



Forest Fire Lookout Association

Monterey Chapter



December 16, 2019

TO: Peter Harris, Division Chief 1
Monterey Ranger District
Los Padres National Forest

FROM: Scott McClintock, Director
Forest Fire Lookout Association
California-South Region

2019 YEAR END REPORT

INAUGURAL YEAR MILESTONES:

5/23/19	Approval given to initiate the Chews Ridge Project
5/29/19	Volunteer recruitment commenced
6/24/19	Tower restoration commenced
7/27/19	Classroom and in-tower training commenced
8/25/19	First operational (non-training) lookout shift scheduled
11/25/19	Tower shuttered for the winter

SIGNIFICANT RESTORATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1. Construction and rodent debris cleared
2. Flagpole installed
3. Existing pit toilet rehabilitated; commode rebuilt
4. Weakened cab floorboards replaced
5. New floor tiles installed
6. Osborne Fire Finder (from the Santa Maria warehouse) refurbished & mounted
7. Trap door hinges moved; counterweight, handrail and deadbolt all installed for safety
8. New furniture built & installed: Map case, desk, wardrobe, bookcase, bed, galley cabinets
9. Water repellent applied to exterior surfaces
10. Window shutters built and installed

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VOLUNTEER TIME STATISTICS

MONTH	HOURS RESTORATION	PERSON-HOURS CLASSROOM TRAINING	HOURS IN-TOWER TRAINING	PERSON-HOURS FIRE-WATCH OPERATIONS	DAYS OF FIRE-WATCH LOOKOUT OPERATIONS	TOTAL PROJECT HOURS
June	35					
July	83.5	126.5				
August	14		85	36	7	
September	56	82.5	95	189	20	
October	49		35	237	20	
November	45		24	189	18	
TOTALS	282.5	209	239	651	65	1,381.5

ANNUAL OPERATIONS STATISTICS

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Days in Season (Aug 17 – Nov 25)	101							
Days Staffed	65							
Smoke Reports On-forest	2							
Smoke Reports Off-forest	1							
Lightning Reports	0							
Visitors	89							

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STATISTICS DISCUSSION:

Ever since the industrial revolution, American workers, supervisors and managers have placed a nexus between production numbers and employee competence. However, in the subject area of fire lookouts, this nexus does not apply. I often remind both volunteer staff and professional staff that low numbers in the Smoke Report column reflect trends in fuel moisture, accidental starts and criminal activity – not lookout vigilance. I add here that I am extremely pleased with the diligence and conscientiousness of the first year's lookout staff.

VOLUNTEER STAFFING DISCUSSION:

36 volunteers completed classroom as well as in-tower training and were certified for lookout duty in 2019. The project strives to deploy two volunteers at a time for safety purposes, but occasionally solo shifts are scheduled out of necessity. Experience with lookout volunteers in other chapters suggests a 15% annual attrition rate, so we can expect 31 veteran lookouts to return in 2020.

Currently there are 32 prospective applicants demonstrating interest in joining the project for the 2020 fire season. Experience with prospective applicants predicts that approximately 25 of these people will show up for registration and training in March, eventually building our total force to approximately 56. There are a lot of variables in scheduling people's free time, but the 56 figure represents an optimistic capability to achieve close to **daily staffing** next year.

PENDING PROJECTS:

The list of restoration accomplishments on Page 1 represents an effort to make the Chews Ridge cab and catwalk safe, efficient, and pleasant work environments. Below are listed restoration goals for 2020 and beyond. I have had a brief discussion with the LPF Heritage Program Director Wendy Weaver and she desires additional consultation regarding tower restoration. I will be following up with her.

1. Replace broken window glass
2. Sand and varnish interior window sills
3. Replacement of exterior cab siding
4. Replacement of catwalk floorboards
5. Replacement of wood catwalk railing components
6. Empty existing propane tank

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The FFLA has begun planning for the 2020 season, and we look forward to a continued productive partnership with the LPF. I personally extend our appreciation to the multiple LPF staff members who have assisted us in getting established.

I can be reached at (760) 585-8400 or at PalomarTowers@gmail.com should you need further information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott McClintock". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Scott McClintock, Director
Forest Fire Lookout Association
California-South Region