

Central California/Nevada Chapter Report 2008

MEMBERSHIP: The Central California/Nevada chapter currently has 18 paid members. The end-of-year balance for this chapter was \$1,036.13. Although there was a decrease in membership, more members chose longer terms or the “plus” package, keeping the coffers healthy.

RESTORATION: A \$500 FFLA restoration grant was awarded to the Buck Rock Foundation to assist the Forest Service with the rehabilitation of Fence Meadow Lookout, Sierra National Forest. The Buck Rock Foundation matched the \$500 grant. These funds are being used to restore the windows, window frames, rotting siding, and shutters. Volunteers and Forest Service personnel spent several days this fall working on the project and expect to complete the rehab during the summer of 2009.

As the Central California Chapter representing the FFLA, we commented on the Trumbull Peak Cabin Restoration (1665) Environmental Assessment, Groveland Ranger District, Stanislaus National Forest. The district hopes to restore the historic cabin which sits at the base of Trumbull Peak Lookout, a long-time decommissioned fire detection location. We agreed with their recommendation to rehab the cabin for the purpose of recreation rental and proposed they take the necessary steps to ensure that the lookout remains standing in place.

CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT: The creation of a sub-chapter of the CCA/NV FFLA called the “Yosemite/High Sierra Chapter was approved. Under the development of FFLA member Jeff May, this chapter will concentrate on the fire lookout towers in Yosemite National Park and the Sierra National Forest, Bass Lake and High Sierra Districts. Lookout towers would include but not be limited to: Signal, Miami, Shuteye, Mt. Tom, Fence Meadow, Musick Mountain, Goat Mountain, Signal Peak, Henness Ridge, and Crane Flat. The purpose of the chapter is “to provide increased public awareness and appreciation of the history and benefits of the fire lookout towers and value to early detection and fire suppression activities; seek approval for historic designations by the National Historic Lookout Register; and to utilize the Forest Fire Lookout Association Tax donation status to encourage public and private sector donations or sponsorships of the chapter.”

ACTIVITIES: We worked in close association with the Giant Sequoia National Monument to include fire lookouts in their Recreation Plan. Now fire lookouts are listed as “destination points” and “information locations” on maps, in brochures, and promoted as such to visitors to the Monument.

CAL-Fire contacted this chapter regarding the dismantling, removal and restoration of Blue Ridge Lookout, Tulare County. We are currently in negotiations with CAL-Fire real estate personnel and US Fish and Wildlife Condor habitat specialists and hope they soon approve the proposal to restore and re-locate the lookout to the Tulare County Fairgrounds. Recent offers by the Southern Sierra Climbers Association to dismantle the tower and a volunteer crane operator to remove and move the cab to its new location should help us through the process.

In conjunction with the Buck Rock Foundation, continue to promote the importance of preserving and staffing lookouts through community outreach: participating in local events, attending meetings, developing youth conservation education programs and establishing relationships with our local government agencies. The FFLA brochures are a tremendous

help.

Through the Buck Rock Foundation, we are increasing the scope of our Lookout Training program to include paid employees and volunteers who are interested in working at a fire lookout. Our training program includes recruiting top-notch fire behavior and communication specialists to teach the classes, which span a two day period each Spring. Several of the volunteers who have attended our training have been hired as lookouts for both the Forest Service and BLM.

PLAN OF WORK FOR 2009:

- Continue Fence Meadow Rehab; assist the Sequoia National Forest with projects at Delilah Lookout
- Investigate the reason behind the loss of members, and recruit new members, especially within the ranks of paid and volunteer fire lookouts throughout the chapter area (re-establish the chapter newsletter?).
- Nominate Park Ridge Lookout to the NHLR
- Assist the new Yosemite/High Sierra Chapter with development, grant-writing and project work.
- Assist FFLA member Rich Camp consolidate CA lookout lists to develop and produce one cohesive document.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Ball
CCA/NV Chapter Director