

LOOKOUTS
of the Pacific Northwest

Leaders Guide
Slide-show narration

2022 Oregon FCE State Conference
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Welcome to “LOOKOUTS of the Pacific Northwest”

(Pacific Northwest being loosely described as; bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west to the Rocky Mountains on the east, including western Montana & Wyoming, and the Cascade Mts. south into Northern California).

This lesson has a lot of information packed into it, all with some relevance to the topic, so we are going to touch on points, starting with a brief history of the US Forest Service, a brief history of Lookouts, and other pertinent categories along the way.

Page 1:

001 1876 Franklin B. Hough, among the first to call attention to the depletion of forests in the U.S., was appointed head of the office of Special Agent in the Dept. of Agriculture.

The Transfer Act of 1905 condenses departments and becomes USDA Forest Service.

002 1905-1910 Gifford Pinchot becomes the first Chief Forester. Pinchot is generally regarded as the “father” of American conservation because of his unyielding concern for the protection of American forests.

003 1907-1908 Forest Reserves to be renamed and divided into smaller **National Forests**.

004 –005 National forests being renamed, ex: Rogue River NF & Siskiyou NF became **Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest**.

006 In the 1930’s Franklin Roosevelt enacted the New Deal, forming the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** in response to the Great Depression, putting millions of young men to work.

007 **1944** Smokey Bear campaign begins to educate the public and promote the prevention of wildfires, used now for 5 decades.

008 Smokey Bear can be found at Forest Service Ranger Stations across the Nation, informing us of fire danger levels.

009 **1934** 10 Forest Service Regions had been formed across the nation, by 1965 they had been condensed to 9.

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010 **CCC camps** had an integral role in the development of our nation's forests, aside from the numerous Lookouts they built...

011 crew doing road work, turning what was often times nothing more than a dirt trail into a real road. (Ex: CCC crews built the road from Diamond Lake to Roseburg, what is now Hwy.138)

012 nearly 3 billion trees were planted nationwide to help reforest America earning the Corps the nickname "The Tree Army"

013 014 fence building, hay cutting/baling

015 Camp Mill Creek, in the Ochoco mts, central Oregon

016 -017 Ochoco Ranger Station, and forest camp pavilion

018 -019 Imnaha Guard Station and Imnaha GS barn

020 021 022 the Watchman Lookout at Crater Lake, the overlook and the stairs to the lookout

023 Bessie Shelter... one of many built in this design throughout the forests. These are examples of structures built usually with locally sourced materials, whether it is hand-split shakes, logs or rocks.

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024 1902 The first fire lookout strictly for the protection of forests from wildfire was established at a place called Bertha Hill in the remote backwoods in Idaho. A private timber camp cook, Mable Gray, mounted her pony on days following lightning storms after doing the morning dishes, and rode to the top of a small knoll, where she'd climb up a makeshift ladder and sit on a big limb 12' up a fir tree. When she spotted a smoke she rounded up the crew on her horse. Two years later, in June of 1904, a pole tower was erected on the summit. And 107 years later, there's still a Bertha Hill Lookout.

After the Great Fire of **1910**, which burned three million acres across Idaho, Montana, and Washington in two days and killed 85 people, the Forest Service began a decade of rigorous investigation of a fire protection system and built more towers.

The early years of fire detection were often nothing more than crude and simple "rag-camps", a perch on a large branch of a broken off tree. Then Crow's nest perches were established in the top of the tallest trees, a map set atop the post, a canvas pup tent served as living quarters, were a luxury at many of these sites.

Page 4: Types of Lookouts

D-6 12 x 12 house with cupola. ("D-6" referred to Region 6)

L-4 14 x 14 early ones called gabled roof. Later one's hip roof.

L-5 10 x 10 cab

L-6 8 x 8 cabs

R-6 flat roof most 14 x 14

By 1953 there were 5,060 lookout stations built in the National forests, over 3,000 of them in the Pacific Northwest.

CCC crews built over 600 lookout towers.

025 Abbott Butte L.O. (1928) changes at this site through the years

026 Abbott Butte L.O. (2015) has since collapsed

027 Bessie Rock L.O. (1930's)

028 Bessie's L-4 cab sits atop this a massive rock, all gear and supplies had to be brought up these treacherous ladders.

029 – 030 Bessie Rock in 1965 (destroyed in 1969), & Bessie in 2019.

031 Black Mt. L.O. Tree (an 80' ponderosa pine) developed in the early 1930's, a 6' sq. platform on top, a resting platform halfway up the ladder.

032 Black Mt. L.O. Tree (2010) still standing, though not able to climb.

033 Black Mt. Cabin was at the Tree site, later moved to Ochoco R. Station

034 Mt. Pisgah Lookout (2010) this R-6 tower was built in 1964 after a fire had destroyed the previous tower.

035 Pisgah's 1923 platform and weather station still standing in 2010.

036 Pisgah's first platform built in 1918, was replaced in 1923, and in 1933

037 an early "rag camp"

038 early 'firetruck' getting water

039 Red Mt. L.O. D-6 cupola cabin was built in 1928, replacing a crow's nest. It was moved to the Tiller Ranger Station in 1985 as a display.

040 Red Mt. L.O. in 2017

041 – 042 plaque and inside view of the equipment.

043 Rustler Peak, early 'rag camp' 1917

044 Rustler Peak L.O. (2013) present L-4 cab since 1948, replacing a 1920 tower. Rustler was the first L.O. in Oregon to use solar power.

045 – 046 Mt. Stella L.O. (2012) present L-4 tower built in 1946, also had a live-in 'garage'. Last used in the 1980's, now abandoned.

047 Acker Rock L.O. (2008) present R-6 flat cab built in 1964.

048 – 049 Illahee Rock L.O. The first D-6 cupola cabin in 1925, and present L-4 tower built in 1956.

050 Cinnamon Butte L.O. in 2020. The present R-6 tower had been constructed in 1955 and moved from Buster Butte in 1976.

051 Garwood Butte L.O. (2018) this L-4 cab was built in 1942, abandoned in the 1960's, is still standing.

052 Hershberger L.O. (2013) this D-6 cupola cabin was built in 1925, replacing an earlier camp dating from 1917. Now used for emergencies.

053 – 054 Hall's Point L.O. (2016) present R-6 flat cab was built in 1956, replacing a 1912 crow's nest tree then an L-4 tower from 1930's. Also showing the Lookout wrapped for protection during a forest fire.

055 White Point L.O. (2018) present ODF cab built in 1974, replaced a wooden tower from 1951.

056 Pickett Butte L.O. (2017) present L-4 tower built in 1948.

057 Tallowbox L.O. (2013) this tower with ODF cab was built in 1963, destroyed by an arson fire in 2007.

058 Parker Mt. L.O. (2018) built in 1956.

059 Chase Mt. L.O. (2018) built in 1951.

060 Robinson Butte L.O. (2016) present R-6 tower was moved from Blue Rock L.O. in 1974, replacing an L-4 tower built in 1933.

061 Pelican Butte L.O.(2013) present all steel observation tower built 1986

062 – 063 Huckleberry Mt. L.O., Lane Co. (2008) this L-4 cab was built in 1939 and restored in 1994. Billboard showing the history & restoration.

064 Wolf Mt. L.O. (2013) L-4 tower was built in 1947. The floor of the tower is 108 feet from the ground and said to be the tallest tower in Oregon.

065 – 066 Mt. Scott L.O. (2016) the present 2-story cab was built in 1952. The trail is 2 ½ miles to the L.O. which sits above Crater Lake on east rim.

067 – 068 Huckleberry-Shasta L.O. Tree (2017) all that remains is a stump of the old Shasta fir with a spot marker in the center of a scarred triangle.

069 Anderson Camp L.O. (2016) CCC crews built a tower here in 1934, it was abandoned in the 1950's. Hardly any trace remains.

070 Mt. McLoughlin (Mt. Pitt) L.O. built in 1917, this cupola cabin was destroyed in 1955. A photo taken in the early 1970's shows a partial wall.

071 - 072 Walker Mt. L.O. (2018) the L-4 cab on steel base was built in 1932, the stone and wood Cabin was built in 1917.

As science advanced, we began to understand that fires are a natural ingredient of healthy forests. Now lookouts radio a fire in, and fire management officers decide to either let it burn or determine the most effective ways to put it out with fire-suppression aircraft and field crews.

Today, drones and satellites have made fire lookouts increasingly obsolete. Fewer than 900 lookouts remain, and only 166 of those are still staffed. But technology will never be able to watch a fire and communicate fire behavior by talking as real humans.

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073 – 074 The Osborne Firefinder ...

In 1911 William B. "Bush" Osborne Jr. Came up with an idea he called a "Firefinder". His alidade instrument didn't find the fire but made it possible to accurately plot its location on the map. His invention was first commercially produced in 1913 (as pictured here), In 1914 and 1915 changes were made to the front & rear sights, various modifications and developments were made, adding more powerful scopes for sightings, more precise calibration, and various other technological developments which increased the instruments accuracy.

075 Firefinder at Hall's Point L.O., also notice the markings above the windows, each prominent hill or peak in all four directions is labeled, including mileage distance.

076 Firefinder at Wolf Mt. L.O., notice the modifications to the spotting scope.

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077 – 078 Panoramic Photos...

Osborne went on to develop the "Photo-Recording Transit" camera. Part camera, part surveyor's transit, this unique 75 lb. precision-designed device was packed to the top of nearly every lookout in the Northwest in the 1930's. The photos had to be taken under the most ideal weather and light conditions, at 9:am, 12:00 noon, and 3:00pm. Mounted end-to-end, the 39" wide set of three prints, the "Panoramic Photo" was etched precisely in azimuth degrees from 0 to 360, and in degrees below and above the elevation of the lookout site.

079 – 080 Hershberger SE, and Hershberger SW

081 – 082 – 083 Cinnamon Butte N, SE, SW

Page 11: Lightning Protection...

084 – 085 Beginning in the early 1930's, all lookouts were equipped with lightning protection consisting of a "bird cage" of solid copper wire extending from the roof peak, down all four corners and down the hill perhaps a hundred yards to dissipate the static charge. Copper lightning rods are mounted on the LO rooftops. Although many LO's get direct lightning hits several times a year, there have been no known fatalities by lightning in a properly maintained LO since.

The lightning stool or proverbial "Hot Seat" was designed simply and may be found in many forms, using telephone insulators on the feet. It was intended to be stood on during a storm when you needed to use the land line phone or radio.

Page 13: Benchmarks... There are many kinds of Benchmarks, and most likely have been recorded, included in a database, created by NOAA's National Geodetic Survey (NGS).

Here are some examples that have been found at Lookout locations...

086 through 092 (which has no BM since it was vandalized)

Page 14: Aircraft Warning System (AWS)...

The U.S. Army established the AWS in 1941- as a branch of the US Army Air Force – with the goal of spotting enemy aircraft in American airspace and reporting it before significant damage could be inflicted.

At the beginning of World War II lookouts by the hundreds all along the west coast were drafted to serve as Aircraft Warning Service outposts. The system comprised more than 500 observation sites in Oregon alone.

CCC crews had previously in the last couple of year's built garages at virtually every lookout station served by a road.

Many of these garages were converted into winter sleeping quarters for the two-person ground observer teams. The requirement was: one had to be always on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year... usually in 8 hr. shifts. This arrangement worked out quite well and many who signed up were married couples.

093 – 094 – 095 Butler Butte, one of the Lookouts drafted to serve as an AWS outpost, was where Clarence and Laura Hartly spent thirteen months. Their job was to report all aircraft sightings to the command post in Roseburg. No Japanese or other enemy aircraft was observed that winter, but Butler Buttes excellent radio reception made it a vital link in the Air Forces communications network.

096 Dutchman Peak was another Lookout drafted into service and was manned by Mr. & Mrs. Slim McDowell.

Mount Emily also in Oregon had quite a story to tell.

I have included two more stories to share, both of courageous and amazing men;

Elijah Coalman, "Man of the Mountain" & Dan Pederson...the Legend

097 An early Forest Ranger making a telephone call.

098 When the U.S. Forest Service first formed in 1905 many of its employees were four-legged. Thousands of horses and mules were drafted into service, where they were used for trail-building, pack supply operations, wildfire assistance, and more.

099 – 100 Here are pack mules hauling lumber and tools to do repair work at a Lookout.

101 Fire crews on the 2014 Happy Camp complex fire, using mules to haul gear and supplies.

102 A USFS pack string in Montana.

In the early years literally everything that went to a Lookout was hauled in on mules.