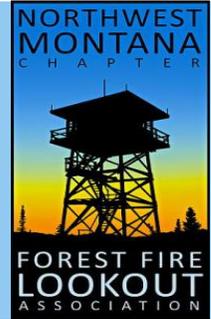


NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

*Dedicated to the preservation of forest fire lookouts
in Northwest Montana*



Spring 2018

Photo Credit: John Ashley

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

2018 promises to be another exciting and busy year for the NWMT-FFLA. This newsletter will introduce you to the full slate of 11 restoration and maintenance projects we have planned for the summer. Volunteer sign-up is well underway; we hope you will check out our website and consider pitching in for one of the projects which still has volunteer spots available at the time this newsletter is going out. Or add your name to the stand-by list, as there are sometimes unforeseen cancellations.

We welcome three new members to our Board, and look forward to your getting to know Deb, Troy, and Doug as they get involved in many aspects of our projects, events, and overseeing the organization. I particularly want to thank Lori Roberts for her years of service on our Board, as she moves on to other challenges.

As spring seems like it may finally be approaching. I can't wait to get back up to a lookout. How about joining me?

Chuck Manning
Board Chair



Volunteer sign-up now in progress at

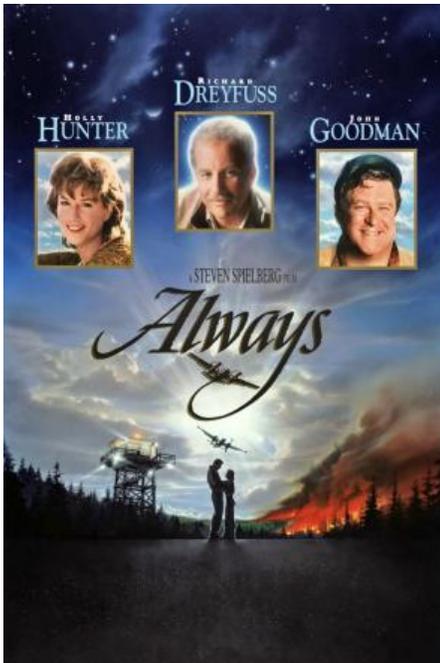
<http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/2018-projects>

We need volunteers for:

- Cyclone LO
- Mud Lake LO
- Huckleberry LO
- Loneman LO

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Movie Night at the Dome Theatre in Libby



When: June 3 at 6 pm

There are more than 30 lookouts on the Kootenai National Forest, many in need of restoration and maintenance. We want to cultivate more members and volunteers in the Kootenai area to help us with numerous upcoming worthwhile projects to help keep these lookouts standing strong, always!

Please bring your family, invite your friends, and join us for a family movie night with popcorn to see this classic movie that was filmed in the Libby area! We will also be showing a short movie about fire lookout Leif Haugan from the Flathead area. And you could even win a cool raffle to support lookout restoration!

Montana Preservation Road Show June 13 - 16, Columbia Falls



The Road Show launches from a different small town every other year with a mission to immerse participants in the history and culture of rural Montana, spotlight great local preservation efforts, and raise awareness of the importance of preserving Montana's historic buildings and cultural landscapes. In the Flathead, that means taking the path less traveled to see barns and homesteads, tribal landscapes, industrial buildings, ranger stations and lookouts, depots, hotels, and more.

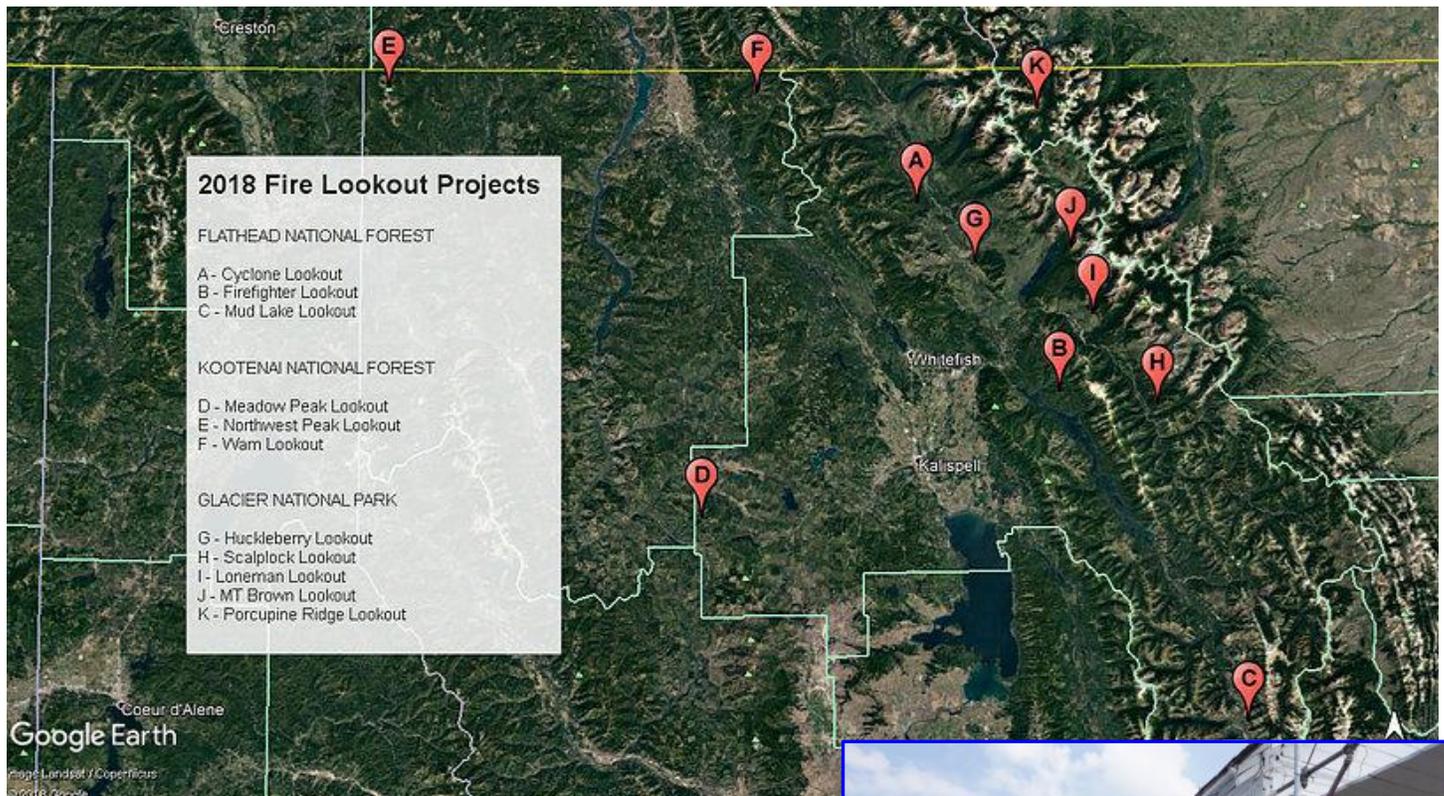
NWMT-FFLA joins in to provide expertise on historic lookouts, and will help conduct a window restoration workshop.

Details at <http://www.preservemontana.org/2018-road-show>

2018 Projects

This summer we have 11 more important projects in store, from a major re-roofing of Huckleberry Lookout in Glacier Park, to re-painting of Cyclone and Firefighter Lookouts on the Flathead Forest. Several projects on the Kootenai are a continuation of large multi-year projects, with faithful returning volunteers. Many thanks! This year we will be working with Glacier Park to help restore or maintain five lookouts, including the remote and awesome Porcupine Ridge.

We are trying to be flexible in scheduling, allowing volunteers to sign up with interest for less than the full number of days of the project. We will do our best to schedule multiple people to meet the full project needs. So if you only have a few days, please still consider joining in the fun!



For more detailed project information or to sign up, please visit--

<http://www.nwmt-ffla.org/2018-projects>



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK



Huckleberry Lookout

Target Dates: July 5 – 11

Commitment Days: 2 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 2 – 3 at a time

Access: 6 mile hike from trailhead on Camas Creek road west of Apgar

Work: Volunteers will be assisting GNP employees with reroofing shingles and ridge cap, repair/replacing siding as needed and general maintenance of the lookout

Loneman Lookout

Target Dates: August 1 - 8

Commitment Days: 2 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 2 at a time

Access: 7 mile hike with 2 water crossings

Work outline: Volunteers will be assisting GNP employees to replace siding and shutters, repair/replace catwalk, work on structural framing, and do general maintenance



Mt. Brown Lookout

Target Dates: August 15 - 22

Commitment Days: 2 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 2 – 3 at a time

Access: 5.5 mile hike from Trailhead near Lake McDonald Lodge

Work outline: Volunteers will assist GNP employees to repair window shutters, storage door at ground level and perform general maintenance

Scalplack Lookout

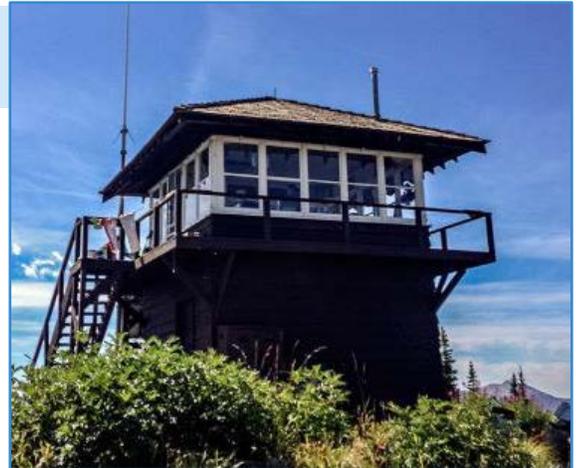
Target Dates: July 18-25

Commitment Days: 2 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 2 at a time

Access: 4.5 mile hike from Walton Ranger Station

Work: Volunteers assist GNP employees to will repair/replace the catwalk and stairs and perform general maintenance



Porcupine Lookout

Target Dates: August – Sept Firm Dates TBA

Commitment Days: Entire 10 day project

Number of Volunteers: 2 - 3

Access: 10 mile hike beginning at Goat Haunt/
Waterton, Alberta; wet water stream crossing;
passport required, eh!

Work outline: Volunteers will be assisting GNP employees to replace siding and shutters, remove solar panels and perform general maintenance



FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST



Cyclone Lookout

Target Dates: July 12 - 17

Commitment Days: 1 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 3-4 at a time

Access: 2.5 mile hike from Trailhead up the North Fork

Work outline: Scraping, sanding and painting the exterior of the lookout



Firefighter Lookout

Target Dates: July 27 - 31

Commitment Days: 1 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 3-4 at a time

Access: Drive to access above Hungry Horse Reservoir

Work: Volunteers will scrape, sand and paint the exterior of the lookout.

Mud Lake Lookout

Target Dates: August 10 - 19

Commitment Days: full project

Number of Volunteers: 2 - 3

Access: 23 mile hike into the Bob Marshall Wilderness beginning at the Meadow Creek Gorge Trailhead



Work outline: This should be the final phase of the major project we began at Mud lake in 2016. This year's Volunteers will be replacing a window, reglazing and resetting windows, rehanging the door, reroofing the outhouse and doing some other final touches to the maintenance needs.

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

Meadow Peak Lookout

Target Dates: July 9-13

Commitment Days: 1 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 4-6 at a time

Access: Drive to lookout from lodging at Historic Raven Ridge Ranger Station

Work outline: Continuing last year's work, volunteers will complete replacement/repair of structural material on the tower, and reinstall the shutters, rebuild the stairs and handrail to the catwalk, and replace or repair failed catwalk and handrails.





Northwest Peak Lookout

Target Dates: July 19 - 24

Commitment Days: 2 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 3 - 4 at a time

Access: 2.5 mile hike from trailhead in the Yaak

Work outline: Volunteers will do a variety of carpentry tasks including replacing/repairing window shutter headers, replacing the shutters, and replacing/repairing window sills.

Mount Wam Lookout

Target Dates: July 30 – Aug 6

Commitment Days: 2 or more days

Number of Volunteers: 3 - 4 at a time

Access: 5 mile hike from trailhead in the Ten Lakes area, Fortine Ranger District

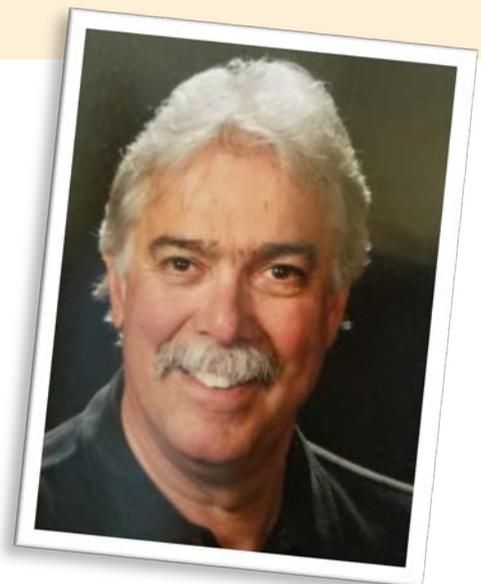
Work outline: This year volunteers will begin a major multi-year project to include leveling the structure and rebuilding the stone piers, repair/replacing the window and door sills, and window and shutter headers, and replacing shutters.



MEET YOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Doug Hatton is a lifelong valley native, and currently a semi-retired property manager. He loves the area and all it has to offer. Doug says he wanted to give back to the community and likes the idea of an all-volunteer organization that is helping to restore and preserve local history.

Doug Hatton

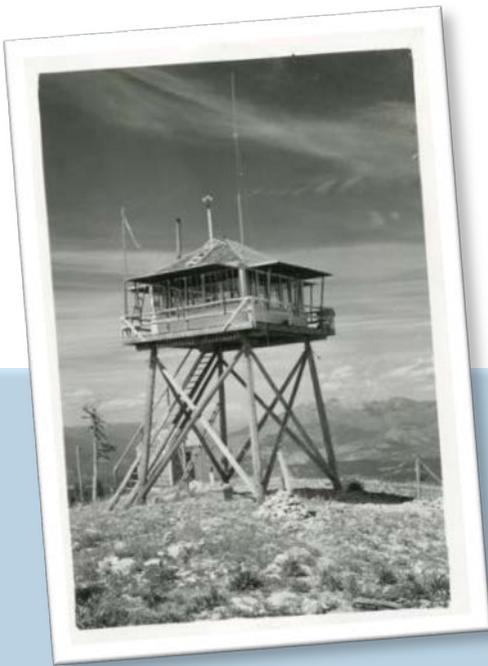




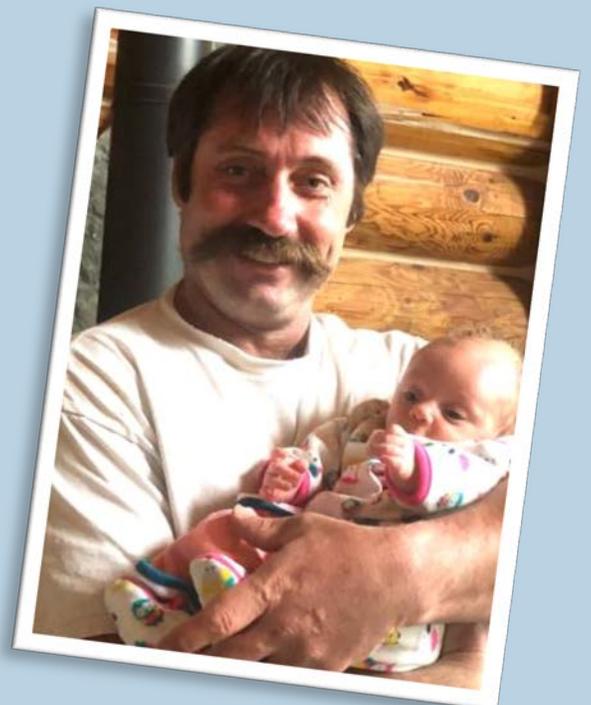
Deb Mucklow Starling

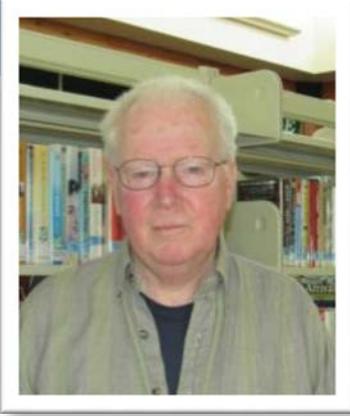
Deb says –

“I am excited to be joining the board of the Northwest Montana Lookout Association. Growing up in Colorado I got to visit fire lookouts with family on hiking and jeeping trips. I graduated from Colorado State University in Forest Management. I worked for the Forest Service for 37 years on the Kootenai and Flathead National Forests, retiring April 2017. This great opportunity allowed me to be engaged with lookouts in many means. First and foremost I visited lookouts to learn the country and enjoy the hikes. While working on the Fortine Ranger District, on the Kootenai NF, I served as the relief lookout for about 5 years for Mount Marston. The experience of staffing the lookout during a lightning bust – trying to keep calm, get good notes with the fire finder and getting azimuths, and just enjoying something most never encounter made me a true believer in staffing lookouts. The past 18 years on the Spotted Bear RD I supported volunteer projects to make improvements on Spotted Bear, Jumbo and Mud Lake Lookouts. I invite all to visit a lookout and have that great experience.”



Troy Denman has deep roots in the Flathead valley. He grew up in Kalispell and now works in Whitefish in the family construction business, and is raising a young family. His motto, “Work, hard, play, hard!” He loves his outdoors time and looks forward to this chance to use his talents to give back to the community by helping preserve historic lookouts!





Tom Jones

Mud Lake Lookout 1971: A Unique Experience Despite Loneliness, Boredom, and Running Out of Food

Tom Jones was teaching in Libby in the late '60s, and had summers to work for the Forest Service on a fire crew at the Canoe Gulch Ranger Station with the Kootenai National Forest. Maintaining trails while on the crew, he discovered a fascination for old lookouts. He was offered a job at the Mud Lake Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness in 1971.

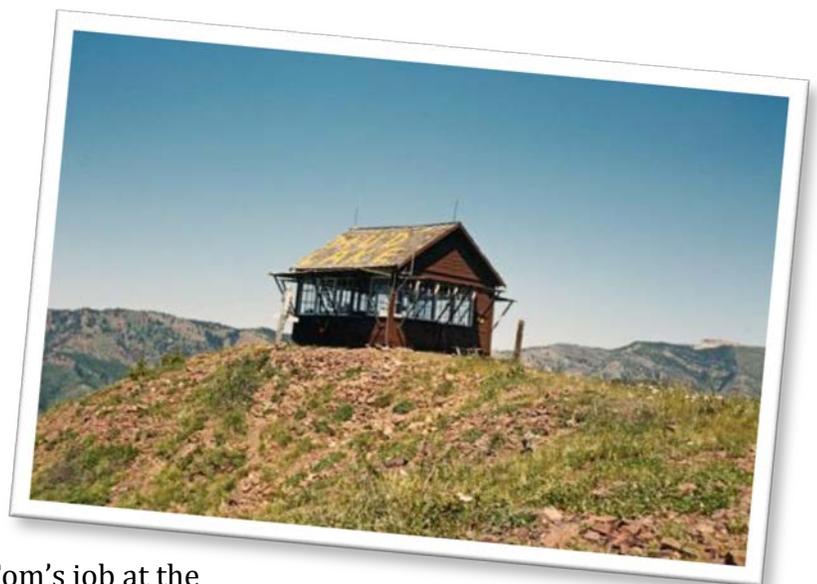
Tom reported to work at the Condon Ranger Station. After a week there, he was packed in on horseback to Mud Lake via the Holland Lake trail, with Drew Finley, the Jumbo Mountain lookout and Forest Service employees, Dave Miller, who was at Big Prairie all summer, and Don Bennett, Tom's supervisor.

Mud Lake sits on the ground in a remote location. Communication was through a portable FS radio or—less reliably—an antique telephone to talk to Big Prairie or Jumbo. "I couldn't [talk] if the wind was blowing for some reason, if the wind was knocking the wires around in the trees."

Initially, a mule carried 20-gallon cans of drinking water, but when the water got low, Tom walked about 1/2-hour downhill to a spring, filling a water bag. "I enjoyed it. Walking up the hill with four gallons of water on my back, it was a workout."

Food was an issue. Tom was sent to Sykes Market in Kalispell to buy his food for the whole summer. At 24 or 25, Tom wasn't much of a meal planner, and got pretty low the last two weeks at Mud Lake. He was told at Sykes that if he ran low, he'd be supplied. "That never happened...I experienced what it was like to hunt for an animal when you're hungry. brought a "goodie basket," packed in by Dale Duff. Sharpens the senses." A call to Big Prairie

Loneliness and boredom took their toll. Tom left the lookout once on days off and hiked to Big Prairie, "where I [could] talk to people." Another time, his wife and young daughter met him at the Meadow Creek trailhead, one Wednesday, after Tom hiked to Black Bear cabin and camped, got up the next morning, and hiked out to Meadow Creek. He said goodbye to his family on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. and hiked 23-miles to Mud Lake, arriving about 11:00 that night.



Relaying messages proved to be a big part of Tom's job at the lookout. Once he directed messages to 16 smokejumpers for a few

Photo courtesy of Tom Jones



days because they could not communicate with Spotted Bear due to poor coverage in the Bob Marshall. “So when they need food, they need water dropped to them, or whatever—the conditions of the fire—everything went through me. I loved it. Great boredom breaker.” Another time, Tom relayed messages between Keith Granrud, a wilderness ranger at the time, who was at Big Salmon Lake, and Spotted Bear. A backpacker swimming with a friend at the lake, had drowned. “They searched and searched, but they never found the drowning victim.”

Tom said the hardest thing about being at the lookout was the loneliness. “I could go without food. I think my craving for human contact—well, I’ve never experienced severe starvation, so I don’t know what that’s like, but to experience a craving for human contact was memorable.”

The best thing about his experience? “I thought this is what it used to be like before people were coming and going in motorized vehicles, and I thought this is really unique. I don’t know where I could experience this anywhere in the United States other than a place like the middle of the Bob Marshall.”

Although Tom enjoyed his time at the lookout, he preferred working fires, and said he wouldn’t be a lookout again; however, he recommends it to anyone who is so inclined. “It’s a unique experience, especially a wilderness lookout, and that’s something I want to emphasize here: the lack of visitors. Most lookouts are accessed by a road these days. This was accessed by trail. The location of this lookout was as close to the center of the Bob Marshall Wilderness as you can get, right up above Big Salmon Lake. This is true isolation, for the lower 48 United States. This is about as geographically isolated as you can get. So it was truly a unique lookout in that sense—the isolation of it.”

This article by Beth Hodder is based on an interview that is part of the NWMT-FFLA Oral History Project to preserve the stories associated with the lookouts (people and places) of Northwest Montana. This and other interviews will be archived at the University of Montana Library, and can be found online at <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/nwmt-ffla/>

Mud Lake Journal Excerpts

Note: The journals are at the Spotted Bear Ranger District office. They were transcribed by Sue Dailey, in July 2002, with the original spelling and punctuation.

...I’ll agree this place is a wreck. The first storm that came, I was recording strikes and in the meantime the water was soaking the mattress real good...

*James Wigger
Ene, Arkansas (part of 1966)*

More Mud Lake Journal Excerpts...

...I would like to say that the weather was mitty dammed cold up here. The wind blows so hard that the lookout just jumps up and down, but the windows don't leak very much.

If you man this lookout be sure you have a gun with you. If you don't have a gun get one right away because the bear have no respect for you if you have no gun, and these bear seem to know if you have any guns with you.

Now this kid named Bottoms didn't have any guns with him and while he was down after water one day a Grizzle and three cubs treed him and he stayed there for one and one half hours before she finely left, and then one morning he woke up and when he looked out the east windows there stood a big grizzle that took up all the one section of windows on the east side and he didn't have to much trouble getting rid of this bear.

*--James A. Seek
Kalispell, Mont (1953)*

...You will find the roof a very comforting place at times and a hard hat during thunder storms almost a must if you want to come down alive. If the phone quits working just look at the saw tooth lightning arrestor but for gods sake don't go down this little hill unless it is necessary. It is a long ways back up! If the garbage pits are a mess don't let it bother you, the bears won't let them stay neat for long...the spring isn't quite so nice. It is 1 ½ miles down the hill and fifty miles back up. There isn't enough water there to soak up the water bag but getting was is fun anyway. If the chipmunks insist on raiding the kitchen just throw them out and close the door.

*Darwin (Swede) Pfaffinger
Lookout July 9, - Sept. 10, 1956*

...The bears are sort of calmed down since I have started blasting ass-holes. I only had to shot one, that was getting pretty brave...The water hole is in good shape since hey put the barrel in it, it's really good, clean, cold water. You will have to dig a garbage pit and will have to dig a new "head" also...The pack-rats are a bother but I got rid of a half a dozen for you. The chipmunks will eat bread out of your hand.

Jack L. Schield

This lookout leaks and one can take a bath over by the stove after a good rain.

*Bob Hayne
College Heights, Ark.
July 7-Aug. 26, 1966*

...Every time someone does come up, you demand that they bring two of those milk cans full of water. I've only had to go for water two times this summer, and the second time, in the first week of August, the spring was completely dry. I hae endured the last three weeks consuming only four gallons of water, which is a pretty good trick.

...If you should gety any rain the roof makes into a great shower faucet. Sleeping outside on the rocks is more comfortable that the bed.

This Mountain Nourishes Me

Kjell Petersen

I am the intruder;
Families of eyes peer warily from the shadows.
Confusion, fear and concern give way to acceptance.
Not viewed as friend, not seen as enemy.
Not bothering, not bothered.

Every voice respected.
Racked bulls bugling, gathering autumn families.
Chirping grouse harvesting clicking grasshoppers.
Scolding circus chipmunks falling from high-wire beargrass blooms.
Manic coyotes summon smoke-cloaked moons;
All voices belong here.

Unaccustomed silence invades;
At first immense, becomes a friend.
Time to visit rooms of my mind, undusted for decades.
What was it that seemed so important all those years?
Straining at times to confirm I am still alive;
A droning horsefly draws me back.
Solitude fills my soul.

Each day awakens slowly, no need to rush.
Welcomed anticipation as the sun claws to the ridge,
Spilling over shark-teeth peaks to flood the veins.
Every hour, never to be seen again,
Afforded the same attention and respect.
Satisfied but reluctant, poised on the edge;
Bids farewell and is snapped from view;
Replaced by the stealth of night creatures.

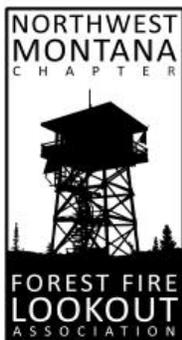
Birth, life, death – relentless change.
Some in minutes, others timeless.
The need to renew is not questioned.
Snowghosts behead trees, williwaws claim more.
Rainless summer days, heating, drying, preparing.
A rumbling sky announces the start;
Releasing a hundred years of stored sunshine.
At times the cycle may yield to us,
Ultimately it will win and we must step aside.

I am a visitor; accepted, respected.
Time to enjoy the Peace.
Peace to enjoy the Time.
This mountain nourishes me;
It tells me good stories.



2018 COMMUNITY GRANT SUPPORTS GLACIER PARK LOOKOUT PROJECTS

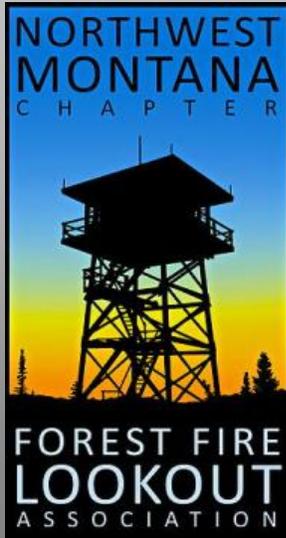
We are pleased to announce that NWMT-FFLA was awarded a \$2000 Community Grant from the Whitefish Community Foundation to support our volunteers in the restoration and maintenance of Huckleberry, Scalplock and Mount Brown lookouts, in partnership with Glacier National Park. We look forward to reporting back to you in the fall on the success of this new partnership!



WILDERNESS SPEAKER SERIES

This winter, NWMT-FFLA was once again a partner in sponsoring this well-attended three-month speaker series. If you were unable to attend, you can see the lectures at the following links

- Feb 2018 [Wild & Scenic Rivers 50th Anniversary](#) Coulter Pence, Wilderness & Wild and Scenic River Manager, Forest Service & John Fraley, Author and Adjunct Instructor at FVCC
- March 2018 [The Untrammelled Observatory - Lessons from Wildfire](#) Andrew Larson, Professor, U of M
- April 2018 [The Recovery of the Grizzly Bear in Montana](#) Rick Mace, Wildlife Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks



BENEFIT SOCIALS

We will again be working with a number of businesses to have evening socials where a portion of the proceeds will benefit NWMT-FFLA restoration projects. Please join us:

Tuesday May 22-- Kalispell Brewing Company

Thursday May 31 -- Cabinet Brewing Company, Libby

Wednesday June 20 - HA Brewing, Eureka

TBA - Five Guys Burgers & Fries, MacKenzie River Pizza

More details TBA. We hope you can join us!



Stop in and visit our booth at

FAMILY FORESTRY EXPO

Saturday May 12, 2018

9:00 - 3:00

Trumbull Ck. Educational Forest
Between Whitefish & C Falls

<http://www.familyforestry.net/>

Stay tuned for info this spring on our 2018 fundraisers & projects on
or our website: <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>

