



# ON THE LOOKOUT

From the  
**National Chairman**  
**Keith A. Argow**

Vienna, Virginia  
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## **WANT TO WORK WITH LOOKOUTS? WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU!**

FFLA is gaining new members every week. This is about the best news we can have as an association with a huge task ahead of it, working to save and restore nearly 500 lookouts ..... some quite visible landmarks ..... whose days on this planet are limited.

Many of our new members are unfamiliar with the workings and the structure of FFLA. Some want to become involved right away, but how do they do that? When we get a call from a new member wanting to work on restoration of a fire lookout, another offering carpentry skills, still another wanting to work on painting cabs and towers. Not knowing what is needed in the field, I ask them to contact their chapter or division director. Too often, the offer stops right there.

Our directors are busy people and many of them do not spend much time in email or phone inquiries. Moreover, only a relatively small number of divisions (or chapters-we use both titles depending on the choice of the director), like New York and Oregon, have a continuing number of active lookout restoration projects under way. Many more chapters have one or two restorations, and often they are fully staffed. If there is a local chapter close by, we are finding those leaders are much more likely to respond to an offer of help.

What is a new member to do? Intended or not, they have been rebuffed, giving the appearance that FFLA is run by a core of "insiders". There is some truth to this, but none of us want it to be so ... it just turns that way. We can and must do better!

How do we fix it? Here are eight possible ways:

1. Starting soon: We will be listing the name and email address of every local chapter that has been established. Look for these under each state listing. Local chapter officers are often closely associated with work needs.
2. I am asking directors to develop a "Wish List" of lookout restoration needs and skills for their area.
3. Expand and update our list of volunteer lookout host positions (in addition to the existing announcements of available paid lookout positions).
4. Develop a Chapter/Division Email Newsletter. These one-page sheets are easily prepared and emailed to all FFLA members in that Chapter/Division. We recommend at least two a year. This is a great way to tell members about on-going projects including hikes to former lookouts sites to document the presence of a lookout at one time and photograph the remains for our historic databases. Indiana, our newest chapter, has already done this.
5. Emergency Restoration Grants. Do you know of a lookout or fire tower that is still standing but in need of emergency repairs to keep it safe? If so, contact your Chapter/Division director immediately (see back page for phone numbers and emails). You may become a "committee of one" to keep it standing until we can work with the owners and get a restoration or even a removal/protection program underway.
6. Historic data base maintenance. These records are kept on computer by individuals that can no longer get out into the woods but have the time and capability to work from home.
7. Historic site research. Visit current and past lookout locations and report on current conditions of the site.
8. Become a Lookout Steward. Many lookouts listed on the National Historic Lookout Register ([www.nhhr.org](http://www.nhhr.org)) have volunteer positions available for individuals who are willing to "adopt" an historic lookout and maintain it. These positions are appealing to people willing to hike or drive in and spend a night or two at a special lookout once or twice a year. For information: [www.historiclookouts.com](http://www.historiclookouts.com).

Still looking for a way to become active, but none of the above work for you, maybe because of your location, skills, or time restraints? Then contact me: [argow@cs.net](mailto:argow@cs.net). We'll find a place for you!

#### FFLA CLOSSES OUT OUTSTANDING YEAR

At the Annual Meeting of the FFLA Board of Directors held January 19 near Tillamook, Oregon, our association completed its most ambitious annual

program ever for 2007, and within budget. Your Directors then approved plans for even bigger goals for 2008. I am not going to repeat those accomplishments and new objectives here, as they appear in detail on the report of the Annual Meeting. New this year are Emergency Lookout Restoration Grants and for the first time, a revenue source from our growing endowment, through donations.

**Keith A. Argow**

CEO/Chairman of the Board

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