

FFLA AZ Director 2025 Report

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I was honored being asked to assume the directorship for Arizona and in April 2025 I have been "getting my feet wet". I have met with Dave Lorenz twice. He passed on to me his many years of accumulated notebook information. Last summer he visited me in Springer Mountain Lookout and enjoyed several hours observing my typical work day. He has definitely also passed on his enthusiasm and confidence in my willingness to take over. I'm extremely grateful to him for this and I am aware that I have big shoes to fill.

The Lookout Network continues to be an outstanding resource for us enthusiasts and I want to commend Gary Weber, it's extremely gifted editor for many years.

I want to also thank Michael Guerin for his focus on forefront issues and developments of natural resource policies and new technologies that have the potential to make an impact on the future of staffed lookouts. His most recent article in the Winter 2026-2026 issue is very pertinent. This past fire season provided myself with an introduction to the new AI technology for the detection of smoke. I would like to expand on my personal experience with this "new kid on the block".

A reporter from KNAU, Flagstaff, AZ came to my tower mid-summer to interview me on my experiences with and perspective on the AI smoke detection towers.

Additionally, I want to acknowledge and thank Barb Zinn, East Pocket Lookout on the Coconino NF. She has kept me abreast on the staffing status of the FS towers on that forest. She has been in the midst of researching the history of the Coconino NF lookout towers. This will ultimately become a Forest Service Report available to the public.

Last summer I passed FFLA brochures out to interested folks. I had 800 visitors last summer, a typical annual number at the tower. The local public loves Springer Mountain Lookout!

Our drought conditions continue here in Arizona and the need to staff lookouts continues, as well. It appears that staffing levels will remain the same as 2025.

Much thanks and hoping all have a great year ahead.

Best regards,

Jane Croxen