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LOOKOUT NETWORK

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- ***Western Conference September 21-23, NE Washington***
- ***New Lookout under construction in Massachusetts***
- ***Bylaws Amendments Adopted***

www.firelookout.org

Lookout in Motion

by Susan Epstein

Usually, we think of fire lookout towers as stationary objects, although I know of a few that have moved once. Colorado's White Pine lookout, however, has moved four times!

The CCC built White Pine Lookout on West White Pine Mountain, about 20 miles west of Fort Collins, Colorado at an elevation of 10,305 feet, in 1939 when Norman Griswold was



the District Ranger (1938-1944). It was an L4 cab on a 35' tower.

While workers carried the lumber to the site by hand, some years later the trail was widened to a jeep trail. Frank Koenig, son-in-law of Hugh Ramsey, the first homesteader in nearby Pingree Park, was one of the first people who staffed the tower, followed by Henry (Hank) Martin

(1941-1943), his son Lowell (Smokey) Martin (1953-1958), Doug (mayor of Fort Collins from 2005 to 2011) and Cathy Hutchinson (1964-65), and last by John and Marilyn Henthorne now living in Cañon City, CO (1966-1967).

Prior to the 1939 tower there was an earlier tower built when Ken Helmick was the District Ranger (1913-1918). Tom Bennett (1879-1959), a homesteader from England, was the primary builder. The Tom Bennett Campground on the Poudre River was named for him, and his homestead is now the site of the Lutheran Church's Sky Camp. This early tower was a tree lookout with a platform and ladder. Because Tom Bennett's son, John, recalled that there was a solar eclipse during the time of its construction, it can be deduced that it was likely built in June of 1918. It was staffed only on an as-needed basis.

When the Forest Service decommissioned the lookout in 1978, they offered it to the city of Fort Collins. When the city accepted, the Army Reserve removed the lookout cab via helicopter and placed it in Lee Martinez City Park in Fort Collins on November 4, 1978. The following year, the U.S. Forest Service Young Adult Conservation Corps repaired it for use in the park's playground. In the 1990s, to protect it from vandalism, the city transferred the cab to Colorado State University's



Environmental Learning Center in southeast Fort Collins (above). Because it was virtually inaccessible at that location, the Fort Collins Natural Areas staff proposed moving it to the adjacent Running Deer Natural Area where it could be a nice destination spot for visitors. As a result, on August 25, 2011, the city used a flatbed truck to move it (below) the 3/4 mile north to the natural area. The Fort Collins Natural Areas staff plans to stabilize the cab and open it to the public in 2012.



Maybe this is where FFLA headquarters should be?



Lucas MacMath photo

The town of "Lookout" is in northeastern California, near Alturas.



White Pine Lookout cab being moved to Martinez Park in 1978 (left) and as it stood in the park after having been repaired in 1979 (right).