

2018 Indiana Chapter Annual Report Forest Fire Lookout Association

MEMBERSHIP: The Indiana Chapter has 7 current members although one member lives in New Mexico. The Illinois Chapter has 8 current members. The balance for the two states is \$112.

RESTORATION:



Ouabache State Park Tower, shown here, was closed in 2015 when it was deemed unsafe. The Friends of Ouabache State Park immediately began fund raising to restore the tower. Their Go Fund Me page raised over \$60,000. The Wells County Foundation matched the funds they raised and restoration of the tower began in Spring 2017. In the spring of 2018 the Ouabache State Park Fire Tower again opened to the public. Comments on the Park webpage noted that once again people could climb above the tree tops and see the country side and how good it was to have the tower open again.

The Indiana Volkswalk Association (INVA) held one of their five 10K walks for 2018 at the Ouabache State Park to highlight the lookout tower and bison herd in the park.

McCormicks Creek State Park Tower – The Friends of McCormicks Creek State Park raised \$97,995 to restore their fire tower to its original condition. This 86' steel structure and metal 7'x7' cab with interior wood panels was constructed in 1935 by Civilian Conservation Corps Company #589. The tower was in service through 1967 and since had become a popular visitor destination in the park. The tower was officially listed on the National Historic Lookout Register on November 12, 2008.

Grants were awarded from several organizations. All donors of \$10 or more will have their names listed on a permanent plaque. Future plans include a commemorative plaza around the Fire Tower, and an interpretive display about the fire tower will be developed for the nature center. The display will feature tools and resources that would have been used by the tower watchmen to protect our forests.



ACTIVITIES: I have not written anything or interviewed anyone this year. Good intentions, but no follow through! I still have people planned to interview but haven't made the appointments to get it done.

PLAN OF WORK FOR 2019:

- I still hope to interview both the widow of the German Ridge towerman and re-interview the Hickory Ridge towerman's widow. I'll write a story for the magazine if I can get good stories from these women.

- I want to work with Bev Stout, IDNR Fire Prevention Specialist to get school history classes in the communities around lookout towers involved in researching their history. This should help us with the nominations for the towers up for selection for the Register. We also want to get the rest of our towers on the Register so will get classes to research those as well. This will also get a new generation interested in lookout towers.
- Contact the State Parks and Forests in the state to generate an inventory of needed work on towers and update the information on towers that we currently have. Offer to give programs on lookout towers at the parks.
- Host a volkswalk at Martin State Forest in April which will feature the Lookout tower.

Respectfully submitted: Teena Ligman, Chapter Chair

9 January 2019