

Northern Idaho/Montana Chapter Report 2008

MEMBERSHIP:

117 Current Paid Members (40 Plus)

Includes: 9 Membership Renewal Past Due

11 New members, 9 Dropped

63 Complimentary Memberships (agency personnel, etc.) varies by issue

Chapter finances decreased, with an ending balance of \$6605.91, down about \$500.00 dollars from the start of the year, primarily due to contributions to the Mineral Peak and Mallard Peak restoration projects.

LEADERSHIP:

Samsara Chapman accepted the Deputy Director position for Central Montana

ACTIVITIES:

Area restoration projects got a late start due to heavy winter snow and very late snowmelt. Restoration of the 53' L-4 tower at Mineral Peak (Lolo NF, MT) continued with a week long project, beginning with clearing a snow drift blocking access to the last section of road. The chapter paid for the food for the camp-out. More tasks are planned for next 2009, expected to be funded in part by the chapter. Member Libby Langston is spearheading the project. Chapter member Pam Aunan led a restoration and volunteer staffing program at Sundance Lookout (IDL-Priest Lake). After Forest Service funds were cut off to repay fire costs, the start of the Mallard Peak (St. Joe NF, ID) restoration was in jeopardy until the chapter stepped forward to purchase paint and supplies for a Labor Day weekend work project. Director Gary Weber was involved in the assessment of winter damages at Arid Peak Lookout (St. Joe NF, ID). The FFLA took measures to stabilize and clean up the damage, and will likely undertake the repair job in 2009.

Deputy Director Sam Chapman was involved in an assessment of Granite Butte Lookout (Helena NF, MT). The 20-foot R-6 flat top had been written off and planned for disposal, but interest has been generated and prospects of saving it look promising.

The chapter was asked for input and concurred with the eventual decision on Spades and Spyglass Lookouts (Coeur d'Alene NF, ID). Spades has suffered extreme vandalism and is to be removed while Spyglass will remain, with current plans of only being an interpretive site.

Unused lookouts continue to be identified under the USFS facility reduction initiative. Jack Mountain Lookout (Deerlodge NF, MT) received no bids during a GSA auction, and is currently being re-offered. Interest may be developing in assisting the district in moving it to a site more suitable for rental use.

A relatively quiet fire season saw very few lookouts threatened, although Gisborne Lookout (Kaniksu NF, ID) was evacuated when a fire broke out on the south slope below the tower.

The cabin rental program continues to be very popular, but lack of workforce time and funding to manage existing rentals, let alone to add other facilities to the program, continues to be an issue.

Restoration activities are expected to continue at several sites in 2009.

In an early 2009 situation, Stonewall Lookout (Helena NF, MT) lost its roof to strong winds.

Deputy Director Sam Chapman is involved in discussions of potential FFLA assistance for emergency repairs.

Gary Weber
FFLA-North Idaho/Montana Chapter Director