

2016 Indiana Chapter Annual Report Forest Fire Lookout Association

MEMBERSHIP: The Indiana Chapter has 5 current members

RESTORATION:

Ouabache State Park Tower, shown here, was closed due to safety concerns. The Friends of Ouabache State Park immediately began fund raising to restore the tower. Their Go Fund Me page read:



DO YOU REMEMBER?

That first climb up the tower?

The thrill of making it to the top?

The pride the first time your Mom let you climb it all by yourself?

Holding your breath as you stared straight up all those stairs as your child participated in a rite of passage?

If you do, you know how special that fire tower is.

Future generations will not have those memories. We need your help saving the tower!

All funds coming from the Go Fund Me are earmarked for the fire tower restoration project. The State Park System does not have the funding to do the project at this time and the local group felt the tower was too valuable to let go.

In addition to Go Fund Me which raised \$60,060 at the end of January 2017, they are still planning several fundraisers. The Wells County Foundation matched the funds they had raised so they intend to move forward with restoration of the tower in Spring 2017. Way to go Friends of Ouabache State Park!

McCormicks Creek State Park Tower – The Friends of McCormicks Creek State Park are working to restore their fire tower to its original condition. This 86' steel structure and metal 7'x7' cab with interior wood panels was constructed in 1935 by Civilian Conservation Corps Company #589. The tower was in service through 1967 and since has become a popular visitor destination in the park. The tower was officially listed on the National Historic Lookout Register on November 12, 2008.

The following bullet points list the scope of work and action items to be addressed during the rehabilitation. The work will include:

- Prep and paint the entire structure
- Replace the wooden steps and landings to bring them back to their original condition
- Remove and replace the safety wiring around the stair case



- A complete rehabilitation of the cab to remove existing damaged materials and replace in-kind allowing public access inside the cab
- Road improvements to allow better access to the site for workers and construction vehicles
- Clear trees in a 50' radius around the tower to decrease risk of future damage to the structure

The *Friends of McCormick's Creek State Park* have started a dedicated fund to help raise the nearly \$85,000 the park estimates will be needed to complete the project. Currently they have raised \$36,793 toward that goal.

ACTIVITIES: I have not written anything or interviewed anyone this year. Good intentions, but no follow through!

PLAN OF WORK FOR 2017:

- I plan to retire this spring. So... that should give me more time to focus on my many extra-curricular interests.
- I still hope to interview both the widow of the German Ridge tower man and re-interview the Hickory Ridge tower man's widow. I'll write a story for the magazine if I can get good stories from these women.
- I want to work with Bev Stout, IDNR Fire Prevention Specialist to get school history classes in the communities around lookout towers involved in researching their history. This should help us with the nominations for the towers up for selection for the Register. We also want to get the rest of our towers on the Register so will get classes to research those as well. This will also get a new generation interested in lookout towers.
- Generate an inventory of needed work on towers and update the information on towers that we currently have.

Respectfully submitted: Teena Ligman, Chapter Chair
6 February 2017