



# ON THE LOOKOUT

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

Vienna, Virginia  
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**THE AMERICAN REGISTER OF FORMER FIRE LOOKOUT SITES**  
([www.fflos.com](http://www.fflos.com))

Got pictures of lookouts? Do you know where lookouts once stood? Have you talked with folks that remember lookouts? Do you like to sniff out old trails and roads and see if you can find footings or remnants of old fire lookouts?

These are things that most of us love to do! Now you can post and get recognition for your efforts. What better excuse can we have to hike in the woods with an objective in mind! What a great opportunity to take family and friends with you and share interest in forest history!

The Register of Former Lookout Sites ([www.fflos.com](http://www.fflos.com)) is only two years old but already has nearly 700 listings in 19 states, compared to the much older National Historic Lookout Register ([www.nhlor.org](http://www.nhlor.org)) that has about 900 listings in 47 states.

There once were 8,000+ fire lookouts in 49 states according to the national inventory completed by FFLA and partners in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. These results are posted on the Towers Page at [www.ffla.org](http://www.ffla.org). The only state without a fire lookout is Kansas, and that will soon change with the imminent construction of a fire tower on the Cimarron National Grassland. Today about 2,000 lookouts remain and FFLA's goal is to recognize, help maintain and restore as many as we can, possibly 1,800!

We are in a race with time, as abandoned fire towers are sold for scrap to make way for new electronic facilities, including cell phone towers, on high points throughout America. FFLA Members continue to do all we can to

prevent that, and happily are becoming more successful every year. Some lookouts get moved to parks, fairgrounds and museums where people can visit and learn of the proud history of these symbols of forest conservation. Others are sold to private parties who move them to their own woodlands and farms to enjoy and preserve them. A few revert to the landowner and face an uncertain future until one of us comes forward with an offer to help.

### **YOU CAN DO THIS ON THE INTERNET!**

Keeping track of these changes is a huge job and that is where YOU come in. The FFLOS is set up so anyone with internet can post his or her information on the site. A few basic questions are asked: 1) Coordinates (latitude and longitude)--easily obtained with a GPS; 2) Date the lookout was constructed and date removed (if known); 3) Description of the lookout (as much as you can find out); 4) Picture of the footings or remains (if possible); and 5) Photo of the lookout before it was removed.

### **SOMEONE HAS TO STEP UP FIRST**

That's all there is to it! Please give it a try and don't assume that so many folks knew about a certain lookout that they would do it. *Someone has to step up first* and give it your best shot. Others surfing the web will find the site and add their information to it. Together we all post our bits of history...and one day it will become an encyclopedia of Former Fire Lookout Sites. There is already a large number of postings of know sites in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, but a quick look reveals a need for pictures and additional information. Check with relatives and friends and see what you may have to add in those two states, or anywhere else.

### **THANK YOU LOOKOUT STEWARDS**

A big thanks for the FFLA members in three states who volunteered to be Lookout Stewards. The need and opportunity remains for many more to come forward. What is important is having folks take responsibility to check the lookout periodically, clean up the site as needed, make a list of repairs needed, and carry out those repairs...with assistance when needed. This is an on-going and open sign up. Periodically we will publish a list in this magazine and on the web of the Lookout Stewards and their lookouts, with contact information.

### **APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

The job of the FFLA Secretary is to attend and take minutes for all three board meetings a year: the Annual Meeting in January, plus both the Eastern and Western meetings in the summer. In recent years Ray Grimes, a former FFLA Secretary, has volunteered his services when needed, since he is usually able to attend all three meetings. To confirm what we have been doing, Ray has accepted appointment as the Assistant Secretary to fill in when needed. Thank you Ray.

**2011 NATIONAL BOARD MEETING**

The FFLA Board will meet in Macon, Georgia on January 14-16, with the actual meeting on Saturday, January 15 at the Georgia Forestry Commission Headquarters, with pre and post tours organized by FFLA Georgia Rep. Don Shedd.

We alternate these annual board meetings between the eastern and western southern states so that those of you with a Northern Exposure can come down and get warm over the M. L. King three-day holiday weekend! 2010 has been an outstanding year for FFLA. Come hear about it first-hand, and learn about fire towers in the Peach State. These meetings are open to all FFLA members and the public and you all are invited! Y'all come, Ya hear!

**Keith A. Argow**  
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