

NORTHWEST  
MONTANA  
CHAPTER



FOREST FIRE  
LOOKOUT  
ASSOCIATION

S P R I N G 2 0 1 7

## NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

### New Board Member Jonathan Fetter-Vorm



We are extremely pleased to welcome Johnathan Fetter-Vorm as a new member to our Board of Directors this winter.

Jonathan Fetter-Vorm is a writer and artist who moved back to the Flathead Valley with his wife after living in New York City for ten years. He is the author two books -- *Trinity: A Graphic History of the First Atomic Bomb* and *Battle Lines: A Graphic History of the Civil War*. As a member of the board of the Lookout Association, Jonathan is excited to help find new ways to preserve and celebrate the historical legacies of Northwest Montana's lookouts.



## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

Like most Montanans, I love winter, but look forward to the coming of spring and the chance to get back up into the mountains more regularly. Winter has been a busy time for the NWMT-FFLA Board, organizing activities for the spring and coming summer season. We have another dozen worthy projects for you to get involved in this summer, from one day assessments or painting projects to a 10-day wilderness trip. Take it from me, it's a great feeling to contribute to preserving a lookout for your grandkids! I hope you can join us!

Chuck Manning  
Board Chair

**And a warm welcome  
back to Kjell Petersen –  
Kjell has rejoined our  
Lookout Board after a  
brief absence!**





## Wilderness Speaker Series A Great Success

This year NWMT-FFLA was a co-sponsor of the popular winter speaker series along with the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and Montana Wilderness Association. The three evening talks were all standing-room-only, and helped remind us of the pleasures and mystery of being in the wild country, and perhaps enticed a few of us to plan new wilderness adventures! We were also pleased to welcome some new members through a special 3-way membership at the final event. Programs included:

- Jessy Coltrane - Kalispell Area Wildlife Biologist - ***Mountain Goats of NW Montana***
- Amy Pearson – Adjunct Professor, Humanities, FVCC – ***100 Days of Solitude***
- Pete Fromm – Wilderness Author – ***“The NAMES OF THE STARS, A Life in the Wilds”***, a ***book reading and discussion***

If you missed these engaging talks, you can find links to their recordings on our website at <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/2017events>

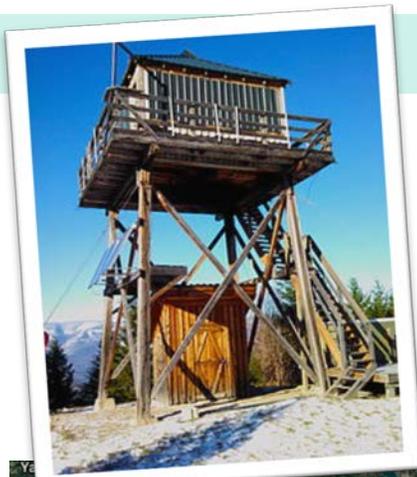


## 100 Days of Solitude

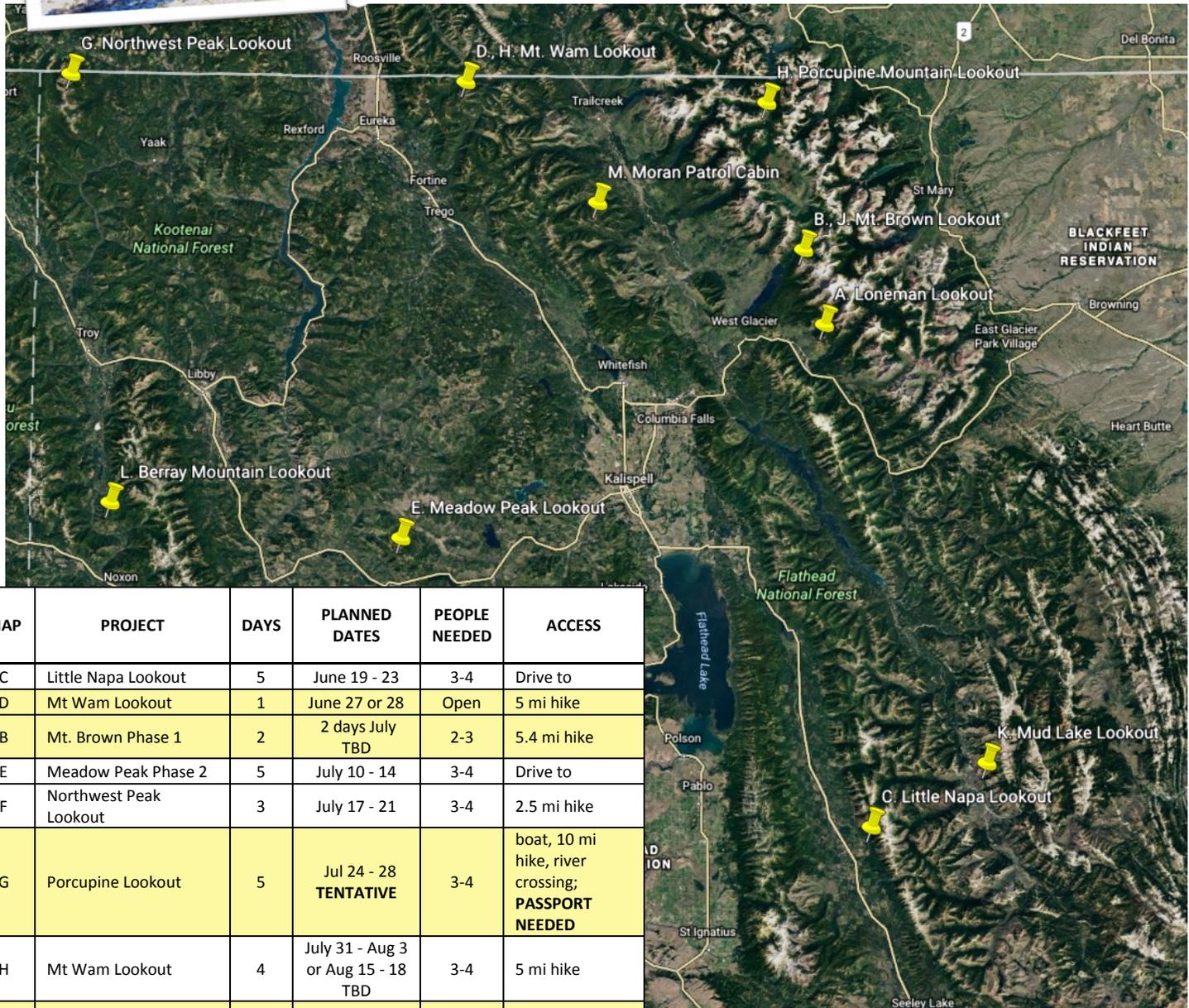
**Amy Pearson**

*A book of poetry and photos created during Amy's 98 day stay at Mt. Jumbo Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness is becoming a reality! The book goes to the publisher in May, and will be published by Many Voices Press at FVCC. It should be available in Kalispell by Fall 2017. You can contact Amy at [amy.pearson@asu.edu](mailto:amy.pearson@asu.edu) for additional information or to obtain a copy of the book. Amy is a great supporter of lookouts and wild places. We congratulate her on this tremendous achievement!*

# 2017 PROJECTS



We have a full slate of great projects, big and small, lined up for this summer. Projects range from remote reaches of Glacier National Park, to the Yaak, to the Swan Valley and the Bob Marshall Wilderness. You can help with assessments, painting a lookout, or more complex restoration projects. Find more details later in the newsletter, and sign up to volunteer on our website at <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/2017projects>



MAP	PROJECT	DAYS	PLANNED DATES	PEOPLE NEEDED	ACCESS
C	Little Napa Lookout	5	June 19 - 23	3-4	Drive to
D	Mt Wam Lookout	1	June 27 or 28	Open	5 mi hike
B	Mt. Brown Phase 1	2	2 days July TBD	2-3	5.4 mi hike
E	Meadow Peak Phase 2	5	July 10 - 14	3-4	Drive to
F	Northwest Peak Lookout	3	July 17 - 21	3-4	2.5 mi hike
G	Porcupine Lookout	5	Jul 24 - 28 <b>TENTATIVE</b>	3-4	boat, 10 mi hike, river crossing; <b>PASSPORT NEEDED</b>
H	Mt Wam Lookout	4	July 31 - Aug 3 or Aug 15 - 18 TBD	3-4	5 mi hike
A	Loneman Lookout	2	2 days July/Aug TBD	2-3	7 mile hike, river crossing
I	Mt. Brown Phase 2	2-3	July/Aug TBD	2-3	5.4 mi hike
J	Mud Lake Lookout Phase 3	10	Aug 4 - 13	3	23 mi hike
K	Berray Mountain Lookout	1	Aug 20	Open	1.5 mi hike
L	Moran Patrol Cabin	1	Aug 26	Open	4 mi hike

ASSESSMENTS IN YELLOW

## 2017 PROJECTS

### Loneman Lookout Assessment

**Projected Dates:** July/Aug dates TBD

**Duration:** 2 days

**Volunteers Needed:** 2-3

**Access:** 7 miles to lookout, river crossing

The overnight trip to this spectacular lookout in Glacier National Park will be planned once the lookout is accessible and a safe river crossing is possible. Volunteers will conduct a complete assessment of work needs so that future restoration projects can be planned.



### Mount Brown Assessment

**Projected Dates:** July dates TBD

**Duration:** 2 days

**Volunteers Needed:** 2

**Access:** 5.4 miles to lookout

This is another Glacier National Park overnight trip to conduct a detailed assessment of work needs and finalize a work project for later in this summer. Good chance of goat sightings on this scenic hike!



### Little Napa Lookout

**Projected Dates:** June 19 – 23

**Duration:** 5 days

**Volunteers Needed:** 3-4

**Access:** Drive to, carpool from Bigfork daily

This project will complete last year's major effort at Little Napa on the Swan State Forest, by rebuilding the catwalk, catwalk opening, and railing and then weather sealing the catwalk, and railings as well as the new stairs, which were rebuilt last year. When this project is completed, Little Napa lookout should be ready to withstand many years of inclement weather.



## MORE PROJECTS

### Mount Wam Lookout Assessment

**Projected Dates:** June 27 or 28 TBD

**Duration:** 1 day

**Volunteers Needed:** Open

**Access:** 5 mile hike to lookout

Join us for a day hike to Mount Wam in the Yaak to learn more about NWMT-FFLA, and lookout restoration, and participate in a condition assessment to help finalize detailed work plans for a restoration project later in the summer.



### Meadow Peak Lookout Phase 2

**Projected Dates:** July 10 – 14

**Duration:** 5 days

**Volunteers Needed:** 3-4

**Access:** Drive to

Work this summer will continue a major restoration project on the Libby District of the Kootenai NF. Planned work includes completing replacement/repair of structural material on the tower, rebuilding stairs and handrail to the catwalk, removing and replacing the ceiling, reinstalling the shutters and repairing or replacing failed catwalk and handrail materials. For this project, the Forest Service will be providing food and a camp cook, so bring a hearty appetite!

## AND MORE PROJECTS



### Northwest Peak Lookout

Projected Dates: July 17 - 21

Duration: 3 days

Volunteers Needed: 3-4

Access: 2.5 mile hike to lookout

This will be the beginning of a major restoration project at Northwest Peak on the Three Rivers District of the Kootenai NF. This year, we plan a major carpentry effort to remove and replace the ceiling, reinforce roof trusses, and repair shutters. We would love to put your skills to work!



### Porcupine Peak Lookout Assessment

Projected Dates: Target July 24 - 28 - flexible

Duration: 5 days

Volunteers Needed: 2-3

Access: boat/10 mile hike, creek crossing – **Passport needed**



Porcupine Lookout, in the remote reaches of Glacier Park, is a challenge to get to. Participants in this project will go to Waterton, take a boat to Goat Haunt to begin the hike south to the lookout. Passports are a must! If you can join us, you will be treated to views of Glacier that few people ever see. Oh, and by the way, you can help NWMT-FFLA by taking photos to support the application for the National Historic Register, and conduct a thorough condition assessment for future restoration needs.

## STILL MORE PROJECTS

### Mount Wam Lookout

**Projected Dates:** July 31 – Aug 3 or Aug 15 – 18 TBD

**Duration:** 4 days

**Volunteers Needed:** 3-4

**Access:** 5 mile hike to lookout

Mount Wam in the Yaak is due for some tender loving care. Come spend a week with us and you can see all aspects of lookout restoration work. We plan to re-level the structure and rebuild stone piers, repair window and door shutters, and repair or replace the lookout door. We have a busy week in store, and would love for you to join us!



### Mount Brown Lookout Phase 2

**Projected Dates:** July/Aug TBD

**Duration:** 2-3 days

**Volunteers Needed:** 2-3

**Access:** 5.4 mile hike to lookout

Come work with us to restore Mount Brown Lookout in Glacier National Park. The assessment in early summer will help determine exact work needs for Mount Brown. The project is expected to include better securing the shutters on the lookout and touching up the paint where needed.

Additional work may be prioritized as a result of the assessment.



## AND MORE PROJECTS !

### Mud Lake Lookout Phase 3

Projected Dates: Aug 4 - 13

Duration: 10 days

Volunteers Needed: 3

Access: 23 mile backpack into BMWC



This is the continuation of last year's major foundation work. Volunteers will relieve the roof loading on the windows, rebuild the west wall, remove, reglaze and paint all of the windows, and install a chimney boot. Volunteers on this project will be treated to a very special wilderness experience, hiking from Meadow Creek Gorge Trailhead to the lookout, and camping at two backcountry cabins, to get to the remote Bob Marshall Wilderness worksite on the Spotted Bear Ranger District of the Flathead NF.

### Berray Mountain Lookout Assessment

Projected Dates: August 20

Duration: 1 day

Volunteers Needed: open

Access: 1.5 mile hike to lookout

Join us for a day hike to Berray Mountain Lookout in Trout Creek on the Kootenai NF and assist in a detailed condition assessment of a historic lookout. This lookout is scheduled for stabilization with a new roof this summer with full restoration to begin in 2018.



### Moran Patrol Cabin

Projected Dates: August 26

Duration: 1 day

Volunteers Needed: 2-4

Access: 4 mile hike to lookout

This is a great one-day project to get involved in lookout restoration. Come spend a lovely summer day helping to paint the rafter tails and eaves on Moran patrol cabin, have lunch and enjoy the company of other lookout enthusiasts. An easy project to delve into volunteering!



## Osborn Lookout Story Marks 1<sup>st</sup> Historical Collection Added to U of M Library

One of the most rewarding “tasks” we have with the NWMT-FFLA is connecting with past and present lookouts and their families and friends to preserve their stories for all people to enjoy. We have begun conducting oral history interviews and cataloging a number of old photographs. The University of Montana Mansfield Library has agreed to archive our collections, and we are pleased to announce that our first collection, which will include an audio interview, a written transcription, and 14 photographs, will soon be available worldwide at:

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

The collection documents the 1948 lookout experience of honeymooners Joe and Becky Osborn at the Spotted Bear Lookout, Flathead National Forest. The Osborns' daughter, Julie, provided the interview and photographs.



Their journey began when Joe, a Quaker, joined the Civilian Public Service (CPS) as a conscientious objector during WWII. He left Indiana to volunteer as a smokejumper in Missoula, never having been west of Chicago. Joe fell in love with the Rockies and Montana. Most jumpers were in their teens or early 20s, but Joe, born in 1911, was one of oldest jumpers, so they nicknamed him “Pappy.” He had a real fear of heights, which carried through the rest of his life. He didn’t like to talk about jumping out of the old Ford Tri-Motor, but he enjoyed fighting fires.

After the war, Joe went back East and taught Engineering at Lehigh University. He met Becky McNees, another Quaker teaching English at the Moravian College for Women, and they married in 1948. Joe’s love for Montana brought them back in a Model T as volunteers at the Spotted Bear Lookout with the Flathead National Forest. (See also the Fall Newsletter story of Dale and Marlene Zorn, who honeymooned on Mt. Brown in 1956.)



A pack string brought their food and some water. Afterwards, Joe would collect snow and Becky would melt it to augment their water supply.

Both were very comfortable living at the lookout. Becky brought a large number of books and spent the summer reading. Joe most likely hiked. Meals included ham (possibly Spam in a can), lentil soup, baked beans, and cinnamon buns that Joe made once a week for years.

Joe had an affinity for photography, and although he probably had just a Brownie camera at the lookout, several surviving photos from that summer demonstrate his expertise. They show bits of life at the lookout that aren't often seen: Becky gathering snow to melt; stirring a pot on the lookout steps; hanging laundry below the lookout as it blows in the wind; and one photograph with the original lookout in the background and the new lookout (now also gone, replaced by the current one) in the foreground. In later years, Joe bought quality camera equipment, climbed to his favorite peaks and composed photographs, waiting for the sun to reach a particular angle or for a cloud formation to come in just right.

The couple had some fires, but none that amounted to much. Lightning unnerved Becky if she was alone in the tower and Joe was out. She always worried Joe might be struck; he never was.

They found the lookout tranquil. Joe carried his smokejumping and lookout experiences with him for the rest of his life. He loved camping, hiking, and snowshoeing, and was impervious to cold.

Joe loved Montana, and Julie said, "If he had not gotten himself so established in Lehigh for the second time, I think he would have been happy to go and live in Montana for the rest of his life. Instead, he went back for summers." Becky's ties were not as strong. Eventually they divorced. Becky didn't return to Montana, but Joe went often, including setting up a trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness along with many of his CPS buddies when all were 70 plus, including Pete, the packer.

Both Becky and Joe said their time on the Spotted Bear Lookout was "a really happy experience." Joe died 1991, and Becky lived until 2014.

Julie Osborn has "thousands of slides and negatives" and black and white photographs taken by her father. Many she thinks are from Bozeman, the Bridger Range, and Yellowstone, and she hopes to be able to identify and scan them. If you have an interest in helping her, please contact Beth Hodder at [bhodder1018@montanasky.us](mailto:bhodder1018@montanasky.us).



## INSPIRATION AT JUMBO LOOKOUT



your life is, 9/25

boiled coffee in the morning  
 a swift glance towards the unending horizon  
 a lookout for that griz and cubs  
 grouse chirping on the rock ledge  
 sunlight streaming through the windows  
 weather reports to give, to receive  
 radio clatter  
 an eye on the smokes calmed down since last night  
 a rationing of cigarettes  
 a dream of family and friends  
 a dream of foreign lands once seen  
 a rationing of water  
 tired legs and creaky knees  
 radio clatter  
 a trip down to the pit toilet, bearspray in hand  
 an open day set out before you,  
 only you

**Amy Pearson** is a poet, teacher, photographer, and wilderness advocate. She currently works as an Adjunct Professor of Humanities at Flathead Valley Community College. She plans to spend this summer on another lookout, this time on the Lolo.

# Spring Fundraisers



Help build a fund for the restoration of Northwest Peak Lookout!



**BREWS FOR BENEFITS**  
Join us for a beer \$1 of every one sold helps support the preservation of fire lookouts in Northwest Montana.

**THURSDAY MARCH 2, 2017**  
5:00 - 8:00 PM

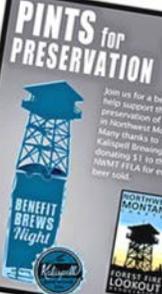
**CABINET MOUNTAIN BREWING CO.**  
206 MINERAL AVE.  
DOWNTOWN LIBBY




Help fund restoration work on MT Brown and Porcupine Lookouts!

**PINTS for PRESERVATION**  
Tuesday March 14 5-8

Join us for a beer and help support the preservation of lookouts in Northwest Montana. Many thanks to Kalspell Brewing for donating \$1 to the NWMT FFLA for every beer sold.





**Glacier National Park**




**H.A. BREWING CO. PINT NITE**  
Wednesday APRIL 12, 2017 3:00 - 8:00



**NORTHWEST MONTANA FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION**

H.A. Brewing Co. will donate \$1 for every pint sold\* and \$2 for every large pizza sold to the NWMT-FFLA.



**Mount Wam Lookout**

Join the Northwest Montana Forest Fire Lookout Association at the H.A. Brewing Company to help raise funds for the operation and maintenance of Mount Wam Lookout, located on the Kootenai National Forest in the Ten Lakes Scenic Area.

\* Built in 1930, Mount Wam Lookout sits atop its namesake peak at an elevation of 7,203 feet. The lookout was used regularly as an observation point for spotting forest fires between 1931 and 1939 and was last restored in 1999 and is currently in the Forest Service's rental program.

THE NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called to supporting Federal and State agencies in the restoration and staffing of fire lookouts and support structures on public lands.



...one pint at a time

**COMMUNITY TAP NIGHT**

Wednesday Nights from 6-9pm

**TAMARACK BREWING COMPANY**

75 cents from every pint sold benefits a local charity or community project

February 15th

**NORTHWEST MONTANA FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION**

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**TAMARACK BREWING COMPANY**  
18 Road - Libby, MT - 59922 - 406-844-0544  
visit [www.tamarackbrewing.com](http://www.tamarackbrewing.com)




Keep up with the latest happenings on our website

<http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>



and



<https://www.facebook.com/northwestmontanalogouts>

<https://www.instagram.com/nwmtlookouts/>

now we exhale, *haiku*, 8/17

i can see the rains  
coming down through the valleys  
rain and tears mix now

thunder brought violence  
to the landscape, and lightning  
now we all exhale

Amy Pearson



NWMT-FFLA

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