

WP 165 PROGRESS

- Chris Allan, Steam CMO

Although lightly patronized, a good amount of work was accomplished during our summer work session in Portola, July 19th – 21st, 2012.

Roger Stabler and I arrived on Wednesday, and again to our delight, the Pullman car was in fine “move-in” shape and required very little cleanup. Thanks to the Museum staff for keeping everything much cleaner than it has been in the past. Roger had brought up a new ice machine for the gift shop that he donated, (thanks to Roger for that!) he spent the majority of the evening replacing the old water filter with a larger more “industrial” version. We now have copious amounts of ice at our disposal.

Thursday morning Charlie and I set up some shade out by the engine, and Roger, with helper Hank Stiles began tacking in the patch on the wrapper sheet. This area was wasted away and needed replaced, being in the corner of the cab where moisture was trapped for a very long period of time. Charlie had to run into Sparks for some welding gasses, which delayed things a bit, but he came through as he always does. Dick Coudin, who came in very early that morning, was given the task of cleaning up the drivers and applying a coat of primer. Assisting him were locals Dave Anderson and Steve Parry. To my delight, Kirk Baer has been cleaning

up the locomotive frame since our last visit, getting some primer on, and making the engine look like someone cares! Thanks Kirk!

Roger and Hank continued the welding project on Friday, lots of welding and even more grinding between passes. Hank chased the threads on more of the flexible stays, still plenty of those left to do, but every one counts.

Norm Holmes stopped by to pick up a train order signal casting that Paul Boschan had brazed together for him. Evidently when the SN cut the mast down back in the day, it fell like a mighty redwood, and broke the head casting in three pieces. The casting is back together again, and Norm hopes to erect it at his new place in Carson City. Norm brought with him a truck load of steam paperwork, parts and a few surprises, like the numberboard glasses from quite a few WP locomotive headlights, including the 165's! Those will make a great display someday. Norm also donated a folio with drawings of valve measurements and settings for every WP engine. That will come in quite handy, Thanks Norm!

Thursday night, around 11PM, I panicked when I heard a locomotive fire up right next to us in the Pullman car. It didn't last long idling. Come to find out it was an eager Seth Adams firing up our latest acquisition, the WP SW1500 1503. Good to hear her finally alive again, although a little warning next time would be nice!



Dave Roth demonstrates that there is no graceful way to exit a firebox.

- Chris Allan photo



*Roger Stabler works on the patch
in the boiler wrapper sheet.*

- Chris Allan photo

(Just kidding Seth).

Later Friday evening, Roger and I cut out early at 4PM to drive up to bucolic Greenville, to meet a fellow by the name of Ross who claimed to have a turbo generator we could use on the 165. The generator that came with the engine was missing the half that contained the windings, presumably purloined by copper thieves. Ross is a great fellow, who lives on a few acres in a WP wood caboose, surrounded by the spoils of his time working for Dobbas Trucking. His company made a living picking up derailments; to say quite a few treasures made it to his property would be an understatement. I thought I was in an episode of "American Pickers." Ross also donated a three chime whistle off now scrapped WP derrick 27, which now resides in our collection. Thanks to him for his hospitality and generosity. Also thanks to our bookkeeper Susan for hanging around her office long enough for us to pick up the check.

Upon inspection of the generator by Roger, it was determined to be in good enough shape to go ahead and purchase. Saturday Roger cleaned out the wasps nests and other detritus in the turbo blades, oiled it, put some air to it, and it spun right up, it even made 32 volts! Thanks again to Norm for arranging to meet Ross, one of the more interesting people I have run across during this project.

Saturday it was back to work welding and grinding for

Roger, who was getting quite gritty at this point, and more cleaning for the shop crew, joined this day by Eddie Chase. In the end Dick's crew got paint on half of the drivers, an excellent start. We will continue in the Fall and hopefully complete the process before the wheels go back under the frame.

All this time, Bob Sims has been tirelessly working on the interior framing of our steam shop car, D&RGW 62962. He has to date gotten the man doors in the side installed, as well as an air conditioner. Bob designed it so when you close the big old sliding door on the side of the car, these newly installed doors are not apparent. After I left on Sunday morning he continued apace and got a couple of the stud walls tacked into place. Before long this will serve as a workshop area and a clean place for the steam crew to "retreat" during our work sessions and eventually operation days. We can't thank Bob enough for his extraordinary efforts!

Utter exhaustion set in Saturday night by the time we needed to start picking things up. Luckily the weather cooperated until Saturday, by which point we were quite warm, especially Roger in his welding coat. After getting everything put away and a brief respite in the Pullman, Roger, Dick and I went off to the Beckwith Tavern for dinner. Prime rib is a great way to wind up a weekend of good progress.

The Fall Work Session saw a lot of continuing work from the Summer. Dave Varley of GGRM and Steve Lee, of Cheyenne, WY have dug into the FRA Form 4

calculations, and have made headway utilizing the thickness readings done by Nathan Osborn and James Cowdery. Generating these numbers is a tedious undertaking to say the least, and we are very grateful to these gentlemen for taking this formidable task in hand. This document will eventually render our Maximum Authorized Working Pressure, or MAWP as it applies to our boiler.

Dick Coudin and Jeff Boone continued their work chipping away at paint, rust, etc. on the driver center castings. These are now looking very nice in primer paint. They will look even better when they are back under the boiler and frame. This is a good example of sticking to a job until it is done, thanks guys!

Steve was also busy checking the wristpins and crankpins for cracking using our dye-penetrant kit. A red dye is sprayed on the part to be checked, wiped off, after which a "developer" is sprayed on, turning the surface white. Any cracks will be visible as red lines. Steve reported that all the components checked passed this inspection. Good news is always welcome.

Severn Edmonds, another helpful fellow from GGRM, has been rebuilding handles and other parts of our "new" lathe acquired last year from the UPRR. Duane and Charlie were able to wire it, and Severn spent hours cleaning and lubricating to make this machine shiny again. When we start threading staybolts, boiler studs and the like, it will be invaluable. Severn deserves accolades for his efforts to get this lathe back in trim, and we look forward to locomotive parts flying off as fast as he can make them!

We missed Charlie Spikes, our favorite volunteer at these workdays. His wife had recently gone through spinal surgery so he stayed home to take care of her, which we more than understand. Our thoughts are with her as well as our wish for her speedy recovery.

The "Dave's" of GGRM, Dave Roth and Dave Varley, joined us for some time in the firebox. The tube ends in the rear tube sheet have been an ongoing thorn in our side, given the generous amount of seal welding around each of the 200 or so 2 inch diameter tubes, and the twenty four 4 1/2" diameter superheater flues. Dana Greeley started this project several years ago, and just about everyone in our diminutive group has had time on the angle grinder vs. the tube sheet.

Dave Varley offered to tackle this as his contribution for the weekend, and we are glad he did. Between the three of them, Dave, Dave, and Severn tag-teaming with grinder, torch and hammer, over 100 of the tube

ends were removed, which leaves only about 80 or so to go. Dave Varley deserves a great deal of credit for grinding for hours like a man possessed, putting the rest of us to shame! This coupled with the unseasonable warmth in Portola earned all involved a great deal of sweaty satisfaction for a job well done. Matt Parker was finally able to get in on the fun, and got many of the threads chased on the flexible staybolt sleeves before his company called him back. Great to see Matt back, it's been too long!

Saturday night the Museum management, led by Eugene Vicknair and Tom Carter, put on a BBQ shindig for the workers, a great period to decompress and lick our wounds. A great end to another productive season. Thanks also to Rod and Gail McClure for running interference on many fronts, as well as their unwavering support of our project.

I would also like to thank Bob Sims for continuing the efforts on our shop boxcar. He has, at his own expense, been working on the interior, sheeting and insulating to create a nice comfortable space for working on steam components and tool storage. Bob has been working tirelessly all summer on this project, and he has our gratitude.

Please note we have a Superheater Donation Program going on. To date our superheater donors are Bob Sims, James Mason, Steve Lee and Matt Shuman. Through their generosity, have seven of the 24 flues donated. Please consider a donation, each is \$350.00, is tax-deductible, and will get your name on the donors plaque in the cab. Thanks again to all of our beloved donors for your continued support! Mail donations to the museum or check out the blog at <http://wprsteam.blogspot.com>.

Looking to next year, Roger Stabler has arranged to have the locomotive's leaf springs rebuilt. These will be ready for pickup in December. The cost will be covered by Roger, which is a very generous gesture. We look forward to getting them back in the frame in the Spring.

Speaking of Spring 2013, our next work session will be Saturday, April 20th through Saturday April 27th. This will be a full week of prep for lifting the boiler and frame back onto the drivers. With a great deal of effort, and some luck, the locomotive will be back inside by Sunday, April 28th. Severn Edmonds and Dave Varley are considering spending the week and we welcome any additional help during setup and tramping.

Sitting here writing this in the comfort of my kitchen at

home, I am glad that the work session was scheduled when it was, given the gas price spike that occurred soon after. Hopefully things will calm down soon. A small reminder that just showing up in Portola can be a great expense to our volunteers, and I certainly appreciate your diligence. I hope to get the 165 restoration "over the hump" next season, and picking up speed until we finally get a fire back in her.



*Dick Coudin primers one of the locomotive driver castings.
- Chris Allan photo*

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.

BUY A HOUSE – HELP THE SOCIETY

The FRRS has received the donation of a residence in Portola for resale, proceeds to go to support the Society's efforts. The property is located a few blocks from the museum just above Old Town Portola.

The home is a one bed, one bath layout with a kitchen, family room and front room, as well as a yard with alley access and a garage in the back. Condition is as-is. It does require work, mainly in the roof, but will make someone a nice vacation home or mountain residence.

The Society thanks Gary Yee for his generous donation to help our preservation efforts. If you would like more information on the property or would like to make an offer, please contact Eugene Vicknair (via email at eugene.vicknair@gmail.com) or Rod McClure (via email at president@wplives.org).

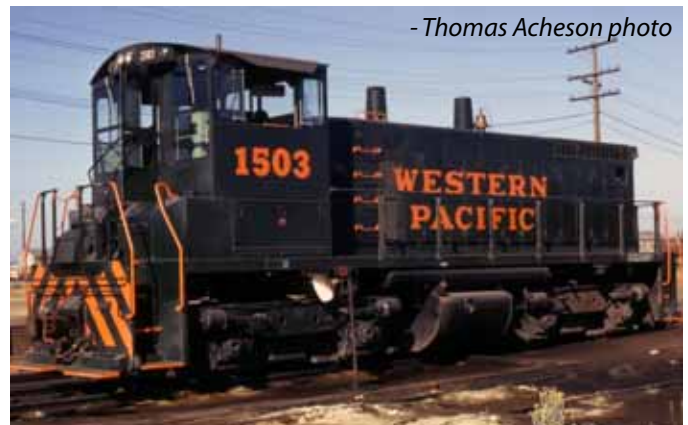
WP'S LAST SWITCHER DONATED

After years of quiet work by FRRS President Rod McClure, the Union Pacific Railroad has graciously donated the last switching locomotive acquired by the Western Pacific: EMD SW1500 number 1503. This engine joins several other significant examples of WP yard power in the collection, including 0-6-0 165, one of two surviving WP steam switchers; Alco S1 504, the first Alco diesel acquired by the WP, and, of course, WP's very first diesel EMC SW1 501.

The 1503 was one of 3 examples of the SW1500 model delivered by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors to the WP in 1973. WP had not acquired switchers for many years prior, but an aging switcher fleet and a need for cleaner running power in the Bay Area resulted in one of the smallest fleets of this model on a Class 1 railroad. In contrast, rival Southern Pacific purchased 240 examples.

WP used their 3 in the Bay Area, serving on yard and local jobs in Oakland and on the little recorded but fascinating trackage in San Francisco. It was here that our Society President, Rod McClure, first became acquainted with the 1503. She served regularly in San Francisco where WP managed to hold on to many customers until the big decline in the early 1980s. The last tracks were abandoned soon after the UP merger.

Renumbered Union Pacific 1503, it served many UP terminals. The unit changed little over the years, acquiring an air conditioner and, of course, yellow and grey paint. Discussions with the UP to acquire this historic engine began years ago and finally came to fruition when she was set aside in 2010. Still in UP paint and wearing number 1042, the 1503 is in operational condition. Plans are afoot to repaint her into WP green and orange in 2013 and fundraising is in progress. If you would like to help, please send donations to FRRS – WP 1503, P O Box 608, Portola, CA, 96122. A complete repaint will cost around \$16,000.



- Thomas Acheson photo