

2018 Year-End Report

Illinois Local Chapter

Accomplishments:

- Formed a local area chapter in Illinois as part of the Indiana chapter, thanks to the guidance of Teena Ligman
- Added four new members from IL to FFLA in addition to the new local chapter representative
- One new member will be launching a Facebook page for our new local chapter over MLK Day weekend
- Collected tower visit reports from FFLA members coming in from Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri for all four standing Illinois towers
- Collected resources and information regarding former tower sites (special thanks to Bob Frakes and Tom Vorac)

Towers:

To our knowledge so far, four towers still stand in IL but are not in active service.

These towers are Big River Lookout in Henderson County, Forest Glen in Vermillion County, Trail of Tears State Forest Tower in Union County, and Trigg Tower in the Shawnee NF in Jackson County. Three of these towers are in the NHLR. We have gathered some history, visit reports, and pictures about these towers from existing members and have also gathered together visit reports and history of many other historic sites of former IL towers.

By our current count, which has continued to expand as we have talked with other members and former USFS employees, we are aware of about twenty-five former lookout sites in the state.

More information about former tower sites can be found in the links below.

Links:

Since we are a new chapter, we would like to share a few resources for those interested in Illinois towers, both standing and historic. These links will of course be familiar to some, but we hope that there is something to learn about our state's history with lookout towers within:

The first lookout is a wonderful collection of historic lost towers and standing towers in the state, with a bit of history, maps, and pictures.

<https://centraluslookouts.weebly.com/illinois.html>

Next, the NHLR entries for three of the last standing towers in IL.

<http://nhlr.org/lookouts/us/il/big-river-lookout/>

<http://nhlr.org/lookouts/us/il/union-trail-of-tears-lookout/>

<http://nhlr.org/lookouts/us/il/trigg-tower/>

A few other small mentions or resources:

<http://www.firelookout.org/lookouts/lo-illinois.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_Lookout

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/shawnee/recarea/?recid=10686>

Goals:

- In 2019, we hope to continue collecting and consolidating information about towers both standing and historic in Illinois.
- We plan to start work to submit the Forest Glen Lookout to the NHLR.
- We will expand our social media presence and share the helpful links above, and hopefully add to them!
- Some of our new members are students with the University of Illinois and a few of its conservation and outdoors clubs, others are involved in scouting troops in the Chicagoland and Carbondale areas. We are hoping to coordinate fundraiser and coordinate with Shawnee NF for repairs and an interpretive plaque for Trigg Tower, as it is the last of at least sixteen towers in the NF

- We also have some new members with neighbors and relatives who worked in Shawnee a few decades ago, and we hope to interview them and to perhaps write a story for one of the 2019 magazines

Finally, as a personal note, I would like to thank all of the people who have supported me and our new little chapter and who have provided mentoring and research as I have begun to learn the ropes in FFLA. This is a warm group with a very cool, very specific shared interest in some amazing history and service, and on behalf of all of the new members, I can attest that we are both honored and excited to get to work over the next many years.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Mirabelli

FFLA Illinois Chapter Representative

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