

FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION
California-Northern Chapter

2023 Year-End Report



CURRENT CHAPTER OFFICERS:

Kyle Stetler, Acting Director

LOCAL FFLA CHAPTERS:

Jon Aronson – Humboldt Local Chapter (Majority of NorCal)

AFFILIATES:

Argentine Rock Restoration Group –

<https://www.argentinelookout.org/?fbclid=IwAR1fGFRTyPpPXkFCP0Z6iOnU0t1nvhbcqX1k3HtXPxJc53PpTMh85A1qz4E>

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

1. **Orleans Mountain LO (Six River's NF) #458** – As with last year, there is cautious optimism that once again support is building for this project. There are a few local volunteers who are hopefully going to undertake the initial stabilization and rehabilitation work while a formal plan is developed. Ongoing conversations with forest staff to iron out process is underway, specifically, the forest staff is hoping to move onto formal tribal consultation. Other forest priorities, however, have been consuming relevant staff time.

Project Status: PENDING



2. **Argentine Rock LO (Plumas NF) #601** – A formal group/subchapter has been formed following the MOU/MOA being signed. The group was also awarded a large Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) grant from the Forest Service. We are also still tentatively looking at light work on Red Rock LO after gaining concurrence with the district staff.

Project Status: ONGOING



3. **Grouse Ridge LO (Tahoe NF) #283** – Local ranger district recreation staff personnel were able to accomplish the majority of the remaining work in during the 2023 field season.

A productive meeting was held in January 2021 where the future of these lookouts on the Tahoe NF was discussed. All participants agreed that it would be excellent to either volunteer staff or use the lookouts for other adaptive uses. Overall, the Tahoe has four lookouts they would like to use again. One, Sardine LO, is already being used by friends of district employees and the public can all the office to reserve it. The other two, Martis LO and Verdi LO are still in very good shape and would need minimal work.

No new updates on the RRAC status in 2023 --- Due to the lapse in approval of a standing Recreation Resource Advisory Committees, (RRAC) no new recreation rental facilities can be approved or modified. In conversations with the R5 Public Services Director, the paperwork was submitted in early 2020 to USDA, but as of early 2023 no approval had occurred. All the Tahoe lookouts then are effectively embargoed till that situation changes.

Project Status: Near Completion

The following pictures from left to right, top to bottom: Verdi Peak, Martis Peak, Sardine, Grouse Ridge.





4. **Ball Mountain LO (Klamath NF) #1383** – KNF contacts indicated that the district ranger on the Gooseneck RD made it up to the lookout this summer and was very excited about pursuing some type of restoration work for Ball Mt. LO. District Heritage contact, who had been very supportive, unfortunately moved over to the Modoc NF so still awaiting detailer or replacement staff to help coordinate project. The Baldy Mountain LO is still a backup project.
Project Status: PENDING



5. **Scott Bar LO (Klamath NF) #1381** – Discussion was renewed this summer as to what to do with Scott Bar Mountain. The Klamath NF put in a request roughly in 2016/2017 to remove the lookout but coordination with the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been ongoing since then. The District Archeologist (Jason Coats) was also interested in establishing an MOU with the FFLA.



6. **Knob Peak LO (Shasta Trinity NF) #1346** – Discussion and a site visit with forest staff was done in late October. Through our discussions it seemed this site would be best suited to be put in the rental program. We are currently collaborating on restoration efforts with staff. They said there was strong support from supervisors to hopefully get a project off the ground. While with staff we discussed possibility of stabilization projects at Mount Bradley, Sugar Loaf as well as Black Rock Mountain LOs. Discussion for ongoing upgrades to other LOs on the forest was also brought up as well as Iron Side LO. Staff also supported some new brochures being made up to be placed at the front desk of the forest offices as well as the rental cabin and LOs on the forest in getting support for FFLA, this was done and the first batch was dropped off.
Project Status: PENDING



Other:

News article on Harkness lookout -- <https://newrepublic.com/article/167662/fire-suppression-lookout-towers>

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY:

No major activity.

OBJECTIVES FOR 2024:

- **Shasta-Trinity had two projects funded under the Forest Service’s Great American Outdoors Act effort and other forests are also submitting proposals to be included for supplemental funding.**
 - o **There have also been very tentative conversations on the Shasta-Trinity NF with respects to rebuilding Ironside Lookout.**
- Continue project development on ongoing coordination with agency staff.
- Support additional information and new entries to NHLR.
- Pursue restoration and reactivation projects with small grants to two of the forests.
- Continue email the NorCal members to keep them apprised of volunteer opportunities.
- We have been approached by a few people proactively looking for volunteer opportunities and the goal will be to connect those people to actual projects this upcoming summer.
- **Develop plan for Sugar Hill lookout on the Modoc NF via continued coordination with Forest staff and local interest groups. This could be aided by Klamath Archeologist moving over to the Modoc NF – Jenna Raabe)**

2023 Chapter Tower Statistics:

Total lookout towers in chapter:	108
Towers in active service:	40ish
Towers in rental program	4
Towers needing significant repairs	43
Towers hopelessly dilapidated	5
Towers converted to alternate function	4
Towers schedule to be removed	3
Complete new tower under construction	0

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Stetler

Director – California-Northern Chapter (Acting)