

2011 FFLA Western Conference

September 16-18

Mt. Hood, Oregon

The 2011 FFLA Western Conference will be hosted by Oregon FFLA Director Howard Verschoor September 16-18 at the Mt. Hood Lions Club near Welches, Oregon. The Lions Club is located on the southeast corner of East Woodsey Way and Highway 26 (24730 E. Woodsey Way).

Program details are still being developed, but will include the traditional silent auction, concluding after the catered Saturday evening dinner. A portion of the auction proceeds will go toward the restoration of the nearby Devils Peak Lookout. A potluck barbecue is planned for Friday evening at the Mt. Hood Village RV Resort with the Oregon Chapter providing the meat and condiments. For those arriving early enough, there will likely also be an informal gathering and barbecue at the RV park on Thursday evening.

For early arrivals, there will be a guided hike (two miles each way) to Devils Peak on Thursday the 15th. Plans are to visit Five Mile and Flag Point Lookouts on Friday afternoon, and Hickman Butte on Saturday afternoon. Clear Lake and Sisi Butte Lookouts are on the Sunday schedule. For those going east on Monday the 19th, there will be an opportunity to visit the Warm Springs Reservation Lookouts.

Howard Verschoor is cutting back on his collection of over 100 wildland fire and disaster books (not his lookout books). He and Ray Kresek will hold a book sale at the conference with the hope of drawing in additional fire people.

Registration, covering site rental, snacks, and Saturday night dinner, is \$30 (pre-registration \$25 until September 6).

The Mt. Hood Village RV Resort, 65000 E Highway 26 (two miles west of the Lions Club), www.mthoodvillage.com, 1-800-570-2267, has a variety of accommodations. The resort offers full service RV hookups, tent sites, rustic cabins, yurts, and fully furnished cabins with lofts. Ask for the FFLA discount when making reservations. A variety of other accommodations are available at vacation area rates along the Highway 26 corridor between Sandy and Government Camp including these:

-Snowline Motel, 73270 E Hwy 26, 503-622-3188, <http://www.snowlinemotel.com>, \$70 a night.

-Mountain Air Motel, 65500 E Hwy 26, 503-622-3169, \$65 to \$85 a night.

For updated information, contact Howard, lookoutoregon@gmail.com or 541-544-2066.

- Thurs 9/15
8:00 a.m. - Devils Peak Hike (meet at Mt. Hood Village)
Evening - gathering at Mt. Hood Village RV Park
- Fri 9/16
8:00 a.m. - Registration/Sign-in
9:00 a.m. - Morning Session begins
Afternoon - Five Mile Butte/Flag Point Lookouts Tour
Evening - Potluck/BBQ at Mt. Hood Village RV Park
- Sat 9/17
8:00 a.m - Morning Session (includes Board Meeting)
Afternoon - Hickman Butte Lookout Tour
Evening - Dinner, Silent Auction, photo/story sharing
- Sun 9/18
All day - Clear Lake Butte/ Sisi Butte Lookouts Tour
- Mon 9/19
All day - Warm Springs Reservation Lookouts Tour

FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION, WELCHES, OREGON SUMMARY

September 16 - 18, 2011

The 2011 FFLA Western Regional Conference was held in the Mount Hood, Oregon area September 16-18. The Friday and Saturday conference sessions were held at the Mount Hood Lions Club on Highway 26, while evening barbecue and social activities, as well as the Friday evening board meeting, took place two miles down the road at the Mount Hood RV Park where many conference attendees were staying.

A few early arrivals took advantage of the opportunity to hike to Devils Peak Lookout on Thursday. Located within a recent addition to the Salmon-Huckleberry Wilderness, the future of the lookout and any restoration activities are unknown at this time.

Thursday evening's barbecue at the RV park drew a sizeable crowd, as new friendships were made and old ones renewed. Once again, Ray Grimes proved to be the master chef, grilling to perfection the brats and burgers provided by the host Oregon Chapter.

After setting up at the Lions Club early Friday morning, the group of forty-some lookout enthusiasts was welcomed by Zigzag District Ranger Bill Westbrook, who also gave an update on the local fire status; with cool, damp weather, closures had been rescinded that would have precluded some lookout tours.

After the customary round of introductions, Mt. Hood NF Historian Allie Wenzl gave a presentation on lookouts of the Mt. Hood. Rick McClure, Archaeologist for the Mt. Hood and the Gifford Pinchot NFs was unable to attend, but sent a powerpoint presentation on the Red Mountain Lookout restoration project that is nearing completion. During breaks, everyone perused the silent auction tables, as well as tables of used books for sale by Howard Verschoor and Ray Kresek to benefit the Oregon Lookout Restoration fund and Washington's Chuck Butler Memorial fund.

Friday afternoon's lookout tour took the group across the Cascade Crest, first to Fivemile Butte Lookout (left), and then to Flag Point Lookout (right). The renters at Fivemile graciously shared the mountaintop and the 30-foot R-6 flat lookout with the group for an hour before the short trip to Flag Point, which was unstaffed that day. From the cab of Flag Point's 41-foot R-6 flat, Howard pointed out where he and Deb currently live in Tygh Valley and enjoy looking up at the lookout nearly every day.

Back at the RV park, the grill was fired up and the tables once again filled with a variety of potluck items, for another delightful barbecue. Later in the evening, a short, but productive, board meeting was held (see p. 3).

Saturday morning's session was geared more toward FFLA activities. Chairman Keith Argow gave the "State of the FFLA" address, followed by Gary Weber describing how membership dues are distributed and used between chapter accounts, cost of the Lookout Network magazine, and other FFLA activities. A short rundown on the proposed bylaws amendments was given, as well as other highlights from the previous evening's board meeting. Forrest Clark gave an update on the Green Mountain lawsuit, and Charlie Heebner told of plans for the restoration of Hoodoo Lookout and the associated facilities at the Umatilla NF site. The morning breaks allowed for valuable networking and discussion.

Zigzag Assistant Fire Management Officer Jeremy Goers escorted the group to Hickman Butte Lookout Saturday afternoon, where member FFLA Jim Kelley welcomed the group to his immaculately kept 41-foot L-4.

After dinner at the Lions Club, the silent auction concluded with over \$600 going to the Oregon Lookout Restoration fund.

Sunday's tour, once again led by Jeremy, started with a visit to Clear Lake Butte Lookout (left), where the group was welcomed by FFLA member Carol Johnson, who has staffed the 41-foot R-6 flat lookout for several years. After an interesting stop at the Clackamas Lake Historic Ranger Station, Sisi Butte Lookout (right) was the final stop for the group. Although not regularly staffed full-time this year, the 40-foot tower with an octagon cab was being staffed because of fires still burning on the forest.

While many departed for home either Sunday or early Monday, several enjoyed the additional unique opportunity to be escorted to the three lookouts on the Warm Springs Reservation on Monday. The recent change in the weather allowed for access to all three lookouts; earlier fire activity had left that in doubt. First on the day's trip was Shitike Butte; the 80-foot Aermotor was the only one still staffed. The next stop was Eagle Butte and its 83-foot tower overlooking the Warm Springs community. The final lookout on the tour was Sidwalter Butte's 100-footer that, like Eagle, had been closed for the season only a few days earlier. After leaving Sidwalter and getting back down to the highway, the group said their goodbyes, and headed their separate ways, with another successful Western Conference in the books!