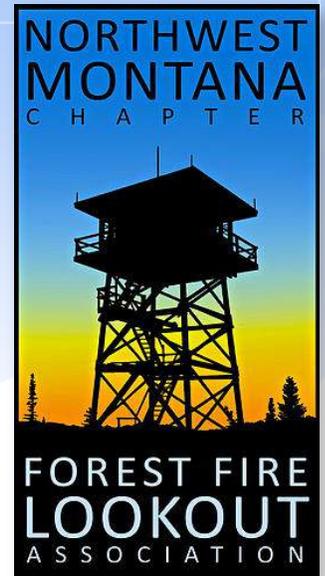


SPRING 2016

NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION



OUR GOALS

HELP facilitate the restoration and maintenance of fire lookouts and historical support structures.

ASSIST in recruiting and training volunteers.

BUILD partnerships with other organizations supporting public lands.

SUPPORT land stewardship by practicing "Leave No Trace" ethics.

COLLECT and share interpretive material on the history of lookouts, support structures and surrounding areas.

PROVIDE funding sources to help meet restoration, maintenance, recruiting and training goals.

GENERATE interest in and support for the FFLA and NWMT/FFLA.

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

It has been a busy winter for the Board of the NWMT-FFLA. We have lined up a busy schedule of volunteer work projects and lookout assessments, starting in May and running through the summer. We also completed a 5-year Strategic Plan, and have been working hard to implement the steps identified to focus our efforts for the future. I hope you will take the time to browse through the latest lookout news, and find a project that fits your time and interests and join us this summer. You won't regret it!

Chuck Manning
Board Chair

Save the Date!

Give Local
Flathead

May 3, 2016

24-hour online crowd-
funding event

givelocalflathead.org



Pints for
Preservation

May 17, 2016

Kalispell Brewing
Company

Downtown Kalispell,
MT



2016 VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Apgar



Firefighter

Details about 2016 projects, and sign-up forms are currently available on the web at NWMT-FFLA.org

H = Hike to project **D = Drive to project**

PROJECTS

JUNE

Apgar Lookout – Glacier NP - 2 days **H**

Little Napa Lookout – Swan State Forest – 5 days **D**

JULY

MeadowPeak Lookout – Kootenai NF - 5 days **D**

Firefighter Lookout - Flathead NF - 4 days **D**

Mud Lake Lookout, BMWC, Flathead NF – 10 days **H**

AUGUST

NW Peak Lookout – Kootenai NF – work day as part of assessment - 1 day **H**

Moran Patrol Cabin - Flathead NF - 1 day **H**

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are detailed inventories of the condition of the lookout, inside and out, to determine future work needs. Except for the more remote lookouts, these are generally one-day trips. These trips are a great way to visit a lookout and learn more about lookout restoration and the Lookout Association, with a small time commitment.

April 25 Wam LO – Kootenai NF – 1 day **H**

April 26 McGuire LO – Kootenai NF – 1 day **H**

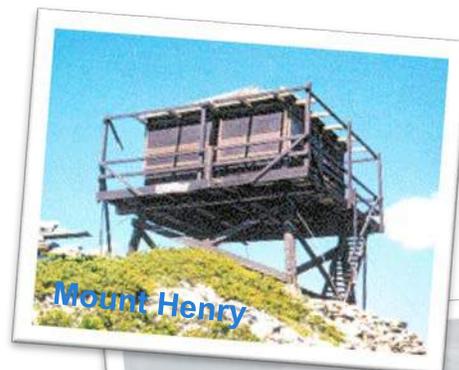
May 9 Apgar LO – Glacier NP – 1 day **H**

May 18 Meadow Peak LO – Kootenai NF – 1 day **D**

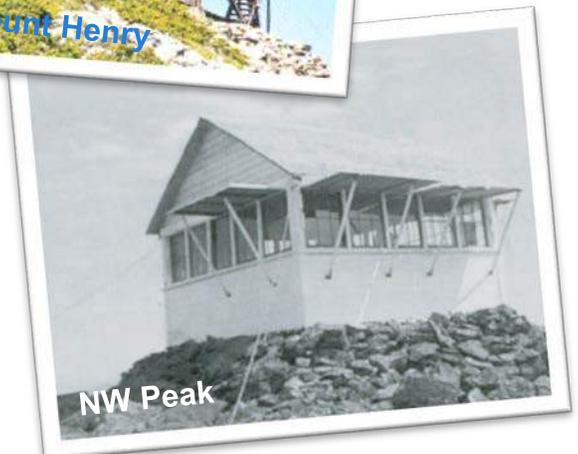
June 23 – 28 Porcupine LO – Glacier NP – 6 days **H**

Aug 19 Mount Henry – Kootenai NP – 1 day **H**

Aug 20 NW Peak in Conjunction with MWA



Mount Henry



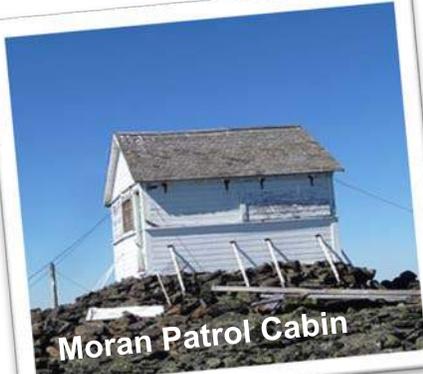
NW Peak

PROJECT DETAILS

	Target Dates*	Approx Hiking Dist	Volunteers Needed	Work Description
Apgar LO	June 10 – 13 (1-2 days)	3.3 miles one way	4	Scrape and paint lookout exterior.
Little Napa LO	June 16 – July 23 (4 days)	Drive	4	Rebuild Stairs from ground to catwalk. Rebuild catwalk.
Meadow Peak LO	July 11 – 15 (5 days)	Drive	3-4	Remove shutters, repair/replace structural material on towers and cab.
Firefighter LO	July 14 – 19 (4 days)	Drive	4-6	Scrape & paint cab exterior, catwalk and railing. Oil tower structure.
Mud Lake LO	July 24 - Aug 6 (10 days)	23 miles one way	3	Rebuild footings, level building, rebuild west wall.
NW Peak LO	Aug 20 (1 day)	2.5 miles	Up to 10	Site clean-up with Assessment. Sign up through MWA Wilderness Walks . (Available soon)
Moran Patrol Cabin	Aug 27 (1 day)	4 miles one way	2-4	Scrape & paint the cabin exterior.

* Target dates for some projects represent windows of opportunity. Dates will be firmed up in conjunction with Agency partners, and depending on packer schedules where pack support is needed.

Additional info about 2016 projects, and sign-up forms are currently available on the web at NWMT-FFLA.org





Montana History Foundation Grant for Mud Lake LO

MHF
THE MONTANA HISTORY
FOUNDATION

The Montana History Foundation (MHF) has awarded NWMT-FFLA a \$3400 grant to support a major restoration project at Mud Lake Lookout this summer.

The lookout, no longer used for fire detection, has been subject to harsh weather at high elevation for 85 years. An initial project at the lookout last summer stabilized issues related to the lookout foundation settling at the corners, and one wall buckling. It is in need of repairs to assure that it retains its integrity for the coming decades.

Due to the lookout's remoteness, this project presents logistical challenges: the volunteer crew will have a 2 ½ day hike (23 miles) each way to the work site, and all materials and equipment will need to be packed in by an outfitter. The MHF grant will support the 10 day

project to include: jacking up and rebuilding the rock pads supporting the sills, re-leveling the lookout, reinforcing walls and window headers, and rebuilding the west wall, all to make the structure square/plumb. All windows will have to be removed, and we will begin re-glazing the many panes as well. The work will be accomplished by hand, according to wilderness ethics and historical standards in partnership with District Personnel. Many thanks to MHF for supporting this important project! When completed, the lookout will again be suitable for use for fire detection if needed, and can be incorporated into the existing *Backcountry Historical District*, listed on the National Register for Historic Places.



Mountaintop Messages

Excerpted with thanks from a blog by Mark Hufstetler, NWMT-FFLA member & volunteer
While stationed on Baptiste Lookout for a 2-week hitch

August 26, 2015

Continuing our tour of Baptiste Fire Lookout, here's a post showing a few of the messages that are posted here for the handful of travelers who come by.

This is the sign posted at the base of the steep stairway leading up to the lookout cab. Charlie is unconcerned about the safety warning.



Looking down from the lookout steps, you can see the word "Baptiste" spelled out in white-painted rocks on the mountainside. (This is visible on Google Earth, too.) All of the lookouts once had IDs like this, placed there decades ago as navigation aids for aircraft. They must have been a big help back when there were hundreds of these lookouts, and aircraft navigation was more primitive.

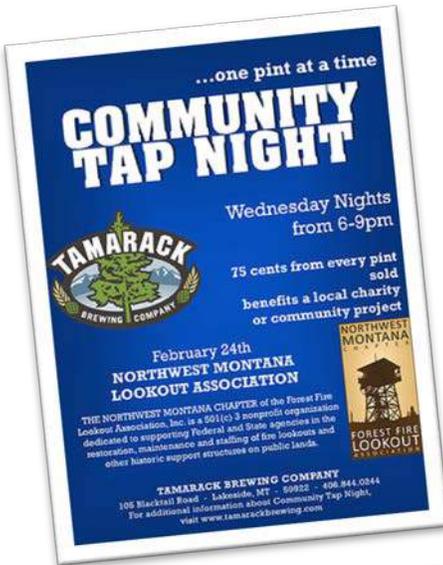


There are some more painted rocks a little to the south; these mark the location of the lookout's helispot:

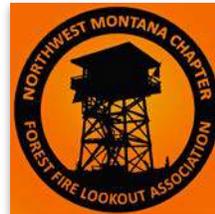
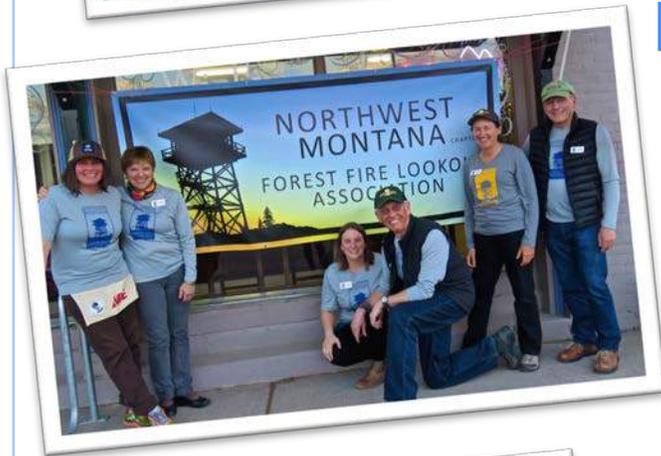


Finally, let's take a walk down to the lookout's outhouse. All outhouse buildings come with graffiti, and mine is no exception ... but this might be the classiest graffiti I've ever seen. It's an excerpt from a poem by the famous Beat poet Philip Whalen:



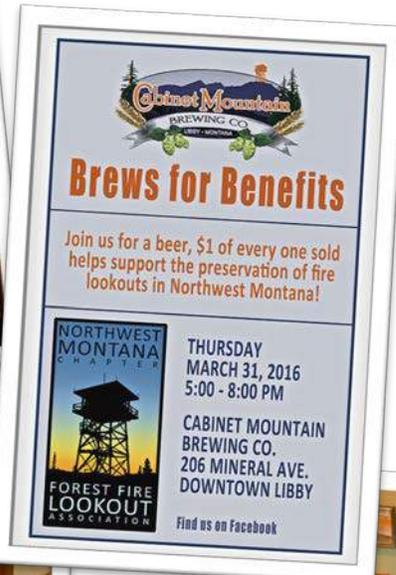


Fundraising Fun 2016



Benefit Brew nights were hosted at the [Tamarack Brewing Company](#) in Lakeside in February, and the [Cabinet Mountain Brewing Company](#) in Libby in March.

We were glad to meet lookout friends new, and old, drink a beer for a good cause and talk about lookout trips past and future.



Thanks to all those who supported these events as Sponsors, Donors, Volunteers, by joining or renewing NWMT-FFLA Memberships, buying raffle tickets, and of course consuming a few glasses of beer to support the cause!





NWMT-FFLA Board Completes Strategic Plan

- Sustainable Funding
- Membership, Outreach & Volunteer Development
- Board Recruitment
- Accessible Archives
- *FUN*draising Events
- Solidified Service Area

The NWMT-FFLA has been rapidly growing and furiously working on projects since its founding in 2013. The Board has been gradually strengthening our organizational foundations, and has felt the need to take a step back and have a clear sense of our future goals and objectives.

As part of an Every Day Capacity Building grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation received in 2015, Ned Cooney facilitated development of a 5-year Strategic Plan for NWMT-FFLA this winter.

This multi-day process led us through some Board essentials to promote more effective decision-making, communication, and committee structures. We then went through a group process of exploring: Why do we serve? Who else cares about lookouts (potential members/supporters)? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats? Our Vision for 2020?

All of this work led to identification of specific actions we want to take in a number of focus areas over the next 12 months, as well as many longer-term ideas to explore in the future.

The Focus areas identified for 2016 are:

- Board Organization & Structure
- Program Planning/Project Parameters

Within each area, specific actions were identified to further our vision, a lead Board member and due date identified to assure that the activity is completed. Many actions have already been checked off our list during the first quarter. The Board will be reviewing our progress as a group quarterly, and updating the Strategic Plan on an annual basis.

We came out of the exercise with Ned with a long to-do list, but a renewed energy and sense of focused purpose for our mutual love of lookouts. And a reminder what a fun and diverse group of people our Board is! It was an intense and rewarding few days that will help guide the Lookout Association efforts into the future.





Volunteers Needed!



Lookouts intrigue us; not only for the buildings themselves, but also for the stories they have to tell. Their histories describe a time and way of life mostly gone. The NWMT-FFLA recognizes the importance of preserving the rich heritage of our lookouts.

We have numerous opportunities for you as a volunteer to help us protect our legacy. The list is as long as your imagination and interest. Here are some important ways we have already identified:

- We are searching for people who staffed lookouts within Northwest Montana. We need volunteers to help locate these individuals. We are already gathering a list of past and present lookouts, but there are many out there that we don't know or don't have current locations for, and we have not begun to interview anyone. Are you interested?
- We also need people to interview past lookouts, if they are willing. A list of questions to ask the lookouts is ready. You can use it to help them remember and become comfortable talking, but you might also find other questions to ask during an interview.
- We can also use assistance taking photos; scanning photos, letters, documents, etc.
- To best conduct interviews, we need archival-quality digital equipment, and it is expensive. Perhaps you might consider donating equipment or funds to help us purchase what we need?

We're searching for:

- a computer with adequate RAM and disk space for very large files;
- an 11x17 Mac compatible flatbed and slide scanner (2400-4800);
- a 35mm digital single lens reflex camera;
- a digital audio recorder (a must!) that has sufficient memory,
- an external stereo omnidirectional (vs. built in) microphone, with ability to record the interviews as WAV files;
- a digital video recorder; a mini DV camcorder (not an ultra-compact camcorder);
- editing tools for digital recorders, such as WavePad (Mac) and Audacity (Windows);
- a digital video recorder (DVR); and storage for the collection's master files, including CD-RW drives, DVD-ROM drives, network servers, or hard drives.

We also need accessories such as extension cords, an adaptor (vs. batteries) for a recorder, an earbud to use while recording, a tripod, etc. Purchasing all of this equipment at once might cost \$2500 or more.

Volunteers Continued .

- We are looking for a long-term solution for storing our files. We have a meeting scheduled in June with agency personnel and the director of the Montana Memory Project to see if it is appropriate for us. Meanwhile, we have tons of information and photos waiting to be scanned. Does this interest you?
- Some of our lookouts are on the National Register of Historical Places, but others have not received that status yet. We need people interested in writing nomination documents that provide the first step in accepting a lookout on the Register.

We will listen to other ideas you may have to help us. We're excited to get started on our historical and cultural projects. We hope you may consider volunteering for any of these projects. If you are interested, have questions, or just wish to pass on information to help us locate lookouts, please contact Beth Hodder: 406-249-2341, or bhodder1018@montanasky.us

We hope you take time to visit a lookout this summer. Enjoy those still standing and remember those that may have only a foundation or debris left atop some beautiful location. These lookouts once helped with important firefighting efforts in early northwest Montana.



Not Yet a Member?

You can join or Volunteer at our Website:

www.nwmt-flla.org We now have both family and individual memberships from 1-3 years. You can also make a donation, sign up as a volunteer for a field project, or let us know other ways you might like to support lookout restoration.

Thanks for your support!

Photos from the Les Darling Collection

What's New in Our Store?



[Check out the latest merchandise online](#)



Find us on Facebook

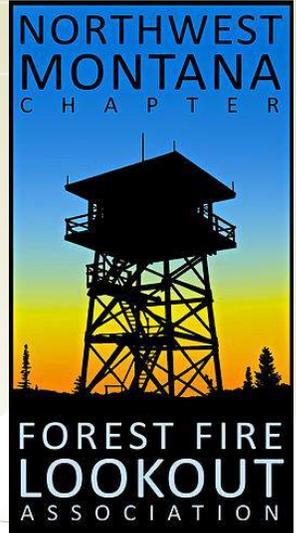
NWMT-FFLA

P.O. Box 2704
Kalispell, MT 59903

FALL 2016

NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

*Dedicated to the preservation of forest fire lookouts
in Northwest Montana*



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

2016 has been by far the most fantastic year yet for the Northwest Montana Chapter of the Lookout Association. With the many hands, heads, and hearts of our volunteers, members, donors and collaborating partners, 7 projects and 22 assessments this summer. Volunteers traveled over 9400 miles for these tasks and donated over 1200 hours of their time. Volunteer contributions plus fixed costs totaled well over \$41,000, not including related agency support costs. We truly appreciate your support of NWMT-FFLA! Please sit back, read about the great work we have been doing, and make plans to join us in the coming year!

Chuck Manning
Board Chair

WILDERNESS SPEAKER SERIES at FVCC 7-8:30 p.m.

Presented by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Montana Wilderness Association, Flathead-Kootenai Chapter, Northwest Montana Lookout Association, & Natural Resources Conservation Management Program at FVCC

ALL WELCOME - FREE OF CHARGE – ART & TECHNOLOGY BUILDING

Mountain Goats of NW Montana

Jessy Coltrane
Kalispell Area Wildlife
Biologist

Wed Jan 25, 2017

100 Days of Solitude

Amy Pearson
Adjunct Professor, Humanities
Division
FVCC

Wed Feb 22, 2017

“ THE NAMES OF THE STARS, A Life in the Wilds” a book reading and discussion

Pete Fromm
Wilderness Author

Wed March 22, 2017

2017 BREWERY FUNDRAISERS

Tamarack Brewing
Lakeside – February 15

Cabinet Mtn. Brewing
Libby - March 2nd

Kalispell Brewing
March 14th

H. A. Brewing
Eureka – April 12

Flathead Lake Brewing
Bigfork – TBA

Backslope Brewing
Columbia Falls – TBA

Bonsai Brewing
Whitefish - TBA

PROJECT UPDATES

Little Napa LO

A major project for NWMT-FFLA this summer was replacing the stairs on the Little Napa lookout on the Swan State Forest. This was a complex carpentry effort – no right angles to be found! It took many weeks of work to tear out the old stairs, work on scaffolding to place beams to support new stair treads, hang the new stringers, place 2 tiers of new stairs, and build new railings. The results are spectacular! Thanks to the many participants: retired architect Daniel Revell who developed the plans, crew leader Chuck Manning, trusty volunteers Doug Berglund, Steve Penner, Eric Berglund and Rick Davis, and the staff at DNRC's Swan Unit for their support. The new stairs are at a much better pitch and so much safer!



History of Little Napa Lookout

The Forest Service built the first lookout in this area in 1932 on Napa Point. It was a 30-foot wooden live-in tower. The Napa Ridge Fire destroyed it in 1937, and the lookout had to run for his life!

In 1968, the State of Montana purchased a military surplus bus and modified it to include sleeping and cooking facilities, as well as a cupola that could be cranked up for use as a fire tower, and cranked down to travel. The bus was used from 1969-1973 at the Napa Point lookout site. It was tough to get the bus around the road switchbacks, and was especially perilous going downhill in the fall when returning to the station.

In 1972-3 Montana DNRC developed "seen-area maps" and determined that more State protection lands were visible from the Little Napa location than from Napa Point. The current Little Napa lookout was pre-fabricated at Goat Creek. A road was constructed to the new lookout site and the lookout was assembled by Swan River Youth Camp Personnel.

Firefighter LO

Volunteers Larry Shadow, Zan Deery, Traute Parrie, Inez Love and Team Leader Rick Davis gave some much needed TLC to Firefighter Lookout this summer, as any visitor will attest. This lookout is located on Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest

Over 3 days they sanded and scraped, and scraped and sanded some more to get the cabin exterior, catwalk, stairs and railings down to paintable wood. They painted two coats on the exterior of the cabin, catwalk and railings, and painted four flights of stair and oiled the tower structure. They also restored the brass threshold panel to shiny niceness, along with a few other touch ups. Firefighter is enjoying her new sleek coat, all ready for winter! Thanks guys!



Zan Deery & Traute Parrie Photos

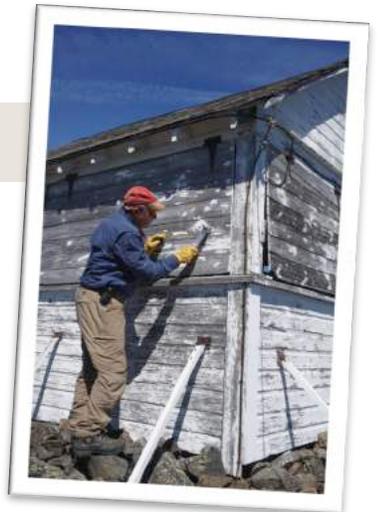
Northwest Peak LO

Northwest Peak Lookout is located in the Northwest Peak Scenic Area on the Kootenai National Forest. The NWMT-FFLA led a group of volunteers to NW Peak to conduct a field condition assessment and do a little project work on this historic lookout.

This trip was co-sponsored with the Montana Wilderness Association as part of their Wilderness Walks Program. Built in 1929, this L-4 lookout prototype has withstood some of the most extreme weather conditions possible.

MWA members Peter and Diane McNair, Bob Saint-Louis and NWMT-FFLA members Nancy and Chuck Manning along with Forest Service employees John Fable and Dave Thorstenson

from the Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai NF, spent several hours working on this historic lookout while all the time being seduced by the unparalleled beauty of its surroundings.



Chuck Manning Photos



Mud Lake LO



This was the second year NWMT-FFLA partnered with Spotted Bear Ranger District to work on the historic Mud Lake Lookout. A crew of three volunteers made the 23-mile hike into the Bob Marshall Wilderness to address some major structural issues this year at Mud Lake. Andy Nelson, Spotted Bear Ranger District's Back Country Facility Manager, joined them at the lookout.

This year's project included leveling and squaring the lookout which had settled unevenly over the years, adding corner cross bracing, building a beautiful new loose stack rock foundation, removing and repairing windows, and moving the radio repeater and

solar panel away from the structure.

Packers Jay Evans and Brady Breese of Salmon Fork Outfitters made several trips to the lookout to deliver and retrieve materials and supplies. The NWMT-FFLA crew consisted of Mark Beckwith, Kyle Staat and Team Leader Chuck Manning. Thanks – You guys “rock”!!

The bulk of the funding for this restoration project was generously provided by The Montana History Foundation.



Mark Beckwith & Chuck Manning Photos

Apgar LO

Apgar Lookout in Glacier National Park is looking spiffy again thanks to this summer's volunteer efforts. The project involved scraping and painting all the white windows, door and frames. And then... Scraping and painting all the brown surfaces: siding, shutters, deck, stairs, and posts. Basically everything you see on the outside of the lookout!

In addition, they replaced one broken window and re-glazed others as needed, and replaced two door shutter boards.

A special thanks to Team Leader, Scott Murphy and volunteers Greg Evans and Sue Paulson for making this project a success.



Scott Murphy & Chuck Manning Photos



LIMITED EDITION MUGS

As a thank you gift for this year's volunteers we created special mugs featuring original artwork of the lookouts we restored this summer. If you are interested in getting any of these limited edition mugs at \$20 each, (includes \$5 shipping and handling) you can place orders on our website **now through December 1 only**. At that time, the website will be taken down, and a consolidated order will be placed. The mugs will be shipped directly to you and should be received in 10 days or less.

Available are: Apgar, Firefighter, Little Napa, Meadow Peak, Moran, Mud Lake, & Northwest Peak

A PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT!

Order at <http://www.nwmt-flla.org/store>



Many thanks to Tom L. Roberts for the beautiful watercolors!

Meadow Peak LO

This year we began Phase one of a 3-year project on the Meadow Peak Lookout on the Kootenai NF. Based out of the historic Raven Ranger Station, this summer's crew traveled each day to work on the lookout. Work consisted of replacing structural bracing and supports on the tower, removing the shutters to be repaired at the Regional Historic Preservation Shop in Missoula, cleaning out and disinfecting the attic to remove pack rat litter, and removing/ replacing the shutter header and soffit. At the end of the work session, the lookout was buttoned up in preparation for winter and to keep the little furry unwanted guests from taking up residence once again.

A huge thank you goes out to Justin Moschelle, Dustin Hill, Cindy Henry and John Fable of the Kootenai National Forest and volunteers Brenda McClure, Terry Richmond, Larry Shadow, Carl Sobczak and Crew Leader Chuck Manning for their dedication and help in restoring this historic structure. Thanks also to Josie Parsons and the crew from the Montana Academy who worked with us to clean up around the lookout site and pick rocks from the access road.



Justin Moschelle Photos

Moran Patrol Cabin

Moran Patrol cabin sits high on a ridge on the Whitefish Range on the Glacier View District of the Flathead National Forest. It was stabilized a few years ago by the Forest Service under the guidance of Leif Haugen. This year, NWMT-FFLA was asked to apply a coat of paint to the cabin.

Co-team leaders, Nancy and Chuck Manning coordinated this project. Special thanks to lookout volunteers and friends Inez Love, Donald Stolte, Barrett Garcia, Vonda Harmon Garcia, Sidney Garcia, Steve Penner, and Caleb Stolte for their combined efforts to help keep the cabin in good shape.



Chuck Manning Photos

INSPIRATION AT JUMBO LOOKOUT
POETRY & PHOTOGRAPHY by AMY PEARSON



winds, haiku, 7/8

winds all through the night
winds all through the day
and night
winds by day and night

something was crying, 8/2

i awoke last night
but it was morning,
maybe 3 o'clock a.m.

the moon finally
was overhead
which i know
because it was full
and i live in a glass house
on the top of a mountain

the winds finally
had calmed
and a mist had settled eerie
over the mountains
late summer, early fall
hot, but not hot, get the
picture?

i heard something crying
in the night,
but it was morning

yes, something was crying
in the morning
down the peak
from where i live

it sounded human,
like a baby
so i listened

i heard some hooting
like an owl
calling out repose

a flash of wings
a dash of woe

to misty minds
the baby's fine





a new love affair, 8/29
for Michael Reavis

it's a new love affair
with a new lay of land

not the kind people exploit
but the kind that they, explore

it came to me, 8/1

it came to me
one morning
after thirty days alone

a reflection

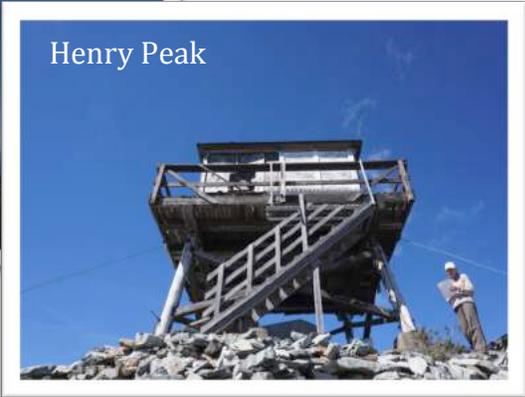
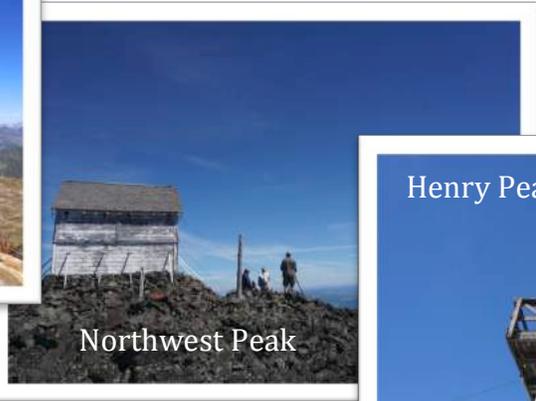
brown and orange
amongst the shadows
painted grey

and i felt
soft like cloud
bare like rock
large like mountain
solid like tree
steady like river

after thirty days alone
it came to me,
beauty



Amy Pearson is a poet, teacher, photographer, and wilderness advocate. She currently works as an Adjunct Professor of Humanities at Flathead Valley Community College.

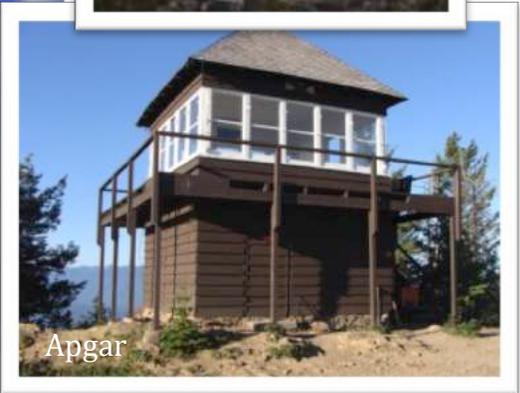
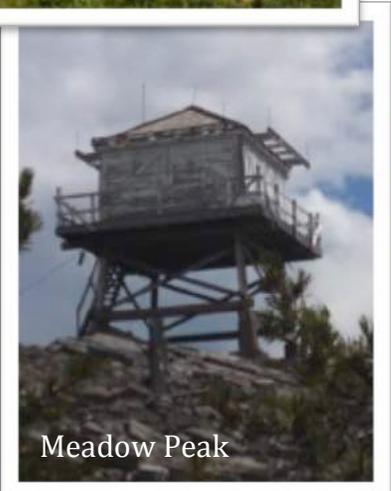


Lookout Assessment Blitz!

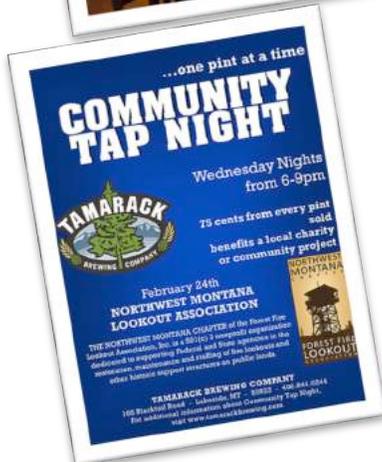
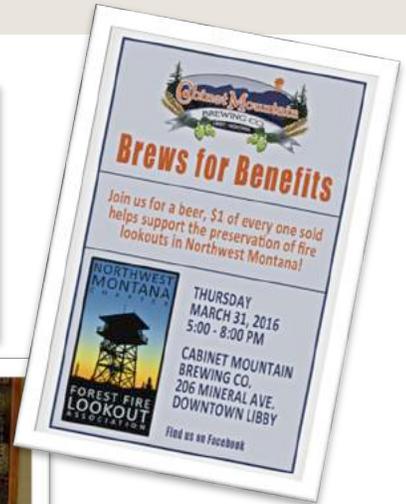
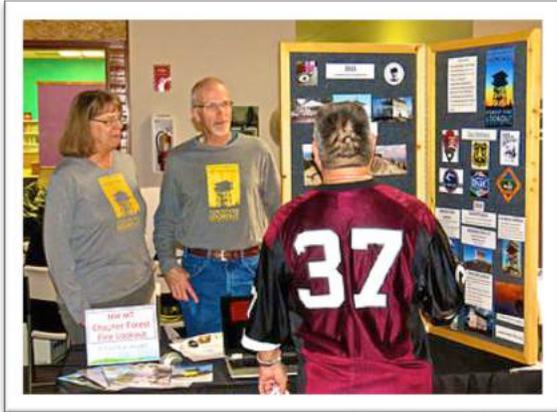
This year NWMT-FFLA made a huge effort to conduct Condition Assessments so that we can work with our Partner Agencies to build solid outyear plans and prioritize future year work for grant seeking. Starting in June and finishing in September, we completed 8 condition assessments: Little Napa LO, McGuire LO, Meadow Peak LO, Apgar LO, Northwest Peak LO, Mount Henry LO, and Wam Mountain.



NWMT-FFLA Board members Chuck Manning and Rick Davis conducted a workshop in Libby to teach our assessment method, and over the course of the summer, volunteers have completed an additional 14 assessments on Kootenai lookouts. This data will be invaluable in setting priorities for future restoration efforts. Thanks to all for this great work!



Fundraising Success



In 2016 NWMT-FFLA participated in a number of fun brewery events to raise awareness, funds, and a few pints in the cause of lookout restoration. In May, we again participated in Give Local Flathead, a 24 hour on-line giving event as part of Give Local America! We continue to sell a variety of great merchandise on our website at NWMT-FFLA.com with proceeds going towards our restoration projects.

Montana History Foundation Grant



In April 2016, NWMT-FFLA was fortunate to receive a grant from the Montana History Foundation to support this summer's restoration project at the Mud Lake Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This grant, for \$3400, is NWMT-FFLA's second major grant.

The Montana History Foundation funds projects across Montana that preserve and honor the history of the Treasure State. In 2016 the MHF granted over \$111,000 to 35 community-based history projects across the state. We received funding in one of 5 funding categories: Buildings and Structures.

The current Mud Lake Lookout was constructed in 1932 using an early L-4 design, and is the only remaining "original" lookout left in the Bob. This partnership effort will support the Flathead National Forest's use of the lookout again for fire protection, and inclusion in the Flathead National Forest Backcountry Administrative Facilities National Historic District, designated in 2015. Once completed, this project will assure Mud Lake lookout's weather worthiness for the coming decades, allowing it to endure for the recreational enjoyment, and education of present and



<http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>

Email us at: <mailto:nwmtc.ffa@gmail.com>



SHARE YOUR LOOKOUT STORIES

As part of preserving the history of lookouts in Western Montana, we are gathering stories and photos of lookouts in our local area. Did your grandparents honeymoon on a lookout? Did you serve as a lookout that is no longer there? Do you have friends with stories to tell? Or do you? We would love to hear from you!

Or if you are interested in volunteering to help us with this project, there are many ways you might assist: conducting interviews with our questions, scanning photos/documents, typing up interviews, helping to organize a database to track our collection, writing news articles, locating additional people for oral histories... Work is ongoing, so we are ready to put you to work right away.

Please contact Beth Hodder, our Archivist/Historian at <mailto:bhodder1018@montanasky.us>

“AND IT ALL STARTED ON MT. BROWN”



A summer-long honeymoon in a 16 x 16 two-story cabin at 7487 feet was not on Dale Zorn’s radar when he asked Marlene Dolliver to marry him. But Marlene’s folks owned a cabin on Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park, and she suggested they apply for a lookout job with the Park.

The couple married on June 17, 1956 in Conrad, Montana. On June 18, they started fire school in preparation for their summer job as fire lookouts on Mt. Brown.

They had no expectations. For them, it was a chance to get away from the world, Dale said, “And it worked. Spending that summer together with no one else around,

we really got to know one another.”

Even though Mt. Brown is near Lake McDonald, it is a difficult and steep hike. They had only 32 visitors that summer, including 7 family members, so they looked forward to the packer who would periodically come by trail with 3 to 4 mules carrying groceries and water.

When the Zorns woke up the first morning, two mountain goats greeted them from the catwalk, staring through a window. Goats frequented the lookout until the snow left, providing company.

A snow bank on shale augmented the 40 gallons of water brought by the packer. Melted on the stove, snow was used to boil water, cook potatoes, wash dishes, and scrub the floor before it got thrown out.

Marlene baked in the wood stove, but the stove was half charred. They would end up with only a half loaf of good bread. Meals included a lot of Spam, with 2-3 days of fresh salads, fruits, and meats when they were resupplied.

Both worked as lookouts, with Marlene paid for 2 days a week and Dale for 5. They never spotted a fire, although one lightning strike torched a tree near the lookout. When Dale called it in to headquarters, he was told, “Well, take care of it.” He said, “Well, okay, I will.” He had to chop the tree down.

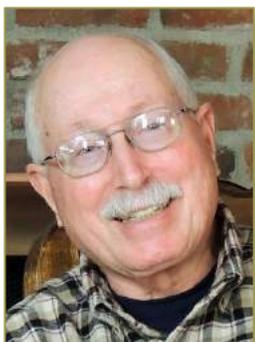
The first morning on the lookout, Dale called in a smoke. He laughed. It turned out to be the Coram sawmill.

The couple left Mt. Brown at the end of the summer with about \$1,100. Marlene had a teaching job, and Dale finished his senior year at Northern Montana College in Havre. Both spent their entire careers as educators.

Marlene died in 2009. They had been married 53 years. Now their kids and grandkids identify with what Grandma and Grandpa did when they got married. Dale said, “It was not only good for us but good for the family...we couldn’t have spent it better any other way.”



Mel Ruder photos, courtesy of Glacier National Park



In Memory of Bill Morgan

Bill Morgan was a Forester with the U.S. Forest Service for 30 years, and spent almost 20 years at Hungry Horse Ranger District. Bill retired in 1994. He and his wife Devvi loved to hike and they visited and photographed many of the lookouts in NW Montana. Bill passed away in February of this year. Lynne C. Brett, made a generous donation to NWMT-FFLA in Bill’s honor, and Devvi has asked that it be put towards needs at Firefighter LO. Many thanks to both Lynne and Devvi for their generosity.

FALL 2016

Happy Holidays!

Hope you have a warm stove and a good book to keep you company through the winter. Or better yet, go visit a lookout in its winter glory! Wishing you all the best!



The Lookout Association Board

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