

# Forest Fire Lookout Association

## CA-Pacific Area Chapter

30021 McKenna Heights Court, Valley Center CA 92082



### 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Hi Samsara,

Bad news first, **Two Fire Lookout Towers in CA-Pacific was lost during 2018 due to Wildfires.** On August 4, 2018 the old decommissioned “Eagle Rock” Cal Fire lookout burns to the ground in Santa Cruz Mountains. Cal Fire says the structure fire was reported at about 4:30 pm and smoke could be seen billowing from atop the Santa Cruz Mountains. The fire spread to vegetation and it grew in size, 'about 1/2 an acre to an acre' with 14 ground and air resources responded to the fire. Cal Fire named the vegetation fire the Eagle Fire and they say it's currently under investigation. The Eagle Rock Fire Tower was built in 1934 by the CCC and was in bad need of repair with lots of vandalism.



In November 2018 (not sure of date burnt), but the High Glade Fire Lookout tower (NHLR #1123) was part of the collateral damage of the Ranch Fire.

The River Fire was reported on July 27 in Mendocino National Forest and burned 48,920 acres and merging with the Ranch Fire and collectively burned 459,123 acres before being contained on September 18. The combination of these two fires are now reported as California's largest recorded wildfire.



## Now for the good news.

- 1) The Konocti Peak Chapter did an outstanding job again this year under the leadership of Jim Adams. With a \$500.00 FFLA Grant the rotten wood inside the cab door was replaced. 12 new volunteers were trained and 35 returning volunteers, staffed the tower 135 days of the 152 day season. There were 41 fires reported with 22 first reports. Due to the longer hours requested by Cal Fire the tower were split to two (six hour) shifts during the Red flag and extreme fire conditions.





- Another project for 2019 may be Oak Ridge (near Annapolis, CA)



The Oakridge LO and residence has seen better days. She's falling victim to the weather pretty badly.

The Oak Ridge tower has some roof damage which occurred while installing the new Commination tower. Also all the glass pane are crack or broken. I'm currently in negotiations with Cal Fire to use some of the PG&E grant money for restoration.

#### **Additional plans & challenges for 2019:**

The plan for Konocti and Copernicus next year will be to start recruiting in January with classroom training scheduled at the end of February. Hands on training at the tower will begin in March and the tower will re-open mid-April to mid-May dependent on the rain we receive.

- Advertise for additional perspective volunteers for the 2019 fire season.
- Set-up training classes for new volunteers.
- Fundraising or Grant to cover cost of restoration of the Oak Ridge Tower and other maintenance items.
- Establish field trips and other activities for group unity.
- Add additional towers to the NHLR list.

A website & Facebook page has been established for CA-Pacific. ([www.ffla-ccwr.org](http://www.ffla-ccwr.org))

My research of Ca-Pacific Tower is on-going, but due to lack of internet data it is my opinion that many of these towers have been removed or destroyed. The search is never over.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bill Ulmer*

Director, FFLA CA-Pacific Chapter

714-473-5111

Always a new twist against progress (Internet article).

## **LOOKOUT LIMBO**

Under federal law, any new fees on forest service structures must go before a recreation advisory committee, an 11-person panel whose members come from specific backgrounds, like “non-motorized guides,” as well as from environmental groups and state tourism.

FELA CA-Pacific Region