

# 2024 Year-End Report

## FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

Northwest Montana Lookout Association (NWMTLA) – Local Chapter  
MONTANA / IDAHO NORTH CHAPTER

Gary Weber, Director

## LOCAL NWMTLA CHAPTER OFFICERS:

Chuck Manning, Board Chair

Deb Starling, Vice-Chair

Nancy Manning, Secretary

Joe Schmidt, Treasurer

## 2024 MOUs and/or Challenge Cost Share (CCS) Agreements:

Flathead National Forest

Kootenai National Forest

Glacier National Park

Montana DNRC

## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Projects:

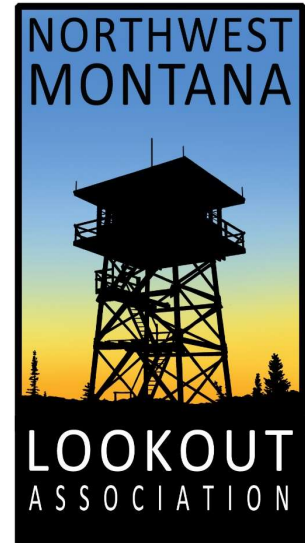
- McGuire Lookout
- MT Brown Lookout
- MT Wam Lookout
- NW Peak Lookout
- Stahl Peak Lookout
- Star Peak Lookout

Assessments:

- Berray
- Huckleberry
- Loneman
- Scalplock

## McGuire Lookout

The McGuire Lookout project focused on upgrading the shed built in the 80's. No work was done on the lookout this year, but the support shed needed some attention. The shed covers an old steel tank that once housed batteries for a radio repeater and other electronics. The shed is now used for storage to support the lookout which is in the rec.gov rental program. This year a roof was built on the back side of the shed to better protect the lookout shutters when the lookout is open to the public for rental. NMLA volunteers, Barb Hvizdak, Helen Tyree, Jim Peacock, Chuck Manning, Forest Service personnel, and the Youth Conservation Corp helped on this project which covered a total intermittent span of four days. -NMLA



### **MT Brown Lookout**

The Mount Brown Lookout in Glacier National Park project was an overnight project to wrap-up a project which couldn't be completed in 2023 due to the cure time for the window glaze. Chuck and Nancy Manning hiked to MT Brown to complete this task. They spent the night and were awakened early next morning by a mountain goat on the catwalk checking out who was occupying "his" lookout. -NMLA



### **Mount Wam Lookout**

The Mount Wam Lookout rehab project is close to being completed. This year, the project dates were changed, which affected the intended task outcomes on this project. Mark Miller, Chuck Manning, Barb Hvizdak, KNF Forest Service personnel, and the Youth Conservation Corp all committed one day to this project. Next year, several days should be set aside to finish installing the shutter braces, repair the vandalized shutters, do some touchup painting, and dispose of the discarded lumber under the cab to mitigate rodent nesting. Installing new roof shingles and ridge cap should be addressed in the near future as the Wx has eroded the shingles by about 50%. -NMLA



### **Northwest Peak Lookout**

Northwest Peak Lookout is located in the Northwest Peak Scenic Area in the Northwest Corner of Montana. The scope of this year's work on Northwest Peak Lookout consisted of removing the windows and inserting plywood panels to protect the lookout over the winter. This phase of the project was completed by NMLA volunteers Peter Kitts and John Zardis with the help of several Forest Service employees and a Youth Conservation crew. The windows were helicoptered out by a coordinated effort of the KNF Helitack crew and other fire personnel. Also, a pre-project assessment was conducted to determine the sequence, materials, and costs of tasks that need to be addressed in 2025 was conducted by Peter Kitts and Chuck Manning. - NMLA



### **Stahl Peak Lookout**

Stahl Peak lookout, a cupola style lookout, is perched atop a precipice overlooking the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area east of Eureka Montana. A pre-project assessment was conducted in advance of this project to determine what supplies were needed to be packed in for the 5-day project. With the help of the Northwest Montana Backcountry Horsemen to support this project, completed tasks consisted of repairing the shutters to better protect the lookout windows, replacing two windows in the cupola, and scraping and painting the entire exterior with two coats of paint. Mark Gunther, Chuck Stearns, Kira Powell, Chuck Manning, and Barb Hvizdak were instrumental in completing all phases of this project. A major rehab of Stahl Peak Lookout is tentatively planned for 2026. -NMLA



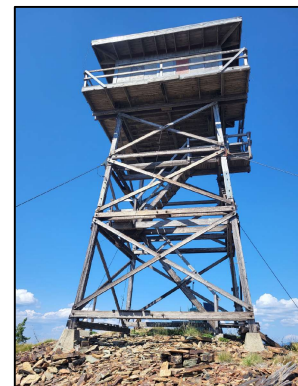
### **Star Peak Lookout**

The Star Peak lookout restoration project started in 2023 through the support of GAOA funding. In 2023, the windows were removed and flown off the mountain to be rehabbed at the Murphy Lake Ranger Station on the Ksanka Ranger District and a new roof was installed. During April and May of this year, NMLA volunteers removed and reset (glaze in) the glass and painted all 19 windows. In June of this year the KNF Helitack crew flew the windows back up to the lookout and helped with the installation. During the summer, Bob Lambrecht, Seth Lambrecht, Katherine Maudrone and Klare Matthew installed new shutters (built on-site in 2023-24), repaired shutter outriggers, painted the lookout exterior, interior, and interior floor. 2024 leaves the lookout in a restored condition. This project wouldn't have happened without the dedication of NMLA member Bob Lambrecht who personally took it upon himself to oversee and manage it's success and the packstock support by Cabinet Back Country Horsemen member Jeff Grotjohn. -NMLA



### **Berray Lookout**

The current Berray Mountain Lookout was built in 1965. It is an R-6 flat cab style resting on a 30' treated timber tower. Berray lookout overlooks the lower Bull River drainage and west into the proposed Scotchman Peak Wilderness. The assessment was conducted to scope out findings for future stabilization and restoration efforts. The deferred maintenance has reached a point where the cost-effective measures for restoration are becoming questionable, and the lookout structure access safety concerns will only escalate. A new roof membrane was installed in 2017 to help defer both interior and exterior damage. Chuck Manning and Troy Denman along with Cabinet Ranger District personnel conducted this assessment. -NMLA



### **Huckleberry Mountain Lookout**

Huckleberry Lookout overlooks the North Fork of the Flathead River and the Camas drainage in Glacier National Park. This assessment was conducted to scope out findings for any stabilization and/or restoration efforts. The Northwest Montana Lookout Association conducts a general condition assessment of Huckleberry Lookout every three years in accordance with a Cooperative Management Agreement. Katie Marsonette, Eric Godin and Joe Schmidt conducted this assessment in August. -NMLA



### **Loneman Mountain Lookout**

In August of 2024, a comprehensive assessment of the historic Loneman Fire Lookout situated in the Nyack area of Glacier National Park, was conducted by Amanda McIntosh, Mark Miller and Molly Tingley. The assessment revealed that while the interior of the lookout is in good condition, the exterior included weakened and rotting catwalk and worn paint. The findings underscore the need for preservation work to ensure the tower's stability and safety, while maintaining its historical and functional value as a critical piece of the park's fire management history. – Molly Tingley



### **Scalplock Mountain Lookout**

Scalplock Mountain Lookout, built in 1931, overlooks the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and the Great Bear Wilderness to the west and south. Katie Marsonette, Duane Day and Sabrina Shattles conducted an assessment in September to determine the lookout's general condition and report any urgent repairs that needed to be completed before winter. Several items of concern were reported. Scalplock Lookout is assessed every three years in accordance with a Cooperative Management Agreement. - NMLA



## **OBJECTIVES FOR 2025:**

- Continue membership and donor campaign - 2024 members and donors are ~150.
- Continue to increase our outreach – 2024 email list is ~700.
- Continue updating our website with current information and maintain our social media platforms.
- Continue to develop positive relationships with agency personnel.
- Work with agencies to mitigate project efficiency.
- Meet restoration and assessment commitments with agencies.
- Continue to sign up qualified volunteers with skills necessary to accomplish required tasks.

## **2024 NWMTLA Lookout Statistics:**

50 - Total standing lookouts and support structures in service area

15 - Lookouts in active service

12 - Lookouts in rental program

4 - Lookouts maintained as shelters

22 - Lookouts on inventory – use not specified

0 - Lookouts converted to alternate function

0 - Lookouts schedule to be removed

0 - New lookouts under construction

Respectfully submitted on 1/6/2025



Board Chair