

FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION



Indiana CHAPTER

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

MEMBERSHIP: The Indiana Chapter had some membership turn over in 2010 and increased their membership to a total number of 9 paid members.

RESTORATION: The State of Indiana received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to restore lookout towers on some of their state properties.

The ARRA Restoration funds paid to restore the Jackson Washington State Forest Lookout Tower. This tower was taken down, sandblasted, painted and new planks and steps put in. Part of the work was accomplished in 2009 but the work was completed in 2010. The Young Hoosier Conservation Corps – YHCC- (another ARRA initiative) did much of the work. Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC), and local Jackson County Corrections Crew also worked hard to restore the tower.

Brad Schneck, Property Manager, said work on the tower has drawn a great deal of interest from the public. Work on the tower included:

1. sandblasted metal and applied primer and new paint
2. replaced stairs and viewing platforms with new treated lumber
3. replaced safety fence with new vinyl coated safety fencing
4. replaced a few badly rusted support braces with new metal braces
5. installed new barrier post in front of the tower

Pictures of the completed tower are shown below.





The last tower restored with ARRA funds in Indiana was the Mason Ridge Lookout Tower at Morgan Monroe State Forest. This tower was also taken down and much of the work was done with the YHCC. Jeremy Kolaks, former Assistant Property Manager and Indiana FFLA member, headed up the effort to restore this tower. The Mason Ridge Tower restoration was completed in 2010. The fall of 2010 was the driest fall ever on record in southern Indiana. It surpassed all years for droughts. The Mason Ridge Tower is just north of the Department of Natural Resources State Fire Headquarters. According to the Fire Headquarters staff – they used the tower countless times to run the steps to check for smokes that fall since fires were a daily occurrence in the area.

Here are a few pictures of the completed Mason Ridge Tower. I also wrote an article for the Lookout Out Magazine on the Mason Ridge Tower project. Incidentally- work on this tower has helped recruit two new members. Jeremy Kolaks became a member when he became interested in lookout towers after getting his assignment to restore the tower and Dennis Goen became a member this last year. Dennis was a former towerman at Mason Ridge and became interested during the restoration of the tower.



CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT: I have used the new brochure to recruiting but have not had great success so far but am still hopeful! Since this was the 75th Anniversary of the Hoosier National Forest I gave a lot of historical programs and talked about the CCC and building fire towers and always put out the brochures along with other handouts. People frequently took them – so maybe you’ll get someone sign up! I also often pass along my magazine after I read it to people I think might be interested, sometimes they’re not in my state, just people I know love fire towers and might want to know more.

I submitted one article to the FFLA magazine and also sent it to a state outdoor magazine but it hasn't been printed yet in that magazine – and may not be at this point.

ACTIVITIES: None as a chapter; just individual efforts.

PLAN OF WORK FOR 2010;

- Recruit more members
- See if we can't generate an inventory of needed work on towers

Respectfully submitted: Teena Ligman, Chapter Chair
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