

Forest Fire Lookout Association
State Historic Preservation Office Liaison
2017 Annual Report

2017 Accomplishments

- 2017 was a good start for the SHPO Liaison activities. My first undertaking was to track down and create a spreadsheet with contact information for all (or nearly all) of the 50 state offices. Once this was completed, I drafted and then sent out a formal introductory email to roughly 41 of the 50 offices. I say roughly because there are 9 states that have few if any lookouts remaining so I leave it with the relevant state chapter directors to maintain a good working knowledge of “their” lookouts. After roughly 10-12 weeks and a number of follow up emails and phone calls, I was able to make contact with 40 of the 41 offices in order to create a national snapshot of SHPO activity as it relates to lookouts. There are a few of those 41, about 4, that I need to get a little more information but otherwise it was a successful first contact. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of states that seem to have very knowledgeable and passionate staff handling lookout reviews. While lookouts are typically a small portion of their workload, I did receive a number of emails stating how much that particular staff person liked working on lookout projects. Now that the information is all mostly in, I will send it out and each chapter director can view their appropriate contacts and what that person said. If chapter directors already have a solid working relationship with their SHPO then by all means, continue to work with them. I am just creating an umbrella document so that we know, and can track if possible, SHPO staff and projects. See attachment for information on each of the SHPO contacts and a high level status of lookouts in their state.

- Followed up on Applegate Butte LO in southern OR following outreach from chapter director. Jesse at OR SHPO called me back and hoped that the USFS consulted several years ago, but when they upgraded to a digital system that file did not get uploaded. She called John Kaiser, the forest archeologist, and left him a voicemail to hopefully confirm this but never heard anything back. She noted that the HABS documents are not usually willingly done so the fact that there is one for that lookout probably means that as a result of consultation, the Forest Service was required to prepare one. She said that John is a very good contact and is a good archeologist and is well aware of their Section 106 responsibilities. She said that there are other “nameless” agencies that they do work with from time to time and have to send notice letters telling them that they did not follow the law and that they need to consult, but that is about as much as they can do. Even if the final outcome is removal or demolition, they have to first consult at a minimum. There is no loophole for at least going through the Section 106 motions. The lookout has already been removed by the time in contacted Jesse at the OR SHPO.

- Was alerted to an agency action concerning the Mount Washburn lookout in Yellowstone National Park. This outreach was initiated by the park staff and I have been working with Park staff to potentially mitigate the impacts of the project. This project will be ongoing in 2018.

- Through California SHPO was alerted to potential action on the Klamath NF pertaining to the Scott Bar LO. Coordination ongoing.

2018 Planned Activities

- My next step is to hopefully create, if not already in existence, a master extant lookout file containing relevant pieces of information including geographic information, administrative data, condition, plans, NHLR, NRHP, etc. for the roughly over 2500 standing lookouts remaining. The

overall goal of this effort, is the identification and tracking, at a high level, of potential remaining lookouts for stabilization or rehabilitation. This will be a ground up effort so that chapter directors can make sure the data fields are populated with projects that are potentially already ongoing and the correct information is included. I will also ask that the chapter directors update me whenever there is a change or at the end of the year.

- Continue outreach with SHPO offices, through mass and individual emails, to determine if there have been any status changes.

Actions Going Forward

Finally, in most of my communications with the SHPOs, it became clear to me that the best defense is a good offense (sorry for the analogy). In other words, chapter and sub-chapter directors working with and assisting the relevant natural resource and land management agencies that oversee and manage the lookouts, is a much better approach to carrying out the FFLA mission as opposed to us catching something when it lands on the Section 106 compliance reviewers desk. Staying vigilant and fostering genuine relationships with the land managers will hopefully pay dividends at a later date. I know that many of the western chapter directors (Gary, Rod, Howard, Forrest, John Rose, CA folks, Kent etc.) already do that so this will hopefully bolster those efforts elsewhere.

Best,
Kyle