

Western Meeting Summary

June 25 - 27, 2010

Grangeville, Idaho

Despite last-minute questions about lookout accessibility for tours, the Western Conference came off well, and seemed to be thoroughly enjoyed by all fifty-some people in attendance. The Elks Lodge in Grangeville, Idaho was the site for this year's event, with additional evening gatherings at the Bear Den RV Resort. The June 24-27 dates had seemed reasonable for lookout visits until an unusually cold and wet May and June significantly delayed snowmelt. Howard and Deb Verschoor had arrived several days early with plans to visit many of the area lookouts, but were stymied by snow-blocked roads nearly every day.

Thursday afternoon saw folks arriving at the Elk's Lodge. After things were set up for the next morning, most adjourned to the RV park where several were staying, for a "meet-and-greet" potluck barbecue, organized by Forrest Clark. Ray Grimes proved to be the master chef, grilling the brats and burgers that Forrest had provided.

The Friday morning session included several presentations by Forest Service personnel. After the welcome by Nez Perce NF Public Affairs Specialist Laura Smith, Archaeologist Cindy Schacher gave an overview of past and present historic Nez Perce NF lookouts, highlighting the unique log lookouts. Dispatcher Margaret Williams discussed the seventeen lookouts still regularly staffed for fire detection in the Clear-Nez Fire Zone. After the round-robin introductions and a break, Clearwater NF Archaeologist Robbin Johnston's presentation focused on how the CCC enrollees from the east coast viewed the wild lands of the North Central Idaho when they arrived in the 1930s. Richard Holm and Heritage Manager Larry Kingsbury concluded the morning presentations with an update of their challenges and accomplishments on the Payette NF. Before closing out the morning session, NHLR certificates were presented to Robbin and to Larry for several Clearwater and Payette lookouts. It was also decided that since everyone had enjoyed the previous evening's barbecue, a repeat would be held at the RV park that evening, but people were asked to not bring any more chips, since there were about twenty bags left from the night before!

Under threatening skies, the caravan departed for Corral Hill Lookout in the afternoon. Lookout Jim Hutchison was very gracious in hosting over fifty

visitors, in spite of being kept beyond his normal time to leave for the weekend. Idaho Public TV filmed portions of the visit, to possibly be included in a future special on lookouts.

In addition to another enjoyable barbecue and gathering, the Board of Directors meeting was held at the RV park Friday evening with ten board members and several other FFLA members present. Saturday's morning session began with Chairman Keith Argow's "state of the FFLA" address, followed by Gary Weber's presentation linking the 1910 Fires to the development of the lookout system. He also made a short presentation on the Mallard Peak Restoration project. Brad Eells gave a powerpoint presentation on the lookouts of San Diego County and several others that he had recently visited; other directors gave updates on activities and projects in their areas. Ray Kresek's "show 'n' tell" featured an ingenious mousetrap like the one used by Jim Wissler in 1946. Before breaking for lunch and the afternoon tour to Grave Point Lookout, NHLR certificates were prested to Cindy Schacher for several Nez Perce NF lookouts and to Pam Aunan and Cathe Rosenberg for Sundance Lookout. Keith Argow presented American Resources' annual Doug Newman Award to Forrest Clark for his efforts and mentoring in Western Washington.

After everyone returned from Grave Point and re-grouped at the Elks, silent auction bidding began to pick up during the social hour before the arrival of the pizza dinner. One of the highlights of the weekend was John Crawford's wonderful slide show featuring some of his best photos from his 35 years at Indian Hill Lookout, where he had retired from last year. After a frenzy of last-minute bids, the silent auction closed with over \$600 taken in to benefit future lookout projects.

Grangeville Air Tanker Base Manager André Ruoti, who attended the entire conference, hosted a Sunday morning tour of the Grangeville Air Center, where she led the group through the smokejumper loft and out to look at "Jumper 14", the retardant loading area, and the helicopter. While some departed for home after the tour, most headed to Kooskia, where they regrouped to go to Walde Lookout and finished out the afternoon at Austin Ridge Lookout before parting to go their separate ways, ending another very successful Western Conference!

Conference Photos



FFLA at Corral Hill Lookout
(Brad Eells Photo)



FFLA at Grave Point Lookout
(Brad Eells Photo)



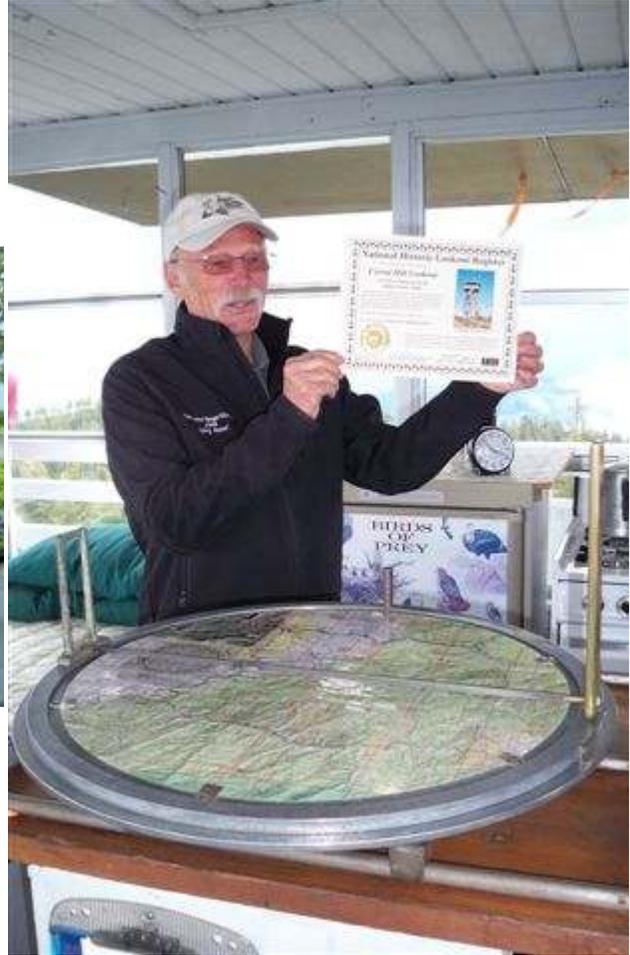
FFLA Conference at Elks Lodge
(Brad Eells Photo)



Thursday Night
(Rod Fosback Photo)



Convoy gathers for Corral Hill
(Rod Fosback Photo)



Corral Hill NHLR
(Rod Fosback Photo)



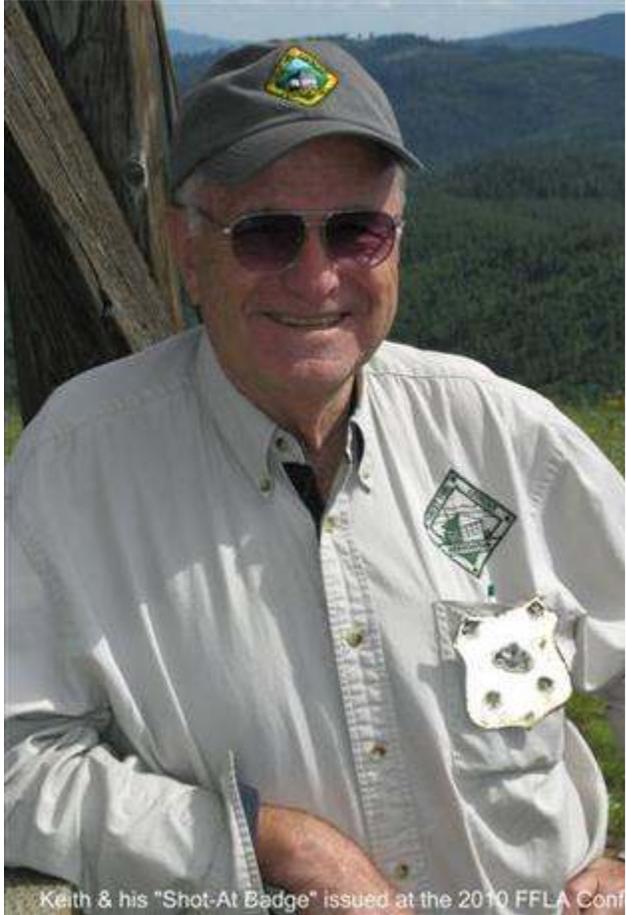
Pam & Kathy with Keith Argow NHLR
(Rod Fosback Photo)



Ray Grimes & Forrest Thurs nite
(Rod Fosback Photo)



Square Mountain NHLR
(Rod Fosback Photo)



Keith & his "Shot-At Badge" issued at the 2010 FFLA Conf

(Ray Kresek Photo)



Howard Verschoor, Ray Grimes, Forrest Clark, Gary Weber

(Ray Kresek Photo)



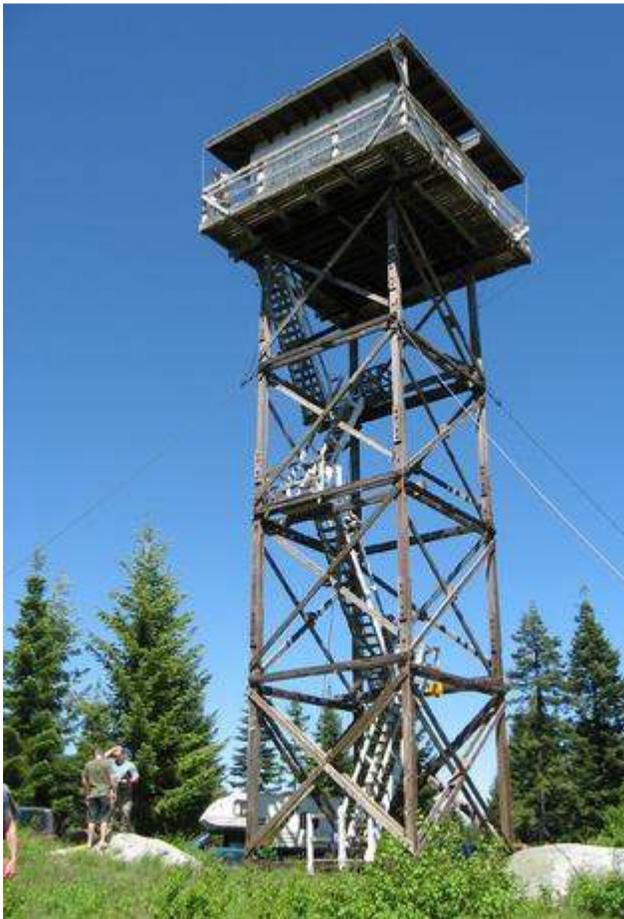
The line waiting their turns at Grave Point
(Bob Adler Photo)



BBQ at Bears Den RV Park
(Bob Adler Photo)



BBQ at Bears Den RV Park
(Bob Adler Photo)



Austin Ridge LO tour



Corral Hill tour - the youngest touree

(Gary Weber Photo)



Mile High step at Walde LO
(Gary Weber Photo)

(Gary Weber Photo)



Walde LO tour
(Gary Weber Photo)



Walde LO tour
(Gary Weber Photo)