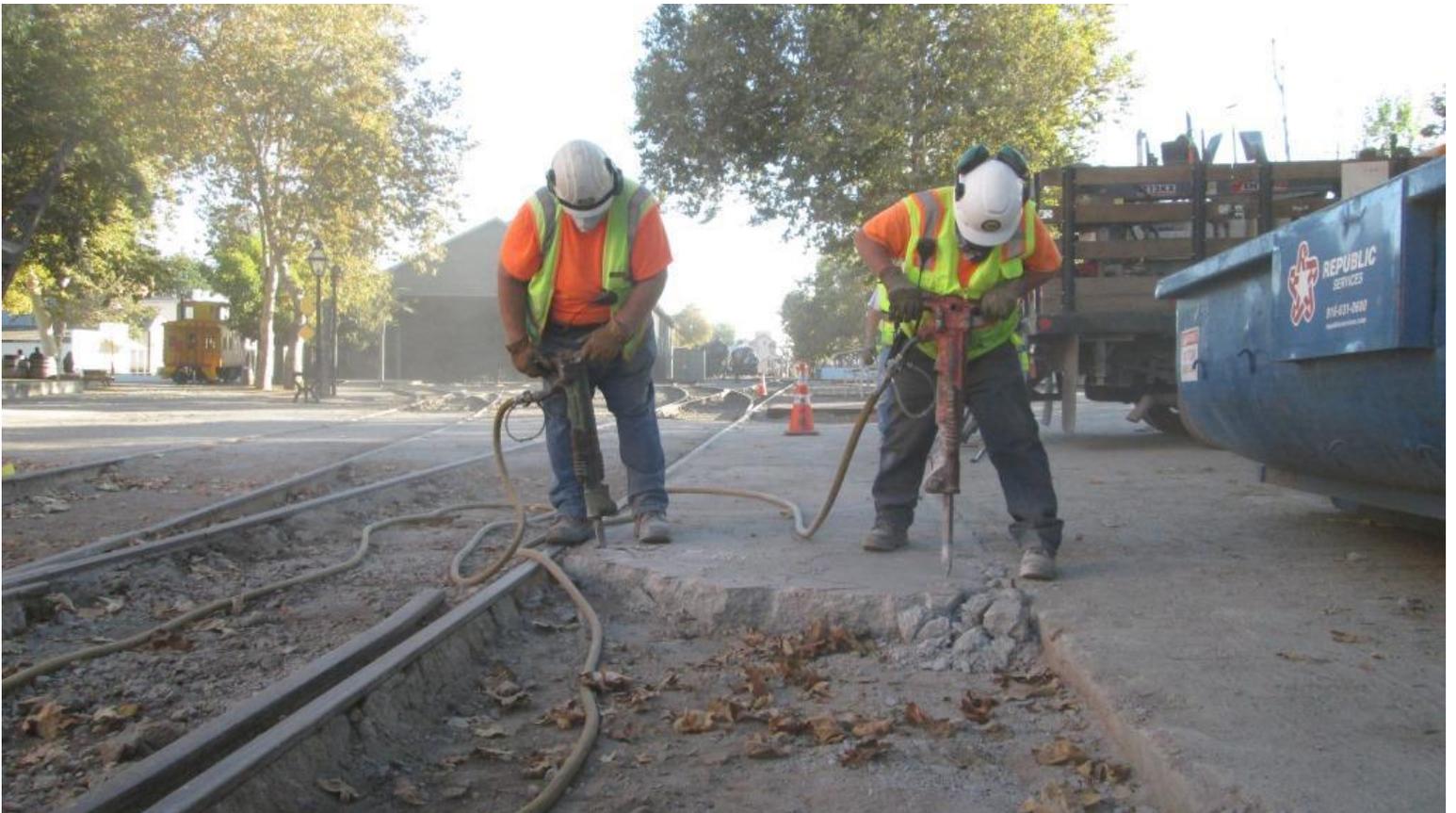
Before long, Steve, Frank, and Mike H. found that they couldn't resist the call



Mike H. and Anthony work the debris loose as Weston and Joe keep the jackhammers going



MOW orange t-shirts are the fashion rage amongst the cool kids. Alas, poor Steve didn't get the memo...



If it's Thursday, it must mean more jackhammering! Frank and Joe pick up where they left off on Tuesday



Weston, Anthony, and Mike H. join the fun



Joe and Mike H. lift a hefty chunk of concrete into the dumpster



Getting to the end of the line: Anthony and Weston break-up the last bits of concrete



Joe picks loose the chunks for easier removal



It's Saturday and, having devoured the doughnuts, the Team gets right to work removing debris from on top of the ties



Chris brings in the back-hoe as Alan, John, Frank, and Joe fill the bucket with loose rubble



It's all hands on deck!



Red flags lifted, the Ed Dorado is switched through our work limits. The "alert and attentive" Team gives way



Next, the Granite Rock No. 10 stops by for a drink of water. Alan discusses important logistics with engineer Ilias Athanasiou



With the blue-flag up, the Team is anxious to get back to work



And, in a flash, the No. 10 is on its way



Frank brings the loader in for Tom and Josh to start filling the bucket



Amazing! Mike F. and Joe actually find a good tie!



Mike W. breaks-up concrete stuck between the converging rails in the frog while Mike F. clears the flange-way



Tom provides direction to Frank in the loader



Heather records the findings as Alan and Andrew measure the ties marked for removal



Once again, the jackhammers make an appearance as Frank and Josh begin breaking up the soil-cement



You'd think a hootenanny was going on with so much dust being kicked-up



Jose takes a turn with the jackhammer and Josh guides the hose. Frank, Tom, and Clem keep the dust flying



The dust mitigation program came to a quick end due to lack of water pressure



With the soil-cement broken up, Chris started digging with the back-hoe



Mike F. uses the forks of Big Green to loosen the hard-pan soil



Granite Rock No. 10 pays a return visit for more water. There was some expert bell-ringing going on...



Talk about being alert to train movements, Mike F. and Alan reposition the dumpster as the 6051 passes by on the Old Main



Steve gets a gauge-rod ready to install as Joe digs out a crib for another gauge-rod



Mike F., Joe, and Steve work at securing the clamps of the gauge-rod onto the base of the rail



Andrew secures the next gauge-rod on the east rail...



...While Heather secures the clamps onto the west rail



Gauge-rod number three is installed



Heather keeps on working while the rest of the crew engages in major power-chatting docent circle...



Joe and Andrew get the next gauge-rod installed



Steve and Chris chip-away at the concrete stuck between the bolts of the frog



Frank takes a turn with the chipping-hammer



With work winding down, Steve on Big Green, moves the other dumpster into position for pick-up