

CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CHAPTER

2018 ANNUAL REPORT (1-7-19)

The California Sierra Nevada Chapter addresses Forest Fire Lookouts from the area of Kernville, CA to the South, continuing North thru Sequoia/Inyo/Sierra/Stanslaus/Eldorado/Toiyabe and Tahoe National Forest to Interstate 80, West to Route 89 and East thru the State of Nevada. Included here are CDF (California Department of Forestry, i.e. Cal Fire Lookout Towers in the Sierra Foothills.)

SIERRA/NEVADA FORESTS---

Forest fires continue to change some of the dynamics within the forests, as well as, the use of lookouts, the financial ability of the Forest Service to maintain and/or restore lookouts and how they intend to use them within their forest. Each one appears to take a different direction from the other. Some towers are inactive, some they have no interest in restoring, and some they want to use for other purposes, i.e. Rentals, Interpretative centers, etc. Also, in light of recent financial shutdowns by the Federal Government, has resulted in no or limited access to Forest lands.

RESEARCH---

Research continues to be an essential part of the development of the territory, as is personal contact, cold calls, and how I might be supportive of the National Forests or CDF facilities.

MEMBERSHIP---

Recent updated Membership lists from Gary Weber indicate members from as far as Texas and Kansas to the Pacific Ocean as relates to the California Sierra Nevada Chapter..

FOUNDATIONS---

There are two subchapters that I am presently familiar with that include the independent foundation called the Buck Rock Foundation, which essentially mans the lookouts with the Sequoia National Forest/Park. Their chairperson is Kathy Allison. I continue to have a close working relationship with her, and she keeps me informed of issues within her area, as well as issues outside of her area and the Forests in general. Another subchapter called the Miami Chapter runs the Miami Lookout within the Sierra National Forest. The Fire Coordinator there is Barbara Thurmann. This summer I met with Kathy Allison for about 2-3 hours in Fresno, CA in which we had detailed discussions as to what was occurring within the Sierra Nevada as well as the Buck Rock Group and Miami Group.

FINANCIAL---

I have a business account for the California Sierra Nevada Chapter which presently has \$852.00 plus some minimal interest. This will continue to be used to support FFLA interests within the territory. Some additional funds are still being maintained by Gary Weber.. which amount to at the end of 2018 in the amount of \$1915.61.

INFORMATION ON FOREST/CDF CONTACTS---

During 2018, I have made some cold calls and appointment calls to National Forests and CDF locations as a greet and meet to identify myself to Forest and CDF personnel. I have had some successes and will review those in future paragraphs.

SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST/PARK---

The Buck Rock Foundation Volunteer Fire Lookout Program this year had 46 lookout volunteers which logged over 4420 hours of staffing for Delilah and Park Ridge as well as fill in staffing for Buck Rock. Their staffing begins on memorial day and ends 149 days later in October. Several hundred hours of training are included. They recorded 20 fires of which 3 were first reports. The Buck Rock Foundation conducts facilities assessment programs to assist partners in lookout maintenance. They also do community outreach about the Lookout Program. Additional items include open houses, docent programs, and an end of season party. Kathy had some other information to provide which I believe is important to share in this report and I thank her for sharing it with me---

1. **Shadequarter Lookout (CALFire) in Tulare County—**Cal Fire is beginning the process of refurbishing the lookout, but no word on staffing. Note—this lookout is a duplicate of Boucher Hill tower in the Palomar State Park. Buck Rock has taken some strong interest here and since CAL FIRE Engine Captain Attebury made contact with Buck Rock Group who met with Cal Fire Officials to access the future of the lookout. The Foundation was able to wangle enough volunteers to repair the roof and do onsite inspection. The foundation is interested on Shadequarter because if staffed it would fill in gaps of territory not currently seen by the other lookouts Buck Rock Foundation is responsible for. Question is who would do staffing, Cal Fire or Buck Rock..
2. **Baker Point—Kern River Ranger District/Sequoia NF—**Continues to deteriorate due to lack of any volunteers or chapter to improve its condition.
3. **Western Divide Ranger District, Sequoia National Forest—**The forest service intents to no longer staff the towers within the District. This includes Jordan, Tobias, and Mule Peak Lookouts. Kahty and I have had continuing conversations concerning these towers and discussions on how to secure items within those towers including Osbornes. I will discuss with Kathy if it is possible to do any further outreach.
4. **There is no movement on rebuilding the Needles Lookout which burned is 2011.**

Buck Rock area of interest is on the Hume Lake Ranger District of the Sequoia national Forest and the Kings Canyon national Park. I have received the Annual Buck Rock newsletter, and intend to get more copies to share with the Directors and Chaiman.

INYO/SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST—

Having had no prior success with the Inyo National Forest, Kathy Allision was recently able to provide a PIO contact name , address, and telephone number for contact. The Inyo has one lookout which is the Bald Mountain Lookout and is advertising for a paid lookout. I did make verbal and email contact with the PIO of the Inyo, and offered if they ever decide to change their modus operandi we would have some interests in forming a volunteer Chapter, and she appreciated the contact. It is in the Mono Lake Ranger District. Barbara Thurmann, with the Miami group operates the Miami Lookout. Both Kathy and I have had limited contact with her as to what is occurring within her group. Some lookouts are paid staffed, some are a hybrid. We provided a National Grant for Mt. Tom, within the High Sierra Ranger District. Also, thru coordination with Gary Weber, some Chapter funds were provided for improvement to Fence Meadow lookout with the same ranger district.

STANISLAUS NATIONAL FOREST—

My contacts continue to remain with Kathy Strain, Resource Manager for the Stanislaus. I have nominated seven towers for the NHLR. I have received back the official recognitions and took

them directly to Kathy Strain including signs and she was most appreciative. This includes Woods Ridge, North Mountain, American Camp Lookout, Elizabeth Mountain, Smith Peak, and Duckwall Mountain.

ELDORADO NATIONAL FOREST—

I have continued my conversations with Jordan Serin, Archaeologist for the Eldorado National Forest. National FFLA has approve (2) \$500.00 grants, one for Robbs Peak and one for Bunker Hill Lookouts. It is the intent to bring both Robbs Peak and Bunker Hill back on line as fire lookouts and interpretive centers. Robbs Peak is near completion and is set for refurbishing and will be ready for next year or following year at the latest. Bunker Hill still needs lot of work and is probably two years out. Jordon has asked me to work on forming a Chapter located near Placerville, CA, the location of the Eldorado Forest Headquarters. Recently, the possibility of a chapter has become a real possibility. I will be attending the Eldorado County Fair in Placerville, CA 6-14/15/16-19 and will be co-located with the USFS for the Eldorado National Forest. I will be taking recruiting materials and may have 1 or 2 individuals from our Highpoint/Boucher group attending.

TAKOE/TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST/CDF/NEVADA BLM—

I will continue my cold calls to these locations, but continue to have no contacts to directly address what we can do for them, not getting beyond the front desk.

PLANS FOR 2018—

1. I plan to make multiple trips up North in my areas of responsibility to address FFLA and what we can do for their Forest or Cal Fire.
2. Submit grant proposals as appropriate, and NHLR requests.
3. Continue my work with the Eldorado National Forest and a possible FFLA Chapter.

Respectively Submitted:



Arthur W. (Bill) Luedeke

Director, California Sierra Nevada Chapter (FFLA)

Land Line 951-699-8606

C: 858-254-7810

Cc Furnished—

1. Keith Argow
2. Gary Weber
3. Sam Duffrey
4. Scott McClintock
5. Bill Ulmer
6. Kyle Stetler
7. Bill Cobb