



Forest Fire Lookout Association

Northern Idaho/Montana Chapter

32145-A Hwy. 57, Priest River, ID 83856

2005

NORTHERN IDAHO/MONTANA CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORT

MEMBERSHIP:

99 Current Paid Members (30 Plus)

Includes: 2 Membership Renewal Past Due

12 New members, 4 Dropped

26 Complimentary Memberships (agency personnel, etc.)

Chapter finances increased, with an ending balance of \$4230.85, up nearly five hundred dollars from the start of the year (see Treasurers Report for details).

ACTIVITIES:

The chapter sold about 500 copies of member Libby Langston's new book, *Lookout Cookbook*. This accounted for the increase in chapter finances. Fifty percent of the year's profits were donated to the national treasury.

The chapter co-hosted the Western Regional Conference in McCall in September

In coordination with the Helena NF and the Montana Discovery Foundation, the chapter hosted "A Day in the Life of a Lookout" at Strawberry Lookout near Helena in June. Member Samsara Chapman spearheaded the event, planned to become an annual affair. Gary Weber presented the NHLR certificate for Strawberry to Helena NF officials.

The chapter assisted in re-opening Deer Ridge, a rental on the Bonners Ferry R.D. of the Kaniksu NF. This effort involved re-installing the lightning protection after other work was completed on the tower, as well as general project advice and support. An assessment and check of the grounding system was completed at Shorty Peak, the district's other rental. An initial assessment on the feasibility of restoration for Burton Peak's log L-5 lookout was also completed. Advice and counsel was also provided on the potential project to move the Black Mountain tower, a former rental.

Restoration of the L-4 cab at Monument Peak (Lewis & Clark NF, MT) was completed. The chapter provided materials and counsel for the project. Gary Weber planned to present the NHLR certificate at the dedication ceremony in September, but was unable to attend due to a hurricane-relief assignment, but Sam Chapman was able to take part. It is still hoped to be able to put the cab back on a tower in the future.

The completion of the last of the lightning protection system at Square Mountain Lookout on the NezPerce NF was not able to be completed due to Gary Weber's fire assignments.

The chapter applied (unsuccessfully) for a significant grant to remove the cab from Mineral Peak (Lolo NF) and place it on a shorter tower. The current 53-foot CT-2 tower is considered unsafe. Efforts will continue, although the structure has been identified for disposal under the USFS facilities alignment (reduction) act. Two other lookouts identified for disposal under the act were Liscomb Butte (Custer NF) and Jack Mountain (Deerlodge NF). There are likely others that have also been identified.

Verbal pledges for partnership and funding assistance were made for Mount Henry (Kootenai NF) and Austin Ridge (Clearwater NF).

Restoration continued at Boulder Point (Bitterroot NF, MT). On the Kootenai NF, Barren Peak Lookout saw restoration work, but on-again/off-again Seven Point Lookout reconstruction project has been shelved once more.

Three Clearwater NF towers that had been closed three years ago have now been retrofitted to satisfy safety/engineering concerns. Bear Mountain and Hemlock Butte should be back in service for detection and Bald Mountain back in the rental program. Work on two of the towers was accomplished by FS workers at about a third the cost of the contract work on the other one.

White Mountain Lookout (Lolo NF) was pressed back into service after Stark Mountain Lookout was evacuated for the I-90 Fire, however the cab had not been cleaned up enough to be livable yet.

Restoration activities are expected to continue at many sites in 2005.

Gary Weber
FFLA-North Idaho/Montana Chapter Director