

NORTHWEST
MONTANA
CHAPTER



FOREST FIRE
LOOKOUT
ASSOCIATION

S P R I N G 2 0 1 7

NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

New Board Member Jonathan Fetter-Vorm



We are extremely pleased to welcome Johnathan Fetter-Vorm as a new member to our Board of Directors this winter.

Jonathan Fetter-Vorm is a writer and artist who moved back to the Flathead Valley with his wife after living in New York City for ten years. He is the author two books -- *Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb* and *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War*. As a member of the board of the Lookout Association, Jonathan is excited to help find new ways to preserve and celebrate the historical legacies of Northwest Montana's lookouts.



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

Like most Montanans, I love winter, but look forward to the coming of spring and the chance to get back up into the mountains more regularly. Winter has been a busy time for the NWMT-FFLA Board, organizing activities for the spring and coming summer season. We have another dozen worthy projects for you to get involved in this summer, from one day assessments or painting projects to a 10-day wilderness trip. Take it from me, it's a great feeling to contribute to preserving a lookout for your grandkids! I hope you can join us!

Chuck Manning
Board Chair

**And a warm welcome
back to Kjell Petersen –
Kjell has rejoined our
Lookout Board after a
brief absence!**





Wilderness Speaker Series A Great Success

This year NWMT-FFLA was a co-sponsor of the popular winter speaker series along with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and Montana Wilderness Association. The three evening talks were all standing-room-only, and helped remind us of the pleasures and mystery of being in the wild country, and perhaps enticed a few of us to plan new wilderness adventures! We were also pleased to welcome some new members through a special 3-way membership at the final event. Programs included:

- Jessy Coltrane - Kalispell Area Wildlife Biologist - ***Mountain Goats of NW Montana***
- Amy Pearson – Adjunct Professor, Humanities, FVCC – ***100 Days of Solitude***
- Pete Fromm – Wilderness Author – ***“The NAMES OF THE STARS, A Life in the Wilds”***, a ***book reading and discussion***

If you missed these engaging talks, you can find links to their recordings on our website at <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/2017events>

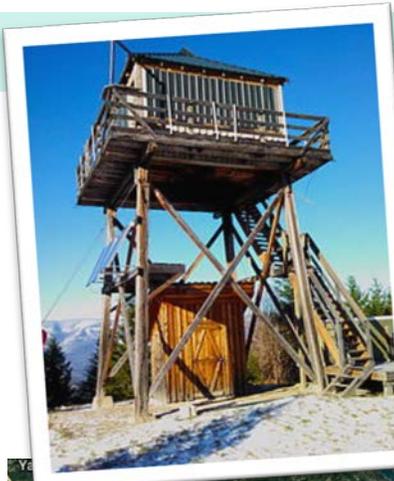


100 Days of Solitude

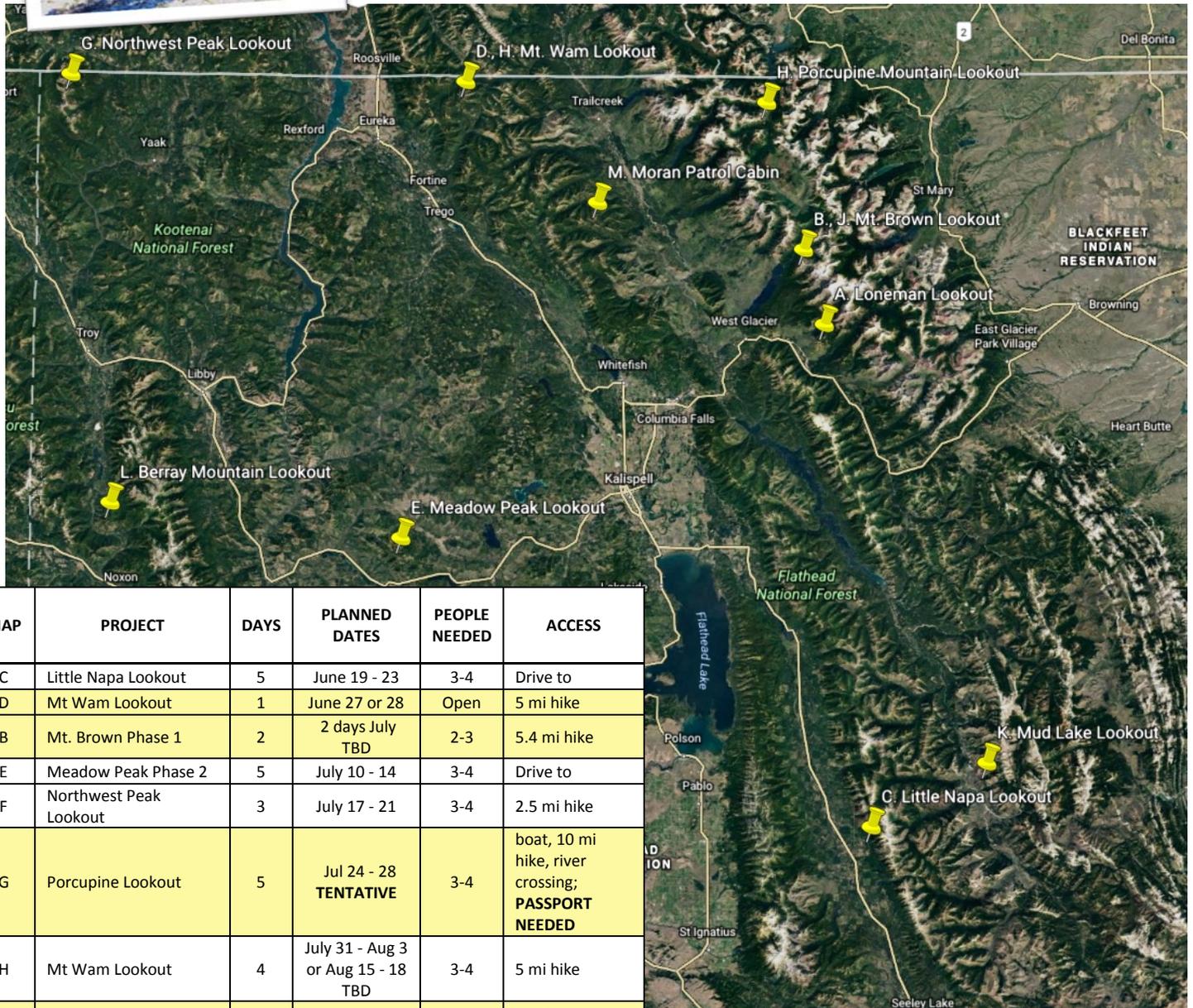
Amy Pearson

A book of poetry and photos created during Amy's 98 day stay at Mt. Jumbo Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness is becoming a reality! The book goes to the publisher in May, and will be published by Many Voices Press at FVCC. It should be available in Kalispell by Fall 2017. You can contact Amy at amy.pearson@asu.edu for additional information or to obtain a copy of the book. Amy is a great supporter of lookouts and wild places. We congratulate her on this tremendous achievement!

2017 PROJECTS



We have a full slate of great projects, big and small, lined up for this summer. Projects range from remote reaches of Glacier National Park, to the Yaak, to the Swan Valley and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. You can help with assessments, painting a lookout, or more complex restoration projects. Find more details later in the newsletter, and sign up to volunteer on our website at <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/2017projects>



MAP	PROJECT	DAYS	PLANNED DATES	PEOPLE NEEDED	ACCESS
C	Little Napa Lookout	5	June 19 - 23	3-4	Drive to
D	Mt Wam Lookout	1	June 27 or 28	Open	5 mi hike
B	Mt. Brown Phase 1	2	2 days July TBD	2-3	5.4 mi hike
E	Meadow Peak Phase 2	5	July 10 - 14	3-4	Drive to
F	Northwest Peak Lookout	3	July 17 - 21	3-4	2.5 mi hike
G	Porcupine Lookout	5	Jul 24 - 28 TENTATIVE	3-4	boat, 10 mi hike, river crossing; PASSPORT NEEDED
H	Mt Wam Lookout	4	July 31 - Aug 3 or Aug 15 - 18 TBD	3-4	5 mi hike
A	Loneman Lookout	2	2 days July/Aug TBD	2-3	7 mile hike, river crossing
I	Mt. Brown Phase 2	2-3	July/Aug TBD	2-3	5.4 mi hike
J	Mud Lake Lookout Phase 3	10	Aug 4 - 13	3	23 mi hike
K	Berray Mountain Lookout	1	Aug 20	Open	1.5 mi hike
L	Moran Patrol Cabin	1	Aug 26	Open	4 mi hike

ASSESSMENTS IN YELLOW

2017 PROJECTS

Loneman Lookout Assessment

Projected Dates: July/Aug dates TBD

Duration: 2 days

Volunteers Needed: 2-3

Access: 7 miles to lookout, river crossing

The overnight trip to this spectacular lookout in Glacier National Park will be planned once the lookout is accessible and a safe river crossing is possible. Volunteers will conduct a complete assessment of work needs so that future restoration projects can be planned.



Mount Brown Assessment

Projected Dates: July dates TBD

Duration: 2 days

Volunteers Needed: 2

Access: 5.4 miles to lookout

This is another Glacier National Park overnight trip to conduct a detailed assessment of work needs and finalize a work project for later in this summer. Good chance of goat sightings on this scenic hike!



Little Napa Lookout

Projected Dates: June 19 – 23

Duration: 5 days

Volunteers Needed: 3-4

Access: Drive to, carpool from Bigfork daily

This project will complete last year's major effort at Little Napa on the Swan State Forest, by rebuilding the catwalk, catwalk opening, and railing and then weather sealing the catwalk, and railings as well as the new stairs, which were rebuilt last year. When this project is completed, Little Napa lookout should be ready to withstand many years of inclement weather.



MORE PROJECTS

Mount Wam Lookout Assessment

Projected Dates: June 27 or 28 TBD

Duration: 1 day

Volunteers Needed: Open

Access: 5 mile hike to lookout

Join us for a day hike to Mount Wam in the Yaak to learn more about NWMT-FFLA, and lookout restoration, and participate in a condition assessment to help finalize detailed work plans for a restoration project later in the summer.



Meadow Peak Lookout Phase 2

Projected Dates: July 10 – 14

Duration: 5 days

Volunteers Needed: 3-4

Access: Drive to

Work this summer will continue a major restoration project on the Libby District of the Kootenai NF. Planned work includes completing replacement/repair of structural material on the tower, rebuilding stairs and handrail to the catwalk, removing and replacing the ceiling, reinstalling the shutters and repairing or replacing failed catwalk and handrail materials. For this project, the Forest Service will be providing food and a camp cook, so bring a hearty appetite!

AND MORE PROJECTS



Northwest Peak Lookout

Projected Dates: July 17 - 21

Duration: 3 days

Volunteers Needed: 3-4

Access: 2.5 mile hike to lookout

This will be the beginning of a major restoration project at Northwest Peak on the Three Rivers District of the Kootenai NF. This year, we plan a major carpentry effort to remove and replace the ceiling, reinforce roof trusses, and repair shutters. We would love to put your skills to work!



Porcupine Peak Lookout Assessment

Projected Dates: Target July 24 - 28 - flexible

Duration: 5 days

Volunteers Needed: 2-3

Access: boat/10 mile hike, creek crossing – **Passport needed**



Porcupine Lookout, in the remote reaches of Glacier Park, is a challenge to get to. Participants in this project will go to Waterton, take a boat to Goat Haunt to begin the hike south to the lookout. Passports are a must! If you can join us, you will be treated to views of Glacier that few people ever see. Oh, and by the way, you can help NWMT-FFLA by taking photos to support the application for the National Historic Register, and conduct a thorough condition assessment for future restoration needs.

STILL MORE PROJECTS

Mount Wam Lookout

Projected Dates: July 31 – Aug 3 or Aug 15 – 18 TBD

Duration: 4 days

Volunteers Needed: 3-4

Access: 5 mile hike to lookout

Mount Wam in the Yaak is due for some tender loving care. Come spend a week with us and you can see all aspects of lookout restoration work. We plan to re-level the structure and rebuild stone piers, repair window and door shutters, and repair or replace the lookout door. We have a busy week in store, and would love for you to join us!



Mount Brown Lookout Phase 2

Projected Dates: July/Aug TBD

Duration: 2-3 days

Volunteers Needed: 2-3

Access: 5.4 mile hike to lookout

Come work with us to restore Mount Brown Lookout in Glacier National Park. The assessment in early summer will help determine exact work needs for Mount Brown. The project is expected to include better securing the shutters on the lookout and touching up the paint where needed. Additional work may be prioritized as a result of the assessment.



AND MORE PROJECTS !

Mud Lake Lookout Phase 3

Projected Dates: Aug 4 - 13

Duration: 10 days

Volunteers Needed: 3

Access: 23 mile backpack into BMWC



This is the continuation of last year's major foundation work. Volunteers will relieve the roof loading on the windows, rebuild the west wall, remove, reglaze and paint all of the windows, and install a chimney boot. Volunteers on this project will be treated to a very special wilderness experience, hiking from Meadow Creek Gorge Trailhead to the lookout, and camping at two backcountry cabins, to get to the remote Bob Marshall Wilderness worksite on the Spotted Bear Ranger District of the Flathead NF.

Berray Mountain Lookout Assessment

Projected Dates: August 20

Duration: 1 day

Volunteers Needed: open

Access: 1.5 mile hike to lookout

Join us for a day hike to Berray Mountain Lookout in Trout Creek on the Kootenai NF and assist in a detailed condition assessment of a historic lookout. This lookout is scheduled for stabilization with a new roof this summer with full restoration to begin in 2018.



Moran Patrol Cabin

Projected Dates: August 26

Duration: 1 day

Volunteers Needed: 2-4

Access: 4 mile hike to lookout

This is a great one-day project to get involved in lookout restoration. Come spend a lovely summer day helping to paint the rafter tails and eaves on Moran patrol cabin, have lunch and enjoy the company of other lookout enthusiasts. An easy project to delve into volunteering!



Osborn Lookout Story Marks 1st Historical Collection Added to U of M Library

One of the most rewarding “tasks” we have with the NWMT-FFLA is connecting with past and present lookouts and their families and friends to preserve their stories for all people to enjoy. We have begun conducting oral history interviews and cataloging a number of old photographs. The University of Montana Mansfield Library has agreed to archive our collections, and we are pleased to announce that our first collection, which will include an audio interview, a written transcription, and 14 photographs, will soon be available worldwide at:

<http://scholarworks.umt.edu/nwmt-ffla/>

The collection documents the 1948 lookout experience of honeymooners Joe and Becky Osborn at the Spotted Bear Lookout, Flathead National Forest. The Osborns' daughter, Julie, provided the interview and photographs.



Their journey began when Joe, a Quaker, joined the Civilian Public Service (CPS) as a conscientious objector during WWII. He left Indiana to volunteer as a smokejumper in Missoula, never having been west of Chicago. Joe fell in love with the Rockies and Montana. Most jumpers were in their teens or early 20s, but Joe, born in 1911, was one of oldest jumpers, so they nicknamed him “Pappy.” He had a real fear of heights, which carried through the rest of his life. He didn’t like to talk about jumping out of the old Ford Tri-Motor, but he enjoyed fighting fires.

After the war, Joe went back East and taught Engineering at Lehigh University. He met Becky McNees, another Quaker teaching English at the Moravian College for Women, and they married in 1948. Joe’s love for Montana brought them back in a Model T as volunteers at the Spotted Bear Lookout with the Flathead National Forest. (See also the Fall Newsletter story of Dale and Marlene Zorn, who honeymooned on Mt. Brown in 1956.)



A pack string brought their food and some water. Afterwards, Joe would collect snow and Becky would melt it to augment their water supply.

Both were very comfortable living at the lookout. Becky brought a large number of books and spent the summer reading. Joe most likely hiked. Meals included ham (possibly Spam in a can), lentil soup, baked beans, and cinnamon buns that Joe made once a week for years.

Joe had an affinity for photography, and although he probably had just a Brownie camera at the lookout, several surviving photos from that summer demonstrate his expertise. They show bits of life at the lookout that aren't often seen: Becky gathering snow to melt; stirring a pot on the lookout steps; hanging laundry below the lookout as it blows in the wind; and one photograph with the original lookout in the background and the new lookout (now also gone, replaced by the current one) in the foreground. In later years, Joe bought quality camera equipment, climbed to his favorite peaks and composed photographs, waiting for the sun to reach a particular angle or for a cloud formation to come in just right.

The couple had some fires, but none that amounted to much. Lightning unnerved Becky if she was alone in the tower and Joe was out. She always worried Joe might be struck; he never was.

They found the lookout tranquil. Joe carried his smokejumping and lookout experiences with him for the rest of his life. He loved camping, hiking, and snowshoeing, and was impervious to cold.

Joe loved Montana, and Julie said, "If he had not gotten himself so established in Lehigh for the second time, I think he would have been happy to go and live in Montana for the rest of his life. Instead, he went back for summers." Becky's ties were not as strong. Eventually they divorced. Becky didn't return to Montana, but Joe went often, including setting up a trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness along with many of his CPS buddies when all were 70 plus, including Pete, the packer.

Both Becky and Joe said their time on the Spotted Bear Lookout was "a really happy experience." Joe died 1991, and Becky lived until 2014.

Julie Osborn has "thousands of slides and negatives" and black and white photographs taken by her father. Many she thinks are from Bozeman, the Bridger Range, and Yellowstone, and she hopes to be able to identify and scan them. If you have an interest in helping her, please contact Beth Hodder at bhodder1018@montanasky.us.



INSPIRATION AT JUMBO LOOKOUT



your life is, 9/25

boiled coffee in the morning
 a swift glance towards the unending horizon
 a lookout for that griz and cubs
 grouse chirping on the rock ledge
 sunlight streaming through the windows
 weather reports to give, to receive
 radio clatter
 an eye on the smokes calmed down since last night
 a rationing of cigarettes
 a dream of family and friends
 a dream of foreign lands once seen
 a rationing of water
 tired legs and creaky knees
 radio clatter
 a trip down to the pit toilet, bearspray in hand
 an open day set out before you,
 only you

Amy Pearson is a poet, teacher, photographer, and wilderness advocate. She currently works as an Adjunct Professor of Humanities at Flathead Valley Community College. She plans to spend this summer on another lookout, this time on the Lolo.

Spring Fundraisers



Help build a fund for the restoration of Northwest Peak Lookout!

BREWS FOR BENEFITS
Join us for a beer \$1 of every one sold helps support the preservation of fire lookouts in Northwest Montana.

THURSDAY MARCH 2, 2017
5:00 - 8:00 PM

CABINET MOUNTAIN BREWING CO.
206 MINERAL AVE.
DOWNTOWN LIBBY

Help fund restoration work on MT Brown and Porcupine Lookouts!

PINTS for PRESERVATION
Tuesday March 14 5-8

Join us for a beer and help support the preservation of lookouts in Northwest Montana. Many thanks to Kalspell Brewing for donating \$1 to the NWMT FFLA for every beer sold.

Glacier National Park

H.A. BREWING CO. PINT NITE
Wednesday APRIL 12, 2017 3:00 - 8:00

NORTHWEST MONTANA FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

H.A. Brewing Co. will donate \$1 for every pint sold* and \$2 for every large pizza sold to the NWMT-FFLA.

Mount Wam Lookout

Join the Northwest Montana Forest Fire Lookout Association at the H.A. Brewing Company to help raise funds for the operation and maintenance of Mount Wam Lookout, located on the Kootenai National Forest in the Ten Lakes Scenic Area.

*Built in 1930, Mount Wam Lookout sits atop its namesake peak at an elevation of 7,203 feet. The lookout was used regularly as an observation point for spotting forest fires between 1931 and 1939 and was last restored in 1999 and is currently in the Forest Service's restoration program.

THE NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called to supporting Federal and State agencies in the restoration and staffing of fire lookouts and support structures on public lands.



...one pint at a time

COMMUNITY TAP NIGHT

Wednesday Nights from 6-9pm

TAMARACK BREWING COMPANY

75 cents from every pint sold benefits a local charity or community project

February 15th

NORTHWEST MONTANA FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

THE NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called to supporting Federal and State agencies in the restoration and staffing of fire lookouts and support structures on public lands.

TAMARACK BREWING COMPANY
18 Road - Libby, MT - 59922 - 406.844.0544
visit www.tamarackbrewing.com



Keep up with the latest happenings on our website

www.nwmt-ffla.com



and



<https://www.facebook.com/northwestmontanalogouts>

<https://www.instagram.com/nwmtlookouts/>

now we exhale, *haiku*, 8/17

i can see the rains
coming down through the valleys
rain and tears mix now

thunder brought violence
to the landscape, and lightning
now we all exhale

Amy Pearson

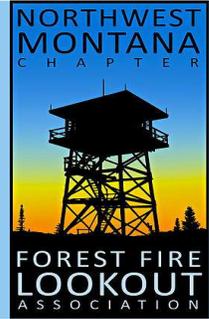


NWMT-FFLA

P.O. Box 2704
Kalispell, MT 59903

NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

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



FALL 2017



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

2017 was a long and challenging fire management year for Land Management Agencies, to say the least. I think everyone was glad to see fall arrive in the Flathead. Despite the late start due to heavy spring snowpack, and the summer fires and smoke, NWMT-FFLA volunteers in partnership with the National Forests, Park Service, and Montana DNRC were still able to complete a substantial program of more than 1000 volunteer hours on 11 different lookouts, valued at \$31,600.

Many thanks to all the hardworking volunteers and members who have supported these efforts. Your sponsorship and participation continues to make a difference in keeping lookouts a part of Western Montana landscapes, and a resource for fire managers and the public alike. We can be proud to be one of the more active chapters in the National Lookout Association! I hope you will continue to support our work with your membership in the coming year. It means so much!

*Chuck Manning
Board Chair*



Mount Brown Lookout, overlooking Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park, spent much of the summer wrapped in protective covering, as the Sprague fire burned almost 17,000 acres of the surrounding area. We are happy to report that the lookout survived the fire.

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

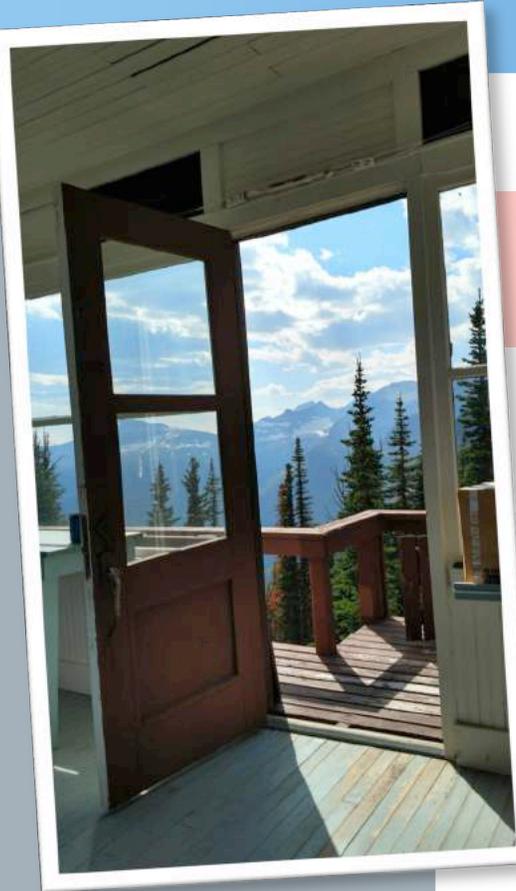
PORCUPINE RIDGE LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

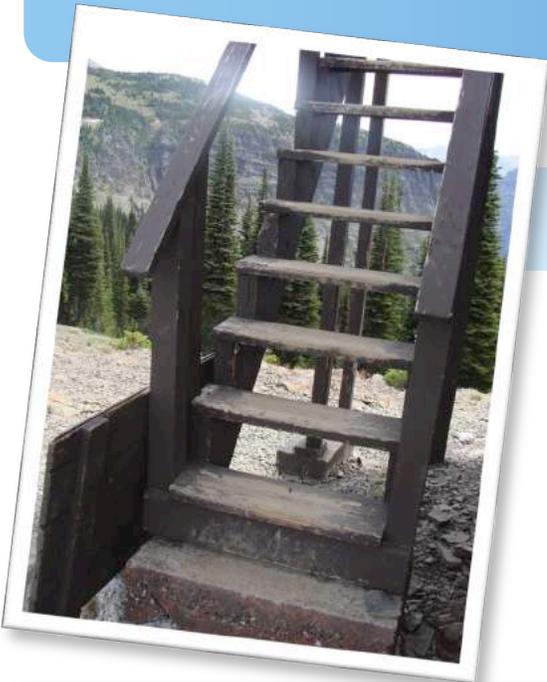
Porcupine Ridge Lookout sits in the NW corner of Glacier National Park, overlooking the Waterton Valley and gazing directly at the west face of Mount Cleveland, the highest mountain in Glacier NP.

A thorough condition assessment was badly needed as the bears and other critters have repeatedly tried to gain access to the lookout since it was last rehabilitated in 2003.

It takes a considerable effort to reach this lookout. Starting in Waterton Park you take a boat to Goat Haunt to begin the 9.7-mile hike. Fords of both Waterton River and Valentine Creek are required, as well as 17 switchbacks up the trail in the backpack trip to this lookout at 7100 feet elevation. But those who persevere are treated to amazing views that few park visitors ever see. Thanks to Greg Evans, Kyle Stetler, Molly Tingley and Chuck Manning for your time and energy to participate in this assessment.

A special thanks goes to Kelsey Bauer, GNP Backcountry Ranger at Goat Haunt who guided them up the Valentine Creek creek bed overgrown with stinging nettles and thimbleberry.





MOUNT BROWN LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

Mount Brown, on the National Register of Historic Places, is a strenuous 5 mile 4,250' elevation gain above Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park, commanding views of Mount Vaught, McPartland Mountain and Heavens Peak towards the north, Sperry Glacier towards the east, as well as Lake McDonald in the valley far below.



This assessment was to be followed with a maintenance project, but due to protection wrapping during this summer's Sprague Fire the project was postponed. Luckily firefighters were successful in protecting the lookout from this tenacious fire. The planned project will likely be on our 2018 program.

Thank you to NWMT-FFLA volunteers Scott Murphy and Greg Evans for your effort and support on this assessment.



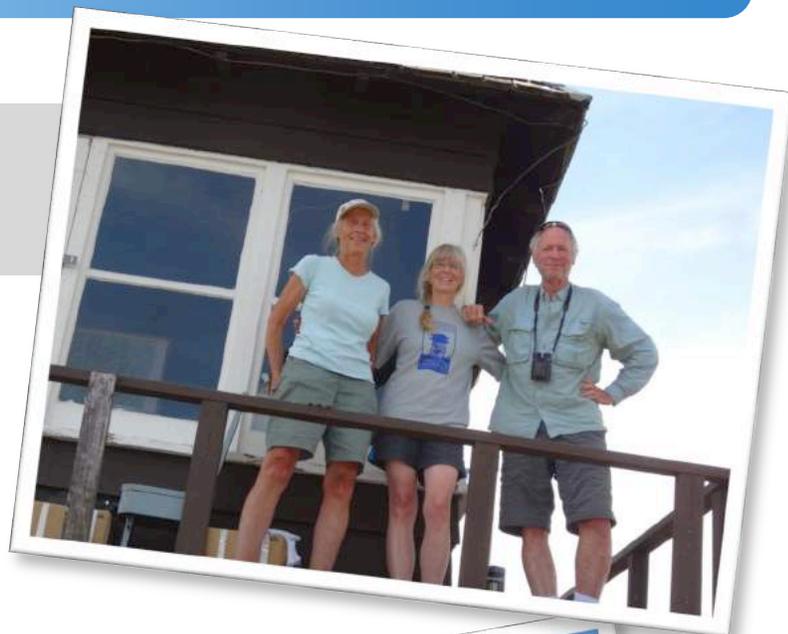
LONEMAN LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

Loneman is located north of Nyack near the southern boundary of Glacier National Park. Access is by fording the Middle Fork of the Flathead River and Nyack Creek. After a 7.4-mile hike and an elevation gain of 3900 ft. you reach the historic lookout, built in 1929.

Thanks to the warm welcome of Karen Reeves, staffing the lookout, we conducted a thorough condition assessment for the Park Service.

From Loneman the assessment crew could view the south edge of the Sprague fire as well as the Great Bear Wilderness, Nyack Valley, and many spectacular mountain peaks like Mount St. Nicholas and Mount Stimson.

Thank you to NWMT-FFLA volunteers Traute Parrie, Greg Evans, Duane Bauch, and Chuck Manning for your effort and support on this assessment.



FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

MUD LAKE LOOKOUT

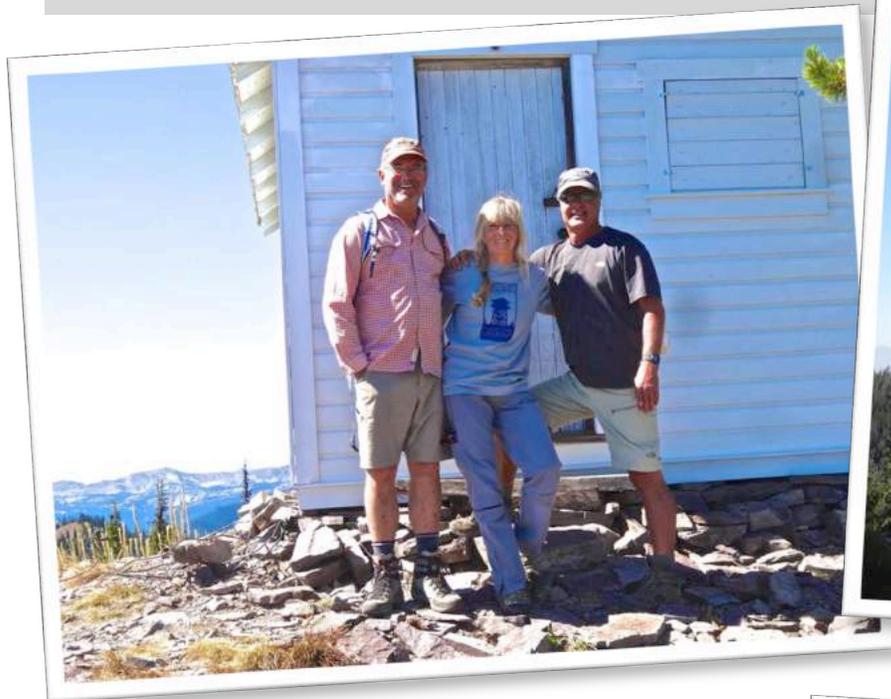


Mud Lake Lookout is located 23 miles in from the Meadow Creek Trailhead on the South Fork of the Flathead River, in the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

This is our 3rd project at Mud Lake. This year's goal was to rebuild the west wall, which had failed due to some structural shortcomings. With all the windows safely removed, the crew was able to build a new strong wall from the ground up, based on last year's foundation work.

Packers from the Spotted Bear Ranger Station and Salmon Forks Outfitters supported this year's project. Two NWMT-FFLA volunteers, Rick Davis and Chuck Manning, worked with Spotted Bear Ranger District's Backcountry Facility Manager, Andy Nelson, to get the job done. Thank you to all involved!

MORAN PATROL CABIN



This cabin, also known as the Coal Ridge Cabin, is located west of Polebridge along the Pacific Northwest Trail.

A crew of NWMT-FFLA volunteers gave it another good dose of maintenance this year, scraping and painting the gable ends, as well as the south facing exterior wall and rafter tails. They also did spot scraping and painting on the other walls and rafter tails, to complete the tune-up begun last year.

Thanks to volunteers Greg Evans, Don Carroll, Scott Schermerhorn, and crew leader Traute Parrie for all your hard work to complete this job!



MONTANA DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION

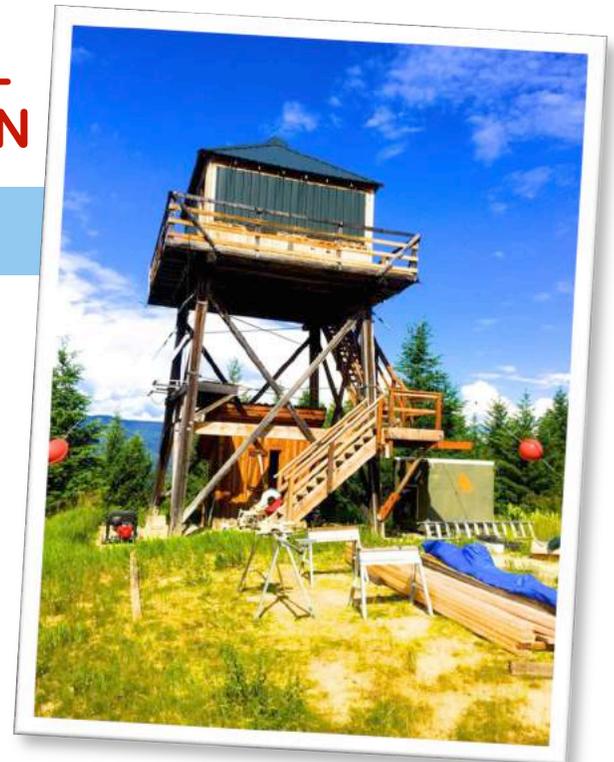
LITTLE NAPA LOOKOUT

It's a wrap on our two-year project on Little Napa Lookout on the Swan River State Forest.

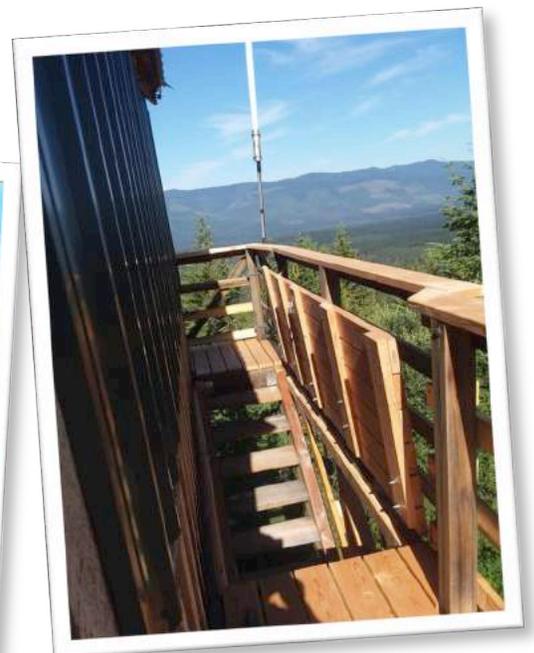
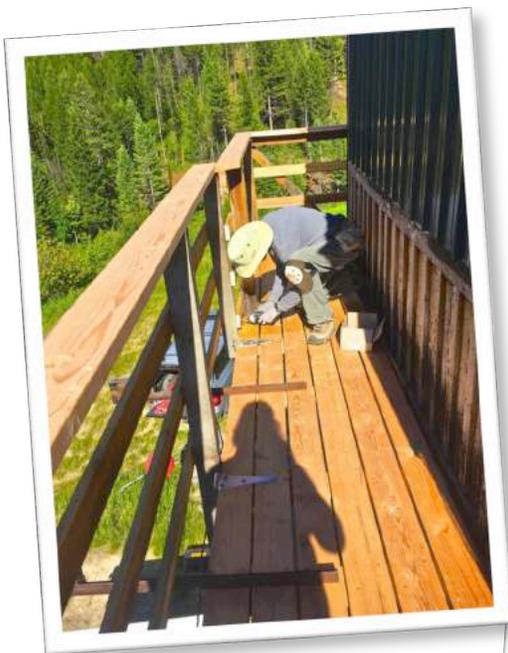
This year's work included removing the old trap door, enlarging the opening, constructing and installing a new larger weighted trap door. Catwalk decking and handrails were also replaced.

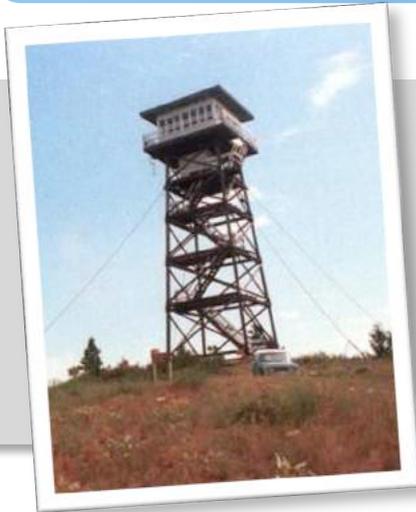
We are grateful to NWMT-FFLA volunteers Steve Penner, Doug Berglund, Barb Penner, Rick Davis, and Chuck Manning for their determination to see this project to completion.

DNRC supplied the materials and NWMT-FFLA supplied the labor.



A special thank you goes out to everyone at DNRC's Forest Division Swan Unit for the role they played in this project. Little Napa is staffed part time by DNRC.





A Birdseye View of the Future Libby Dam from Swede Mountain Lookout



In 1952, UC Berkeley college students Rod and June Ash loaded their car and traveled to Libby, MT to work for the Kootenai National Forest for the summer. Their job as lookouts on (Big) Swede Mountain Lookout would allow Rod to read and do research for his Masters degree in Anthropology and Ecology and make some money at the same time.

June recalls that the lookout was a “hub of traffic” because of its location. They had visits from the Army Corps of Engineers and the railroad. Swede Mountain is 4 miles ESE of Libby, Montana, and in 1952, the Army Corps of Engineers was designing the Libby Dam and Lake Koocanusa. It is across from the controversial asbestos mine. And because the dam was going in, they had to move the major railroad that ran through the area. “We looked right down on the railroad,” June says. “I mean, we could time ourselves whenever the train...would go through down in the basin.”

Prior to working on the lookout, June and Rod went through training in Warland, MT. “The thing I remember most about Warland was that in the evening we’d meet down at the Warland Bar as the train went through, and we would wave at people on the train. I had my first shot of whiskey down in the Warland Bar.”

As with many other lookouts, life for Rod and June consisted of living in a 50-foot high cabin on a platform, with a wood stove and a fire finder. Although a post-polio person, June did not feel the tower encumbered her any more than the outhouse they had to reach downhill from the lookout.

They regularly got water at the fish hatchery at the bottom of the hill, which they carted in big containers. June did simple laundry on the stove, but she also periodically went to a Laundromat in Libby

Gordon, June’s son, asked if they had any exciting times. June said there was a huge electrical storm coming down from Canada. They were being hit by lightning and had to sit in chairs “that had the little insulated booties on them.” They didn’t move. The storm made them think carefully about what they were doing. June said it “created immense suspense.”

Another memory involved being awakened at 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning. Herb Flodberg, the ranger, asked what they saw. They scrambled out of bed, and saw a huge fire down in the valley and some guy’s barn was on fire. Herb heard about it, probably, from the fire depot. Most fires they spotted were at the Libby dump.

Also, periodically, Herb would call at night and ask if they saw any headlights by the asbestos mine, indicating poachers. Herb caught quite a few illegal hunters that way.

The experiences June and Rod had on Swede Mountain had “an immense effect” upon their lives. Although hoping to settle in Libby, teaching jobs paid poorly. In 1969, they bought a home from Min Copra, one of the original homesteaders in the Swan Valley. They permanently moved there in 1984, continuing to raise their 4 children. Although Rod died in 2006, June has kept the home. Currently she lives in Brendan House in Kalispell.

Swede Mountain Lookout still stands guard over Libby, and now Lake Kooconusa. Swede Mountain is still actively staffed by the Kootenai National Forest.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION POTLUCK



In October we hosted a gathering to celebrate the season’s accomplishments with our members and especially to thank the many volunteers who worked so hard on this year’s many projects. We hope to see more of our members and partners at this event next year!

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

NORTHWEST PEAK LOOKOUT

Northwest Peak Lookout is located on the Kootenai National Forest in the Northwest Peak Scenic Area. Built in 1929, this L-4 lookout prototype sits at at 7606 feet in elevation, and has endured some of the most extreme weather conditions possible.

This year was the beginning of a major top to bottom restoration project on this rare gable roof L-4. Our crew first removed ceiling boards to expose the rafters. Then collar ties were installed to tie rafters together, and ceiling joists were secured to collar ties. These steps should get the lookout much closer to a stable future!

Thank you to this year's volunteer crew: Matt Heinen, MCC Intern, NWMT-FFLA volunteers Reggie Good, Barbara Bates, Peter Kitts, and Chuck Manning.

A special thank you goes out to the Three Rivers Ranger District who supplied all materials and made sure our tools and gear were delivered on-site.



BERRY MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

Berry Mountain Lookout is located north of Noxon and the Clark Fork River and East of the Bull River. The present lookout, built in the 60's replaces a prior observation platform from the 1930's. Berry has not been staffed for many years and is on the Cabinet Ranger District's short list to be restored.

The District completed a major project to install a new roof this summer, to protect the structure from further water damage. Structurally, the lookout is in passable shape, and we look forward to working with the Kootenai National Forest and the Cabinet Ranger District to developing a plan and further restoring this historic structure.

Our appreciation to members Doug Ferrell, Doug Lang, and Chuck Manning for this detailed assessment, the critical first step on the road to restoration.



MEADOW PEAK LOOKOUT



A NWMT-FFLA crew returned to Meadow Peak Lookout this summer to continue the good work begun with last year's project. Based out of the historic Raven Ranger Station, this summer's crew traveled each day to work on the lookout.

This year's work consisted of painting new shutters, built at the Regional Historic Preservation Shop in Missoula, in preparation for for installation next year. Major structural work included replacing ceiling boards, soffit & fascia and the west wall below the windows. New materials and all exterior walls were scraped and painted. With a Phase 3 project next year, we hope to complete the major restoration at Meadow Peak.

A big thank you goes out to Matt Heinen, MCC Intern, Justin Moschelle & Cindy Hemry, KNF Archaeologists, and NWMT-FFLA volunteers Harry McAllister, Terry Richmond, Neil Jensen, Duane Bauch, Ron Erickson, and Chuck Manning for their dedication and talents this year in preserving this historic structure.

TOM ROBERTS – LOOKOUT VOLUNTEER



We thought you might like to meet Tom Roberts, the artist behind the beautiful lookout products including mugs and notecards that you have seen at our events and on our website.

Tom L. Roberts was born in Des Moines, Iowa. He graduated from Spencer High School in 1974 and studied art at the University of Northern Iowa where he earned a BA in Art Ed. in 1978. His teaching career in art has spanned the last 39 years with positions in Iowa, Virginia, Kobe, Japan, Vienna, Austria and Kalispell, Montana where he taught both two and three-dimensional art.

His love for the west was inspired by early trips to the Rockies in the 70s with his wife



Cindy and their work as seasonal park rangers in Yellowstone National Park for 20 summers. During his time as an interpretive summer ranger he presented many historical living history portraits of John Colter and his exploration of the Yellowstone region.

His attention to detail was nurtured by his love for history and his involvement in reenacting the time period from 1755 to 1810. Tom works mainly in oils and watercolors but has done some sculpting and pottery. He has had two one-man shows at the Sioux City Art Center, was the feature artist for three consecutive years at the Missouri River Expo, and had a one man show of Yellowstone historical paintings at the Yellowstone Gateway Museum in Livingston, MT. Tom's work is in many private collections in the Midwest and Montana.

He and his wife, Cindy, have two grown daughters, Lisa and Lori and he currently lives and works in Kalispell, Montana. For more information contact Tom L. Robert, at yellranger@yahoo.com.



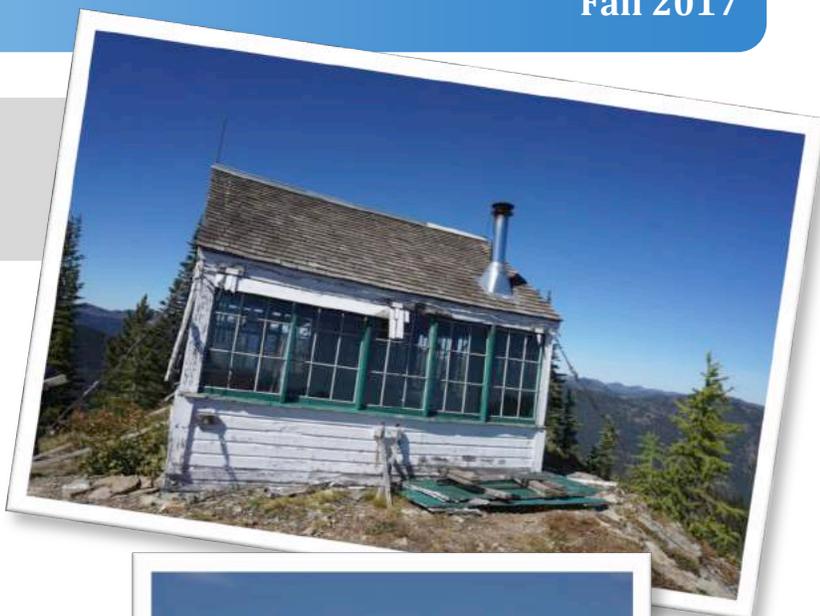
WAM LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT & PROJECT

Wam Mtn Lookout is located in the Ten Lakes Scenic Area in the Whitefish range and is about a 5-mile hike from the trailhead.

This was a two-day assessment and maintenance trip for NWMT-FFLA volunteers Traute Parrie and Chuck Manning with the assistance of the Fortine Ranger District Trail Manager, Dan Ward and crew, Scott, John, and Aaron with Archeologist Cindy Hemry.

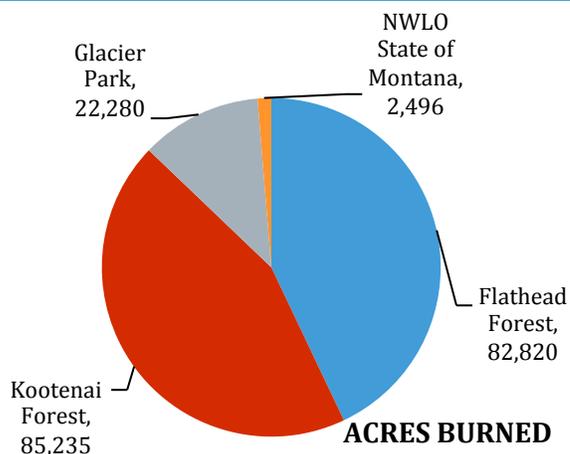
After doing a thorough assessment, the shutters got some much-needed maintenance. Over the years Wam has weathered many extreme environmental conditions at over 7100 ft in elevation, and is in need of some TLC. The shutters were repaired to withstand winter's weather events with plans to be replaced next summer.

A special thank you must go out to the Fortine RD trail crew and others who hand carried in all of the supplies we needed for this year's project.



2017 FIRE FACTS

In Western Montana in 2017, there were 289 fires, only 4 more than the prior 10-year average, but due to our extremely dry conditions, 5 times as many acres burned. In Montana as a whole, a total of 1.25 Million acres burned in 2017, 4 times the 10-year average.



A VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

from Traute Parrie



Traute, Rick Davis and Inez Love at Firefighter LO

As members of the NWMT-FFLA, you all understand the importance of the lookout tower as a symbol of forest protection and the ongoing need for both the towers and their symbolism. In fact, as more people play in the woods and high country, lookout towers are the destination now for mountain bikers, through-hikers, and skiers – users that didn't occur there a decade ago.

What I hope we can do now is tap into that enthusiasm for lookout towers to grow this great group of restoration volunteers! Folks like Chuck Manning and Rick Davis have demonstrated huge success in working with the agencies to establish a strong partnership and complete some beautifully done projects in the realm of pikas, wolverines, and passing hawks.

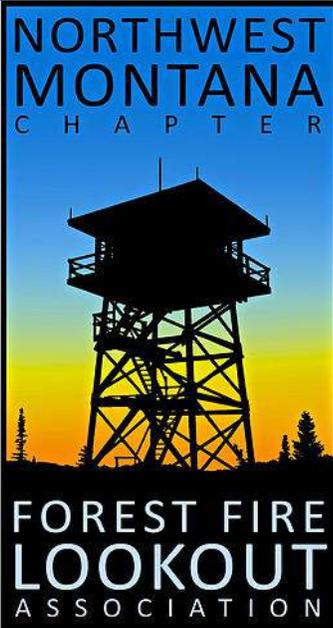
But they can't do it alone! There's much to be done. They even asked me to be a project

leader this year! Turns out Chuck made it a very easy job, even though I traveled quite a few miles, from Red Lodge. And I met yet more cool people in this community of fire tower lovers.

If you are even contemplating volunteering for a project, don't hesitate. The payoff is more than you expect. And, if you've already worked on a restoration project, please say yes if Chuck asks you to lead a project, as you already know how quickly projects fill up and the limiting factor is not volunteers, but project leaders.

And where else can you work on Montana's rooftop, with views of Canadian Rockies, or Hungry Horse Reservoir blanketed in fog, or sit in the middle of a lightning storm? Come follow in the footsteps of Edward Abbey, and now Buck, and Karen Reeves. We need you.





WILDERNESS SPEAKER SERIES

We will again be a co-sponsor of a great speaker series this winter with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and Montana Wilderness Association. Planned talks at FVCC at 7:00 p.m. are:

- **Wednesday Feb 7 – Coulter Pence & John Fraley – Wild & Scenic Rivers : 50 Year Anniversary**
- **Wednesday March 7 – Andrew J. Larson - The Untrammelled Observatory—Lessons from Wilderness Fire**
- **Wednesday April 4 – Rick Mace - The Recovery of Grizzly Bears in Montana**

Stay tuned for info this spring on our 2018 fundraisers & projects on and our website: <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>



NWMT-FFLA

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