

MRC LINE COMMITTEE
LINE OBSERVATION REPORT
FROM
WHITE LAKE TO MILEPOST 461
August 02, 2017

Participants:

Lynn Kennison, SD DOT
Harlan Quenzer, SD Railroad Board

General background information:

The purpose of the observations this date was to monitor the general condition of the MRC line.

Extent of high-rail observations:

1. We started at the junction of the MRC rail line and east road crossing in White Lake, SD, and ended at Mile Marker 461 east of Kennebec, South Dakota.

General observations:

East of Chamberlain Bridge:

1. The vertical and horizontal alignment appears to be fair to adequate in most places. Some areas of cross slope misalignment were felt during the traversing of the track. Some work is needed to realign the rails both vertically and horizontally.
2. The damaged track due to the train derailment east of the Gavilon Grain facility was repaired. Grain pickup was, for the most part, complete with some grain pickup remaining to be completed. The pickup and removal of the damaged rail, railcars, car trucks and wheels remains to be completed.
3. The mowing and spraying of weeds appeared to be underway in some areas. Koshier weeds in several locations were 2 to 3 feet high at the edge of the ballast in many locations. Vegetation was observed between the rails in many locations with the heaviest generally located east of mile post 432 (near Pukwana). In general, weed growth appeared to be out of control in most areas.
4. There were areas where ballast and tamping appeared to be needed. Ballast had been placed in several areas. There was a little evidence of the tamping and regulating having been done in some areas. However, there appeared to be little, or no effort having been made in other areas.

5. It appeared that some tie replacement had been completed and was underway in the area between mile post 419 and mile post 424 (near Kimball).

West of Chamberlain Bridge:

1. The vertical and horizontal alignment of the rail is fair to adequate in most places. Some areas of cross slope misalignment were felt during the traversing of the track. Some work is needed to realign the rails both vertically and horizontally.
2. There was no evidence of major rail stress or misalignment due to thermal expansion. There was no evidence observed indicating the removal and/or repair of kinks in the horizontal alignment due to major thermal expansion.
3. The mowing of weeds appeared to be underway in some areas. Koster weeds appeared to have been mowed to a point several feet beyond the edge of the ballast in most locations. Vegetation was observed between the rails in several locations. The spraying of weeds in this area seems to have been more effective than in the area east of the Chamberlain Bridge. In general, the control of weed growth in the area west of the Chamberlain bridge appeared to be better than the area east of the Chamberlain Bridge.
4. There were areas where ballast and tamping appeared to have been completed. There were other areas where ballast is needed and tamping and regulating required. Ballast had been placed in several areas. It was noted that the model 6700 tamper was setting on the west end of the Chamberlain yard. The model 5700 tamper was not noted at any point during our travels on the line.
5. During the December 2016, Board meeting there were concerns raised relative to the potential loss of the ballast that was stockpiled in the areas outside of the rail and the cost to return the ballast to the area between the rails. Due to concerns that the ballast may be lost during snow removal procedures, it was the consensus that the excess ballast then on the outside of the rail would be relocated to the inside of the rail for future use in maintenance operations. The DSRC was to be compensated by means of a tax credit for the work for the cost of the effort to salvage the material. The material in question is for the most part still in the locations as noted during the November 2016 observation trip.
6. Two areas were noted that are an exception to the above referenced ballast concerns. In both areas, the ballast was neither as thick nor as wide as had been reported by DSRC personnel. In these areas, the material that was salvaged and used to tamp and regulate the track contained a relatively large quantity of topsoil. This topsoil appears to have contaminated the ballast that was placed between the rails.