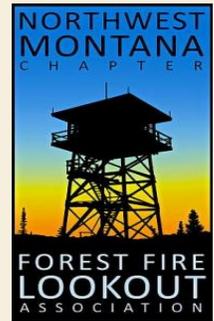


# NORTHWEST MONTANA LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

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



Helicopter delivery of 19 refurbished windows to Wam LO

## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

2020 has been such a strange and challenging year for all of us. We are so very grateful for the dedication and adaptability of our Partners, supporters, and volunteers for continuing to devote time and effort to supporting lookout restoration projects. In a year when many activities have been interrupted or canceled, we are happy to report that we still got a significant amount of lookout work done this summer. In total we volunteered more than 2300 hours of labor and more than \$63,000 of in-kind value to our Agency Partners.

One highlight of this year's activities was a socially distanced Window Restoration workshop where 19 windows for Wam Lookout were scraped, painted, glass reinstalled, and re-glazed. We also made one final trip into Mud Lake Lookout in the Bob, to put the finishing touches on a major multi-year project. It is great to see that lookout in secure shape for the future. This summer also saw completion of numerous lookout assessments which will help Agencies make detailed plans for future year projects. Read on to see what we have been up to this year.

Best wishes for you to stay healthy and safe till we can gather together in better times. Remember, a trip to a lookout is always a good way to be socially distanced!

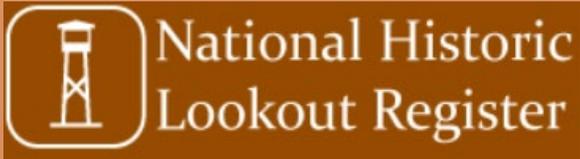
*Chuck Manning*  
Board Chair



Welcome to our newest Board Member - Kyle Stetler

*Kyle and his family moved back to Montana in January after 11 years in Seattle, to be closer to grandparents and to take advantage of everything Montana has to offer...in particular lots of lookouts!*

*After joining the national FFLA in 2004 and working on several lookout projects, he is excited to be on the board of the NWMT-FFLA and the opportunity to work on local projects here in his home state.*



National Historic Lookout Register:  
<http://www.nhlnr.org/>

National Register of  
Former Lookout Sites:  
<http://www.firetower.org/>

At one time, there were over 8,000 fire lookouts in 49 states. Today, fewer than 2,000 lookouts remain with roughly 400 of those staffed every season. In Montana there are about 130 standing lookouts of the over 600 that once existed.

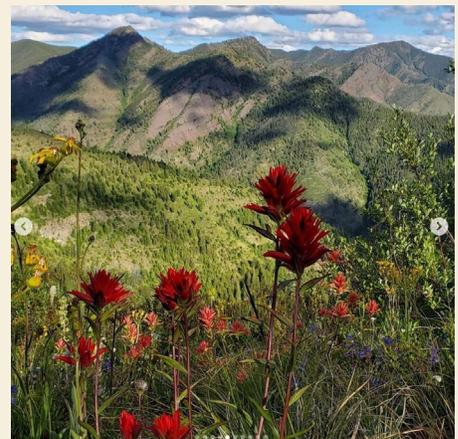
But where can I get information on all the standing lookouts in Montana? What about the entire United States? While there are several sources, the Forest Fire Lookout Association works in conjunction with American Resources Inc. to support the National Historic Lookout Register. This database is user supported so anytime new information becomes available anyone can submit updates and the database will be more current. A companion database is the Former Fire Lookout Sites Register which is an analogous site but for lookout locations where the structure is no longer present.

While Montana has fairly good data for its standing lookouts, after looking at the map for northwest Montana in particular, we found there were approximately 23 lookouts that had no entry in the register. Many more sites where lookouts once stood have no information. The NWMT-FFLA requested and received access to the database so that we can nominate and then create the profile for those 23 lookouts.

That said, anyone with pictures, information, or stories about any of the standing, or former, lookouts in northwest Montana can get in touch with us so that we could use that information to make the Register more complete. There are many lookout sites in our area that have no known pictures. For more information on what data the two registers collect go check out the websites!

This year the  
**WILDERNESS SPEAKER SERIES**  
Is going online!

Stay tuned for more information!



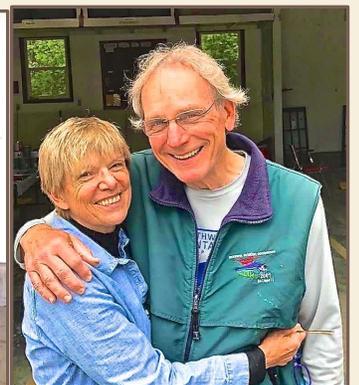
# 2020 Projects

## KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

### Windows Restoration Workshop

The first major project of the spring was refurbishment of windows for Wam Mountain Lookout. Chuck built a steam box to speed the prep work, and with the help of Rick Davis all 171 panes of glass were removed from 19 windows to begin the restoration process. When we put the call out for a workshop, a great cadre of volunteers stepped up and joined us at the Murphy Lake Ranger Station over two long weekends for the labor intensive process of scraping, resetting the glass, glazing, and ultimately painting these windows in preparation for them to be flown up back to the lookout by the Kootenai Helitack Crew.

Thanks to Joann & Joe Schmidt, Donald Stolte, Robert Saint Louis, Amanda McIntosh, Karen & Mark Sheets, Peter Kitts, Cindy Henry, Angie Stafford, Tyler Rounds, Marcy Goheen, Nancy Manning, and Rick & Marli Davis for participating and making these windows beautiful and weather-proof for many years to come.





## WAM LOOKOUT PREP

The Wam Lookout restoration story continued in June with the Kootenai NF Rapellers preparing the windows with much TLC for transport via helicopter sling load up to the lookout.



We received this fun message from Jeannie Petrinovich, Marston Lookout-Kootenai NF, who was quarantined at the Murphy Lake RS when the move was taking place.



"... In the middle of quarantine, outside my window,  
 From the door of the engine bay, there arose a sweet sound.  
 I threw high the sash, and declaring my state, from a distance of 12 feet,  
 I spoke to them, there.  
 Chuck Manning, it was, and Nancy his wife, with Kjell Petersen near,  
 The volunteers three, working hard to restore the old lookout, Mt Wam.  
 The trailer with windows, they gathered that day,  
 In the chill and threat of the oncoming rain,  
 And away they did drive to the heliport site.  
 Libby's helicopter delivered those precious panes to the top,  
 And another step in this season of restoration took place.  
 Many hours these hardy volunteers do dedicate,  
 And lookouts on mountaintops sparkle and gleam.  
 Thank you to you all, you grand volunteers,  
 And here, in this case, to the NWMT-FFLA team."

**Seriously, thank you for your amazing work, for being  
 always on call, for flexing your plans, and for  
 accomplishing these amazing renovations.  
 Your work is our heritage.**

Jeannie Petrinovich

## WAM LOOKOUT

Don Stolte, Karen & Mark Sheets, Amanda McIntosh, Tammy Bogovich, Tyler Mellem, Peter Kitts, and Dan Ward (FS) participated in this year's on-site restoration project at Mount Wam. The restoration included the replacement of three window sills and headers, installing all 19 of the newly refurbished windows, and the removal and replacement of all siding. A special thank you goes out to the Montana Academy, the Youth Conservation Corp and the Chrysalis School Montana and several board members for hiking in and out supplies.



## McGUIRE LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

Kathy Butterfield, Marli and Rick Davis, Nancy and Chuck Manning along with Dan Ward, Forestry Technician -Trails, Kootenai National Forest, conducted an in-depth assessment of McGuire Lookout in preparation for an extensive restoration project next summer. Built in 1923, it was abandoned around 1944 and later renovated between 1983 and 1998.



## MEADOW PEAK LOOKOUT

Throughout the summer and fall we continued to put finishing touches on Meadow Peak Lookout in preparation for it being placed in the Recreation.gov program. The tasks included extending handrails to meet OSHA requirements and implementing a way to secure the shutters during winter months. If everything goes as planned and with a few more tweaks, it will be ready for the general public to enjoy in 2021. Thank you Deb & Bob Starling, Salena & Mark Beckwith, Troy Denman, Chris Beever & Chuck Manning along with support by the Libby Ranger District Rec. Dept. for their help in bringing this project closer to the finishing line.



### FACEBOOK COMMENT

We were happy to get this message from a retired FS'er who staffed a Kootenai Lookout 61 years ago this summer. Thought you'd enjoy his memory.

"I checked out your lookout restoration projects and it really warmed my heart to see Meadow Peak L.O. on the Kootenai N.F. was restored in 2018.

My first job with the FS was lookout on Meadow Peak in 1959. I was on the L.O. from the first of July till the first part of September. I turned in one smoke - turned out to be a barbecue grill at a home on Thompson Lake.

I returned to Meadow Peak about 10 years ago and it was in need of a lot of work.

I had a new awakening about what my new life would be - never had the foggiest idea I would get hooked on fire management as a career.

I had a great summer in 1959 - only 7 fires on the Raven Ranger District. Saw a fanatastic lightning storm to the south - Lolo NF - they ended up with over 300 fires.

Thanks to all who participated in the restoration - it looks much like it was in 1959.

*Gary Meyer FS-Retired*

## LIBBY RANGER DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS



Big Swede LO



Assessments were completed by volunteers Deb and Bob Starling and Mark and Salena Beckwith for Big Swede LO, Blue Mountain LO, Big Creek Baldy LO and Ziegler LO during field season 2020. The Libby Ranger District has prioritized projects from the assessments for 2021. Primary projects will be on Big Swede LO and if we have the capacity may be able to help with Big Creek Baldy. Stay tuned for opportunities this coming season. Should be fun!



Blue Mountain LO

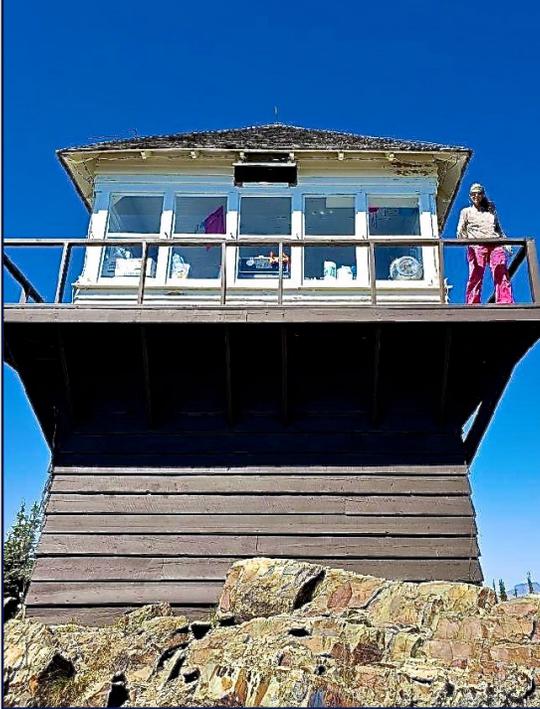


Big Ck Baldy LO



Ziegler LO





## GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

### MOUNT BROWN LOOKOUT

Mark Gunther, Amanda McIntosh, Kathy Butterfield and Greg Evans spent several days, mid-August painting Mount Brown Lookout located in Glacier National Park under the watchful eye of several area mountain goats. They painted the entire exterior as well as some touch-up painting on the interior. Thank you Mark, Amanda, Kathy and Greg for volunteering for this project which was supported by the Park Service.



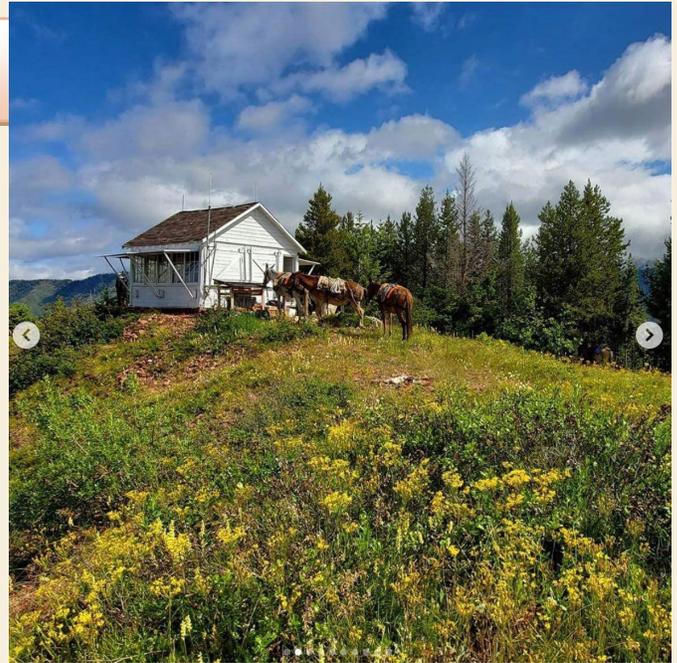
### HEAVENS PEAK LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

Although the lookout assessment was fairly routine, the trip in for an overnight stay was anything but. A very tough hike...3,000 vertical feet bushwhacking slog through the 2003 Trapper Fire with no trail. Heaven's Peak Lookout hasn't been staffed in decades so there is work to be done here!. Thank you to our intrepid volunteers Kathy Butterfield, Tammy Bogovich, and Traute Parrie plus guide/carpenter Zac Rubin with the NPS.



# FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST

## MUD LAKE LOOKOUT



This year saw completion of a multi-year restoration project on Mud Lake Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness which we began in 2015. A special shout-out goes to two new volunteers on the project this year. Tyler Mellem from Kalispell and Bob Cowdrick from GA jumped in with both feet and contributed to the success of this restoration. We are also indebted to our partner, Salmon Forks Outfitters., for the “over the top” pack support. Without their help we could not have completed the mission.



# STILLWATER STATE FOREST

## WERNER PEAK LOOKOUT



Werner Peak Lookout sits at 6,960 feet atop the Whitefish Mountain Range located approximately 23 miles north of Whitefish, MT. This year saw a new partnership with the Stillwater State Forest to give this lookout some TLC..Chuck Sterns, Joe & Joann Schmidt, Bob Saint-Louis, Ben Cavin, Helen Tyree, Ray Davis, Nancy & Chuck Manning, and Marli & Rick Davis helped scrape and paint the lookout exterior.





Numa LO

## A Short History of Lookouts and Glacier National Park's Podcast

In 2018, the Northwest Montana Forest Fire Lookout Association interviewed Kay Rosengren, who, with her husband Keith, staffed Numa Ridge and Apgar Lookouts in Glacier National Park from 1958, 1960, and 1963. Board member, Beth Hodder, and Ann Fagre, association volunteer, recorded Kay's remembered experiences as part of our ongoing oral history project.

Currently, Michael Faist, visual information specialist for Glacier NP, is creating a 15-minute podcast for Glacier about lookouts in Glacier, with strong emphasis on Kay Rosengren's interview.

The Theme of the story will be one of discovery, with a brief history of fire lookouts in the country, and in Glacier, including that author Ed Abbey had worked at Numa Ridge. Michael will include a clip of Karen Reeves, a longtime lookout, recently at Numa Ridge, who suggested Abbey's wife did all the work. Then he will introduce Kay and Keith's Story, with Kay as narrator.

A brief talk with Beth in the podcast discusses the importance of our organization in preserving and maintaining national and state lookouts in northwest Montana, including those in Glacier, the Flathead and Kootenai National Forest, and State lookouts, following the demise of most of the country's 8,000 lookouts.

Michael's expects the podcast to be available in early December at:

<https://www.nps.gov/glac/learn/photosmultimedia/headwaters-podcast.htm>

A future NWMT-FFLA newsletter will feature Kay Rosengren. Look for Kay's interview with us soon through our website, under "Oral History Project," or the University of Montana's Mansfield Library archives at:

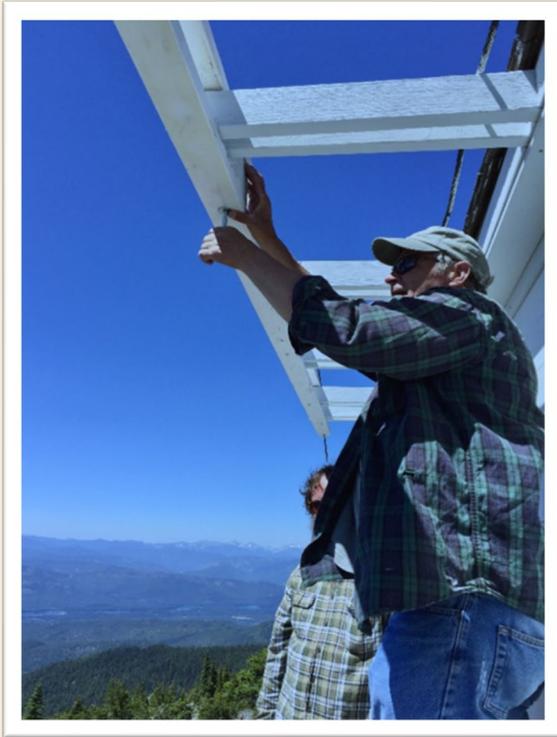
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/nwmt-ffla>

Also check out our other audio interviews from our website or the U of M archives or download the transcriptions. We hope to have two additional interviews archived soon.

On a side note, Hannah Soukup, oral history curator for the U of M archives, sent an email in October saying, *"I looked up the numbers on how many times your interviews with forest fire lookouts have been accessed by researchers. To date, the audio has been downloaded 115 times and live streamed 139 times. That's really wonderful! Thanks for donating them to us."* Hannah said that not all the listeners are from Montana. They're from different parts of the United States, some in Germany and other parts of Western Europe, as well as China and Malaysia. So the project has global reach.

We are excited to hear that researchers have discovered our interviews, and that the university finds our oral history project worthwhile.

## Remembering Harry McAllister 1948 - 2019



Harry volunteered through the Northwest Montana Forest Fire Lookout Association (NWMT-FFLA) to work on lookouts in Northwestern Montana after his retirement from the Forest Service.

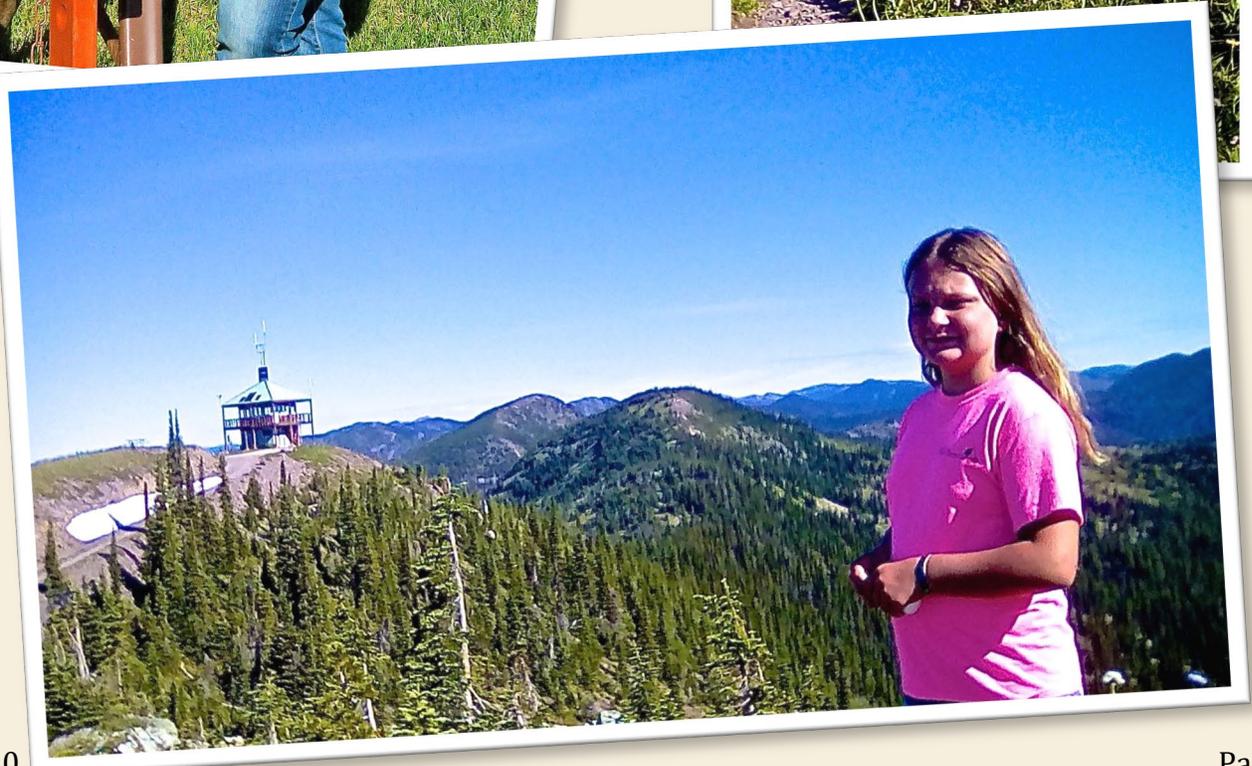
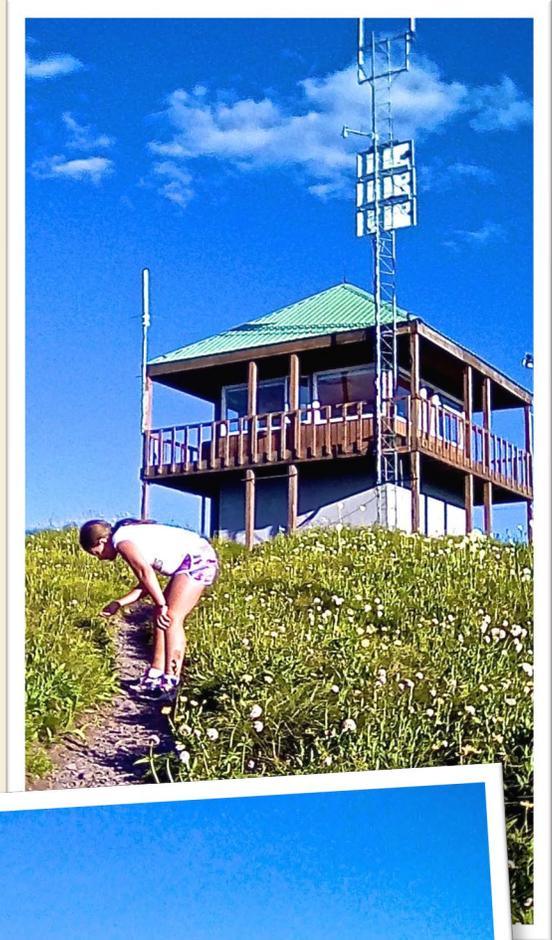
Harry worked on the Spotted Bear Lookout project in 2014. The Spotted Bear Lookout is located on the Flathead National Forest/Spotted Bear Ranger District in the South Fork River drainage just south of the ranger station. He was one of a six-man team who did major maintenance work on this fire lookout which is still staffed during the summer fire season.

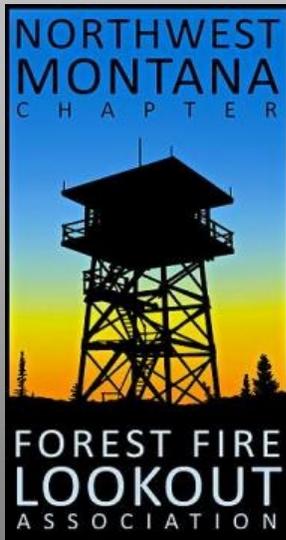
He also worked on the Meadow Peak Lookout located on the Kootenai National Forest/Libby Ranger District, northwest of McGregor Lake and west of Kalispell. Harry volunteered to help on Meadow Peak on different occasions along with other volunteers to get this lookout ready to be placed on the Forest Service Lookout/Cabin Rental Program.

Harry was a "git-r-done" kind of guy, took things seriously but always with a smile on his face. He was also one hell of a cook and a master at using the Dutch oven. We'll miss working with Harry on the mountain tops of Montana. He was a great friend to many of us and a strong supporter of the NWMT-FFLA. At his request, his friends and family made numerous generous donations to the Lookout Association in his honor. Thank you Harry, and rest well.



*Helen Bushby Tyree was the lucky winner of our raffle for a night at Werner Lookout in July. Helen has been member of NWMT/FFLA since 2016. She and her granddaughter had a grand time!*





## What's in a name?

Look for us to appear with a shortened name in the coming year, as we become the

### **NORTHWEST MONTANA LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION**

Same great organization, doing the same good work. Just less of a mouth full for a name. And a slightly shorter acronym in our future (NWMTLA!) We are making the change to become a stand-alone 501c(3) non-profit which will streamline some of the financial aspects of our organization, including applying for grants and working with Challenge-Cost Share projects . Stay tuned.

Keep in touch with us via facebook  
or our website: <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>



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