

WP 165 PROGRESS

- Chris Allan, Steam CMO

To start off, the Superheater Fundraiser is COMPLETE!! Thanks to donations from Steve Lee of Cheyenne, WY., Henry Stiles of Rancho Cordova, CA., John and Lynne Haman of Harbert, MI., The Manos Family of Colfax, CA., and Michael Andrews of Yuba City, CA., we have reached our goal! Thanks to everyone for your support and generosity.

SPRING WORK SESSION

A great deal of preparation went into getting ready for the Spring 2013 work session. Lots of folks, including Roger Stabler, Rod McClure, Steve Habeck, Charlie Spikes, James Mason, Susan Scarlett, Rick Gruninger, and Severn Edmonds went above and beyond to make sure things went smoothly. I am very appreciative for their efforts.

I made good my escape from the Greater Los Angeles area early on the morning of Tuesday April 16th. A fierce headwind driving up the valley gave me some idea of what lie ahead. A midday stop in Sacramento at our spring re-builder to load six rejuvenated leaf springs left my truck somewhat lower to the ground. I handed off his payment, which was substantial, and it was off to lunch with Steam Team member Dick Coudin and Paul Zaborsky, Railway Manager at WRM. Temperature at sea level was in the low 80's, but the clouds hanging over Donner remained ominous.

With around 1000+ pounds of spring steel in the bed of the truck, my power steering seemed to be a lot more powerful. A few snow flurries up ahead, but thankfully no chain controls were being enforced. Winter was in full force by the time I made Beckworth, not being able to see more than twenty feet in front of my hood. I was able to make out the crossing gates on Road A23 ahead, and aimed straight for them. Being raised in Southern California, I don't get into violent snow storms too often, and the remainder of the trip into Portola was dicey to say the least. I pulled through the gate, the sun immediately came out, and I was greeted by the familiar sound of a Fairbanks-Morse prime mover thumping off in the distance.

Wednesday morning, the first order of business was to wash the sandblast media out of the mudring. Joined by boilermaker Norman Comer, Charlie

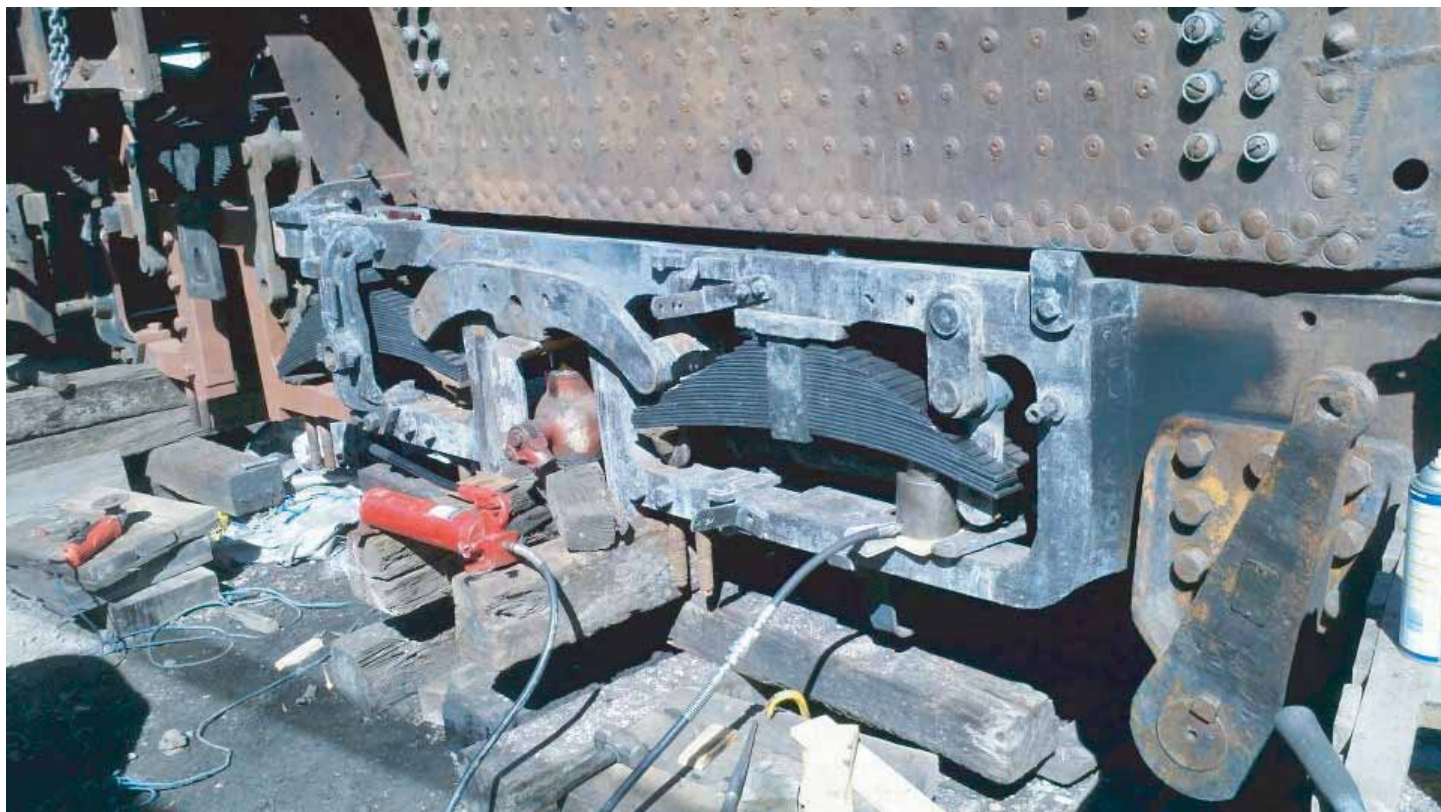
Spikes, Dave Anderson and Kirk Baer, we used a variety of means to clean out the black sand. Temperatures were still in the high 30s, it took a while for Charlie to thaw out the pump on the water trailer, and I managed to thoroughly soak myself to the bone, but by lunch the mudring was cleared out.

Kudos goes to Kirk Baer and Dave Anderson who got the locomotive frame needlescaled and primed prior to our work session. The locomotive looks great, as do the drivers that were painstakingly cleaned up by Dick Coudin and others, who stuck with it until the end. Great job guys!

Two full weeks at Portola was my longest stay to date, and the days tended to flow into one another. I can say that a great deal of extra work on the boiler was accomplished by Norman, and later in the session by Roger. The rear tube sheet that the late Dana Greeley started cleaning up six years ago was finally finished by Norman after three arduous days of grinding and pounding. Just about everyone on the crew had a hand in this unsavory job and ate more than a little grit in the firebox, but now we are onto other things. Another tube sheet patch is indicated, this time in the upper knuckle of the rear sheet, an area that was badly cracked, and badly repaired by the previous owner. Dave Varley, who is generously generating our FRA Form 4, a document which calculates the stresses on various parts of the boiler, identified a few more spots to take a closer look at this summer. Thanks go to Nathan Osborn, who spent a few days taking more ultrasound readings to relay to Dave Varley for use in the Form 4. This is another task that is seemingly unending, but Nathan has stuck with it.

Norman and I spent two full days getting the spring rigging set up, no small feat given that our white forklift was down. The "new" springs had a good deal more arch to them which made getting them back into their old positions a bit of a challenge. The porta-power was up to this Herculean task, and everything went back where it belonged. We were joined by Severn Edmonds from GGRM and our own Hank Stiles, and we were off to the races.

Severn spent time cleaning up the shoes and wedges for the pedestal jaws, and Hank started to polish up the journals on the driver axles. These jobs can prove to be somewhat repetitive, but at times like this we are glad the engine is an 0-6-0, and not a



The rebuild leaf springs back in place in the frame.

- Chris Allan photo

2-10-4. Severn drilled each shoe for a set-bolt, a clever way to keep it in place on the frame while being set on the drivers. I suppose this SP trick would have been used by the WP as well if they had thought of it. All the while Steve Habeck, helped by Greg, Matt and Dave Elems, had been switching things around so that the tender could be positioned for removal of the oil and water cisterns at the lift site. They also cleared up the shop track so we could position the driver sets outside and put up the side rods prior to the pick. A lot of thought goes into these switch moves, especially given how crowded our yard is, and we really appreciate it.

An evening in the lounge car "Silver Debris" and a viewing of Blazing Saddles helped to clear our heads as well as provide a bit of perspective on things. A nice little treat for all...

Fast forward to lift day, suffice to say a great deal took place on all fronts prior, but the focus of our work was to get the 165 rolling again, and that day was now at hand.

On Friday the 26th, two 75 ton capacity hydraulic rigs from Bragg Crane in Reno arrived right on time. Given the current state of our 200 ton WP derrick, I made the decision that we would go with the sure

thing. That decision proved to work out, as the lift went quite smoothly. Steve Lee was assigned the job of lift-master, the only person allowed to give signals to the cranes, just to keep confusion to a minimum. Four of us also donned the hardhats and went around with bars to move driving boxes this way and that to get everything in alignment. After about 40 minutes the frame and boiler were reunited with the driver sets, and it was onto the tender. The oil tank had been previously removed the day before using the big rental forklift, so all that remained was to remove the water cistern and place it on blocks for sandblasting this summer. The foot valves in the front were a bit of a problem, but Roger cut the holes in the steel decking a bit larger, and we prevailed.

Engine and tender (frame) were reunited for the first time in many years, and the switch crew pushed us into the shop, a good feeling after weeks of work, done safely and professionally by all involved.

Erin Swain, life member from Flagstaff, Arizona, was all the while patching holes in the roof of the locomotive's cab, and they were numerous. He managed to get his project just about done, including driving rivets in concert with Kirk who also helped to grind welds. Erin will start milling the

wood for the cab interior soon, which will look great no doubt. Thanks to him for seeing this portion of the project through!

The GGRM boys along with Hank and Roger started the arduous task of placing wedges and pedestal binders back up into place, which took all day, and was finished up on Sunday by Severn. A great deal of effort was expended by all, but the goal was in sight. We reached it just in time for a delicious meal prepared by Gail McClure that included Tri-tip, chicken and all the sides, and two tasty cakes for dessert. Thanks Gail for such a great meal!

This was our biggest and most complicated work session to date, and I expect there will be more like it as we get closer to steam-up. Thanks to everyone who pitched in, gave up their time to help the project along. I appreciate it greatly as does everyone in the Feather River Rail Society. Those in attendance included: Hank Stiles, Charlie Spikes, Steve Lee, Roger Stabler, Kirk Baer, Dave Anderson, Matt Parker, Dick Coudin, Erin Swain, Severn Edmonds, Garrett Brisbie, Jim Prettyleaf, Nathan Osborn, Dave Roth, Dave Hensarling, Dave Varley, Jeff Boone, Deanna Knowles, Nancy Harding, Ken Asmus, new volunteer Mike (sorry didn't catch your last name!), Bob Sims, and a few others which I am omitting to be sure, for which I apologize. I missed a few of you thanks to the "Fog of War" atmosphere that hangs over the chaos and general confusion these events generate.

SUMMER WORK SESSION

I really do try to plan these work sessions out well in advance. I purchase tooling and materials weeks or even months ahead, line up contractors and volunteers in advance, all this just to make sure everything goes smoothly and efficiently. Rarely do things go "as planned" despite my best efforts, and last week is proof of that. However, it can work out for the best in other, less tangible ways.

Wednesday, July 17th, together with my dad, we set out from my parent's home in Concord, CA. Since we had the time, and he had never seen the Feather River Canyon, we drove up Hwy. 70, a nice change from going over Donner. Dad was impressed with the scenery, and I have to say, so was I having not seen the Canyon from the driver's perspective for several decades. Arriving at the museum we moved into our accommodations, air conditioning in

perfect working order I might add, and settled in. An invitation to Kirk and Debbie's house for dinner was the perfect way to wind down. Thanks guys for the nice break!

Upon inspection of the engine on Thursday morning, I was pleased at the amount of work that the "Wednesday Warriors" (Kirk, Dave, Eddie and Larry) have accomplished by way of needle scaling and primer painting. The 165 is finally looking more like a restoration project than a park locomotive. The care and attention to detail these fellows are taking has really paid off, so keep up the momentum and thanks! Charlie Spikes and David Elems have been working on the tender frame, removing deck rivets so that the wasted sheets under the decking can be renewed. Thanks to Charlie, Mike, David and some coaching from Norman our boilermaker as well as earplugs, they were all out by the end of the weekend. The new plate is on hand and can now be marked out and drilled.

Severn Edmonds was in by Thursday afternoon much to our delight. He has made it his mission to get the Lodge & Shipley 16" lathe running for the last year, and I can report that we were finally able to make real actual parts on it this time! Thanks to Severn for sticking with it!

My hope was to start drilling the remainder of the 2" holes in the front tube sheet this time. I purchased a special hole cutter bit and adaptor so it could be used in a conventional drill chuck, and arranged to have Severn borrow the magnetic base drill press from our generous friends at GGRM. Sadly the adaptor did not fit the drill chuck, so Severn is making up a new bit of tooling so this can be done in the fall. A person can only plan for so much, we continue to fight on.

On a happier note, Bob Sims has been quietly converting our ancient D&RGW box car into the steam department tool car. I was pleased that some of our tooling was moved out of my overloaded tool "dumpster" and into the car. Hank and Dave got a long steel table from out in the bone yard, straightened the legs and fork lifted it into the car using Bob's angular calculations. The resulting space is a real boon to the steam guys, and will help productivity greatly given that everything will be at hand, rather than in a messy pile. Thanks to Bob for sticking with the project and to everyone who helped get us moved in.



Roger Colton removes rivets from the rear tube sheet.

-Chris Allan photo

Our boilermaker, Norman Comer was in from Tuolumne, CA. His efforts were concentrated on fitting the rear tube sheet knuckle patch that Roger cut out in the spring. This project requires a great amount of fussy cutting and measuring, and he will hopefully be back after Railroad Days to finish it up before Cody the Welder is back out in the fall from Cheyenne, Wyoming to finish all the sheet renewal work.

Throughout the course of the weekend my dad was content to hang out in the climate controlled zone of the Pullman sleeper and catch up on his reading, and take the occasional nap. This was a nice change from the day to day of his regular home life. He did wander over to the shop periodically to check on our progress, but given that a heat wave was on, and the interior of the building was hotter than the hinges of hell, we only saw him briefly. To be honest I wouldn't have minded joining him in the car from time to time myself.

Traditionally, the summer sessions are our least patronized as far as volunteers go, but I am happy to say that things are looking up. Kirk, Dave, Larry, Charlie, Burr, Mike, David, Hank, Duane, Bob, Norman and Severn did accomplish a great deal, and they have my gratitude, and the gratitude of the Board.

Saturday night everyone was invited once more to Kirk and Debbie's for the evening meal. It was a nice gesture, and a great way to get everyone in one place at the same time for conversation and storytelling. This social aspect is what I enjoy most about coming up to Portola, so kudos to you guys for facilitating this "team building" event, we hope we can do it again soon!

A big thank you goes to Gail McClure for designing and printing the new 165 "Heavy Metal" t-shirt for sale in the gift shop. Please pick one up next time you are at the museum! And thanks also to the switch crew lead by Steve Habeck who had the engine and tender spotted right where we wanted it. I know it's not always easy to move stuff around in that yard, kinda like one of those sliding tile puzzles given the amount of equipment we own.

Sunday morning finally arrived, so dad and I moved out of the Pullman, and we headed out the gate. We returned by way of Pine Grove so I could drop a chunk of railroad iron off at my property. Taking Carson Pass over into California, I managed to avoid Highway 80 entirely, which was great. Dad was likely happy to get back home. I took a pause for the cause and headed back out on the road to LA. I arrived late that evening and decompressed a bit before collapsing. Unbeknownst to me, a week of sanding and painting ceilings lay ahead; something I really didn't plan for.

WP 165 needs your help. Steam engines run on 4 things: fuel, water, rails and money. We've got 3 of those in abundance, but your help is needed for the last one. To donate to the 165, you can post mail a check to Steam Department - FRRS, P O Box 608, Portola, CA 96122. Or go on-line to the WP Store: giftshop.wplives.org. Click on Monetary Donations and select 165 Donation to support the return of steam to Portola.