

2013 Summer Eastern Conference

Beckley WV

The Eastern conference started with a preconference tour for any early arrivals in to Beckley. The first tour was to Cass Scenic Rail Road State Park. Keith Argow and Ray Grimes NJ co director took the 6 hr tour. The train ride started at 11 am and the first stop was to Whittaker Station at 3380' and the Refurbished Gauley fire tower. The tower has a nice paint job in camouflage design. After getting back on the train we asked the conductor about the tower he advised that the property owner where the tower sits did not want the tower visible from a distance, so it was painted camouflage to blend in with the back ground. The next stop was at the top of the mt where Bald Knob is we did not get to the tower because the train was only there for about a ½ hr and there was not enough time to make the mile trip up and back in time. The trip from the station to the top was 10 miles and there were 2 stops to take on water at a spring on the way up and back. The other tour was done by Bob Spear Mark Houghwout and Ed Seifert and they hit 3 fire towers on Friday Shawnee Ridge which they did not get to do to mining rd gate and signs saying keep out, Lambert Knob was in bad shape no steps, and Pilot Knob was seen but behind a security fence before meeting up with Keith and Ray for dinner

The summer eastern conference was held on June 19th in Beckley WV at the region 2 forestry office. The meeting started at 9am and there were 15 people present at the meeting.

DIRECTORS - Chair, EDC, SEDC, Historian, Secretary-NJ co, KY

Members from PA, NJ, WV, KY, guests

The first order of business was around robin of introductions and how they got interested in fire towers. Afterwards region 2 forester and our host Tom Cover got up spoke about the fire towers in his region. He also did a power point of the towers that were in the area and which ones are still standing and what condition they are in if he knew. Tom also spoke about a tower that was removed from the forestry agency and was transferred to the state park service it has been rehabbed and some of the trees around the tower were removed to open the area around the tower for more visibility since it was used as a active tower the forest grew up around it. The tower will be going on the cabin rental program shortly as soon as they finish up with the full rehab. This tower is Thorny Mt Fire tower and Keith Argow spent a night in it before coming to Beckley.

The second speaker was Bob Beanblossom he is WV state park regional administrator. Bob started out with the state forestry then moved over to the state park service. Bob spoke about the history of the fire towers the construction of them and some of the fires that happen over

the yrs Bob did talk a bit about Thorny MT tower project and putting it on the cabin rental program.

After the speakers there was discussion among the group on fire towers on the east coast, getting more involvement on the east coast, difference between the east and west as a whole and directors.

Bob Spear got up and gave a short talk as historian about collecting all the info on towers cataloging it and putting them on DVD's.

After lunch we went to 2 fire towers nearby they were Tams fire tower and Huff knob. Both are no long in use but look in pretty good shape.

Sunday's tower tour consisted of 5 towers. The towers are Keeny tower which we did not get to we were stopped by a large gate and 4 miles between us and the tower. We did see it from the valley and looks like it is surrounded by an antenna farm. Next stop was to Sugar Grove tower it is situated behind a church in an over grown hay field. Briery Knob tower sits behind the Netti FD in the middle of town. Mikes Knob or Red Oak 2 tower is located on the top of Richwood FD. This tower is a 14'x14' USFS tower w/ cat walk. The last stop was to Man Mt tower. The tower has no floor and there was a stone wall around it at one time and the grasses have taken over between the wall and tower

Danny Blevins and a few members from his fire co took the ride to Cass Scenic RR SP and did the train ride up to Bald Knob over look and Whittaker station to see Gauley fire tower.