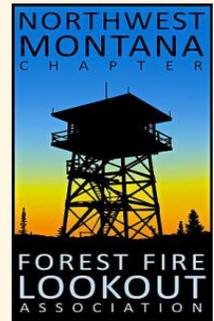


# NORTHWEST MONTANA LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

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

**WINTER 2021**



McGuire LO 1979, June 2021, & Oct 2021

## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

2021 may have been a record hot year in the Flathead, but lots of cool things were happening up at the lookouts. This year we had 37 volunteers complete more than 250 person days of work for our Agency Partners for an in-kind value of more than \$60,000.

Our project at McGuire Lookout made major progress, as you can see in the photos above. The summer's work was diverse. From installation of a much-needed new toilet, to re-glazing windows at two lookouts, to foundation work and painting, our volunteers continue to devotedly pour TLC into fire lookouts in Glacier National Park, the Kootenai National Forest and Stillwater State Forest. Each year we also do assessments of lookout condition and work needs to help Agencies develop longer term plans for other lookouts in their inventory.

As we enjoy the holidays, we are so thankful for our many Partners, volunteers, and donors who continue to support our mission of caring for northwest Montana's lookouts. From the entire Lookout Board, Best wishes for a wonderful 2022.

*Chuck Manning*  
Board Chair

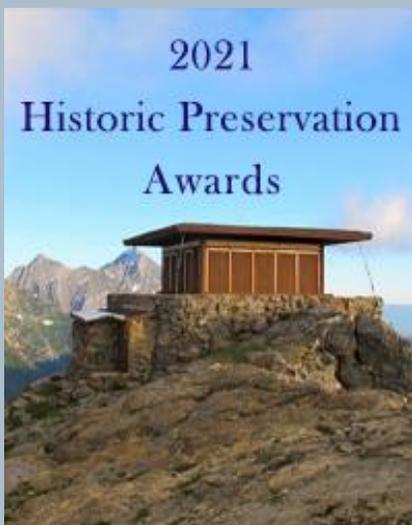


### Welcome to our Newest Board Member Pete Thomas

A Whitefish local for 25 years, Pete has always been attracted to the rugged mountains of Northwest Montana, the recreational activities they offer, and the camaraderie of the local community. Outside of his work as a designer, artist and writer, he enjoys raising his two daughters, Echo and Eva, along with his wife, Allison, herself a fine woodworker. Pete is an avid cyclist and has ridden up to several local lookouts, so he is excited to join the board of the NWMTLA to help preserve these important pieces of history. Maybe we can convince his wife to come swing a hammer next summer, too.

# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.  
**Montana**  
Historical Society



## NWMTLA Receives 2021 Historic Preservation Award

Every two years, the Montana Historical Society's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) hosts the Historic Preservation Awards Ceremony. This year, two Montana organizations were given Historic Preservation Awards. We were honored to be recognized for our collective work :

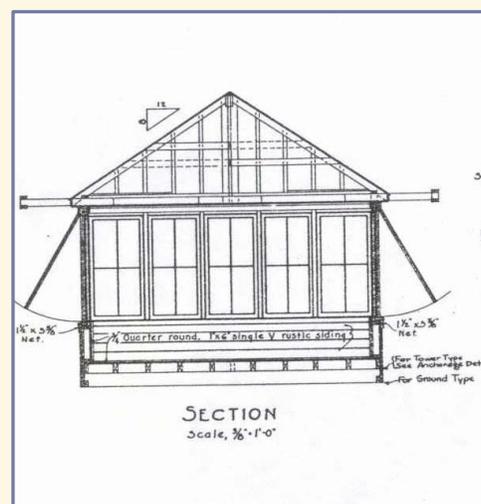
“The Northwest Montana Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association (NWMCFCLA) has advocated for lookouts since their chapter formation in 2013. One of the greatest contributions of the FFLA and the Montana chapter is the extensive volunteer work they contribute to restore historic forest fire lookouts.”

A link to the video of the awards presentation is available on our website [HERE](#)

## WILDERNESS SPEAKER SERIES

The Wilderness Speaker Series went virtual in winter 2021, with 3 great conservation presentations from Dr Drew Lanham, John McCarthy, and Denver Holt. These presentations can still be viewed through links on our website [HERE](#).

Stay tuned to our Facebook page for information about the 2022 Wilderness Speaker Series.

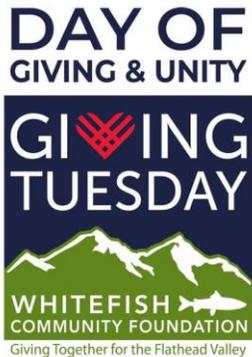


# FUNDRAISING

## AMAZING TOOL DONATION



With the help of Board Member Troy Denman we received a very generous tool donation from Scott Bruski of Makita Corporation and Scott Mosley of Western Building Center. This suite of battery operated Makita tools will make our work easier and more efficient. We are truly grateful.



With limited options for public gatherings last winter, our typical brewery fundraising opportunities were limited. We had to get a bit creative. In February, we were able to partner with Backslope Brewery for a community benefit gift card event where a percentage of gift card sales on a specific night went towards lookout restoration.

In May, we participated in the Day of Giving sponsored by the Whitefish Community Foundation. Through the generosity of numerous donors, we were able to obtain a raise enough funds to obtain a \$1000 matching grant from WCF through that campaign.

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

We continue to add to our collection of Oral History Interviews which are archived at the University of Montana. We are now able to do video interviews via Zoom. This year we have added interviews with Bob and Marj Folkestad who staffed Ashley Mountain LO in the 1960s and two interviews with Gene Miller sharing stories from his growing up in the Swan valley and 37 years as a fire lookout. Links to all of our archived interviews can be found [HERE](#).

If you know of individuals who were lookouts in Western Montana who might be willing to be interviewed for this project, please contact Beth Hodder at [bhodder1018@gmail.com](mailto:bhodder1018@gmail.com).

# 2021 Projects

## KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

### MCGUIRE WINDOWS

In Mid-June, a final detailed work assessment was completed at McGuire, and the windows were removed and packed up for transport down the mountain to Murphy Lake Ranger Station for a thorough refurbishment. There, a steambox was used to prep windows for removal of old glazing, and then all our volunteers went to work.

They spent a busy week removing all the glass, scraping and repairing frames, resetting the glass, reglazing, and repainting every window. Finally, they were carefully repacked, and the Forest Service Northern Region Pack string hauled them back up the mountain to the lookout where plenty of other restoration work was in progress. We thank the volunteers Tamera Bogovich, Larry Shadow, Chuck Stearns, Mike Barham, Helen Tyree, Barb Hvizdak, Donald Stolte, and Ray Davis along with staff Marli Davis, Rick Davis, and Chuck Manning for the many hours of hard work on this window project.



## MCGUIRE LOOKOUT



On-site work at McGuire was a major push for lookout volunteers this past summer. Crew Leader Chuck Manning and crew spent a full week squaring and leveling the structure, repairing and replacing failing exterior siding and trim and painting both the exterior and interior of the lookout.

The refurbished windows were re-installed, and the project finished up in October with the installation of new shutters.

Many thanks to our volunteers Ruth McLaury, Greg Evans, Barb Hvizdak, Kathy Butterfield, Tammy Bogovich, Helen Tyree, Paul Perinchef, Ray Davis, Rick Davis, Marli Davis, Mark Gunther, Tyler Mellem, Chuck Stearns, John and Heidi McAllister and packers Andrew Cote (Montana Mountain West Outfitters), Jim Thramer, John Hawkins, Bart Healy (Backcountry Horsemen) and Casey Barns and Robin Connell (USFS Northern Region Pack Train).

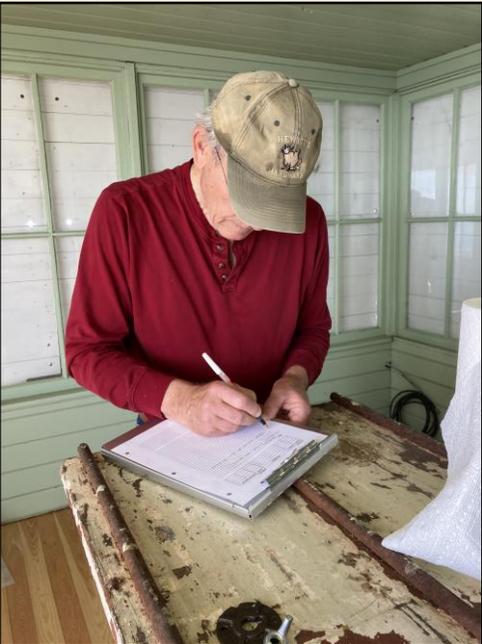
McGuire Lookout is about 14 miles SW of Rexford.



# MEADOW PEAK LOOKOUT

Throughout the spring and early summer, the NWMTLA helped the Libby Ranger District put finishing touches on Meadow Peak Lookout in preparation for it being placed in the Recreation.gov program. Tasks included attaching safety screen on the railing, making windows operable to allow for cross ventilation, digging an outhouse hole and installing a vault for a privy with a view.

The lookout , midway between Kalispell and Libby, can now be rented from mid-June through late September.



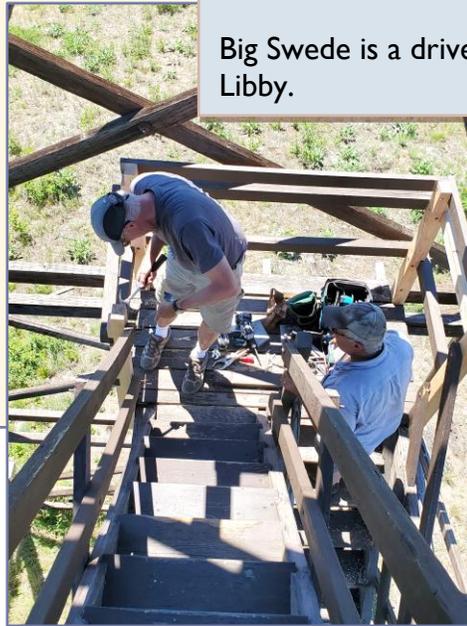


## BIG SWEDE LOOKOUT

There were two projects at Big Swede on the Libby Ranger District this summer. In the first, 52(!) windows were glazed, the catwalk posts were replaced, and railings and posts were replaced on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> landings.

In a second project, volunteers scraped, sanded and painted the lookout. Windows were taped in advance. Loving the bright green tape that came off wonderfully after the painting! Keeping safety first we got everywhere we could reach. In 2019 a new roof was put on and additional stabilizing of the roof in 2020. A special thanks to all of the volunteers for the entire project in 2021: Mark and Salena Beckwith, Larry Shadow, Barb Hzidak, Greg Evans, Bob and Deb Starling.

Big Swede is a drive-to lookout overlooking the town of Libby.



# FROM THE LOOKOUT COOKBOOK

## Libby Langston

### 2005

*From member Gene Miller,  
long time lookout at Blue Mountain  
and Priscilla Peak on the Lolo NF,  
and NWMLA member*



### Heavenly Huckleberry Happiness

#### Filling

4 cups of huckleberries  
1 ½ cups sugar  
4 Tbsp. flour  
½ tsp. cinnamon  
¼ tsp. nutmeg  
2 tsp. lemon juice  
1 Tbsp. butter or margarine

#### Biscuit Mixture

1 cup flour  
2 Tbsp. sugar  
1 ½ tsp. baking powder  
¼ tsp. salt  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
¼ cup Crisco (butter flavor)  
1 egg slightly beaten  
¼ cup milk  
½ tsp. vanilla

Combine filling ingredients and place in a large saucepan. Cook and stir on medium heat until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Stir and simmer for one minute. Put into an 8" square or 2 quart baking dish. Place in oven at 375 degrees. Meanwhile, combine biscuit ingredients. It is best to combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon, then cut into Crisco until crumbly. Combine slightly beaten egg with milk and vanilla. Add to flour mixture and stir until moistened. Drop biscuit mixture onto fruit in 8 mounds. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm with milk, cream, or ice cream if desired. Makes about 8 servings.

### Spam Delight

*From Kjell Petersen, former lookout on the St. Joe and Clearwater NF  
and current NWMTFLA Board member*

Spam  
Graham crackers  
Sweetened applesauce

Lightly fry Spam slices. (Being careful not to get 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns from spattered grease. I suggest being fully clothed during this step!) Place fried Spam between graham crackers to form a sandwich. Serve with a large bowl of sweetened applesauce.

Exercise vigorously after eating to prevent cardiac death.

# STILLWATER STATE FOREST

## WERNER PEAK LOOKOUT



This year's project at Werner Peak was a continuation of last year's project which had to be halted due to poor weather. This year our volunteers were able to complete painting the catwalk, railing and window trim, plus touch-ups. Thanks to our volunteers Barbara Boorman, Marli Davis, and Barb Hvizdak under the direction of Team Leader Rick Davis for seeing this project through to its successful completion.

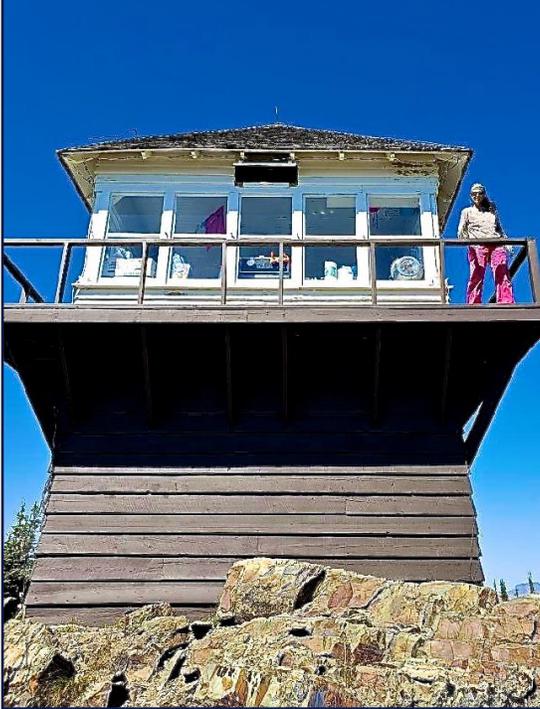
Another major thank you goes to Troy Denman and Denman Construction personnel and equipment for taking on the challenge of installing a new pit toilet vault on the top of a mountain!

Werner Peak Lookout sits at 6,960 feet atop the Whitefish Mountain Range located approximately 23 miles north of Whitefish, MT.



# GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

## HUCKLEBERRY LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT



At the end of July, NWMTLA Board Member Kyle Stetler and members Joann and Joe Schmidt ventured up to Huckleberry lookout to do a needs assessment for future project work. The assessment identified need for future maintenance including dry rot, window reglazing, cracked exterior boards, failing catwalk railing, and painting. This assessment will help Glacier NP plan for future restoration work at Huckleberry.

Huckleberry Lookout is an 11-mile hike and overlooks Lake McDonald.



Lower Exterior N2 –  
Finding: Failing paint  
Recommendation: Scrape and paint



Lower Exterior E4 –  
Finding: Failing and split board  
Recommendation: Replace

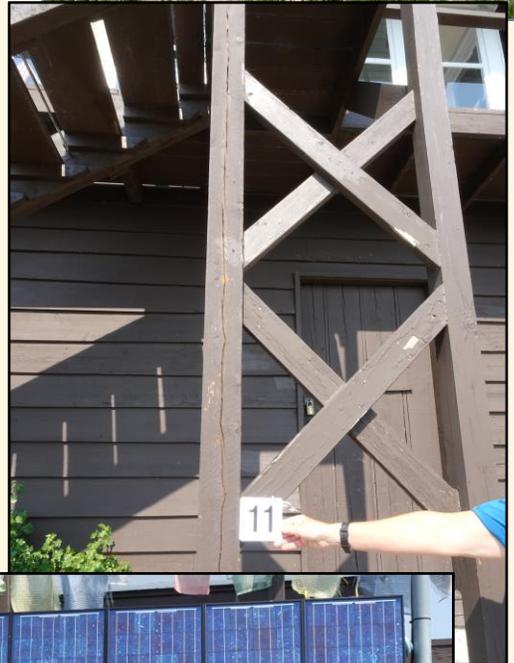


Lower Exterior S11 –  
Finding: Potential dry rot on lower right end of step  
Recommendation: Replace or repair

# SCALPLOCK LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT

Our volunteer crew found the Scalplock lookout to be in good condition with only minor maintenance items noted, as it was staffed and maintained by a lookout during the fire season. Thank you, Jake for sharing your mountaintop home with our crew. The Scalplock Lookout condition assessment was conducted by volunteers Joe and Joann Schmidt, Traute Parrie and Molly Tingley.

Access to Scalplock starts at the Walton Ranger Station and the trail climbs 4.5 miles to the lookout which overlooks the Middle Fork Drainage and the southern part of Glacier National Park.



# LONEMAN LOOKOUT ASSESSMENT



The Loneman condition assessment was conducted over a two-day period by volunteers Kathy Butterfield, Tammy Bogovich, Karen Downs and Eric Godin. Loneman lookout was found to be in good condition with only minor maintenance issues to be addressed. Trail access was a brushy 7 miles with an elevation gain of 3,100 vertical ft.

Loneman Lookout is located within Glacier National Park on its southern boundary and accessed from Nyack Flats on the Middle Fork of the Flathead River.





## Life as a Lookout on Battery Mountain in 1944

Like his best friend Ivan O’Neil (interview available through our website), George Ostrom lied about his age to get a job with the Forest Service during WWII. “We did the lookout stuff, we cleaned the trails, we fought fires, we hung telephone lines—we did it all. We manned the lookouts.”

While working on trail crews, George helped maintain phone lines to keep telephones working. It meant checking hundreds of miles in tough territory. The lines were hard to maintain—elk would get tangled up in the wire, trees would fall over, and sometimes the snow would cause them to go down.

George was later assigned to Battery Mountain Lookout, above Quintonkon Creek, northwest of Spotted Bear, which was all “wilderness” then.

He experienced a lightning storm when lightning hit his lookout. “I had a hard time seeing, hearing, or smelling for days. My poor doggy was up there. He never did quite recover from it. I was on the bed to drain off electricity, but he wasn’t, of course. Poor little doggy. Anyway, [the lightning] made burn marks on the lookout when it went down.”

As with many lookouts, water had to be hauled. “Stubb [lookout supervisor] wanted us to use those cloth bags; they’re canvas, and they had to get soaked up before they’d hold water, because they’d always drip, and you’d lose water. Well, he insisted that we use those canvas bags. ‘Oh, yeah, we’ll use them.’ Well, we never used them. The minute he disappeared down the trail—he took each kid up to the lookout to make sure he knew what he was doing up there—and the minute he left, we got out those big five-gallon cans and tied them to a pack horse. That’s the way we got the water up and back and forth.”

Lookout life wasn’t for everyone, explained George. [The Forest Service] hired a guy, “hauling him for two days, for God’s sake, into the Bob Marshall. This is before we had the wilderness bill. It was a wilderness system, and the packer took him in there with horses, put him on the lookout—I can’t remember the name of the lookout; it was way in the middle of the Bob—and hooked up his telephone and made sure everything was working, and the packer left him there. Well, within a little while, after the packer left, a lightning storm came up, and lightning hit pretty close. Well, this kid took off. He got his clothes and his toothbrush and whatever, and he took off—he was running—and he passed the packer on the way. And of course, then when they tried to call him that evening for the check in, he wasn’t there. They were able to get the packer on the telephone at Black Bear [Cabin], some place, and he took his saddle horse and went back up there, and the kid was gone. So, anyway, he was through. He never hired back.”

At the end of the war, George enlisted and served overseas three years in the Occupation. “There were people dying in the streets and lacking clothing and shelters and stuff.”

When he got back home, George joined the smokejumpers in Missoula and was one of two jumpers chosen to jump as part of a ceremony at the new Smokejumpers base. “For reasons I do not understand, the largest crowd ever assembled in the state of Montana was over 40,000 people who came to the dedication of the Smokejumpers’ Center, and the featured speaker was the president of the United State, Dwight Eisenhower.” While sitting on the stage during the dedication, George met

Lee Metcalf, who later asked him to help write the Wilderness bill. He went to Washington for a while to work for Metcalf before returning to Montana where his life pulled him into the communications world, beginning with KOFI and then helping rebuild KGEZ.

“Being a lookout, you’re all by yourself. You get to do a lot of thinking. And I did a lot of talking; I talked to myself. I still do it. I got in the habit. I like to hear me talk. Well, I’ve made my living for 62 years as a talker on the radio.”

George had too many memories to write about here, including stories about the Mann Gulch fire and jumpers, other war stories, and many other lookout memories.

When asked what he liked best about being a lookout, George said, “I don’t know. I was lucky in that I had Ivan [O’Neil]. I could call him up and we could talk. But I don’t know. I was a kid, and it felt challenging. I felt I was a man out there. I’m doing a man’s job. I’m a wilderness lookout, and I take care of myself.

“I think that part of us fellows up there doing that lookout thing, it was a blessing for us. We all became responsible people. We’ve had business and career successes. So, it was a good training. It was fun. “



## ADVICE FROM THE THE LOOKOUT COOKBOOK, 1938

U.S. Forest Service, Region One

In cooking vegetables: Cover those that grow under the ground. Leave uncovered those that grow above the ground.

If the oven hasn’t any gauge on the front of it to tell you the temperature of the oven, just put either bread or white paper in the oven. If it turns brown quickly, the oven is too hot for most things; if it turns brown in about five minutes, then this is a moderate oven.

### PEP COCTAIL

Beat 1 yolk of egg (discard the white) into 1 glass of strained orange or grapefruit juice, sweeten with sugar or honey. Take first thing in the morning and last thing at night. May also add juice of 3 beets and a bunch of parsley; or may use with grape juice or berry juices.

## NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL FFLA



### From Board Member Kyle Stetler who serves as part of the National FFLA Leadership

The organization continues to solidly gain more members and receive more media coverage while at the same time members serving as lookouts get the word out. For the last three years, membership in the national FFLA, excluding the chapters that have formed their own affiliate organizations, has grown by roughly 100 per year. This is a positive trend with national membership now over 1400 dues paying members.

This summer there were also several amazing articles in national and international media outlets covering lookouts. One in the BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-57626403>), another online publication (<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2021/10/25/loss-of-fire-lookouts-spurs-questions-about-historic-preservation/>), one in the Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jul/03/wildfire-lookout-california-mt-tamalpais>), and yet another in Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/usa-wildfires-lookout/?fbclid=IwAR0V9onlQfPGf-uvbYmjpJzIAIF-gppsC-3tdbxG9PZnPWdGpj5fj3GxsSQ>) not to mention several local and regional periodicals. And while the coverage is good, it is even more relevant to generate support for lookouts after losing 5 lookouts in this summer's western wildfire season.

While at one time there were close to a dozen lookouts threatened by the Dixie fire in northern California, only one lookout was lost. That was Mount Harkness lookout in Lassen Volcanic National Park, which at the time, had been the longest staffed and used lookout in the National Park Service. The other big loss was Bull of the Woods lookout on the Mt. Hood National Forest in Oregon.

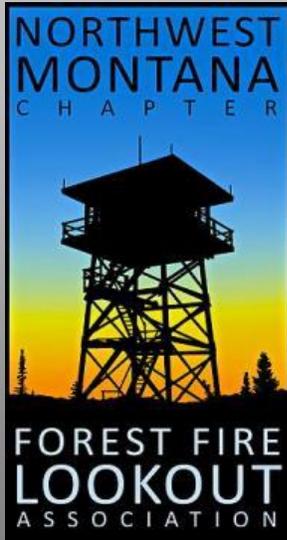
(<https://www.oregonlive.com/travel/2021/09/wildfire-destroys-historic-bull-of-the-woods-fire-lookout.html>)

Finally, Ironsides lookout on the Shasta-Trinity NF and Mule Peak lookout on the Sequoia NF both in California were lost and Morehead Mountain lookout on the Salmon-Challis NF in Idaho was destroyed.

There will also likely be a big change for the first time in over 20 years as national chairman Dr. Keith Argow is officially retiring from his position in January 2022 at the conclusion of this most recent term. Dr. Argow has been part of the FFLA leadership since its inception in 1992 and his institutional knowledge runs deep. Stay tuned for the election results in the new year. Finally, the national FFLA is always looking for volunteers to help with various tasks and ad hoc committees and are typically posted in the quarterly publication the *Lookout Network*.

If you have any questions or want to help the larger lookout community, feel free to get in touch!





Keep in touch with us via facebook:  
or our website: <http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>



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