

The following is a summary of the work done on the Three Fingers Lookout this year.

The 2025 season of Three Fingers maintenance is finished, with a total estimated 1,816 hours of work done by Friends of Three Fingers Lookout (FOTFLO) volunteers this year so far. All work was completed in coordination with the US Forest Service rangers and historians, utilizing only old-style hand-tools in accordance with US wilderness regulations, and in cooperation with the Everett Mountaineers. We made efforts to exactly match the original design and hardware of the 1932 building wherever possible.

Over two years was spent preparing wood for this season's projects. Rankin Custom Milling in Darrington specially milled locally harvested lumber at no cost to FOTFLO. In thanks, FOTFLO made a donation to Glacier Peak Institute, a Darrington non-profit that aims to empower underserved and marginalized youth through action-based outdoor education and recreation. Our volunteers spent many days shaping, sanding, painting, and prepping the boards for this summer's projects. In addition, a beautiful new kitchen table and two elegant new stools were hand-crafted to replace the old broken ones made of scrap wood in the lookout. 1300 pounds of materials were gathered, counted, weighed, organized, and transported to the Verlot ranger station. The heavy building supplies were airlifted to the lookout as part of a training exercise, while our intrepid teammates carefully traversed the glacier very early season to receive and stow the packages.

Everett Rotary Club funded a grant to purchase WAG bags for hikers to carry out their own human solid waste. Many trips were made out to the three trailheads to refill the WAG bag dispenser boxes, clear branches from the road, remove debris from the culverts, and keep the lookout accessible to hikers and bikers. Everett Mountaineers certified sawyers and our volunteers also cleared some huge logs off the Meadow Mountain trail with old-fashioned cross-cut saws (due to wilderness regulations) and rebuilt damaged tread. Many more logs need to be cut next season!

Late in the summer our highly skilled volunteer work crews went up and lifted the lookout, removed two rotting floor joists, installed new ones, and squared the building. Aging and damaged siding was removed, replaced with new, caulked, and painted on all four lower sides and the upper gable ends. All the doors, shutters, window frames, windows, and sills were inspected for rot and weather damage and many areas were cleaned out, repaired, strengthened, sealed, and painted. The shutter that blew off last winter was found, hauled back up, and temporarily reinstalled. However, the header board that the south shutters attach to is severely damaged and will need to be replaced next year. In the meantime, the south shutters have been bolted shut and made inoperable until those critical repairs can be made in the future.

All the construction debris was neatly packaged and removed from the summit block for safety. The disposal of the construction debris will be another project for next year. An inventory of tools & supplies was made, and the lookout got a thorough cleaning inside and out. Also, the damaged Meadow Mountain trailhead sign was rebuilt.

Enjoy the before and after photos!

How can you help? Always bring a tent with you on this hike. Be gentle on the nearly 100-year-old building and keep the lookout in good repair. Honor the maximum occupancy of 8 persons and limit your stay to allow others a chance to spend the night during busy times. Do not enter the attic - that is for volunteer crews only! Do not hang a hammock inside the lookout as this damages the header boards. Close and securely latch all the shutters when you're leaving and overnight. Leave the south side shutters bolted closed at all times until the header board can be replaced hopefully next summer. Use a WAG bag and PACK OUT your own poo. Also pack out all your trash and any other you see! There's a pile of construction debris at the bottom of the first ladder that we plan to transport out next summer. In the meantime, grab a bucket or bag and throw it in your pack in the way out! Make a donation to Friends of Three Fingers Lookout as all of this is primarily funded by generous gifts from individuals. Tax-deductible donations can be sent by check to the Forest Fire Lookout Association at 2590 W Versailles Dr, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815-8127, with a note "for Friends of Three Fingers Lookout" in the memo line.

Join us for planning meetings, road maintenance, and trail work this winter as we prepare for our volunteer crews next summer. :) Many hands make light work!

Friends of Three Fingers Lookout



Front before (photo credit Nate Scholz)



Front after (photo credit Chance Gromm)



Back before (photo credit Nate Scholz)



Back after (photo credit Chance Gromm)