

Northern Idaho/Montana Chapter Report 2009

MEMBERSHIP:

121 Current Paid Members (44 Plus)

Includes: 6 Membership Renewal Past Due

Net gain of 4 members: 11 New, 6 Dropped, 1 Transferred out

62 Complimentary Memberships (agency personnel, etc.) varies by issue

Chapter finances decreased, with an ending balance of \$4429.22, down over \$2000.00 dollars from the start of the year, in large part due to contributions to the Mineral Peak restoration project.

LEADERSHIP:

Leif Haugen is now the Deputy Director for the Flathead-Glacier region of Northwestern Montana.

Samsara Chapman continued in the Deputy Director position for Central Montana.

ACTIVITIES:

Restoration of the 53' L-4 Mineral Peak tower (Lolo NF, MT) continued with a weeklong project funded primarily by chapter funds and an FFLA Restoration Grant. Certified climbers from the Clearwater NF re-tightened all tower bolts and applied preservative to the tower structure. A refurbished door was also installed, with door latch parts donated by the chapter. Member Libby Langston is coordinating the project. The chapter supported continued restoration efforts at Mallard Peak Lookout (St. Joe NF, ID). A project at Square Mountain Lookout (NezPerce NF, ID) involving replacement of period lightning protection was completed.

Deputy Director Sam Chapman arranged for the loan of a firefinder table for Granite Butte Lookout (Helena NF, MT). Efforts were being made to ready the 20-foot R-6 flat top for staffing while Stonewall Lookout was receiving repairs from winter damage.

The chapter was asked for input, advice, and involvement in the potential relocation of Jack Mountain Lookout (Deerlodge NF, MT). The forest is considering a future airlift of a portion of the lookout.

The chapter declined when offered the task of removing Scenery Mountain Lookout (Kootenai NF, MT) given the lack of access. The chapter's request for salvage was turned down, being told that the removal of the structure would then be put out for bid. A short time later, Forest Service crews removed the cab off the concrete block foundation, using the forest helicopter to transport the materials off the mountain. Liscom Butte (Custer NF, MT) was also removed under a demolition contract. These were the only two lookouts in the area lost in 2009.

Deputy Director Leif Haugen has been involved in readying Thoma Lookout (Flathead NF, MT) for staffing in 2010 after having been vacant for over 30 years. Several other lookouts have been receiving upgrades, at least two (Middle Sister and Hughes Ridge (Idaho Panhandle NFs) are expected to be ready for 2010 staffing.

ARRA (Stimulus Program) funding was allocated for several facilities maintenance projects that included lookouts on the Kootenai NF (MT) and the Clearwater NF (ID). The potential exists for adding additional lookouts to the cabin rental program as a result of this funding. Restoration activities are expected to continue at several sites in 2010, with various levels of support from the chapter.

The chapter will host the 2010 Western Regional Conference in Grangeville, ID June 24-27.

Gary Weber
FFLA-North Idaho/Montana Chapter Director