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SPRING 2024

# **LOOKOUT NETWORK**

THE QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION, INC.

- **New Chairman - Mike Guerin**
- **New Chapter Directors - Two Positions Filled**
- **Western Conference - September 27-29, Fawnskin, CA**

[www.firelookout.org](http://www.firelookout.org)



# From the Chairman...

**National Chairman  
Michael Guerin**

Upland, California  
February 2024



When I joined FFLA in 2018 I had no idea I would be writing my first column as Chairman in six short years. I had ended a 38 year career leading government organizations and was ready to be a good FFLA member and USFS volunteer, happy for others to lead the way. One thing leads to another and here we are. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the leadership and service that Brad Eells has provided us, both as Chair, and in his work on the NHLR. Brad, Keith Argow and Gary Weber are, or will soon be, tired of my incessant questions. I pledge to each of you my best effort to move the organization forward and to advance our goals.

In speaking with others in FFLA I have found that each of us seems to have a little different idea of who we are and what we are about. One of my initiatives for the short term is to better define the association and to finally find consensus on a concise mission statement. In my conversations with our executive board this version seems to be our final draft: *"Our mission is to preserve lookouts and their legacy. We do this through research, education, and support of lookout restoration, staffing for interpretation or fire detection, and other alternative uses."* What do you think? Once we have agreement on a mission statement we can develop and include our vision and values statements and then use these cornerstones to develop our goals and objectives each year.

Other initiatives you will hear more about in the months and year to come include consideration of our partnerships and connections. There are government and conservation organizations that have little knowledge of our resources and expertise. Perhaps we can work to develop and leverage relationships to enhance our standing and to provide help where it is appropriate.

This will be the year that we develop a new FFLA website that is friendly to both viewers and to those that will keep it up to date. A committee has been formed and their work has begun. We also need to consider the National Historic Lookout Register and companion Former Lookout databases and FFLA's relationship to them. As we all rely on them, their accuracy and currency must be ensured, and who better to do this than FFLA and its members.

As we evolve and improve it is important to emphasize an awareness of, and support for, regional differences. We have exemplary programs on each coast and elsewhere in the country - each done quite differently, but true to our emerging mission statement, in my opinion. A mission

statement is more than a set of words. As we approach a change or project it can be a mirror in which we "check ourselves" before proceeding "out the door."

Our members and the programs they support are engaged in important work each and every day. This magazine celebrates those achievements. Thank you for your support and for your support of this fine organization. I invite your ideas, comments or commentary to [lookoutmike@yahoo.com](mailto:lookoutmike@yahoo.com), now or anytime in the future. Carry on.

Michael Guerin  
Chairman of the Board  
Forest Fire Lookout Association  
909-732-7131  
[lookoutmike@yahoo.com](mailto:lookoutmike@yahoo.com)

## FFLA Conferences

### 2024 FFLA Western Conference

Fawnskin, California  
September 27 - 29

The 2024 Western Conference is being hosted by the Southern California Mountains Foundation, on the San Bernardino National Forest. The conference will be held September 27 - 29, 2024 at The Big Bear Discovery Center in Fawnskin, California. Speakers, displays, tours, and the silent auction will fill the three days. If anyone would like to do a presentation, please reach out to Shane Harris, [sharris@mountainsfoundation.org](mailto:sharris@mountainsfoundation.org) with your details. The agenda and registration information will be in future issues.

### 2024 FFLA Eastern Conference

To Be Announced

Efforts are underway to find a suitable location and date for the 2024 Eastern Conference, potentially in New York, but at press time, no selections have been made. Stay tuned for updates in the next issue!

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**Gary Weber, Editor**  
**2590 W Versailles Dr, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815**  
**email: [weblookout@roadrunner.com](mailto:weblookout@roadrunner.com)**

cover photo: Pinyon Peak Lookout, 9945' overlooking Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Salmon-Challis NF, 9/4/23 (Gary Gadwa photo)

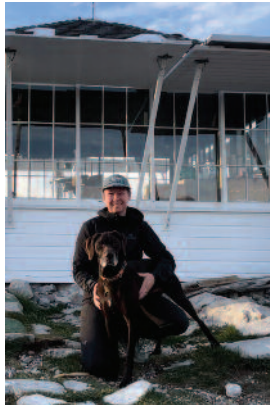
# FFLA News

## Vacancies Filled

New Chairman Mike Guerin wasted no time in filling several board vacancies. With the concurrence of the Executive Committee, he announced these appointments:

### Director, Colorado/Utah - Kathryn Lindquist

Kathryn Lindquist grew up in Cary, North Carolina but has lived in Colorado since 2017. She currently serves as a Fire Lookout based out of the Rocky Mountain Ranger District in Montana. She has always advocated for historic preservation and education, specifically for various military history related organizations. Kathryn is best known for running across Europe to commemorate D-Day, for which she received international recognition. She previously worked in the coffee industry, but left to pursue a career in wildland fire when the East Troublesome Fire impacted her personally in 2020. Aside from working as a Lookout, she is passionate about prescribed fire and most recently began pursuing professional training to become a Wildland Fire Investigator. Currently she lives in Silt, Colorado with her husband Jimmy and their two dogs, Gus and Tava.



### Director, Northern California - Jon Aronson

Jon is a Humboldt County native and has remained there. He worked in the logging industry as well as in construction. He has been involved in the fire community as a contractor and a volunteer. He has always had a fondness for fire lookouts but it blossomed when he met his fiancé. They started going on adventures with fire lookouts as their primary mission about two months after they met. It was by researching online that he found FFLA. They have been to over 30 now in their area. It was Brad's letter in the magazine that really got him involved in trying to help save these historic structures for his son to enjoy in the future. Jon intends to push forward in the Northern California area and build new agency relationships as well as foster recognition for the Association and future members. "One of us isn't as strong as all of us together," says Jon.



### Deputy Chair, West - Kyle Stetler

The third appointee needs less of an intro, coming out of "retirement" from past service in other positions. Growing up in Montana, Kyle has been acquainted with lookouts for a long time but it wasn't until his first summer on a fire crew in 2004, and a serendipitous meeting with Virginia Vincent at Stark Mountain lookout, that he felt the urge to join FFLA. Since then he has held several positions and assisted on multiple projects where needed. One of his most recent accomplishments was assisting with the restoration of the Skookum Butte Lookout in Montana on the Lolo National Forest. After 11 years in Seattle, Kyle moved home to Montana with his family and now resides in Bigfork, where he works for the Forest Service. There, Kyle also served on

the board of the local Northwest Montana Lookout Association from 2020-2023.

Kyle will also resume the SHPO coordination role that he previously held.

## Other Continued Vacancies

The new appointments filled three large holes, but several others continue, as well as one more director looking to pass the torch. The **Eastern Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming** chapters are all still in need of directors. The **Archivist/Historian** position also remains vacant. If interested in any of these positions, please contact the regional Deputy Chair or Chairman.

Dave Lorenz has expressed his desire to step down as the **Arizona** Director in the coming year, as well as Howard Verschoor continuing to look for the right person to take his place as the **Oregon** Director; interested Arizona or Oregon members should contact Dave or Howard directly.

## Restoration Donations

The FFLA recently received a \$50,000 donation from a long-time FFLA member, to be used for lookout restoration projects. The donor's preference is leveraging the value by buying materials and supporting other expenses for volunteer projects, with the realization that sometimes important professional specialty work may need to be paid for. Criteria for the use of this donation will be developed, likely separate from and more substantial than the current FFLA grant program's \$500 limit.

In addition, the FFLA received a \$10,000 grant from Ford's "Bronco Wild Fund" to be used for Oregon lookout restoration projects.

## 2024 FFLA Calendar

### You Choose the Start Date

The 2024 FFLA Calendar is still available for ordering on Zazzle, and can be started with any month that you choose. For maximum FFLA benefit, use this link: [https://www.zazzle.com/store/forest\\_fire\\_lookout](https://www.zazzle.com/store/forest_fire_lookout). This link will take you to the FFLA Zazzle Store (and give us an extra 15% above the royalty on each sale) so you can shop for the calendar and other FFLA-themed items! Calendars are available in three sizes and two formats. All profits from any FFLA item in the Zazzle store directly benefit lookouts through small grants and support to volunteer programs. **Check the Zazzle site frequently for special discount codes.**





# More FFLA News

## 2024 FFLA Board Meeting

### January 13, 2024 - Zoom Meeting/Conference Call

The 2024 FFLA Board Meeting was again held on the Saturday of Martin Luther King weekend, January 13, with a video Zoom format with a call-in option.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Brad Eells at 11:07 Eastern Time; following the approval of the Minutes that had previously been distributed by Secretary Ray Grimes, the roll call found 18 officers and directors present; an additional 6 other local chapter leaders or area representatives were on for a total of 24 either on the screen or calling in.

Election Chair Rob Hoeye announced the results of the 2024 election. There were three positions up for election; nominee Mark Haughwout was re-elected as the Eastern Deputy Chair, while write-in candidates Michael Guerin for Chairman and Gary Weber for Treasurer were elected, as there had been no nominations submitted for those positions.

Chairman Brad Eells thanked Rob for once again conducting the election, and congratulated Mike, Mark, and Gary on being elected. After thanking the hosts of the 2023 conferences, Brad then passed the gavel to Mike to continue the meeting.

Mike thanked everyone for their support and gave a few of his thoughts about the FFLA and plans for more communication, both with the Executive Committee and between deputy chairs and the directors.

Keith Argow spoke about the future of the FFLA and his pursuit of a National MOU with the Forest Service.

Gary Weber summarized the Treasurer/Membership report that had previously been sent to all board members. Overall membership was stable, with a net gain of 14. He also noted that after getting behind beginning eight years ago, the magazine is now "caught up" and ready to resume a quarterly schedule of "single" issues. Gary explained the proposed budget that had also been sent out; it was later approved as presented.

No other functional reports were presented; the SHPO, Webmaster, and Social Media reports can be found online at <http://www.firelookout.org/chapter-reports.html>.

Directors present gave brief reports for their 2023 chapter activities and 2024 plans; full reports are online at <http://www.firelookout.org/chapter-reports.html>.

The current dues rate was brought up, but it was felt that no increase is needed at the current time.

Upcoming conferences were discussed. Mike had previously queried Western directors with the only offer coming from Southern California; the 2024 Western Conference will be hosted by the Southern California Mountains Foundation in late September. Mike then asked about an Eastern conference; Laurie Rankin advised that the New York Chapter is willing to host it this fall. Southern New England Director Jack Kelly mentioned the possibility of holding the 2025 Eastern Conference in Massachusetts.

The website re-design was discussed; Mike will be forming a committee to get the effort re-started.

Lastly, Mike is soliciting comments on an updated FFLA Mission Statement.

It was decided that the 2025 Board Meeting will be January 18, 2025, again on MLK weekend.

The meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m. EST.

The complete minutes of the meeting, compiled by FFLA Secretary Ray Grimes, Jr. will be posted at <http://www.firelookout.org/conferences--events.html>

### 2024 Approved FFLA Budget

<b>Income</b>	
Balance Forward	\$49,285.53
Dues	\$20,000.00
Donations	\$ 1,000.00
Chapter Grants (Pass-Through)	\$50,000.00
Merchandise Sales	\$ 2,000.00
Interest	\$ 30.00
Total	<b>\$122,315.53</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Publication	\$20,000.00
Chapter Distributions	\$ 2,500.00
Brochure Cost	\$ 50.00
Restoration Grants	\$27,500.00
Emergency Stabilization Grants	\$ 300.00
Chapter Grants/Donations (Pass-Through)	\$50,000.00
Insurance	\$ 1,800.00
Merchandise Cost	\$ 1,800.00
Operations	\$ 500.00
History/Archive/Preservation Fund	\$ 500.00
Website Upgrade	\$ 3,000.00
Total	<b>\$107,950.00</b>
<b>Year-end Balance</b>	<b>\$14,365.53</b>

## NHLR

### End-of-Year Listings

December was a busy month with 19 new registrations; three were from two Canadian provinces, the other 16 scattered between eight US states, led by seven from Tennessee. The new listings are:

US #1765	PA #72	Pondfield Fire Tower
US #1766	TN #68	McGlamery Lookout Tower
US #1767	TN #69	Lutts Lookout Tower
US #1768	TN #70	Savannah Lookout Tower
US #1769	TN #71	West Point Lookout Tower
US #1770	TN #72	Kelso Lookout Tower
US #1771	TN #73	Franklin St. Forest Lookout Tower
CAN #14	BC #4	Greenstone Lookout
CAN #15	BC #5	Lavina Lookout
CAN #16	ON #1	Fort Frances Lookout Tower
US #1772	NM #53	Los Alamos Lookout
US #1773	MO #8	Pilot Knob Lookout (Phelps Co.)
US #1774	MS #62	Greenwood Lookout Tower
US #1775	VA #46	King William County Fire Tower
US #1776	MO #9	Doniphan Lookout
US #1777	VT #9	Glastenbury Mtn. Fire Tower
US #1778	TN #74	Burns (Bell) Lookout Tower
US #1779	NY #56	Makomis Fire Tower at Speculator
US #1780	PA #73	Little Flat Fire Tower

To nominate a lookout, go to: <http://nhlr.org/nominate/>.

The National Historic Lookout Register is a project of the American Resources Group®, 374 Maple Avenue East, Suite 310, Vienna, VA 22180, (703) 255-2700, [www.american-resources.org](http://www.american-resources.org)



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# Notes from All Over

## MAINE

### Fire Towers as Recreational Destinations

A number of open-to-the-public fire towers serve as recreational destinations in Maine. One of the more popular ones is Deboullie Mountain. Located in Deboullie Public Lands in remote Aroostook County, multiple hiking trails allow access on foot, but snowmobiles make their way here as well. This version of the Deboullie tower was erected in 1929 and is 48 feet. The State of Maine replaced the cab on it in 2020. The 1955 watchman's camp also still exists and sits next to the tower. It was renovated in 2016 and provides a nice picnic space or a place to catch some shelter in a storm.



Snowmobilers visit Deboullie Fire Tower in 2024 (Lewis Chase photo)

Bill Cobb

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

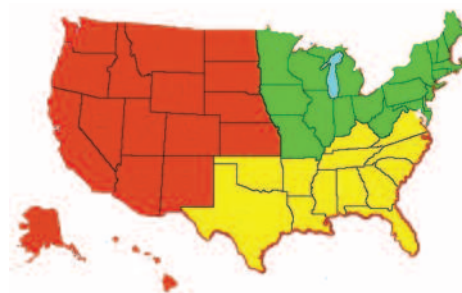
During 2023, 49 human caused fires burned 58.4 acres, much lower acreage than 2022. Most of the fires occurred in the Spring as rain moved in during June and the rest of the year was quite wet with some flooding at times. The White Mountain National Forest had 3 human caused fires which burned less than 1/2 acre. New Hampshire operated many of their towers on weekends as in 2022. Belknap and Cardigan had tower steel painted and cabs replaced. This work was delayed by the wet summer weather. There is a video online of the Belknap cab roof being lowered into place at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIT5Sfs-b0Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIT5Sfs-b0Q). Looks like a somewhat hard landing.

Both towers should be back in service this spring. The State is seeking bids for cab replacement and other work at Federal Hill and Pitcher Mountain this year.

Happy Trails,  
Chris Haartz



Belknap tower with new cab (WM Moose photo)



### Deer Mountain Update

In early December, the Connecticut Lakes Headwaters Working Forest citizens advisory committee, which makes recommendations to the State, voted unanimously in the affirmative on two proposals put forth by The Cohos Trail Association regarding the Deer Mountain fire tower. The first proposal requested that the association refurbish an old jeep lane up the northeast flank of the mountain to connect with the Deer Mountain Fire Tower Trail just south of the tower to create a loop hike on the mountain for visitors and a thru-hike up and out of the valley for Cohos Trail trekkers. The second proposal called for beginning the long process of eventually trying to restore the Deer Mountain tower itself, by rebuilding the stairs, railings, landings, and top story deck to create a viewing platform four stories above the forest floor. The ideas were very well received by some twenty people who attended the meeting in the town of Pittsburg.



(Photo by John Higgins of the Cohos Trail Association)

## WASHINGTON

### Three Fingers Update

Once again, it was very productive year for Friends of Three Fingers Lookout. Volunteers, known and unknown, graciously shuttled heavy, awkward supplies and worked long hours on the lookout. Virtually all of this year's goals were accomplished, including but not limited to shutter repairs, painting, a new door, a beautiful sign board at the trail head and trail maintenance and improvements. Also, for the third year in a row, the group was honored to receive a grant in the amount of \$500 from the Rotary Club of



New Info Trail sign placed 1/4 mile in

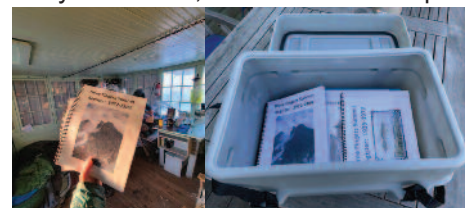
New door for the lookout



Waiting for primer coat to dry (This is not from a drone. This is a camera and tripod on the rock adjacent to the lookout.)

Everett Port Gardner. That grant may be used to help fund the effort of improving education and materials that can help to overcome the nasty human waste issues (liquid and solid) that have disgustingly developed at the lookout since it has increasingly become a popular destination.

A special delivery made it to the lookout in late September - hard copies of the summit registers dating back to 1935, carried up by Brenna Anderst. In early October, Michael Holmquist



carried up the tote that the registers will be stored in. Malcolm Bates and Jack Bennett put these together for visitors to enjoy all of the history! The registers cover 1935-1972, 1972-1984, and 1992-1995 (1984-1992 are missing). The challenge for this winter is to transcribe the entries from the registers from 1995 to the present - a mish-mash of notebook pages and small pads.

### Salmo Lookout Progress

The volunteers who have steadily been restoring Salmo Lookout had a positive, productive meeting with Colville NF personnel in November. The Forest is putting together a Resource Advisory Committee; the RAC is necessary to review and



approve the addition of the lookout to the recreation rental program. The lack of an outhouse has been a stumbling block, but simpler toilet facilities are being looked at for the short term so it can be opened as a rental. Consideration is being given to a gate that would be placed on the last pitch of the road, north of the lookout to provide some limited form of security. Options are being considered for having some sort of a firefinder in the lookout. Lastly, the repair work needed to ready the lookout for rental was discussed and a list of items for the volunteers to undertake agreed on; they are very optimistic they'll finish those in 2024.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### New Roof for Greenstone

A new roof is on the Greenstone Lookout! It was nip and tuck working with the weather window in November, but it got done, readying it for winter.



Jane D'Silva photo

The leftovers were used to reroof the woodshed, too. Some years ago there was a serious issue with "idiots" breaking the glass in the lookout, so it was thought plexi would be better but it could not stand up to the UV. The windows were to be replaced with 3-ply car glass, but time ran out against the weather window.

## CALIFORNIA

### Chalone Lookout to be Removed

Pinnacles National Park has decided to demolish Chalone Peak Lookout, due to lack of funds for the \$300,000 to \$1,000,000 required to restore it; and ongoing access limitations. Also known as North Chalone Lookout, the structure is a 16' x 16' octagonal wood cab, the oldest of the revised 809R design, atop a 20' enclosed steel tower. It was built by the California Department of Forestry in



what was then Pinnacles National Monument in 1952. Ownership was transferred to the National Park Service in 1990, however the NPS did not maintain it, and it fell into disrepair.

California South Director Scott McClintock has reached out regarding the pending demolition and preservation of the Osborn Firefinder.

### San Diego-Riverside Activities

The San Diego-Riverside chapter continued to operate two restored lookout towers on Palomar Mountain in 2023; High Point Lookout is owned by the Cleveland NF, and Boucher Hill Lookout by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation. Approximately 80 volunteers staffed the towers for the season that opened on May 1 and closed on November 30.

2023 Statistics	High Point	Boucher Hill
Smokes Reported	38	63
Lightning Strikes Reported	9	0
Visitors	1,499	9,432
Days Staffed/Open	210/211	206/211

### Buck Rock's 100th Year Celebration

Several hundred visitors, volunteers, and dignitaries attended the Buck Rock Centennial Open House held on Sunday September 3rd. Festivities started with a solemn flag raising ceremony, followed by a traditional Native American blessing. Afterwards, visitors toured the lookout while down below, the crowd enjoyed the joyous, fair-like atmosphere. District Ranger Marianne Emmendorfer cut the centennial cake while Park Superintendent Clay Jordan and Forest Supervisor Teresa Benson mingled with volunteers and visitors.

As part of the Open House Weekend, over 30 Buck Rock Foundation volunteers and lookout groupies attended the "End of Summer Soiree"



campout at the Big Meadows Guard Station. Folks with campers, trailers, 5th wheels, and tents started arriving on Friday, and by Saturday we were overflowing with camaraderie and good times ... it was a weekend not soon to be forgotten.

### Outdoor Education

Park Ridge once again became an outdoor education classroom on August 29. One of the Buck Rock Foundation's goals is 'outdoor education' and every year; for the past 8 years, the 8th grade class from Three Rivers School has been hosted at Park Ridge Lookout. The students' lesson inside the cab included a math component using the Osborne Firefinder, they learned about the science of weather observations, and heard what is "good" fire and what is "bad" fire.



## NEW YORK

### Bramley Mountain Tower Progress

The Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower are looking forward to June, when they expect to be reconstructing the tower on Bramley Mountain. In November, a fundraising dinner was held at Eightymain in Delhi to support the group's work and to celebrate many recent accomplishments - Delaware County's agreement to fully support the tower, a \$10,000 grant from the O'Connor Foundation, and NYC DEP's work to facilitate the project. The dinner raised over \$2,500 for the fire tower project!

In November, NYC DEP workers improved the Summit Trail Road, a former logging road, so that the fire



tower components and the equipment needed to build the tower can get up the mountain more easily. They also cleared the summit area to make room for the construction of the tower. Finally, they built a second parking lot just uphill



of the existing trailhead and parking area on Glen Burnie Road.

The Friends have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Delaware County formalizing their partnership and specifying the duties for the tower construction and for the tower's ongoing operation.

The contractor, Excelsior Towers (FFLA member Mike Vilegi), has the footings tentatively scheduled for early May; construction of the tower should begin in June and is expected to be completed within a two-week period.

The match has been achieved for a \$5,000 matching donation challenge announced in December, and a similar \$5,000 matching donation challenge has recently been announced. Tax-deductible donations can be made at <https://givebutter.com/FireTower> or by sending a check to Friends of Bramley Mountain Fire Tower at PO Box 63, Delhi, NY 13753. All donations made between now and March 31st, 2024 will be eligible for matching funds. Achieving this matching gift will ensure the group having the funds needed for construction and for ongoing expenses in the future.

Follow their progress online at <https://bramleymountainfiretower.org/> or on the Bramley Mountain Fire Tower Facebook page.

## IDAHO

### Idaho Fire Lookouts Fundraiser

#### Lookout Charm Necklace

After the overwhelming success of their Christmas Ornament fundraiser - it brought in \$800, Idaho Fire Lookouts (led by Cat House and Billy Cooter) have come up with another to help get Lookout Mountain Lookout restored - Fire Lookout Tower charms, on 19" chain or black cord necklaces. \$30.00 (free shipping).

Email [cat@idahofirelookouts.com](mailto:cat@idahofirelookouts.com) (Venmo or Paypal) or visit their Etsy store, [www.etsy.com/shop/IdahoLookouts](https://www.etsy.com/shop/IdahoLookouts).

## TENNESSEE

### Mt. Cammerer Restoration

The first historic preservation project that inspired the creation of the Friends of the Smokies and their partnership with Great Smoky Mountains National Park thirty years ago was the restoration of the Mt. Cammerer Fire Tower.

The octagonal tower, sitting 100 feet from the North Carolina line at 4,928' elevation, was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1939 and staffed into the 1960s. By the 1990s, it had fallen into a state of disrepair, with boarded-up windows, peeling paint, and graffiti. Restoration began in 1995 and finished a few years later, but nearly three decades later, the tower was once again looking rough. The door was kicked in, the glass in the windows cloudy, broken or missing, and a fresh coat of graffiti covered the walls. On the 30th anniversary of its roots, Friends of the Smokies gave the park more than \$50,000 to complete a new round of restoration.

In September, a Park Service historic preservation crew was back at the tower for the much-needed restoration on the unique historic structure. Getting the crew and all the materials up to the top required two trips with a pack string. In four days, the crew replaced the glass in the windows, rebuilt the stairs, and repaired the railing and the floor. They finished their to-do list, but will need to return to finish up some cosmetic details. The Park Service had done maintenance on the tower since the original restoration, but this is the first time a renovation to this scale has taken place, thanks to the Friends and the organization's Forever Places endowment.



## MISSOURI

### Former Arkansas Tower

On a recent trip to Branson, Missouri, Jason Johns stopped to look at this former fire tower at Wild Bill's Travel Center, just across the Arkansas state line into Missouri along US-65. It has markings for



Hamburg, Arkansas, in the southern part of the state. Ron Stafford's research shows three former tower sites in Ashley County, where Hamburg is located. If that's indeed where it came from, it could possibly be one of Berea, Bowden or an un-named one south of Crossett.



## In the Media

### Alberta and Victoria

**'Your job is to be in tune with the land':**

**A day in the life of a fire lookout**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/fire-lookout-wildfires-alberta-lookout-observer-1.6955504>

**In fight against wildfires, Alberta's lookout towers are reliable, low-tech protectors**

<https://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/news/in-fight-against-wildfires-albertas-lookout-towers-a-reliable-low-tech-protector>

**On the lookout for fires**

<https://arr.news/2023/12/22/on-the-lookout-for-fires/>

**Fire Lookout Observer**

**has eyes on the job**

FFLA member Simon Hawkins:

<https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/ourpeopletheirstories/stories/fire-lookout-observer-has-eyes-on-the-job>

## LOOKOUT CHARM NECKLACE



**Brushed Stainless Steel hypoallergenic pendant on metal chain or black cord**  
**\$30 with Free Shipping**  
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[www.etsy.com/shop/IdahoLookouts](https://www.etsy.com/shop/IdahoLookouts)



# Northwest Montana Lookout Association Accomplishments



## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

I am delighted to report that this was our 10th season of projects restoring lookouts in northwest Montana! Looking back, I am so proud of the work that our Board and countless volunteers have put in over the last decade to help our partner Agencies keep lookouts a vital part of fire-fighting and recreational use on the landscape. This year's projects contributed more than 1600 hours and an in-kind value of over \$69,000 to our partner Agencies. We thank you for your continuing support and look forward to working with you on a mountain top in our second decade.

*Chuck Manning*  
Board Chair

### Save the Date

Stonefly Lounge, Coram MT  
May 22, 2024, 5 - 7 pm  
Celebrating 10 Years of NMLA  
and  
Celebrating the Volunteers

## 2023 RESTORATION PROJECTS

### Mount Wam Lookout Kootenai NF

Mount Wam Lookout, located a few miles from the US-Canada border near Eureka, has had ongoing work for quite a few years. Reaching the end of projects

there, the lookout is looking remarkable! Final touches this past year included painting the interior windows and exterior trim and moving the outhouse



2018



2023

to a new location. As the lookout is on an outcrop of sedimentary rock, this was no small undertaking – a generator powered demolition hammer was used to break up the layers, and a pit close to five feet was dug in about two and a half



days. Next a vault was built to line the hole and then the crew moved the outhouse to its new location. Thanks go to volunteers and the Northwest Montana Back Country Horsemen who supported both ends of the project, helping transport tools and supplies. The YCC joined the project for one day to pull staples from the lookout being wrapped for protection during the 2022 Weasel Fire.

### McGuire Lookout Kootenai NF

The McGuire Mountain Lookout and support structures restoration project has finally been completed.



Starting in 2016 when the group's first on-site condition assessment took place, this endeavor evolved into a major rehab project consisting of leveling the lookout; removing, reconditioning, and replacing all windows; building new shutters; moving the outhouse onto a newly constructed vault; reroofing the lookout and both support structures. This year's portion could not have happened without the tremendous support of the volunteer force.

Leif Haugen and his volunteer crew of four tackled the reroof of the D-6



cupola lookout. The Northwest Montana Back Country Horsemen supported both ends of the project to help transport tools and supplies not airlifted in earlier by the Forest's Helitack Crew. The Youth Conservation Corp also helped sherpa supplies to and from the lookout.



### Star Peak Lookout Kootenai NF

Star Peak (formerly known as Squaw Peak), overlooking the Clark Fork and Bull River valleys near Heron, is the site of the first recorded lookout in Montana. The original rock house, built in 1910, still sits below the current lookout, an L-4 ground cab built in the mid-1950s. This historic lookout restoration is supported through the Great American Outdoors Act. The project began in early June when all windows were removed and flown off the mountain, thanks to the Kootenai



NF Helitack Crew. The windows will be reconditioned over the winter and flown back up the mountain to be reinstalled next spring. Later in the summer, NMLA volunteers reroofed the structure with



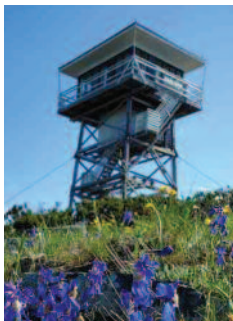
new cedar shingles, scraped and painted the exterior (with the exception of the deteriorated shutters) and addressed failing structural issues. Shutter material was painted in preparation for building new shutters in 2024 to be installed over the reconditioned and reinstalled windows. The Cabinet Back Country Horsemen supported the project by transporting tools and supplies.





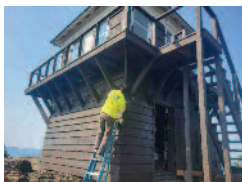
## Big Creek Baldy Lookout Kootenai NF

Big Creek Baldy, north of Libby, got a new roof in 2022; this past year NMLA worked with the Forest to get a new heater installed to upgrade the cabin rental experience. The volunteers also did some fine-tuning of the roof and hatch. Some planned work had to be deferred to next year, but final measurements and materials were gathered for the next stage.



## Mount Brown Lookout Glacier National Park

Overlooking Lake McDonald, Mount Brown Lookout sits just south of its namesake peak. This past summer marked the completion of several ongoing maintenance projects which included replacing cracked windows, replacing failed siding boards on the lower enclosed storage area, replacing failing catwalk deck boards, and painting needed areas of the lookout's interior and exterior. NMLA volunteers brought closure to this project; GNP personnel were instrumental in supporting this project and coordinated pack stock to transport all materials and supplies. Volunteer support was funded in part through a Whitefish Community Foundation grant.



## ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP

Thorough assessments of lookout conditions are a critical first step in planning for every lookout maintenance or restoration project. NMLA's goal is to repeat assessments on a regular basis to help monitor lookout status, complete minor maintenance and identify any changing conditions that might merit emergency repairs. In mid-June, a group of NMLA members gathered at Cooney Lookout to train as Team Leaders on future assessments.

## 2023 ASSESSMENTS Heavens Peak Lookout Glacier National Park

Heavens Peak Lookout was built by conscientious objectors who were members of the Civilian Public Service during World War II. The lookout uses native materials to integrate the structure into the landscape and was operational from 1945 until 1953.



Extensive work to stabilize the structure was completed in 2013-14. Volunteers completed this assessment and were rewarded with relatively clear skies and expansive views including Chapman Peak, Mt Cleveland, the garden wall, Lake McDonald and the Camas drainage after bushwhacking to the lookout. The structure is generally in good shape, but is in need of extensive painting in addition to other repairs.



## Porcupine Ridge Lookout Glacier National Park

Porcupine Ridge Lookout sits at 7100 feet elevation, SSW of the Waterton Lakes Ranger Station in Glacier National Park. It was built in 1939, later abandoned for use in 1972,



but has had a number of restoration projects to help keep it snug on the remote mountaintop. Porcupine was a challenging assessment! Logistical planning and support was a must - passports, boat tickets, a backcountry permit, and a gazillion questions as to how to approach the project. The trail was easy to find, but is quite brushy/overgrown below treeline. The volunteers found the first two fords of

Valentine Creek dry (on 8/24), but that third one was still a doozy! It was a very rewarding trip to the top of the world! The lookout is in pretty good overall condition; it is mainly in need of routine maintenance such as painting, and some shutters could be replaced.



## Mount Henry Lookout Kootenai NF

Volunteers had a bluebird day for a hike to Mount Henry Lookout to do an assessment for future restoration needs. The lookout is in pretty good shape considering it was built in 1942



and has been out of use since the 1990s. It needs a major paint job and a few panes of glass replaced to restore its former glory. The outhouse however, flattened a few years ago by the elements, is barely hanging in there, now propped up by rocks and boards - it needs some major attention!



## Stahl Peak Kootenai NF

Volunteers completed the assessment of Stahl Lookout on a cold, blustery day in late August. The D-6 cupola lookout is perched dramatically on a cliff's edge in the Ten Lakes Wilderness Study Area. At an elevation of 7,281' there are uninterrupted





views of the entire Ten Lakes basin, Canada, and Glacier Park. The lookout itself is in a state of disrepair, something a coat of fresh paint and some basic carpentry could improve.

### Lost Horse Lookout Kootenai NF

This seldom-seen lookout is reached by a flagged route after a 30-mile drive on a dirt road. NMLA volunteers re-flagged the 2-mile route as they worked their way up to the



lookout assessment. Greeted by the weather-grayed wooden tower, L-4 cab, and "butter box" was reward in itself.



One can also see downtown Yaak, Mount Henry Lookout and the surrounding majestic mountains.

Built in 1934, this little gem of a lookout needs the catwalk, steps, railings, and shutters repaired or replaced. Light shines through several small holes in the ragged roof which needs to be patched or better yet, re-shingled. Amazingly, inside, the cab is in good shape with intact windows and glazing. It was wrapped in 1994 to protect it from the Yaak-Red Dragon Complex Fire, and again in 2000 for the Kootenai Complex fires. It would be a shame to lose this lookout to deterioration since it has withstood strong winds, snow, and weathering for countless years.

### LOOKING BACK

This past year the group surpassed their 100th volunteer outing between assessments and larger maintenance/restoration projects. While their restoration partnerships began on the Flathead National Forest, over time more of their work has shifted to the Kootenai NF where Challenge-Cost Share funds are more often available to help fund needed restoration work.

## Reflecting on 10 Years of Restoring Lookouts

When Chuck Manning spent a summer staffing Thoma Lookout fresh out of high school, Nancy would hike up to visit him. They never imagined that their lives would still be intertwined with lookouts 60 years later. After that summer, they went on to get married, have a family, and have busy lives and careers.



In 2013 they found themselves volunteering with the Forest Service, once again on a mountain top staffing a lookout tower at Firefighter and Baptiste. Visiting with other volunteer lookouts, they saw an opportunity to help out with various lookout maintenance projects that it was often difficult for the Forest Service to complete, and a group began exploring the idea of forming a non-profit organization. After discussion and support from The Hungry Horse/Glacier View/Spotted Bear Rangers and Fire Staff, the Northwest Montana Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association was established under the umbrella of the Idaho/Montana chapter of the National Lookout Association. Later, in 2020, they became a stand-alone 501c(3) non-profit, the Northwest Montana Lookout Association.

The first efforts the group undertook in 2013 were finding volunteers for the restoration of the Holland Peak Cabin and providing materials for the FS restoration of the Coal Ridge patrol cabin re-siding project.

In 2014, the first Memorandum of

Understanding was written with the Flathead National Forest, followed in 2015 with the Kootenai National Forest and Glacier National Park. The NMLA began doing assessments of lookouts that were not in use to help determine maintenance needs and set the stage for future project partnerships.

For the early projects, volunteers were recruited by word of mouth and through friends. Now a more formal process is in place, as there are always more interested volunteers than space available every summer.

One of the more challenging projects Chuck recalls was Wam, where they had to remove the windows and take them off-site for restoration, rebuild the foundation, shutters, walls, siding, rebuild new window sills, and eventually reinstall the reglazed and painted windows. The project began in 2018 and was completed this past year with moving the outhouse to a new location.

Though every lookout hike is special, Nancy's favorite is probably Mount Brown. They've made the hike many times, and each time it's still wonderful – such a beautiful spot, and the hike always

feels like a real accomplishment. Another favorite is Baptiste Lookout. One year at the end of their volunteer season, they woke up to 42 degrees inside the lookout and 22 degrees outside - that was the end of season! Chuck fondly recalls early season assessment trips with Nancy to Jumbo and a trip to Mud Lake where Sydney treed a bear (twice!) and they ran short of both human and dog food and had to restock at Black Bear cabin for the hike out.

Nancy and Chuck had the opportunity to revisit their time at Thoma lookout when they filled in for a week for lookout Leif Haugan 50 years after





Chuck's first summer spent there. They found some familiar signs of his first visit - bear scratches on the door, spikes in



a tree used to climb for a better view, and signs of an old refrigerator hole Chuck created when he staffed the lookout. And the view was just as wonderful as they remembered.

When asked about lessons learned over the 10 years of projects, Chuck said that of course "planning is crucial". We all know he's the master of that! Second he said that it's all about building and tending the many relationships - with the Agencies, their Partners, and their many members and volunteers that are the real keys to NMLA's success and sustainability. "And let's not forget well fed volunteers", Nancy chimed in.

Reflecting on why they are still passionate about lookouts after all the trips and hours they have spent, Chuck and Nancy agreed that they love the solitude and the chance to see the cycles of nature up close and unfiltered - the storms, the sunsets and sunrises, the animals... It all adds to a fulfilling life. And Chuck still has some lookouts on his bucket list. When he can find the time, he would like to visit Heaven's Peak Lookout.

## Buck Rock Foundation Facilities Team

The Buck Rock Foundation Facilities Team has been active for six years. Each year, the Team performs an assessment BRF's three staffed lookouts. Maintenance and repair items are identified, and the Team coordinates with the Forest Service and Park Service partners to perform basic repairs and preserve the historic nature of these structures.

In addition to keeping the BRF lookouts in top condition, the Team has offered their services over the years to inspect and/or perform repairs at other lookout towers around the region. The list of other lookouts includes Shadequarter, Penon Blanco, Baker

Point, Fence Meadow, Tollgate, and Oak Flat.

A minimal amount of work was needed at BRF's three staffed lookouts in 2023. The flagpole was reinforced at Buck Rock and a leaky faucet was repaired and a union on the water line was tightened at Park Ridge. At Delilah, the roof of the telecommunications building was cleaned and re-coated, touch up paint work was performed on the exterior of the outhouse and supply building, and the water tank was opened up and cleaned.

Elsewhere in 2023, the Team and other BRF volunteers returned to Fence Meadow Lookout to complete work that began in 2022. New supports were installed and lightning protection cabling was added to the shutters. In addition to the work performed by BRF, the Sierra National Forest hired contractors to perform lead paint abatement and make significant improvements which included new paint inside and out, cabinetry, and catwalk side rail mesh. The siding of the shed was replaced. The Sierra NF plans to re-open the tower in 2024 as a staffed lookout.

At Oak Flat on the Sequoia NF, the Team and other BRF volunteers performed an inspection on this rental lookout. The lookout has been out of service for several years due to vandalism. The Kern River Ranger District wants to make repairs to bring the lookout back into the rental program. A report was prepared for the district to use in planning restoration work.

At the request of the Hume Lake Ranger District, members of the Team, with support from others, performed an inspection of the Big Meadows Guard Station, specifically focused on the water and electrical service. The Team made recommendations and performed minor repairs prior to occupying the Guard Station and grounds during the Buck Rock Open House weekend.

Plans for 2024 include water line repairs, improving the marmot screen around the cab base, and starting new internet service at Buck Rock, improving the cab storm door to prevent water intrusion at Delilah, and repairing the water heater and vinyl floor tile and fixing the exterior stairway lights at Park Ridge.



## Snoqualmie Fire Lookouts Association

### 2023 End of Year Report

SFLA Chairperson John Hearing

shared some snippets and great stories from their end of the year report to the Forest Service.

In summary, SFLA members have a lot to be proud of:



- 117 members contributed 372 volunteer days, for 3,236 hours of volunteer service in 2023.

- We hiked 519 miles of trail patrols
- We turned out a great crew for National Trails Day, repairing a major section of trail that was blown out by Deep Creek and restoring the trail.

- Qualified four of our members as USFS-certified sawyers for chainsaw and cross-cut saws. Then we helped log out trails and roads, including over 400 trees that were down across Corral Pass Road.

- We staffed Suntop for 86 days out of the 92-day season, greeting 3511 visitors, with a peak day of 242 visitors in one day.

- Kelly Butte wasn't open as much due to road closures, but we still managed to provide 31 days of operation out of a 45-day season, hosting 306 visitors.

- We delivered a huge amount of service to the lookouts this year. Of course, the two big jobs we accomplished were the re-roof of Granite Mountain (delayed after last year's Llama Strike), and the building of the ADA deck and ramp at Suntop. Both projects were huge undertakings for our volunteers, but we rose to the occasion got the jobs done. We also did a number of smaller jobs: painted the shed at Suntop, relocated toilets at Kelly Butte, worked on picnic benches, repaired windows, and cleaned up the area around all three lookouts.

Lots to look forward to next year: more visitors to Suntop (especially after the Seattle Times articles) and Kelly Butte, additional repairs to the shed at Suntop, finishing the ADA access ramp (see p.12), working more on the trail to Kelly Butte, and finishing maintenance items at Granite and hopefully being able to put it back into operation.

The Forest Service has expressed their thanks for the incredible efforts of SFLA members.



# A Lookout with a Difference

## Creating a barrier free environment for the mobility challenged

By John Hearing, Chairperson, Snoqualmie Fire Lookouts Association ([www.snoqualmielookouts.org](http://www.snoqualmielookouts.org))

Suntop Lookout has remained perched on a mountain top north of Mt. Rainier for 90 years. One of the early L-4 lookouts in the Cascade Range, it is a ground house with spectacular views of the mountain, as well as the rest of the Cascades. Originally reached by horse trail, in the 1950s a road was built up the mountain, ending in a parking lot just below the lookout. The proximity of this lookout within 100 minutes of the Seattle metro area plus the relatively easy access and unique location have made it extremely popular with visitors—in just over 100 days in 2022 over 3,000 visitors ascended to the top of Suntop and visited the fire lookout. But not everyone could. Like almost all Fire lookouts, Suntop remained out of reach to persons with mobility challenges.

In 2018, a group of Forest Service employees and volunteers started to

volunteers, local groups, and mobility activists, they crafted a concept and launched it up the chain of command: what if we made Suntop accessible? With enthusiastic support from their boss, District Recreation Manager Brian McNeil, the idea quickly gained steam. Responses from Forest Service District and Forest leaders indicated a real interest in this idea.

In 2020 work was to begin on phase I: Building an ADA-standard access trail from the parking lot to the lookout. An eager volunteer was found in Nolan B., a young man from Bonney Lake WA and a prospective Eagle Scout. Seizing on this idea for his Eagle Scout service project, Nolan scouted a number of pre-existing “social trails” to find a route that would be gentle enough to accommodate the challenging ADA standards and plotted the path. Sadly, in 2020, COVID landed, so all volunteer and unnecessary work was halted for a year, yet Nolan committed to wait so he could complete this project. In Spring of 2021 the lockdowns started to ease and Forest Service was able to assist, so Nolan’s project began. Mustering volunteers from his scout troop, High School, and other local groups, Nolan and his crew followed these pre-existing social trails, widened and leveled them, added side logs to support the trail, hauled in tons of crushed gravel, and finally tamped it in place. What started out to be a 250 foot trail ended up at 350 feet in order to make the grade gentle enough for wheelchairs.

At the same time, it was needed to find financial support for the construction portions of the project. To make the lookout ADA accessible while not massively altering the external look of the lookout was the goal. Suntop had been modified a number of times over its history, but at its core, remained an L-4 model lookout, albeit one without a wraparound deck. Based on other similar ground-house lookouts with decks, a design was created that would add a 5’ wraparound deck with a shallow ramp to the lookout. Drawing on years of experience, plus a pool of eager volunteers, Coughlin and Schmutz wrote a grant proposal to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) requesting finances to help complete the project. One key element of grants like this is commitment for matching hours of effort in addition to the grant.

Enter the Snoqualmie Fire Lookouts Association (SFLA). Formed in 2019, SFLA ([www.snoqualmielookouts.org](http://www.snoqualmielookouts.org)) is a non-profit group of volunteers committed to preserving lookouts in the Seattle area as operational, in-service Fire Lookouts. An affiliate of the nationwide Forest Fire Lookout Association (FFLA), SFLA members help maintain, repair, and operate fire lookouts, so working to help make one of these lookouts more open to the public to visit was a natural fit. With over 100 volunteers, many with carpentry and restoration skills, SFLA was a natural partner on the ADA project. Based on the strength of the proposal and the endorsements from interested groups, the Washington State RCO approved a substantial grant to pay for materials.

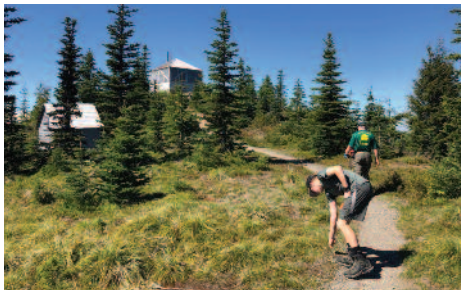
While applying for the RCO grant, the team turned to make sure that the modifications met with the required approvals. They started with the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Archaeologist, who reviewed the plans from historical perspectives, then consulted with the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation. Both parties considered the potential modifications, the plan to modify the lookout to a slightly different L-4 configuration, and the magnitude of the potential benefit to the public, and approved the project.

In addition to the ADA trail, 2022



Suntop Lookout before

consider the unique position of Suntop: a ground house (not a tower) operational fire lookout at the end of a maintained road with a relatively short trail reaching from the parking lot to the lookout. What would be the possibilities of changing parts of this to make this lookout accessible to people with mobility impairments?



Old trail leading to the lookout

Mary Coughlin, 410 Corridor Manager for the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and her assistant (and later, replacement) Todd Schmutz, and Forest Service volunteer John Hearing led the launch of this idea. Working with



New ADA trail leading from the parking lot



ADA trail approaching the lookout



was spent preparing the area around the lookout to support the deck. 68 support points were either poured or drilled into rock in order to connect support posts to the deck. With snow loads approaching 15 feet, the new deck design was reviewed by structural engineers to ensure that it would be up to the challenges. Mary Coughlin (now retired), John Hearing, and Valerie Cunningham from the SFLA led this portion of the project.

Finally, in summer 2023, time came to start the build. Materials were freighted up to the lookout level by USFS personnel and on July 3rd, volunteers from SFLA, Scouts, and the Washington Trails Association (WTA) began the construction. Once the basic structure was completed, the rest of the



New ADA deck going up

deck went up quickly, including adding handrails called for by the L-4 design, modifying supports for the shutters, and changing the window opening system. All of the efforts were directed by a desire to keep the lookout as close to the classic L-4 design look as possible. The result has been a very sturdy deck structure with spectacular views of Mt.



SFLA member Kim Luetgen working on stairs



SFLA member Ed Proso sanding railings

Rainier and the Cascades, yet retaining the iconic look of a fire lookout.

The basic deck was done in a little over a week; then efforts turned to the access ramp. Another Eagle Scout candidate, Darren B. from Auburn and a fellow member of the same troop as Nolan, took on the ramp as his project.



Beginning the ramp



Scout Darren B and SFLA member Ed Proso starting to deck the ramp

The ramp was a challenge to keep within ADA guidelines, but with perseverance and a lot of help from volunteers from SFLA and his troop, Darren managed to create a 5' wide ramp with handrails leading from a take-off pad to the deck level. More work remains to do to connect the pad to the ADA trail, but with these key steps done, the deck was preliminarily open to the public.

The result has been what is believed to be the first operational lookout in the nation that is accessible to persons with mobility issues (there are a few others that are accessible but are not operational or in active service). The reaction of the public to this effort has been overwhelmingly positive. By making some modifications to a lookout site, the Forest Service and the volunteers have made possible visits to an operational fire lookout by an entire group of people who had been excluded before. Even before the deck was complete, a man contacted the Forest Service and requested access to the site. One evening he drove up to the lookout with his son, who was wheelchair bound due to brain cancer, pushed his son up the new trail with the help of the volunteer on lookout duty, and was able to share the sunset over



Deck and Ramp nearing completion

Mt. Rainier with his son—something that wouldn't have been possible a few years ago. Jenny Schmitz, a blogger from Seattle with mobility challenges wrote in support of the project, *"Friends of mine have hiked up to and even stayed at fire lookouts, and I've always been left out, because of my wheelchair. Last Fall my husband and I were planning a back-roads drive with stops at fire-towers along the way, but we gave up before even going, because it seemed like the fire-towers were not accessible. [Completing this project] would be fantastic"*

The response of the public thus far has been overwhelmingly positive, although not 100%. We have had a few comments like "you are ruining a historic building" and some angry people. But while all of us want to preserve these fine historic lookouts, many of us view this as more about preserving the FUNCTION of fire lookouts -- not just about keeping creaky old buildings intact. Yes, we need to do that too, but adding this deck and ramp 1) is within the design of the old L-4 lookouts and 2) will increase the number of people we get to talk to about fire lookouts, the lookout job, and the forest. So we think of it as enhancing our mission.

So what's next? There are a number of "clean up" items to work on: finishing the connection between the ADA trail and the ramp; adding ADA accessible picnic tables; adding a harder surface to the trail; adding interpretive signage along the trail and at the lookout; and modifying the doorway to allow it to open wider to enable wheelchairs to actually enter the lookout itself.

And ultimately, we look forward to the day that a volunteer with mobility issues will be able to check in on the radio and report themselves "in service" at Suntop lookout—because of the vision of some U.S. Forest Service people and a group of dedicated volunteers.



# Legacy of the First Lady Fire Lookouts

by Dixie Boyle

When the U.S. Forest Service began to establish fire lookouts in the early years of the 20th Century, women were not considered for the primary lookout positions. Government officials felt women could not handle the physical requirements of the job nor live in a wilderness setting on their own for an entire fire season.

Over a decade would pass before northern California's Klamath National Forest hired the first woman to officially staff a fire lookout for the U.S. Forest Service in 1913. Hallie Daggett made newspaper headlines when she accepted Eddy Gulch Fire Lookout. She was the perfect woman to pave the way for other women to serve as fire lookouts. She loved the outdoors, was familiar with the territory, enjoyed the isolation and more importantly was well respected as a fire lookout by the public as well as her superiors.



Hallie Daggett (USFS Photo)

Hallie reported forty fires her first season pinpointing them all when they were small and establishing her reputation as a fire lookout. She seldom asked for help and cut and staked her own firewood plus early in the season gathered snow with a shovel to melt for her drinking water. She was paid \$840.00 for the entire fire season and received two days off a month if she was lucky.

She often dressed as a wilderness ranger or wore ankle-length skirts. She started strapping a revolver to her belt after seeing a panther near the lookout one evening. She was independent, capable and not afraid to live on the mountain alone for months at a time.

Hallie retired in 1927 from lookout duty. In the 1950s residents of her home town in Etna, California built her a log cabin on Main Street next to the home of her sister. She lived in the cabin until

her death in 1964. Later, the cabin was donated to the City of Etna in 1993 for a park and historic site.

Six years after Hallie was hired to staff Eddy Gulch, two more women were hired by the U.S. Forest Service to work as a primary lookout in 1919. One from Colorado's Pike National Forest and the other from New Mexico's Zuni Mountains. Helen Dowe, a former newspaper reporter and artist, spent three fire seasons staffing Devil's Head Fire Lookout near Denver.



Helen Dowe at Devil's Head (USFS Photo)

The *Denver Post* dated September 19, 1920, told about the influence Helen had on other women throughout the country wanting to work as a fire lookout, "The success she has attained as the first woman fire lookout, and the widespread publicity she has received in magazines and motion pictures has led thousands of girls throughout the country to make applications for similar positions." Helen received thousands of letters from women wanting to know about the life of a fire lookout and how they could land a position.



Helen Dowe (USFS Photo)

After three years at Devil's Head, Helen decided to work on a U.S. Forest Service surveying crew and became the first woman in the country to do so. But, more significantly she is credited with inspiring hundreds of women to apply for jobs as fire lookouts throughout the nation.

The second lady lookout has not received as much publicity as Helen, but also in 1919 Lucy Whiteside of New Mexico's Cibola National Forest served

as the primary lookout on Mt. Sedgwick. She was offered the job after her husband who had the position was murdered by a neighbor in 1918.



Lucy Whiteside (Cibola County Museum Photo)

The Whiteside's Ranch was at the base of Mt. Sedgwick making it convenient to staff the lookout and look after the ranch at the same time. An article in the *Carrizozo Outlook* in November of 1920 tells about her skills as a lookout and firefighter, "Lucy has considerable experience fighting fires both during the time that her husband was fire guard and later, and has successfully fought more than one fire single handed."

Lucy Whiteside was the first woman in New Mexico to staff a fire lookout between 1919 and 1920. But she would move on to be better known as Mother Whiteside a midwife and café and hotel owner along historic, Route 66. She is credited with delivering 500 babies in the Grants area and often gave away food at her café to those in need.

Many described her business as an oasis in the desert between Albuquerque and Gallup. Those who frequented her establishment knew she always had a pot of coffee on, and if she had gone to bed there was a roast in the oven. Her customers were asked to leave the correct change on the dining room sideboard. She was loved and respected by the community and the local library was dedicated to her.

With the onslaught of World War II, many lookout posts were left vacant throughout the country as men were needed in the war effort. For the first time, this gave women more opportunities to serve as the primary fire lookout. Although government officials as well as the American public were still skeptical of women staffing fire lookouts



on their own, this did not stop them from applying for the position.

On South Dakota's Black Hills National Forest, Minnie Cooper was one of the first women to staff a fire tower when she accepted work on Elk Mountain near the Wyoming border in 1943. Minnie was quite the pioneer and instantly took to the life of a fire lookout.

In the beginning she rode horseback to the lookout site and packed in her own water and supplies. She even blazed a primitive trail to the lookout before a decent road was completed to the lookout site. She staffed Elk Mountain for sixteen years until 1959 when she was diagnosed with cancer and passed away later that year.

It was not uncommon for these lady lookouts to spend decades on their mountain peaks. Virginia or Ginny Vincent, a lookout on Montana's Lolo National Forest, staffed Stark Mountain Lookout west of Missoula for 39 fire seasons making her one of the nation's longest working fire lookouts. She was known throughout the region for her accuracy in reporting wildfire and for her love of nature.

Ginny received a degree in Zoology from the University of Vermont and worked at Cornell and Princeton Universities before moving to Montana. She loved nature and knew all the plants and birds. She often gave nature tours and documented the plants in the area.

Ginny first thought about becoming a fire lookout after reading an article on lookouts while a teenager living in New Jersey. She applied for a lookout job in 1960, but during this era in fire management the person hired as the lookout also had to extinguish the blaze they spotted and maintain phone lines to the lookout site.

Since she was a woman she was not considered for the job. She tried again in 1970 and this time landed Stark Mountain Lookout beating out two men who had also applied for the position. The lookout site became her summer home and vocation for almost four decades until



Ginny Vincent – Stark Mtn. Lookout (USFS Photo)

she was in her eighties. She was an extremely dedicated fire lookout and fortunately her contributions have been documented by the U.S. Forest Service.

Currently, the U.S. Forest Service hires as many women as men to staff their fire lookout sites. Women are now accepted as members of engine, hot shot and helitack crews. They serve on fire management teams, hold supervisory positions and even head our national forests. It is hard to imagine, the struggle these early lady fire lookouts endured in order to be able to staff a fire lookout for the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies.

## America's First Forest Fire Lookout

Although not actually "hired" as one, the country's first "Lady Lookout" actually pre-dated the U.S. Forest Service.

In 1902, Idaho's Clearwater Timber Company manager Theodore Fohl was concerned about the extreme fire danger during the summer of the great Yacolt Fire, and decided to give his camp cook Mable Gray an extra detail, to watch for fires. Mable would become "America's first forest fire lookout". She was the camp cook at the company's Thunder Mountain timber cruiser camp (later named Bertha Hill) north of Headquarters, Idaho. During high fire danger days Mable would hop on her horse after doing the morning dishes and ride the short quarter mile to the top of the hill just west of the camp. She

climbed up a crude ladder to sit on a wolf limb 15 feet up an old hemlock snag and watch. When she discovered a smoke, she would fire her shotgun to warn the cruisers and hop on her horse and go get help.

Bertha Hill's 6th lookout tower is still regularly staffed by the Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association.



Timber cruiser Bob Gray helping his sister Mable up to her lookout perch

**Are you reading this but not a member?**

**We'd love to have you Join!**

<http://www.firelookout.org/learn-more-join.html>

## FFLA Chapters and Affiliates

Chapters, local chapters and affiliates are where things get done!

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Hi Mountain Condor Lookout

(California-South)

Copernicus Peak Lookout, Calfire VIPs

(California-Pacific)



# Uncle Tom on Green Mountain, Maine

*Back in 1924, Tommy Whelan took the watchman job on Green Mountain in Dolebrook Township, northwest of Moosehead Lake. He worked the mountain for 2 years and left at the end of the 1925 fire season. In 1958, he wrote a letter about his time on Green Mountain, apparently answering a letter from others that were curious about the job. This letter was later found by a family member and it made its way to Guy Goodine, who graciously provided us a copy. Tommy Whelan was Guy's Uncle Tom. What follows are excerpts from that letter. - Bill Cobb*

I was first hired as a lookout watchman with the Maine Forestry Service to tend the lookout on Green Mountain, which is I would say about 18 miles from the boundary between Maine and Quebec. The nearest town being Saint Zacharie, Quebec. Rockwood Maine is about 32 miles distant also. The nearest camp to where I was stationed was 10 miles, and sometimes I would not see anyone for as much as 10 days at a time. My supplies were brought in by trucks that hauled supplies for the lumber camps on a road which came within a quarter of a mile or so of my camp, and they left them in a large box I had nailed up on a spruce tree by the road. They also brought any mail I received and took out letters that I wished to mail.

My camp was near the foot of the mountain, about one and a quarter miles from the camp. It was not a very steep mountain, and not hard climbing most of the way, more like going up an ordinary steep hill, only like one hill after another. On top of the mountain, the trees were very short and scrubby due to the colder air and the force of the wind when it blew, and the snow stayed much later in the spring up there than down at the camp. It used to be very cold I remember also through late May and most of June, and then in September it would often be pretty cold, and some snow squalls. In July and

August, it used to be very hot, especially on days when it was calm, as the little cabin (7-feet square) in which I stayed from about seven in the morning until 6 in the evening, was up about 60 feet from the ground, right in the sun, and windows all around it.

The tower was built of angle-iron with steel braces and the ladder up which I climbed was also steel, and went up one corner of the framework. I shall never forget the first morning I climbed that ladder. I had been up the day before with the man who was my boss, and it did not seem too bad, but that morning I was sure scared. I went up half way and wondered if I could ever get to the top. I remembered what an old tower man had told me, to look out straight ahead and neither up nor down lest I get dizzy. I went back down and looked up and wished that I had never asked for the job. However, I could not take back water as the saying is, without being sort of a coward in my own eyes as well as other people's, so I started up again. Went a little farther that time, and came back down part way, tested myself then by looking down and up a few times, came down and took a rest, as my arms and legs were aching by then, and then up I went, and in through the little trap door in the floor of the cabin. I could not help wondering how I would manage to get back down, but when the time came, down I went. In a few days, I did not mind going up or down in the least.

I did my own cooking of course, and though I fared poorly enough at first, I soon managed to learn how to make bread, muffins and a couple of kinds of cake. It was lonesome at first, but soon I became accustomed to being alone and did not find the time too long. There were no moose in that locality, but the deer were very plentiful, and became so tame I could stand in the front door of my camp and they would eat potato peelings and salt that I used to put in the yard for them. And often one would come out and feed on the



Green Mountain fire tower in the 1970s

grass around the foot of the tower. Once as I was coming down the mountain in the evening, I saw a large bear eating raspberries near my trail, but it either did not notice me or was not interested. I was a bit nervous until I safely past and on my way. One day I was cutting bushes along the trail and took off my leather coat and hung it on a tree, and forgot to get it when I was going to camp. The next day I found it badly chewed by a porcupine. It taught me a lesson. They also were very plentiful, and I used to shoot them when they came around the camp, for they would destroy most anything they found, especially if it has salt in it.

My work of course was to keep watch from the tower for fires, and I had a good set of field glasses, which made it easier to see distinctly over great distances. From such height, one could see 60 or 70 miles on a real clear day. That is, you could see a range of hills or mountains, and see the smoke of a large fire, or such. A small fire could be seen 20 miles quite easily as a rule, but all depended on the clearness of the atmosphere. I have seen it so hazy and smoky during a dry spell that it was hard to see more than a couple of miles, and there have been times like that when I would anxiously scan the horizon all day long, moving around and around watching first north then west, then south, then east until my arms would ache from holding the glasses. Sometimes a breeze flowing through a valley would make the smoke and haze rise at some point and I would be on the point of reporting it as a fire, but to make sure, would wait a few minutes and usually it would turn out to be what I have said. The morning fog would often fool a person in the same way. You would see sort of a spiral of white fog coming up out of the valley, and it would look just like smoke. A forest fire often starts in old cuttings where the wood is dead and dry, then the smoke will be white, but when it hits green woods, the smoke is black. On a cloudy day if the clouds were very low, the whole top of the mountain would be in the clouds, and it was just like a thick fog. No use to be in the tower then for you could not see any distance. I have seen it too when the clouds would begin to lift, and if you climbed the tower part way you could see for many miles, but if you went right to the top, you would be in the clouds. From below and looking up it



Green Mountain watchman's camp in the 1960s



was just like if a heavy white blanket were being held over you.

You asked how it was possible to locate where a fire was after it was sighted. Well in the tower there was a round table, about 4 feet across, covered with a topographical map, that is the center of the map represented the point where the tower stood, and everything visible from your tower was shown on the map. Mountains, rivers, lakes, roads, and other lookout towers on several mountains within sight. The outer edge of this map was divided into degrees (360) which as you may know makes a circle. Should I sight a fire, I



A portion of the early Green Mountain alidade map

would line up the alidade, which was a flat steel rod which stretched across the center of the map with an upright at each end for sighting accurately. When I had this lined up with the fire, I would call the chief warden and report my findings as so many degrees east of north, west of south, or whatever it might be. He would then call one or two other lookout men and tell them the bearing and see if they could pick up any sign of smoke. If either or both did, they would give him the bearing from their location, and by drawing a line or laying a ruler along each of these bearings he could tell quite accurately where the fire was.

I tended this lookout 2 seasons, and although I saw many fires during that time, only one was very near to where I was. It started on a Sunday afternoon about 4 miles from my tower, and burned over a few acres before it was put out. They thought some fishing party has left a camp fire without putting it completely out and the wind spread it. I have seen a very few bad fires, and some that burned for weeks until heavy rains extinguished them, but all that time there were hundreds of men fighting them.

## In Memoriam

### Jim Stiglich

**Dec. 23, 1956 - Dec. 5, 2023**

Jim Stiglich, a 10-year volunteer with the Buck Rock Foundation (BRF), passed away on Dec 5, 2023, after a short battle with cancer. Jim was a very active member and contributed valuably to the BRF in numerous ways.

Jim joined the BRF in 2014 following his retirement from the Los Angeles City Fire Department. Jim's volunteering with the BRF started as a Delilah fire lookout, and very quickly expanded to many facets of the organization. His "jack of all trades and master of many" was put to good use when it came to maintaining and improving the three lookouts staffed by the foundation (Buck Rock, Delilah, and Park Ridge). He regularly participated in the annual tower inspections, as well as many season open and close events. Jim left his mark at all three lookouts, with numerous repairs and facility improvements made at each. His skills were also put to use with the re-roofing of Mt. Tom, fabrication of new



aluminum shutters for Fence Meadow, and construction of an observation deck for the Blue Ridge LO at the Tulare County Fairgrounds.

Jim also participated in other facility inspections, including Baker Point, Oak Flat, and Tollgate lookouts. Most recently Jim did some work at the Big Meadows Guard Station site.

Jim's talents weren't limited to the tools, as he was very adept with the pen. He regularly captured the joys of the outdoors and the experience of being a fire lookout with his colorful entries in the Delilah journal and numerous articles in the BRF annual newsletter. As he scanned for smoke, Jim was constantly spotting and identifying birds as they glided across the sky. From a stately bald eagle to a diving falcon, or an acrobatic phainopepla, he knew them all.

In addition, Jim was an instructor in both classroom and in-cab training of new volunteers, and a BRF Associate Director from 2020 to 2023.

Jim's role in helping preserve and promote lookouts will be greatly missed, but not forgotten, as his legacy will live on with the lasting impression he made.

## Zazzle FFLA Items

### Lunch Box

In addition to the 2024 Calendar, there are several other items in the Zazzle FFLA Store, the newest of which is a classic metal lunchbox featuring a photo of one of North Idaho's classic L-4 lookouts on the top and the FFLA logo on the bottom. The lunch box is available in green, white, black, or stainless colors.



Other items, all with the FFLA logo, include a tote bag, a USB swivel flash drive featuring a photo of the iconic Sundance Lookout, a trailer hitch cover, sticky notes, a refrigerator magnet, face masks, and a lighter.

To order Zazzle items and get the most benefit for the FFLA, go to [https://www.zazzle.com/store/forest\\_fire\\_lookout](https://www.zazzle.com/store/forest_fire_lookout) or to the FFLA website, <https://ffla.org/lookout-store.html>, and click on the links there.

## National Museum of Forest Service History

### Conservation Legacy Center Final Push Fundraiser

The National Museum of Forest Service History is close to finalizing its Capital Campaign and plans to break ground this spring for its Conservation Legacy Center in Missoula, Montana. One of their long-time donors has offered to donate up to \$500,000 by matching every new cash donation raised by June 2024 to ensure all costs are covered for both the building and exhibition. To help meet this match, donate at <https://forestservicemuseum.org/sup-port-donate/build-center/>.





# Indian Hill Journal

Following up on his new book, **Above it All**, is John Crawford's journal from his stint as the "opener" this past June at Indian Hill Lookout on the Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho.

## June 16th Day 1

**1130** Arrived at the lookout with David and John of the Moose Creek District fire crew on an ATV. Immediately noticed only about half the snow on the ridge compared to last year's huge cornice when I moved in on the 20th. Colorful phlox covers the mountaintop, as I get down on all fours to smell its beautiful alpine scent. The lookout's shutters were opened by a crew that came up yesterday. Nice to not have to struggle getting them up this year. Using David's cell phone (mine doesn't have coverage), I call my partner, Judy, when I get up on the tower to let her know that I have arrived.

**1230** Fire crew helps me with shoring up the outhouse as I notice it leaning over to the east from the strong winter winds that came out of the west.

**1300** Fire crew leaves me alone on the mountaintop for my week-long stint as the "opener" on Indian Hill for the second year in a row. In 2 months I'll go up on my other lookout at Sundance Mountain in northern Idaho, near Priest Lake, to close out the fire season.

**1430** Notice a raven flying by. I do my red-tail hawk imitation and he circles around to check me out on the catwalk. One quick look at me and he moves on, realizing it wasn't a hawk.

**1530** I mount the sign that I made back in Montana, on the log cabin to give the visitors a little history of the lookout.

**1545** After putting up the sign I collect a little snow in my Sierra Cup from the large bank on the east side of the ridge, to have a powdered lemonade slush. My hands freeze from digging in the snow.

**1605** I glance down at the ground from my 41-foot-high perch and see a Columbian Ground Squirrel scurrying around below. He gets a huge wad of grass in his tiny mouth and takes it into his burrow in the rocks, filling me with joy. I'm anxious to see the Golden Mantled Ground Squirrels, my favorite little critters up on Indian Hill.

**1625** A hummingbird shows up outside my all-glass house. One rare sight. I haven't ever seen one up here.

Spent a good part of my first day just staring out at all this incredible beauty of millions of acres of a wrinkled carpet of green in all directions as far as the

eye can see.

**1755** My raven buddy is back. He circles over the log cabin and flies directly at me. At the last second he veers off to the west, apparently curious as to who his new neighbor is.

**1800** Hiked to my favorite meadow a mile southwest of the tower. Two Columbian Ground Squirrels chirped at me by their underground burrows for over an hour until they got bored.

**2015** Saw a cow elk down by the outhouse.

**2130** Heading to bed to dream of more wonderful days on Indian Hill.

## Day 2

**0600** Headed down road to lower spring for water. Discovered lots of elk were roaming around the mountaintop during the night.

Major discovery on my hike back up the road—besides the grove of small aspens down by the spring, I found an even tinier grove just off Trail #603 that goes down to Meadow Creek off the switchback a mile from the lookout.

**0845** Back at the tower. Found .07" of rain in rain gauge. Lots of smoke-looking waterdogs clinging to the mountains. In my first years as lookout I might have been tempted to call them in. I scan the rest of the country for some "real" smokes, but find none.



It's going to be like I'm backpacking up here for my lookout stint, eating freeze-dried meals. This morning's entree is Mountain House Biscuits and Gravy—my favorite. Tastes great after a workout getting water.



**0930** The perspiration from the long haul back to the tower now freezes me in the cold lookout. Glad that I brought a change of t-shirt and insulated flannel

shirt. Now I'm warm.

**1030** On a trip back from the outhouse I sat down on the boardwalk underneath the tower and waited for "something" to happen. Patience won out. After about ten minutes I saw a Columbian Ground Squirrel bringing a wad of grass into his nest amongst the rocks. I watched him doing trip after trip, bringing more and more grass. Then he caught wind of me and stared up at his new neighbor staring at him. After about 2 minutes he carried on, bringing more nest material home.

Filled with the joy of watching the ground squirrel, I returned to my nest high above the Selway.

**1215** Rocky, my Golden Mantled Ground Squirrel buddy made a brief appearance below in the rocks, putting one big smile on my face!

**1430** I hit the jackpot! When some visitors showed up and found out that I'm only eating freeze-dried, they graciously gave me a bag of cheese and caramel popcorn, chocolate chip cookies, and a huge bunch of grapes! They said that I was a good host, and it paid off!

**1705** After 15 years I finally got to my favorite spot near the lookout...to the top of the bluffs a quarter mile southeast of the tower.



Grand view of the wilderness at my feet, the Craggs, and especially of the lookout tower.

**1900** Went on a hike along Patrol Ridge. Stopped at the cairns on Patrol Point, and checked out the view, then



proceeded up to the highest point on the ridge. Scanned out over the huge expanse of wilderness of Meadow Creek and beyond to Sheep Hill and the Salmon River Country. Looking back to the west I notice a storm cell out over Elk City heading this way, so I hightailed it back to the lookout in record time!

**1945** Safe on my lightning stool, I take



a direct strike on the tower, feeling a slight tingling on the back of my neck.

### Day 3

**0600** It was quite a tough night sleeping with the strong winds flapping a loose west-side shutter most of the night. I also had to put on my insulated jacket, and long underwear and wool hat to ward off the freezing cold I felt in my sleeping bag.

The west windows are coated with 1" of snow. The catwalk is a slippery glaze of white.

**0630** With only a few sticks of firewood in the lookout, I go down the ridge with a Pulaski to split up some rounds I saw yesterday on the hunter's camp flat 300 yards away to get warm in the ice-cold glass house.

**0730** Got a fire going and am finally warming up.

**0940** Noticed what looked like somebody's cat by a rock outcrop a hundred yards from the tower. I go get my binoculars and discover that the "cat" is actually a coyote pup! And there's not just one, but three pups playing amongst themselves with Mom close by. I've rarely seen coyotes up here, so this is going to be neat, watching them play by their den. As I watch the puppies play, I get to thinking of what the mom is feeding them. Ground Squirrels immediately come to mind—my "pet" ground squirrels! I sure hope momma coyote doesn't get one of them...especially Rocky! I take a closer look, and find not 3, but 4 cute little coyote pups playing down by the rock outcrop!

**1030** Hauled up some more firewood from old camp.

**1130** Andrew Bertel of the Fenn fire crew, came up with a couple more batteries for my radio, and helped me out tremendously with cutting a bunch of firewood rounds down the road, and bringing them up here for me to split. That should keep me busy this week, getting in a supply to stash in the cabin.

**1300** Went on a hike to try to find water somewhere above the upper spring. After some searching I discovered another good water source a few hundred yards above the upper spring along the trail. On my climb back to the tower I found not only one, but two split-tree insulators, a rare find. #9 telephone line was used in the old days to go through these insulators, connecting the lookouts with the ranger stations for their crank telephones.

**1712** Hadn't seen coyote pups all afternoon until now. It warms my heart

to see the youngsters playing. Right now they're taking flying leaps and jumping on each other's backs and playing chase. Now I see a pup trying to play with mom, but she doesn't appear too interested. Watching these coyote pups brings me so much joy up here!

Tonight's entertainment, while sitting by the fire, is reading 10-year-old newspapers that I found in the cabinet in the lookout.

### Day 4

**0600** Split a huge load of kindling this morning! Enough to last for a couple of summers, I think.

**0730** Back on the tower looking for smokes. All clear... no fires in my seen area. Coyote family must be sleeping in no movement down at the den site.

**1000** Snowing!

**1025** Fogged in and cold outside...but contrastingly warm in my all-glass house with the fire going. Reading the old newspapers by the woodstove and drinking hot chocolate. Could life get any better?

**1100** So foggy that I can't see the rock outcrop den of the coyote pups. Trust that they are all huddled up inside and staying warm.

**1115** Finished one of the two books that I brought up here. Now back to reading more of the old newspapers.

**2000** Everything above 5,000 feet is white, as I can finally see out across the land. It looks like winter! And it feels like it. More than 5 feet from the crackling stove and it's freezing cold! No movement down at the coyote den. They must be taking a long nap to stay out of this snowy cold landscape.

I get a special end-of-the-day treat as I see two elk slowly making their way below the tower, their contrastingly dark brown fur showing up against the white backdrop. I watch as they chase each other around, having a ball in this wintry landscape. I put a log on the fire, the sound of the woodstove door alerting the larger elk to my presence. He stares up at me until he feels no more threat, then continues to mosey his way off to the west of the tower.

### Day 5

**0500** I thought about going to my spring, slipping and sliding down the steep mountain through 4 inches of snow for water, but that was stupid...I have plenty of snow up here to melt. So out on the catwalk I go, scooping it into pots that I'm melting on the stove. But a full pot of snow is melting to a tiny bit of water. One slow process.

**0815** I'm watching a real nature show, as I see the coyote mom leave her pups, to bring something home for them to eat. She heads off across the snowy slope to my west, jumping at maybe a mouse or a chipmunk. But apparently missing getting them, she continues on. I watch the coyote get further and further away, going well past the cabin, and the old corral and across the road up onto the hunter flats, a quarter mile from "home". I watch her until she disappears from sight. Strange...I'm only seeing one of the pups through binoculars. No other movement or sign of the other three. Hope they survived the snowstorm!

**0900** Sad day in paradise. I noticed a little hummingbird who got trapped in the log cabin, dead on the east window ledge. The same hummingbird that I saw the first day up here. Ceremoniously I dug a hole over on the wilderness side of the ridge, overlooking Bluff Creek- a special spot to be laid to rest. So sad when I laid him in his grave, and covered him with dirt.

**1030** No sign of momma coyote yet. Can it be possible that she's abandoning her pups?

Can see one pup at the entrance to their den. "Looking for mom, maybe?"

**1100** Split more firewood.

**1200** I know that nature's in charge and there's nothing I can do, but I'm worried sick about the little pups! I have my chair set up by the north bank of windows where I have a direct shot to the den's entrance, reading a book and glancing up occasionally to look for smokes and to see if momma coyote has returned. Still no sign of her or her pups. I know HI keep up this vigil all afternoon, hoping they'll appear.

Extreme quiet. Only the sound of snowmelt dripping through the shutters can be heard. Then a plane breaks the silence, heading over the Selway River and into the Moose Creek backcountry airstrip.

**1225** Raven hanging out by den site. No momma coyote to chase it off. Not a good sign.

Veil of rain down by the Salmon River, way to my south, which looks suspiciously like a smoke. I check through binoculars and concur that it's just light rain falling and nothing to be concerned about.

I just drank the last of the spring water. Now I'll be drinking snowmelt.

What bothers me is if the pups were alive (and at least one was a little while ago), why aren't they out warming up in



this sunshine? Surely they wouldn't just be napping in their den all this time!

**1330** Movement! I grab binoculars and yes... I see one little guy at the den's entrance. At least one is alive and kicking! But still no sign of mom. I wonder if this little guy can survive without mom feeding it, if indeed she has abandoned them?

**1350** Hallelujah! I can see at least two pups at the den's entrance! Can't quite tell if there's more than two, though. When I first got up here five days ago there was some haze from the Canadian wildfires. After all this moisture, the air is crystal clear! The Bitterroots stand out like they are right next door! The snowy Crags are impressive. The Camas Prairie, far to my west, is as clear as a bell. Such a pleasure to gaze out over these seemingly endless miles of country staring back at me!

**1530** Four coyote pups playing outside den. But I still can't find the mom! Hope she show up soon. I've paid so much attention to the pups that I almost forgot about my ground squirrel neighbors. So I eat an apple and throw the core down to Rocky, and he gets it and eats it on a rock.

**1600** Hearing the different fire crews and Moose Creek check in to Grangeville reminds me of years ago when I was up here. I feel again part of the Nez Perce Forest "fire team".



One of John Crawford's proudest moments in his decades-long lookout career ... being "on the lookout" in the Nez Perce National Forest's float in Grangeville's 2008 4th of July parade with Smokey and the Clearwater District Fire Crew

I was thinking of going for a hike tonight, but decided against it with this weather coming in from the southwest. Will sit by the fire and read a book instead.

**1900** Finally the coyote mom has returned! The pups are happy and playing with each other and their mom!!! Now I'm at peace, knowing they're back together.

**Day 6** First day of summer.

**0500** Headed down spring trail for water. Stopped at the bluff overlook on the way back.

**1445** Not sure what's going on with the coyotes. I've only seen one pup so far today. But I had a visitor up here who showed me a picture of a "fox" on the road way below the lookout to the west. That "fox" sure the heck looked like the mother coyote to me! Haven't seen the mom at den site today. If that was the momma coyote, that's one long ways away from the den!

**1530** Watching pups play. Still no sign of mom.

Washing windows today. Finished splitting stack of firewood.

**1620** Heard it before I saw it...an F-16 roaring past the lookout off to the south. Impressive!

There's a panoramic photo from 1968 in the fire finder cabinet that shows what the scene was like back then. It's amazing to compare it to what it looks like now. There are so many recent burn scars from major forest fires around here...The Slim's Fire, the Wash Fire, the Johnson Bar Fire, and more. Gray snags have replaced green trees all over the nearby mountains.



**Day 7**

If you haven't noticed, I feel like I'm in heaven up here! This morning, when I was taking a break from stashing all the firewood into the log cabin, the Lark of the Mountain perched in the top of a nearby gray snag and serenaded me. Those heavenly notes just kept going... and going.

**0900** Now I'm back up on the tower and being treated to all 4 pups playing outside their den...chasing each other and jumping on each other's backs. I've also noticed that they are wandering further away from their den now.

Last night I got the itch for a hike. So I laced up my books and off I went, following Patrol Ridge to the high point of Indian Hill and then going cross-country east, climbing over the downfall to get to the snowbanks that I can see from the lookout. My wanderlust kept me going, tying in with Trail #621, and following it to the rock outcrop overlook on the other side of Bluff Creek. I set my butt down on a rock outcrop, above the Otter Butte Trail that is essentially abandoned because of all the blowdown. Then I thought back to the year that I had gone over to Otter Butte and coming back in a sudden snowstorm. Wet, tired from the 4,000 foot climb, and totally spent, I had laid down in the 7" of snow and fell asleep, right below this rock outcrop! I was totally zonked out, having a dream that Judy was yelling for me. I found out it was no dream, and she was calling for me in the fog and snow...from across the canyon. She saved my life that day, as I followed that voice back to the lookout to live another day.

**1030** In 37 years up here I amazingly have never tried this...yelling out towards the bluff walls and hearing the echo! Not just one echo, but three echoes bouncing off the rock walls back to me!

**1035** Another lookout voice comes over the airwaves. My next-door neighbor on Shissler Lookout, 20 air miles away in the wilderness, is up for the season.

**1047** Tanker plane seen refueling another plane overhead.

**1300** Ryan, the AFMO at Fenn, and Trevor arrive to take me back to civilization. But he gives me a very tempting option. Leave with them, or stay another night and drive down the 4-wheeler that they'd leave for me. After a short tutorial on how to run the 4-wheeler, I'm convinced that I didn't want to take the chance of not being able to start it tomorrow, so I opted to go down with them.

I got all my stuff packed up, checked the lookout twice to see if I left anything (last year I left my headlamp up here), locked the door and headed back for Montana. I took one last look over to the coyote den and sadly didn't see the pups. But I did see my little buddy Rocky on the rock outcrop on the north side of the lookout. It was a fitting way to end my stay.



Order all items on this page from:

FFLA - Gary Weber  
2590 W Versailles Dr  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815  
[fflatreas@gmail.com](mailto:fflatreas@gmail.com)

Make Checks Payable to FFLA or  
Pay through PayPal  
(<https://www.paypal.com>)



Payable to [fflatreas@gmail.com](mailto:fflatreas@gmail.com)

## FFLA CAPS

Embroidered FFLA logo caps are now in stock, available in two styles, both adjustable to fit. The shaped, structured caps are available in charcoal gray or forest green. The soft, low-profile unstructured caps come in charcoal gray, forest green, or a "washed" hunter green. Specify color and structured (left) or unstructured (right) style.

\$23.00 each (includes shipping/handling)



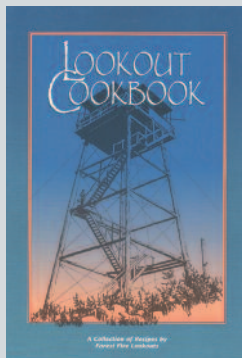
## LOOKOUT COOKBOOK

**A Collection of Recipes by  
Forest Fire Lookouts**

by Libby Langston

*Lookout Cookbook* is a blend of recipes, history, personal stories, and over 100 photographs bringing together the lookout staffers, their stations, and their creativity. *Lookout Cookbook* is a cooperative venture between the North Idaho/Montana Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, the Lolo National Forest and the Museum of North Idaho.

\$14.95 each + \$4.00 s/h for first book, \$1.00 s/h for each additional book to same address.



## FFLA MERCHANDISE

**Most prices include shipping**  
(Additional shipping for non-U.S.A. orders)

### FFLA PINS and PATCHES

Multi-colored embroidered FFLA logo patches, 2-1/2 inches per side (3-1/2" across) continue to be available.

\$6.00 each (includes shipping/handling)



FFLA logo lapel pins are back in stock! The pins measure 1 inch across (3/4" per side).

\$7.00 each (includes shipping/handling)



### FFLA CAN COOLERS

**Keep your drinks colder longer  
while displaying the FFLA logo!**

The crisp white FFLA logo outline stands out on two sides of the royal blue foam can cooler. The coolers are made of polyurethane foam with a no-slip grip.

2 for \$8.00 (includes s/h)



### FFLA LOGO DECALS

Full-color FFLA logo vinyl decals with rear adhesive. Three sizes are available, the large is 5" across (3-3/4" per side), the medium is 3-1/2" across (2-1/2" per side), and the small is 2-1/2" across (1-3/4" per side). The small decal is ideal for hardhat applications, the medium is the same size as the popular FFLA multi-colored patch.

Large (5") decals, \$2.00 each,  
Medium (3-1/2") \$1.50 each, Small (2-1/2")  
\$1.00 each (includes shipping/handling)

### NEW YORK PATCHES

With the recent centennials of several towers, the New York Centennial patch is available again! The 3" x 3" patches are on sale for \$5.00 each (includes s/h) or in person from New York State Director Laurie Rankin.

The 3-1/2" x 4" Cornell Hill Fire Tower and Camp Saratoga patch is also still available for \$10.00 each (includes s/h).



## FFLA SHIRTS!



Black/white full-front design w/4-color FFLA logo on Ash color shirts

**Wide range of sizes available!**

T-shirts (short-sleeve)

S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X, 5X

\$23.00 each (includes shipping/handling)

T-shirts (long-sleeve)

S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X

\$25.00 each (includes shipping/handling)

Sweatshirts (long-sleeve)

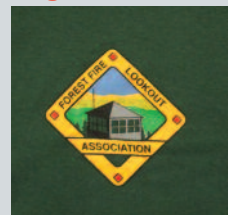
S, M, L, XL, 2X, 3X, 4X

\$33.00 each (includes shipping/handling)

### GREEN T-SHIRT

**Small Logo**

Forest Green  
short-sleeve  
FFLA Logo on  
Left Chest  
S, M, L, XL, 2X  
\$23.00 each  
(includes s/h)



### LOOKOUT NETWORK CD

The entire collection of LOOKOUT NETWORK issues is now available on CD. Each issue, beginning with Vol. 1, No. 1, has been scanned and saved as a .pdf file. An index is also included to easily search for past articles. As a bonus, a variety of local/regional editions produced prior to the advent of central printing/mailling are also included!

\$20.00 each (includes shipping/handling)

### CHALLENGE COIN

1-1/2" diameter challenge coin with FFLA logo on one side and Osborne Firefinder on the other. \$10.00 for the first, \$7.00 for each additional (includes s/h).





# Books

Unless otherwise noted, all books should be available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) or other bookstores.

## New Books!

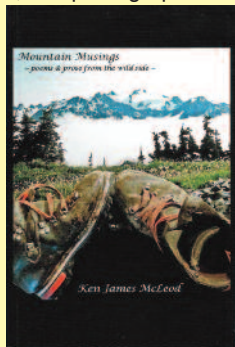
### MOUNTAIN MUSINGS

#### Poems & Prose from the Wild Side

by Ken James McLeod (FFLA Member)

Independently Published, March 22, 2023, paperback, 6 x 9", 50 pp., ISBN: 979-8376963999

The poems, prose, and photographs are a result of the author seeking out the grandiose scenery in his beloved Washington state in over 50+ years of climbing on mountains, bushwhacking through Devil's club, or fighting slide alder, dwarf cedar, and the like. For a further look into his photography and writings, see [www.alpinequest.com](http://www.alpinequest.com).



### JACKSON'S RAMBLINGS

#### Rambling The Southland and Beyond VOLUME ONE and VOLUME TWO

by Jackson E. Knight, Jr. (FFLA Member)

Vol. 1: Independently Published, November 19, 2023, paperback, 8 x 10", 50 pp., ISBN: 979-8868209499

Vol. 2: Independently Published, December 19, 2023, paperback, 8 x 10", 109 pp., ISBN: 979-8872359722



These books contain stories, history, and other information on numerous things pertaining to the Black Belt Counties of South Alabama. Included are some of Alabama's Forest Fire Lookout Towers, and several Historic Churches. Jackson is an officially retired senior citizen who loves history, photography, and flying drones. Because his grandfather worked for the State of Alabama in forestry, he holds a strong love for fire towers and has documented many of them with his drones. He is currently working on several projects to document many different aspects of his beloved Southland, one of which is to get an exhaustive list of standing historic churches, preferably built before 1900. See [jacksonsramblings.com](http://jacksonsramblings.com) for more of his blogs.

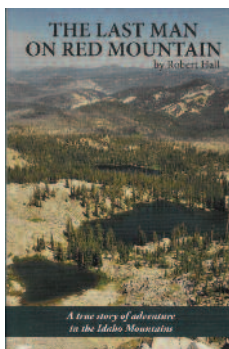
## Not so new, but "Recently Discovered"

### THE LAST MAN ON RED MOUNTAIN

by Robert Hall

Independently Published, December 10, 2019, paperback, 6 x 9", 72 pp., ISBN: 1705873499

This book is the author's account of a challenging summer in the Idaho wilderness.



That year (1958) was the last year the nearly 9,000-foot-high Red Mountain Lookout was manned. Thus, Bob became "The Last Man on Red Mountain." He tells how he dealt with primitive conditions, fought fires, and dealt with a dangerous night-time rescue.

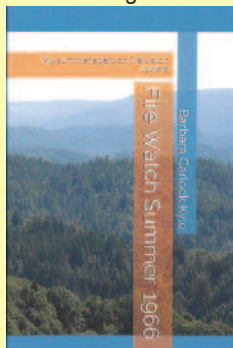
### FIRE WATCH SUMMER, 1966

#### My summer spent on Oregon Fire Towers

by Barbara A. Carlock Kyle

Independently Published, November 16, 2020, paperback, 6 x 9", 68 pp., ISBN: 979-8566004679

This story is about a high school graduate's first job, on Oregon State Forestry lookout towers (Glass Hill and Tiptop); a first summer away from home in a job that would help with college fees. She packed water, used an outhouse, split wood, cooked on a wood cookstove, washed clothes by hand, and had few visitors, while her 5-year-old sister spent most of the summer with her.



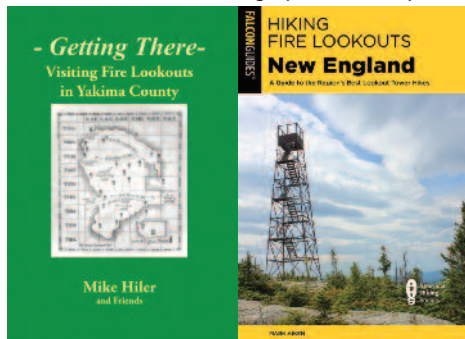
### GETTING THERE

#### Visiting Fire Lookouts in Yakima County

by Mike Hiler (FFLA Member)

Cave Moon Press, May 14, 2023, paperback, 6 x 9", 210 pp., ISBN: 1733798757

Getting There holds a one-stop treasure map to fire lookouts for off road vehicles and hiking in Yakima County, Washington. Mike spent years as a fire lookout and still hikes around the trails checking up on his old posts.



### HIKING FIRE LOOKOUTS NEW ENGLAND

#### A Guide to the Region's Best Lookout Tower Hikes (The Falcon Guides)

by Mark Aiken (FFLA Member)

Falcon Guides, May 15, 2023, paperback, 6 x 9", 240 pp., ISBN: 1493065440

Hiking Fire Lookouts New England details 40 hikes that lead to climbable lookouts in the region. These lookouts are strategically placed on high ground, elevated even higher

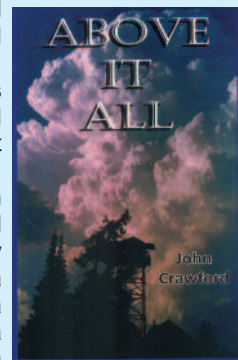
from the summit, to give the best vantage point for spotting signs of fire in the broadest possible area. Fire lookouts offer the ultimate payoff in terms of views, interest, and thrill.

### ABOVE IT ALL

by John Crawford (FFLA Member)

Stoneydale Press Publishing, July 2023, paperback, 5-1/2 x 8-1/2", 238 pp., ISBN: 9781938707636

Since 1974, John Crawford has left civilization behind and returned to his summer homes at Indian Hill and Sundance Lookouts to stand guard for fires in the millions of acres of forests in northern Idaho. Totally immersed in nature, he and his wife, Judy, in their inaugural year, lived through intense thunderstorms, lightning striking trees and starting forest fires, and wind-driven hail pelting the thin-paned lookout windows. Early morning visitors are the elk, deer, and moose that frequent the mountaintop. Over the years John has experienced all sorts of uniquely interesting things on a firetower on top of a mountain...missing a practice fire, an arsonist on the loose, lightning strikes hitting the tower, his lookout being threatened by a large forest fire, nearly running out of food, calling the gray jays to eat out of his hand, and much more! Includes nearly 100 color photos!



To order a signed copy of his book, including a special bookmark from his lookouts, mail \$25.00 (includes s/h) to John Crawford, 12494 Arena Drive, Lolo, Montana 59847.

For the "next chapter" of his story, see *Indian Hill Journal* on p.16 of this issue.

Comments about "Above It All"

"I loved your book...the adventures and humor drew me in! Felt like I was there!"

Gerry Grazi, Sundance Lookout

"You definitely captured what it's like to live on a lookout!"

Kris Anderson, Beaver Ridge Lookout

"I didn't want the book to end!"

Kjell Petersen, Cooney Lookout

"I spent all day in your exuberant writings and colorful (and crisp) photographs! What a gift you have created, and are now dispersing out into the world, where I have no doubt that it will fire the imaginations and dreams of others, as it has fired mine!"

Bruce Lumper, Adventurer

"I've been slowly reading John Crawford's book that you so kindly gave me when Caroline and I visited you (Ray Kresek) in September. Bit by bit John's passion has been emerging from the pages and I have found myself feeling more and more in common with him. It's the little things; the birds, the mystery lookout in Canada, and of course that age old self doubt that actually drives us to maintain the vigilance. That story is truly above all the others!"

Simon Hawkins, Australian Lookout

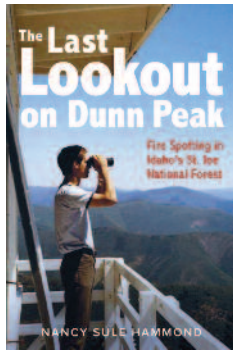


## THE LAST LOOKOUT ON DUNN PEAK

### Fire Spotting in Idaho's St. Joe National Forest

by Nancy Sule Hammond (FFLA Member)  
Washington State Univ Press, July 27, 2023,  
paperback, 6 x 9", 180 pp., ISBN: 1638640084

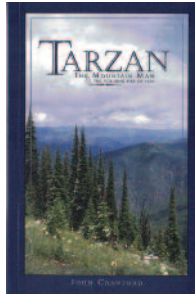
Some seasons of life seem destined to deliver cherished memories. For married high school sweethearts Don and Nancy Hammond, those were the summers of 1972 and 1973, when Don's lifelong dream of becoming a fire lookout came true, beginning at Dunn Peak Lookout on the Avery Ranger District of the St. Joe National Forest in Idaho. When Dunn Peak was closed, Don and Nancy spent the following season on Avery's Middle Sister Lookout. Nancy shares stories from those two thrilling, magical fire seasons, as well as their return to volunteer at Middle Sister in 2010, going back to narrow catwalks and stunning views in a place where any lightning strike could turn the dry forest into a raging wildfire.



## TARZAN THE MOUNTAIN MAN & the Pete King Fire of 1934

by John Crawford (FFLA Member)  
Stoneydale Press Publishing, August 19, 2020,  
paperback, 5-1/2 x 8-1/2", 127 pp., ISBN:  
9781938707551

John Crawford spent years looking at the old Otter Butte Lookout site from his summer home at Indian Hill. His curiosity led him to "Tarzan the Mountain Man", Ernie Bohn, who was living his later years along the Selway River. John's account of Tarzan's summer of 1934 experience was taken from Ernie's journals and first hand taped interviews. For information on purchasing autographed copies of the book, email [lookoutjohn51@gmail.com](mailto:lookoutjohn51@gmail.com).



## EXPLORING NORTH CAROLINA'S LOOKOUT TOWERS

### A Guide to Hikes and Vistas

by Peter Barr (FFLA Member)

photos by Kevin Adams

Blair Publisher, April 20, 2021, 10 x 8", 377 pp.,  
Hardcover - ISBN: 1949467597  
Paperback - ISBN: 1949467554

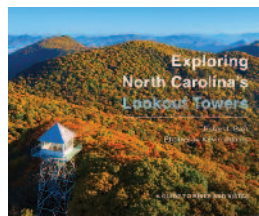
Thirteen years after the release of his first book on western North Carolina fire lookouts, WNC FFLA chapter director Peter J. Barr has released the entirely new and significantly expanded follow-up book *Exploring North Carolina's Lookout Towers*, one of the most visually stunning books about fire towers yet produced.

The book covers everything about NC mountains' fire towers in 377 full-color, giant 10" x 8" pages complete with in-depth

history and background information on the towers and the summits they stand upon, oral interviews and personal stories of lookout men and women who operated the towers, artistic maps, comprehensive descriptions of views and vistas, detailed driving and trail hiking directions, and more than 200 striking photographs, shot by professional photographer Kevin Adams showcasing many of his talents. More than 70 historical photographs for current and former fire towers are also featured.

The book also chronicles the restoration and rehabilitation successes that Barr's FFLA WNC chapter has achieved over the decade-plus since the release of his first book.

Signed copies of *Exploring North Carolina's Lookout Towers* can be ordered in both hardback and paperback at [www.nclookouts.com](http://www.nclookouts.com).

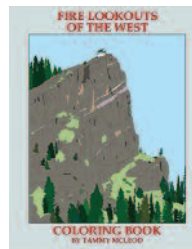


## FIRE LOOKOUTS OF THE WEST Coloring Book

by Tammy McLeod (FFLA Member)

Independently published,  
September 28, 2021,  
paperback, 8.5 x 11", 33 pp.,  
ISBN-13: 979-8471985209

*Fire Lookouts of the West Coloring Book* is a coloring book for adults featuring 15 coloring pages for relaxation and stress relief.



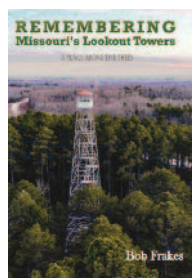
## REMEMBERING MISSOURI'S LOOKOUT TOWERS

### A Place above the Trees

by Bob Frakes (FFLA Member)

Words Matter Publishing, November 15, 2019,  
hardcover, 8-1/2 x 11", 278 pp., ISBN: 1949809528

For half a century Bob Frakes pursued his "Forest Lookout Tower" hobby, leading to this book. It has history, stories, technical information, and interviews. And there are the pictures - over 300 images. Some are archival and one of a kind and many are in color. You can take a tower trip and never leave your living room.



Available at [wordsmatterpublishing.com](http://wordsmatterpublishing.com),  
or from bookstores.

## LOST FIRE LOOKOUT HIKES AND HISTORIES

### Olympic Peninsula and Willapa Hills

by Leslie Romer (FFLA Member)

Sidekick Press, December 7, 2021, paperback,  
6 x 9", 332 pp., ISBN: 1736935100

Leslie Romer is a western Washington hiker who has been exploring the Pacific Northwest forests for fire lookout sites for close to twenty years. She first joined FFLA in 2005 to learn more about lookouts from the people

who work in them and work to keep them standing.

This book takes readers, hikers, and historians where fire lookout lists and inventories leave off. Each of the 59 chapters provides detailed history and takes you to an accessible fire lookout building or site in coastal Washington state.

Each chapter starts with as much of the lookout's history as has been found. Some are detailed and well documented; some stories have become clearer with the author's research; others remain mysteries.

The book includes maps of neighboring lookout sites, individual hike route maps, and more historical photographs of lookouts.

Available from selected local Washington book outlets, as well as major bookstores.

## CHILDREN'S BOOKS

### FINDING THE BLAZE

by Maryellen B. Wander Eyer (FFLA Member)  
(Illustrated by Anthony Richichi)

Saratoga Springs Publishing LLC,  
July 1, 2023, paperback, 5" x 8",  
87 pp. ISBN: 1955568332

*Finding the Blaze* is an adventure story in the woods that is written for elementary school age children with ideas and tips about what things to bring on a successful hike.



## FFLA Member Julie Lafferty's Books

These books humorously summarize the typical experiences that wildland firefighting resources face on the job.

### THUNDER TOWERS

by Julie Lafferty

Independently published, February 23, 2023,  
paperback, 8-1/2" x 11", 40 pp., ISBN-13: 979-8378709113

Humorous rendering of wildland firefighting experiences. Told through animal characters who recur through the series.

### RIDE ALONG WITH ENGINE 82

by Julie Lafferty

Independently published, March 4, 2023,  
paperback, 8-1/2" x 11", 30 pp.,  
ISBN-13: 979-8385736348

Follow the crew of Engine 82.

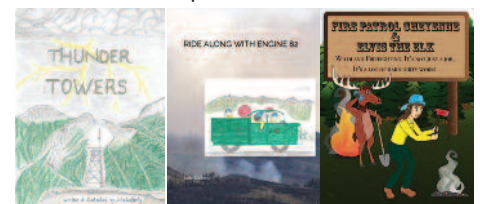
## FIRE PATROL CHEYENNE AND ELVIS THE ELK: Wildland Firefighting: it's not just a job, it's hard dirty work!

by Julie Lafferty

(Illustrated by Alejandra Soller)

Kindle Edition, February 7, 2017, 23 pp.

Cheyenne and Elvis are fire prevention technicians who patrol the forests.





**FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION**  
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**VIENNA, VA 22180-4718**



# FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

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