

# The Track Car

*The Official Newsletter of West Coast Railroaders Group*



Photo Credit: Adam Weidenbach Photography

## President's Message

Welcome to our newsletter! As we begin 2021 and try to forget 2020, the new year brings with it hope for our country and world for the COVID-19 pandemic to be over. Many of us have lost friends, family and co workers to this virus that has ravaged the world. Railroads have not escaped the virus either. Many of our host railroad's have had to cancel or scale back operations, as well as furlough employees. Throughout the pandemic, WCRG remained fully operational to serve our host railroads needs. We also were able to host several excursions, with additional protocols to keep everyone safe and healthy. 2020 was another year without any injuries or incidents. I'm exceptionally proud of all our qualified operators and excursion participants

Moving into 2021, WCRG's 10th anniversary, we will continue to focus on safety, including our continued commitment to motorcar excursion safety. WCRG's Excursion Participant Safety Advisories help keep our excursion participants engaged in the operational challenges of operating a motorcar in an excursion environment, as well as the importance of situational awareness.

I look forward to leading WCRG into 2021, as well as Tyler Marty and Matt Parker, as we continue to be the safest and most efficient track car organization in the west.

See you on the rails,

Ken Marty

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### **Upcoming WCRG Events:**

#### **Track Car Excursion :**

Roaring Camp Railroads  
March 28th, 2021  
(Possible date change to  
April)

#### **Vintage Track Car Rides:**

Roaring Camp Railroads  
May 2021 Fundraiser for  
Make-A-Wish Greater Bay  
Area (Covid Permitting)

#### **Track Car Excursion:**

Goose Lake Railway June 18th  
and 19th, 2021

**More Track Car Excursions  
coming in 2021! Check  
WCRG's website for  
updates!**



## Meet Tyler Marty, Manager Of Operating Practices, Southern Region



Manager Of Operating Practices Tyler Marty Operating WCRG 574

It's not often you meet a young man with as much passion for the rail industry as Tyler Marty, WCRG'S new Manager of Operating Practices, Southern Region. Growing up in a railroad family, Tyler knew from a young age he not only wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, but wanted to excel in the changing railroad industry with its modern technology such as Positive Train Control, Distributed Power, as well as other technological advances that are reshaping the industry. As exciting as the future is for modern railroad operations, Tyler is also very in tune with the historical aspect of railroading and all the opportunities that come with operating historic trains and vintage on track equipment. Tyler has been involved in WCRG's fire patrol service on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad for many years. As Manager of Operating Practices, Tyler has a lot of responsibility for a young adult, but he enjoys the challenge. Tyler especially enjoys working with our Veteran's partnerships including Honor Flight Nevada, as well as the Mighty Oaks Foundation.



# WCRG's Excursion Participant Safety Advisories Continue To Educate Excursion Participants For Continued Safe Operation



## WCRG EXCURSION PARTICIPANT SAFETY ADVISORY 2020-02 "Operating Over Frogs"



WCRG EXCURSIONS OPERATE OVER VARIOUS TYPES OF TURNOUT FROGS. THIS ADVISORY WILL HELP EXCURSION PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY COMMON FROGS OPERATED OVER DURING WCRG EXCURSIONS, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR OPERATING OVER EACH STYLE FROG AS OUTLINED IN WCRG TRACK CAR EXCURSION OPERATING RULES & STANDARDS RULE 445.



### SELF GUARDING FROG

A Self Guarding Frog is identified by guides or flanges, above its running surface which contact the tread rims of railcar wheels for the purpose of safely guiding their flanges past the point of the frog. Self guarding frogs are most easily identifiable by the absence of guard rails on either side of the outer rail. These frogs pose a risk of derailment to track cars due to the lack of these guard rails. Additionally, when the point of a self guarding frog has excessive wear, track car wheels can "jump" over the point and cause a track car to derail. Track car movements turning out through self guarding frogs must not exceed 5 MPH.



### SPRING FROG

A Spring Frog is identified as having a movable wing rail which is normally held against the point rail by springs, thus making an unbroken running surface for wheels using one track. These frogs pose a risk of derailment to track cars as most track cars are too light to overcome the spring pressure needed to open the wing rail for the diverging route. Track car wheels may "walk" up the base of the frog and may or may not follow the intended route through the frog. Track car movements over the closed side of a spring frog must not exceed 3 MPH, prepared to stop if flange does not follow the intended route. Additionally, when available, a person must be on the ground to guard against derailment and guide the track car to the intended route.



### LIFT/JUMP FROG

A Lift or Jump Frog is identified by a continuous stock rail on one side of the frog in which the flange of the wheel on a railcar is lifted up and then rolls over the stock rail. Lift/jump frogs are generally found on lightly used turnouts. These frogs pose a risk of derailment to track cars as the wheel is lifted up and over the stock rail, the track car may or may not follow the intended route through the frog. Track car movements over lift/jump frogs must not exceed 3 MPH, prepared to stop if the flange does not follow the intended route. Additionally, when available, a person must be on the ground to guard against derailment and guide the track car to the intended route.

WCRG Excursion Participant Safety Advisory 2020-02 10/2020  
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## WCRG EXCURSION PARTICIPANT SAFETY ADVISORY 2020-03 "Preventing Rear End Collisions"



Rear end collisions due to loss of situational awareness, as well as failure to operate at a speed that allows stopping half the distance track is seen to be clear can result in equipment damage, as well as personal injury. Excursion participants are reminded of the following WCRG rules and operating practices to ensure continued safe operations on excursions.

### Potential Causes of Rear End Collisions

- Failure to allow safe following distance by taking into consideration speed, sight distance, track conditions and other factors that may affect stopping distance.
- Excessive speed for operating conditions.
- Inattention and/or distraction including, but not limited to, unauthorized use of electronic or other devices, cameras, etc.
- Inattention and/or distraction including, but not limited to, track side scenery, people, animals; landmarks, and/or activities not relevant to the safe operation of the excursion.
- Fatigue.

### Applicable WCRG Rules to Reference

- WCRG Rule 405: Ensure full rest before excursion starts.
- WCRG Rule 411: Turn off and stow personal electronic devices. This applies to operators and passengers.
- WCRG Rule 431: Operators and Passengers observe and comply with on car communication, as well as situational awareness.
- WCRG Rule 437: Maintain awareness of the location and speed of the track car(s) ahead. This includes change in speed, activation of brake lights, slowing or stopping, or disappearance from view of the track car ahead.
- WCRG Rule 438: When stopping out of view of a following track car, immediately protect the following movements.
- WCRG Rule 441: Excursion participants must always operate at a speed that permits stopping half the distance track is seen to be clear i.e. 1000 feet of visibility, track car must be able to stop in 500 feet. In addition, participants must factor in rail conditions such as wet/greasy rail, leaves, moss, or other hazards that require longer stopping distances.
- Immediately contact the EIC (Employee In Charge) if you become fatigued, ill, or otherwise find yourself in a condition not suitable to continue safely operating your track car with full alertness and competency. The EIC will work with you to find a solution which keeps you and the other participants safe.



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WCRG's Excursion Participant Safety Advisory campaign kicked off last year with our Drug and Alcohol Advisory making our position perfectly clear that, just like any railroad operation, drugs and alcohol have no place on any motorcar excursions. Since then, WCRG has issued two more advisories, one outlining the safe operation over switch frogs, and our latest advisory to help prevent rear end collisions.

The latest Excursion Participant Safety Advisory is in response to a serious rear end collision which occurred on a non-WCRG motorcar excursion in October, 2020, seriously injuring two people and completely destroying a motorcar. These types of accidents and incidents are completely preventable and absolutely unacceptable. At WCRG, as well as though out the rail industry, it is firmly believed, and ingrained in the culture, that every single accident is preventable. In some hobby clubs that operate motorcars, there seems to be an acceptance that accidents may occur on occasion. Their safety culture (or lack thereof) expects that a freak accident is going to happen now and then. This is unacceptable.

Any organization or railroad can have a book of rules, but without the institutional knowledge as well the culture to foster safe operations from the leadership, accidents are likely to occur. This is why it is so important to have trained, professional railroaders in charge of every excursion. WCRG's Professional railroaders bring this zero accident culture to every WCRG Excursion we lead. WCRG will continue our excursion participant safety advisories throughout the coming year to ensure our excursion participants have the knowledge and the culture needed to foster safe operations on every excursion WCRG operates, because NO accident is acceptable.

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## Safety First-What It Really Means And How To Apply It



WCRG Job Briefing Before Excursion Departure

We are all familiar with "Safety First" on the railroad. But what does it really mean and how do we apply it? Safety has always been at the forefront of modern railroading. It sounds easy enough, but is it? Just last week I was in a local "big box" hardware store picking up supplies for a project. As I waited for my order, next to the department's work station was a cork board with several tags on it that read "safety save" with employees names and what they had done to prevent an accident. As I glanced over each one, it was evident to me that safety isn't just a company statement, it is a culture that is fostered into each employee.

I asked the employee about the board and what he thought of the program. He went on to say that we (the company) have a very good safety record at this store. The managers expect us to work safely, even if it means a few minutes of overtime to do it the safest way, and not cut corners. The managers really care about our well being. As I picked up my order and departed I reflected on just how true it is, whether it's a railroad or hardware store. Safety is a culture, not just a statement. That culture needs to be fostered into each employee through training and experience. That culture also starts at the top. The culture must flow from the leadership to everyone involved in the business or organization.

WCRG's Logo "Safety by the Mile" really does mean what it says. We believe and foster a culture of safety that empowers our people to always take the safe course. They are empowered and expected to do just that. It doesn't matter what the service is, a track inspection, fire patrol, or hosting a motorcar excursion. Every time we climb on a track car, we build a culture of safety that is and must be embraced by everyone involved in the operation. During our motorcar excursions, every excursion participant is reminded that they, as an individual, have the authority to stop the excursion at any time should they think it's necessary for the safety of themselves or the group. That includes mechanical issues, clarification of authority, rules clarification, etc. More importantly each excursion participant understands they will never be judged or criticized for doing so. This is the culture of safety that prevents rule violations and accidents. Just like the "big box" store, this culture of safety is what matters. When safety is the culture of the company or organization, safe operations will be the result.

Ken Marty



## WCRG & Amtrak Team Up For Make-A-Wish Greater Bay Area



Amtrak Engine Crew With Adam And His Dad



Make-A-Wish Staff With WCRG 2016

WCRG and the Make-A-Wish Foundation, together with our host railroads have a very successful partnership. One such railroad is Amtrak. On January 2nd 2020, Make-A-Wish Greater Bay area teamed up with WCRG and Amtrak to bring Adam, a 16 year old train enthusiast who wished for a train trip to Amtrak's Emeryville, CA. station for a wish reveal. With exceptionally warm weather, the day was perfect as could be for Adam's big surprise. WCRG and staff from Make-A-Wish, along with Robert Ward, Road Foreman of Engines for Amtrak set up a display table with Make-A-Wish literature, handouts, and balloons. The Make-A-Wish motorcar, WCRG 2016 was also on display. With everything set and train number 5 on schedule for an on time arrival into the station track, Adam and his father arrived to the station just as train 5 pulled into the depot. With the train stopped, and after a thorough job briefing with the train crew, WCRG 2016 was set on the track and positioned in front of the locomotive for a photo shoot with Adam and his dad, as well as the engine crew members. After the photo shoot, Adam was given a tour of the train. Adam was all smiles after debarking the train and couldn't wait for his trip that was scheduled just a few weeks away. The Make-a-Wish staff, as well as Amtrak, together with WCRG pulled off another amazing event bringing train themed wishes to children with life threatening illnesses. For more information about the Make-A-Wish Foundation visit their website at [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org)

The logo for Make-A-Wish, featuring the text 'Make-A-Wish' in a blue serif font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a blue arc above it and a small star to its right.

## Goose Lake Railway Mighty Oaks Foundation Excursion Fundraiser June 19th-20th, 2020



Last June WCRG held a motorcar excursion on the Goose Lake Railway. Many of you already know WCRG is involved in many charitable causes. When Quinton Swank, Operations Manager for the railway suggested the Mighty Oaks Foundation as a beneficiary of the excursion proceeds, we were very interested in learning about what the Mighty Oaks Foundation is all about. Mighty Oaks offers faith based programs for our Nation's Veterans dealing with PTSD. Mighty Oaks offers this at no charge to veterans needing help. WCRG was more than willing to step up and do whatever it took to make this excursion fundraiser the best it could be.

The event was a two day excursion, with day one traveling about 30 miles from Lakeview, OR out to the OR/CA state line at Goose Lake State Park and back. Saturday the excursion proceeded from Lakeview to Alturas, CA and return. Upon departure Saturday morning, Luke Dodd from the Mighty Oaks Foundation spoke at the job briefing about the importance of helping our Nation's Veterans, and that Mighty Oaks provides our Nation's heroes with the support they need to live productive lives when transitioning back to civilian life. Luke's speech was powerful and motivating to the entire group.

As the group finished the job briefing, the excursion got underway just before 7:30AM. Twenty two motorcars rolled safely through the quiet road crossings of the town, and after clearing the yard limits the excursion was under way on the main track to Alturas. The first stop was State line, for a potty stop and refreshments, provided by WCRG on our pushcar. After the twenty minute stop, the excursion was under way again. Our next stop was Davis Creek. This area provided excellent footing conditions, as well as beautiful trees that lined both sides of the tracks. Green pastures lay just beyond the trees making the scene reminisce of a Norman Rockwell portrait of America from another era. After the group was done taking in the beauty of the area, the excursion continued on to Alturas.

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## Goose Lake Railway Mighty Oaks Foundation Excursion Fundraiser June 19th-20th, 2020 Continued



Excursion Group At The Wye In Lakeview



Excursion Group At Davis Creek

Approaching Alturas, the railway winds through a canyon with a mature waterway, the North Fork Pit River, eclipsed by sharp rock walls that come down to track level. After a few miles of canyon running, the railway opens up into the Alturas valleys with beautiful mountain skylines. In just a few more miles, the excursion had reached Alturas. The excursion group then turned each car for the trip back to Lakeview, and then proceeded about a mile up the track for a lunch break at the Chimney Rock travel center.

After lunch a job briefing was held before departure, highlighting safe operating practices and challenges as the group prepared to depart Alturas. After departing Alturas, the excursion made a brief stop in front of the famous chimney rock, a well known area landmark. Again underway, the excursion proceeded to Davis Creek, for another potty and refreshment stop. After departing Davis Creek, the excursion encountered a severe sun kink (Thermal Misalignment as the rail industry refers to it) requiring a person on each side of the track to walk each car over the section of track. Each motorcar slowly and safely proceeded over the sun kink without derailing with the help of the spotters carefully guiding them forward. After the last motorcar cleared, the excursion was back up to speed.

The excursion's last stop on the return trip was State Line. Another chance for each excursion participant to grab a few refreshments for the last leg into Lakeview. Back underway, the outline of Lakeview comes into view, and soon the excursion is hitting the yard limit board. The excursion safely and slowly proceeds into Lakeview and arrives at the yard to begin setoff. With all the cars off the tracks by 6:30PM, and a few handshakes from the railroad staff and Luke Dodd from Mighty Oaks, another safe, successful excursion was officially in the books. For WCRG, Mighty Oaks was new to us. For Mighty Oaks, motorcar excursions were something new to them. The birth of a new partnership to say the least.



## Virginia & Truckee Railroad Excursion July 10th-12th, 2020



July 10th-12th were the dates for WCRG'S annual summer motorcar excursion on the Virginia & Truckee Railroad. This highly popular excursion is a favorite of many west coast motorcar excursion participants. Some call it the "best in the west" excursion due to the fantastic scenery, heavy mountain grades, and exceptional track. As with the majority of WCRG excursions, this excursion was a fundraiser, in this case for Honor Flight Nevada. Honor Flight sends America's Veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit their memorials free of charge, with an emphasis on World War II Veterans. The excursion also offered a ride along for a few dozen local Veterans to experience the railroad by motorcar. The excursion started out Friday evening with a test and tune from Virginia City to Scales, and return. This gave excursion participants a chance to tune their motorcars to the high elevation of the Comstock region, at 6,200 feet above sea level.

Saturday morning's trip would be the first of two to Mound House, just short of the Eastgate depot. With the new rail bike operation on the railroad, the excursion had to work around both train operations and rail bikes. Saturday morning started out with a thorough job briefing, and a presentation by Honor Flight's Jon Konvicka, who talked about the importance of Honor Flight and how much the Veterans who were riding along appreciated the opportunity to participate with the excursion. Jon also rode along and answered questions about Honor Flight during the excursion. The excursion got under way shortly after 8AM. The weather was perfect for a morning run down the Comstock Division to Mound House. Leaving town, the first of two tunnels came into view. Exiting Tunnel #4, the town of Gold Hill comes into view as the track descends a 3.6 percent grade, then proceeding safely through Gold Hill as the line begins to snake through several cuts along the mountain. Just around a long horseshoe curve, Tunnel #2, the second of two tunnels comes into view. On the porthole, the dates 1869 and 2008 may be observed, the first year being when the tunnel originally opened, the second when the tunnel was rebuilt for the current service.

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## Virginia & Truckee Railroad Excursion July 10th-12th, 2020 Continued



Around a few more curves the excursion passes Haywards siding. The track straightens out for a short section and then back to another horseshoe curve before dropping into Mound House. As the excursion group arrives at Mound House, the cars were turned, and with operations suspended, excursion participants had the opportunity for a break and a chance to grab a snack and drink off the pushcar. With the participants back on their motorcars, the group departed Mound House for the trip up hill that would test both operator and machine as they battled the heavy grade the entire way to Gold Hill, where the excursion would hold for the local train from Virginia City. As the excursion reached Gold Hill, the train was just coming into town. After the train departed, the excursion followed the train into Virginia City. Arriving at Virginia City, the excursion pulled into the siding and the motorcars were secured for lunch.

With the excursion participants back from lunch and ready to proceed to Mound House for the afternoon trip, another job briefing was held. Then, the excursion participants fired up their motorcars and upon return of the train into Virginia City, the group departed the siding and onto the main track and out of town. The afternoon trip included a photo stop on the US Highway 50 bridge before departure back to Virginia City. With the group back on the move towards Virginia City, and with authority to occupy the main track from Mound House to Virginia City, the railroad was clear for the excursion to make a straight shot to Virginia City Depot. After a few small mechanical problems, the excursion group arrived back at Virginia City and the motorcars were secured at the depot for the night.

With the excursion done for the day, the excursion participants and guests were invited to a BBQ dinner in Virginia City. Sunday's excursion was a repeat of Saturday's excursion. Sunday morning's trip also included a stop just outside of tunnel two, where the excursion group lined up for a photo shoot. Professional photographer Adam Weidenbach positioned himself above the motorcar group for a one of a kind shot of the motorcars lined up with operators next to them. The afternoon run offered one last ride from Virginia City to Mound House and return over one of the most spectacular rail lines out west. With everything from wild horses to operating steam trains and a few gun fighters around town, Virginia City and the Comstock region offers one of the best experiences any motorcar excursion participant could imagine. A big thank you to the Virginia & Truckee Railroad, as well as the Commission for once again hosting our excursion.

## Santa Cruz, Big Trees & Pacific (Roaring Camp) Excursion November 7th, 2020



Excursion Group At Santa Cruz

Saturday November 7th was the date for our Santa Cruz, Big Trees & Pacific (Roaring Camp) motorcar excursion. Rain the night before had cleared leaving partly cloudy skies for the two trips from Felton to Santa Cruz and return. The early morning seton, and a 10:15 departure gave plenty of time to safely get the 17 cars on the rails and have a thorough job briefing (which included stopping distances due to wet rail conditions and a strong emphasis on preventing rear end collisions) before departure. With the Santa Cruz Beach Train running 15 minutes ahead of the excursion group, the group slowly departed Felton, immediately entering the cool, damp shade of a forest with many towering ancient redwood trees on both side of the rails. Soon, the cars crossed the San Lorenzo River bridge and continued for a few miles winding through the many curves, still surrounded by trees.

Next stop HWY 9 to bunch the group up for the highway crossing. With the group tightly bunched up, everyone proceeded through with the protection the automatic warning devices (gates and flashing lights.) Descending down the grade and leaving most of the trees behind, and gradually re-entering civilization, the excursion approaches the city of Santa Cruz. The lead car stopped again to bunch up the group in preparation to turn the cars at Encinal St. As the last car was turned, the excursion prepared to proceed back to Felton. With the excursion group back at Felton, the motorcars were pulled into a spur track and secured for the lunch break. After lunch, and with the job briefing completed, the excursion group pulled back onto the main and proceeded down to the rear of the beach train. After the beach train departed, the excursion waited 15 minutes and then proceeded to make the second trip to Santa Cruz. As the excursion group reached HWY 9, the beach train was stopped by a car parked in the foul of the track.

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## Santa Cruz, Big Trees & Pacific (Roaring Camp) Excursion November 7th, 2020 Continued



Excursion Group In The Clear For Lunch



Excursion Group Prepares To Depart Felton

After about a 45 min wait, a tow truck removed the car, and the train and excursion group were back on the move towards Santa Cruz. For the second trip into Santa Cruz, the excursion proceeded all the way to the wye near the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. As the excursion proceeded through the many public crossings equipped with automatic warning devices, the excursion participants enjoyed the extra safety of these devices activated by the shunted motorcars. The vintage magnetic flagman (wig wags) were also a big hit. As the excursion approached the wye, the group proceeded up the west leg, then backed down the main, and then proceeded up the east leg to the community center park for a stop before heading back up the hill to Felton.

With everyone back on their motorcars and ready to proceed, the excursion group departed the wye. After leaving the wye, the track has several blocks of street running. The excursion group safely and slowly preceded through the street trackage and through the downtown tunnel. Clearing the tunnel, and after proceeding through several street crossings, the rear car cleared the last crossing, and the excursion was underway back to Felton. With the excursion group back at Felton, the motorcar group began setting off the cars and loading them up. As the last excursion participants car was clear of the track, the beach train had also arrived back to Felton. Another fantastic, safe and successful WCRG excursion!



# Photo Highlights 2020





# **W**est **C**oast **R**ailroaders **G**roup



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