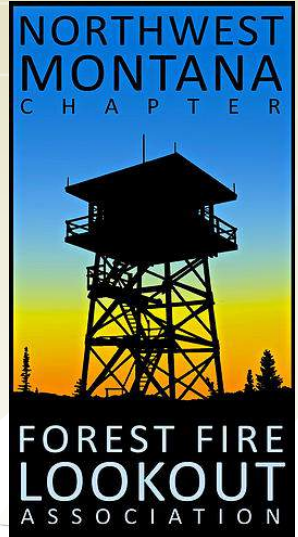


FALL 2016

# NORTHWEST MONTANA CHAPTER – FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION

*Dedicated to the preservation of forest fire lookouts  
in Northwest Montana*



## NOTES FROM THE BOARD

2016 has been by far the most fantastic year yet for the Northwest Montana Chapter of the Lookout Association. With the many hands, heads, and hearts of our volunteers, members, donors and collaborating partners, 7 projects and 22 assessments this summer. Volunteers traveled over 9400 miles for these tasks and donated over 1200 hours of their time. Volunteer contributions plus fixed costs totaled well over \$41,000, not including related agency support costs. We truly appreciate your support of NWMT-FFLA! Please sit back, read about the great work we have been doing, and make plans to join us in the coming year!

**Chuck Manning**  
Board Chair

### WILDERNESS SPEAKER SERIES at FVCC 7-8:30 p.m.

Presented by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation, Montana Wilderness Association, Flathead-Kootenai Chapter, Northwest Montana Lookout Association, & Natural Resources Conservation Management Program at FVCC

ALL WELCOME - FREE OF CHARGE – ART & TECHNOLOGY BUILDING

#### Mountain Goats of NW Montana

Jessy Coltrane  
Kalispell Area Wildlife  
Biologist

Wed Jan 25, 2017

#### 100 Days of Solitude

Amy Pearson  
Adjunct Professor, Humanities  
Division  
FVCC

Wed Feb 22, 2017

#### “THE NAMES OF THE STARS, A Life in the Wilds” a book reading and discussion

Pete Fromm  
Wilderness Author

Wed March 22, 2017

## 2017 BREWERY FUNDRAISERS

Tamarack Brewing  
Lakeside – February 15

Cabinet Mtn. Brewing  
Libby - March 2nd

Kalispell Brewing  
March 14th

H. A. Brewing  
Eureka – April 12

Flathead Lake Brewing  
Bigfork – TBA

Backslope Brewing  
Columbia Falls – TBA

Bonsai Brewing  
Whitefish - TBA

# PROJECT UPDATES

## Little Napa LO

A major project for NWMT-FFLA this summer was replacing the stairs on the Little Napa lookout on the Swan State Forest. This was a complex carpentry effort – no right angles to be found! It took many weeks of work to tear out the old stairs, work on scaffolding to place beams to support new stair treads, hang the new stringers, place 2 tiers of new stairs, and build new railings. The results are spectacular! Thanks to the many participants: retired architect Daniel Revell who developed the plans, crew leader Chuck Manning, trusty volunteers Doug Berglund, Steve Penner, Eric Berglund and Rick Davis, and the staff at DNRC's Swan Unit for their support. The new stairs are at a much better pitch and so much safer!



### History of Little Napa Lookout

The Forest Service built the first lookout in this area in 1932 on Napa Point. It was a 30-foot wooden live-in tower. The Napa Ridge Fire destroyed it in 1937, and the lookout had to run for his life!

In 1968, the State of Montana purchased a military surplus bus and modified it to include sleeping and cooking facilities, as well as a cupola that could be cranked up for use as a fire tower, and cranked down to travel. The bus was used from 1969-1973 at the Napa Point lookout site. It was tough to get the bus around the road switchbacks, and was especially perilous going downhill in the fall when returning to the station.

In 1972-3 Montana DNRC developed "seen-area maps" and determined that more State protection lands were visible from the Little Napa location than from Napa Point. The current Little Napa lookout was pre-fabricated at Goat Creek. A road was constructed to the new lookout site and the lookout was assembled by Swan River Youth Camp Personnel.



## Firefighter LO

Volunteers Larry Shadow, Zan Deery, Traute Parrie, Inez Love and Team Leader Rick Davis gave some much needed TLC to Firefighter Lookout this summer, as any visitor will attest. This lookout is located on Hungry Horse Ranger District, Flathead National Forest

Over 3 days they sanded and scraped, and scraped and sanded some more to get the cabin exterior, catwalk, stairs and railings down to paintable wood. They painted two coats on the exterior of the cabin, catwalk and railings, and painted four flights of stair and oiled the tower structure. They also restored the brass threshold panel to shiny niceness, along with a few other touch ups. Firefighter is enjoying her new sleek coat, all ready for winter! Thanks guys!



Zan Deery & Traute Parrie Photos

## Northwest Peak LO

Northwest Peak Lookout is located in the Northwest Peak Scenic Area on the Kootenai National Forest. The NWMT-FFLA led a group of volunteers to NW Peak to conduct a field condition assessment and do a little project work on this historic lookout.

This trip was co-sponsored with the Montana Wilderness Association as part of their Wilderness Walks Program. Built in 1929, this L-4 lookout prototype has withstood some of the most extreme weather conditions possible.

MWA members Peter and Diane McNair, Bob Saint-Louis and NWMT-FFLA members Nancy and Chuck Manning along with Forest Service employees John Fable and Dave Thorstenson

from the Three Rivers Ranger District, Kootenai NF, spent several hours working on this historic lookout while all the time being seduced by the unparalleled beauty of its surroundings.



Chuck Manning Photos





# Mud Lake LO



This was the second year NWMT-FFLA partnered with Spotted Bear Ranger District to work on the historic Mud Lake Lookout. A crew of three volunteers made the 23-mile hike into the Bob Marshall Wilderness to address some major structural issues this year at Mud Lake. Andy Nelson, Spotted Bear Ranger District's Back Country Facility Manager, joined them at the lookout.

This year's project included leveling and squaring the lookout which had settled unevenly over the years, adding corner cross bracing, building a beautiful new loose stack rock foundation, removing and repairing windows, and moving the radio repeater and

solar panel away from the structure.

Packers Jay Evans and Brady Breese of Salmon Fork Outfitters made several trips to the lookout to deliver and retrieve materials and supplies. The NWMT-FFLA crew consisted of Mark Beckwith, Kyle Staat and Team Leader Chuck Manning. Thanks – You guys “rock”!!

The bulk of the funding for this restoration project was generously provided by The Montana History Foundation.



Mark Beckwith & Chuck Manning Photos

## Apgar LO

Apgar Lookout in Glacier National Park is looking spiffy again thanks to this summer's volunteer efforts. The project involved scraping and painting all the white windows, door and frames. And then... Scraping and painting all the brown surfaces: siding, shutters, deck, stairs, and posts. Basically everything you see on the outside of the lookout!

In addition, they replaced one broken window and re-glazed others as needed, and replaced two door shutter boards.

A special thanks to Team Leader, Scott Murphy and volunteers Greg Evans and Sue Paulson for making this project a success.



Scott Murphy & Chuck Manning Photos

## LIMITED EDITION MUGS

As a thank you gift for this year's volunteers we created special mugs featuring original artwork of the lookouts we restored this summer. If you are interested in getting any of these limited edition mugs at \$20 each, (includes \$5 shipping and handling) you can place orders on our website **now through December 1 only**. At that time, the website will be taken down, and a consolidated order will be placed. The mugs will be shipped directly to you and should be received in 10 days or less.

Available are: Apgar, Firefighter, Little Napa, Meadow Peak, Moran, Mud Lake, & Northwest Peak

**A PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT!**

Order at <http://www.nwmt-flla.org/store>



Many thanks to Tom L. Roberts for the beautiful watercolors!



## Meadow Peak LO

This year we began Phase one of a 3-year project on the Meadow Peak Lookout on the Kootenai NF. Based out of the historic Raven Ranger Station, this summer's crew traveled each day to work on the lookout. Work consisted of replacing structural bracing and supports on the tower, removing the shutters to be repaired at the Regional Historic Preservation Shop in Missoula, cleaning out and disinfecting the attic to remove pack rat litter, and removing/ replacing the shutter header and soffit. At the end of the work session, the lookout was buttoned up in preparation for winter and to keep the little furry unwanted guests from taking up residence once again.

A huge thank you goes out to Justin Moschelle, Dustin Hill, Cindy Hemry and John Fable of the Kootenai National Forest and volunteers Brenda McClure, Terry Richmond, Larry Shadow, Carl Sobczak and Crew Leader Chuck Manning for their dedication and help in restoring this historic structure. Thanks also to Josie Parsons and the crew from the Montana Academy who worked with us to clean up around the lookout site and pick rocks from the access road.



Justin Moschelle Photos

## Moran Patrol Cabin

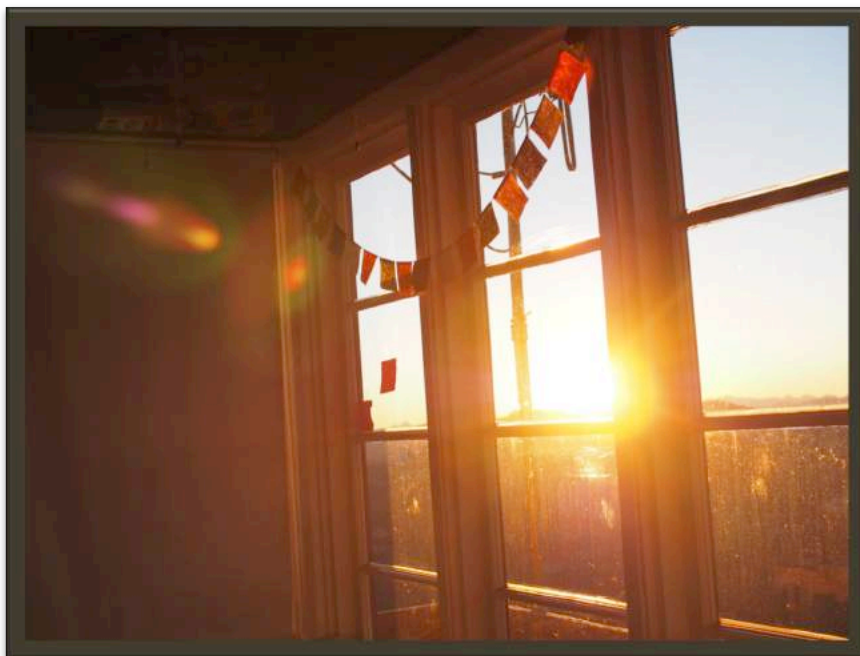
Moran Patrol cabin sits high on a ridge on the Whitefish Range on the Glacier View District of the Flathead National Forest. It was stabilized a few years ago by the Forest Service under the guidance of Leif Haugen. This year, NWMT-FFLA was asked to apply a coat of paint to the cabin.

Co-team leaders, Nancy and Chuck Manning coordinated this project. Special thanks to lookout volunteers and friends Inez Love, Donald Stolte, Barrett Garcia, Vonda Harmon Garcia, Sidney Garcia, Steve Penner, and Caleb Stolte for their combined efforts to help keep the cabin in good shape.



Chuck Manning Photos

INSPIRATION AT JUMBO LOOKOUT  
POETRY & PHOTOGRAPHY by AMY PEARSON



winds, haiku, 7/8

winds all through the night  
winds all through the day  
and night  
winds by day and night

something was crying, 8/2

i awoke last night  
but it was morning,  
maybe 3 o'clock a.m.

the moon finally  
was overhead  
which i know  
because it was full  
and i live in a glass house  
on the top of a mountain

the winds finally  
had calmed  
and a mist had settled eerie  
over the mountains  
late summer, early fall  
hot, but not hot, get the  
picture?

i heard something crying  
in the night,  
but it was morning

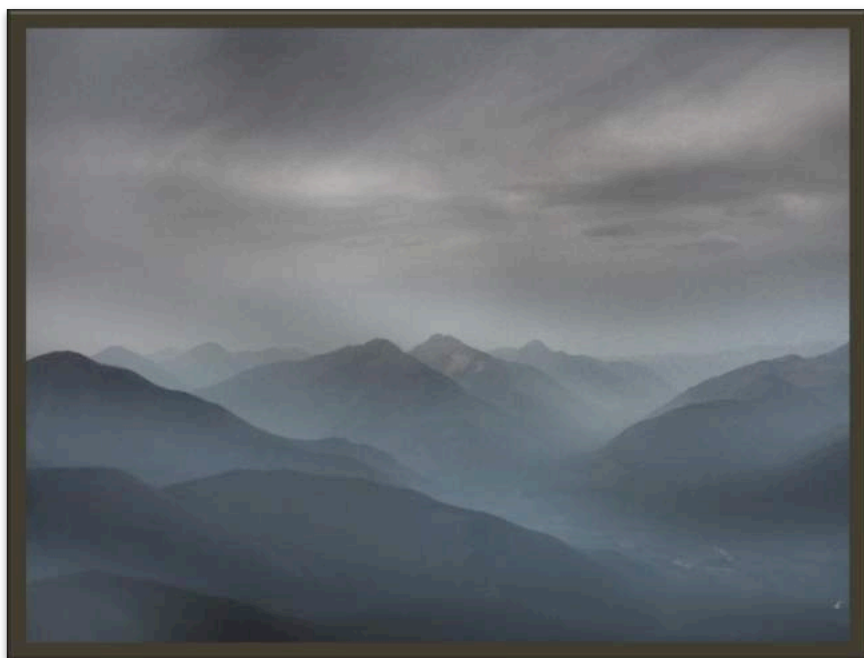
yes, something was crying  
in the morning  
down the peak  
from where i live

it sounded human,  
like a baby  
so i listened

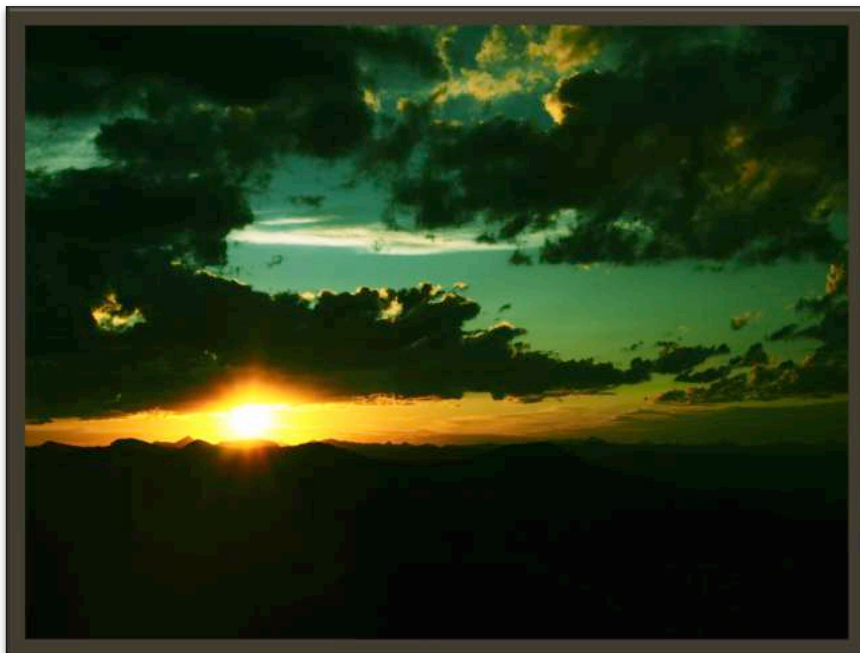
i heard some hooting  
like an owl  
calling out repose

a flash of wings  
a dash of woe

to misty minds  
the baby's fine







a new love affair, 8/29  
for Michael Reavis

it's a new love affair  
with a new lay of land

not the kind people exploit  
but the kind that they, explore

it came to me, 8/1

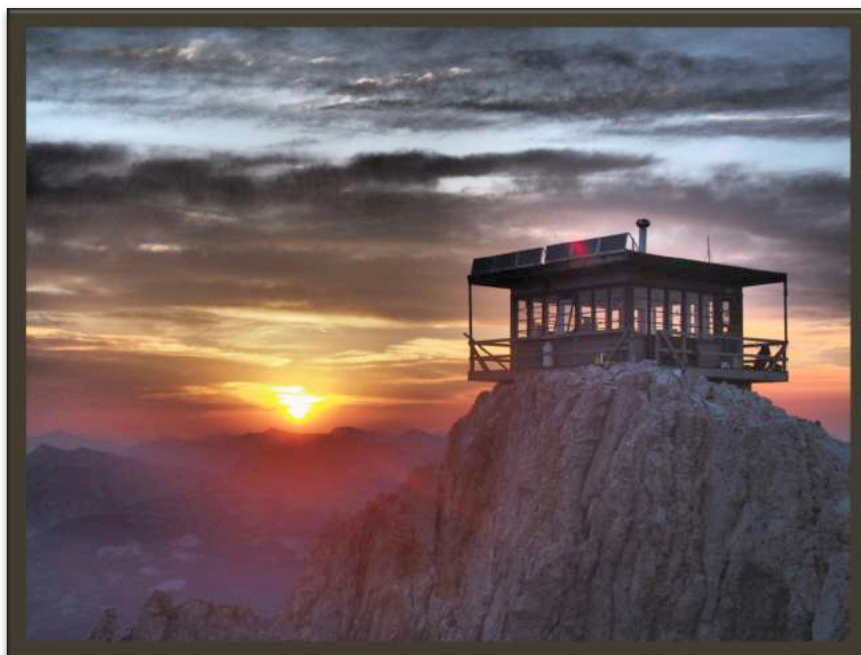
it came to me  
one morning  
after thirty days alone

a reflection

brown and orange  
amongst the shadows  
painted grey

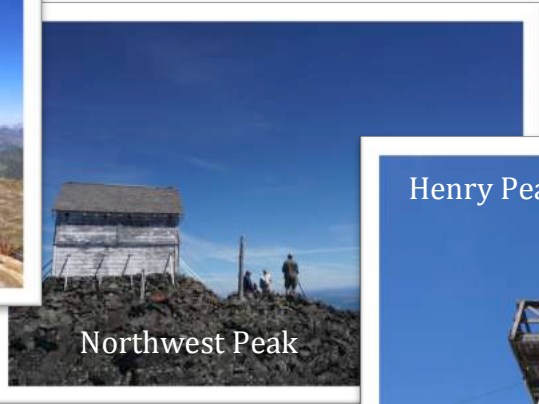
and i felt  
soft like cloud  
bare like rock  
large like mountain  
solid like tree  
steady like river

after thirty days alone  
it came to me,  
beauty



**Amy Pearson** is a poet, teacher, photographer, and wilderness advocate. She currently works as an Adjunct Professor of Humanities at Flathead Valley Community College.



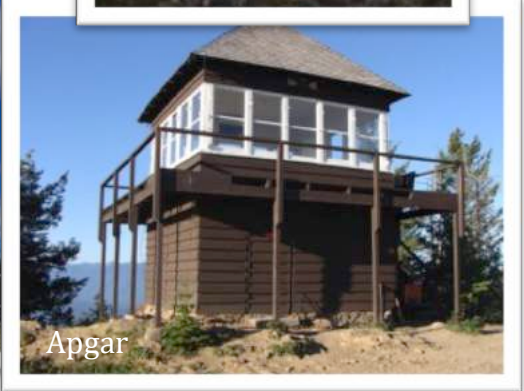
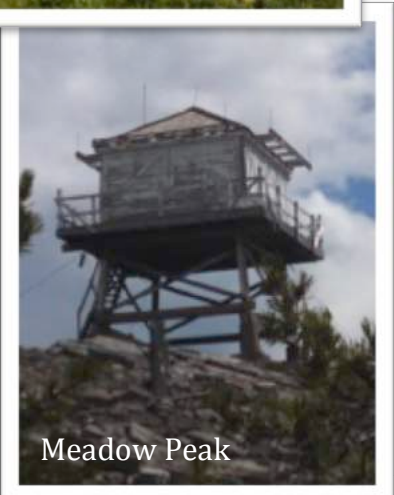


## Lookout Assessment Blitz!

This year NWMT-FFLA made a huge effort to conduct Condition Assessments so that we can work with our Partner Agencies to build solid outyear plans and prioritize future year work for grant seeking. Starting in June and finishing in September, we completed 8 condition assessments: Little Napa LO, McGuire LO, Meadow Peak LO, Apgar LO, Northwest Peak LO, Mount Henry LO, and Wam Mountain.

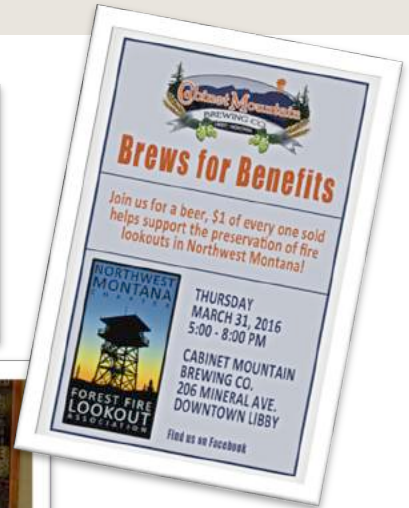


NWMT-FFLA Board members Chuck Manning and Rick Davis conducted a workshop in Libby to teach our assessment method, and over the course of the summer, volunteers have completed an additional 14 assessments on Kootenai lookouts. This data will be invaluable in setting priorities for future restoration efforts. Thanks to all for this great work!





# Fundraising Success



In 2016 NWMT-FFLA participated in a number of fun brewery events to raise awareness, funds, and a few pints in the cause of lookout restoration. In May, we again participated in Give Local Flathead, a 24 hour on-line giving event as part of Give Local America! We continue to sell a variety of great merchandise on our website at [NWMT-FFLA.com](http://NWMT-FFLA.com) with proceeds going towards our restoration projects.



## Montana History Foundation Grant



In April 2016, NWMT-FFLA was fortunate to receive a grant from the Montana History Foundation to support this summer's restoration project at the Mud Lake Lookout in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This grant, for \$3400, is NWMT-FFLA's second major grant.

The Montana History Foundation funds projects across Montana that preserve and honor the history of the Treasure State. In 2016 the MHF granted over \$111,000 to 35 community-based history projects across the state. We received funding in one of 5 funding categories: Buildings and Structures.

The current Mud Lake Lookout was constructed in 1932 using an early L-4 design, and is the only remaining "original" lookout left in the Bob. This partnership effort will support the Flathead National Forest's use of the lookout again for fire protection, and inclusion in the Flathead National Forest Backcountry Administrative Facilities National Historic District, designated in 2015. Once completed, this project will assure Mud Lake lookout's weather worthiness for the coming decades, allowing it to endure for the recreational enjoyment, and education of present and



<http://www.nwmt-ffla.org>

Email us at: <mailto:nwmtc.ffa@gmail.com>



## SHARE YOUR LOOKOUT STORIES

As part of preserving the history of lookouts in Western Montana, we are gathering stories and photos of lookouts in our local area. Did your grandparents honeymoon on a lookout? Did you serve as a lookout that is no longer there? Do you have friends with stories to tell? Or do you? We would love to hear from you!

Or if you are interested in volunteering to help us with this project, there are many ways you might assist: conducting interviews with our questions, scanning photos/documents, typing up interviews, helping to organize a database to track our collection, writing news articles, locating additional people for oral histories... Work is ongoing, so we are ready to put you to work right away.

Please contact Beth Hodder, our Archivist/Historian at <mailto:bhodder1018@montanasky.us>

**“AND IT ALL STARTED ON MT. BROWN”**



A summer-long honeymoon in a 16 x 16 two-story cabin at 7487 feet was not on Dale Zorn’s radar when he asked Marlene Dolliver to marry him. But Marlene’s folks owned a cabin on Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park, and she suggested they apply for a lookout job with the Park.

The couple married on June 17, 1956 in Conrad, Montana. On June 18, they started fire school in preparation for their summer job as fire lookouts on Mt. Brown.

They had no expectations. For them, it was a chance to get away from the world, Dale said, “And it worked. Spending that summer together with no one else around,

we really got to know one another.”

Even though Mt. Brown is near Lake McDonald, it is a difficult and steep hike. They had only 32 visitors that summer, including 7 family members, so they looked forward to the packer who would periodically come by trail with 3 to 4 mules carrying groceries and water.

When the Zorns woke up the first morning, two mountain goats greeted them from the catwalk, staring through a window. Goats frequented the lookout until the snow left, providing company.

A snow bank on shale augmented the 40 gallons of water brought by the packer. Melted on the stove, snow was used to boil water, cook potatoes, wash dishes, and scrub the floor before it got thrown out.

Marlene baked in the wood stove, but the stove was half charred. They would end up with only a half loaf of good bread. Meals included a lot of Spam, with 2-3 days of fresh salads, fruits, and meats when they were resupplied.

Both worked as lookouts, with Marlene paid for 2 days a week and Dale for 5. They never spotted a fire, although one lightning strike torched a tree near the lookout. When Dale called it in to headquarters, he was told, “Well, take care of it.” He said, “Well, okay, I will.” He had to chop the tree down.

The first morning on the lookout, Dale called in a smoke. He laughed. It turned out to be the Coram sawmill.

The couple left Mt. Brown at the end of the summer with about \$1,100. Marlene had a teaching job, and Dale finished his senior year at Northern Montana College in Havre. Both spent their entire careers as educators.

Marlene died in 2009. They had been married 53 years. Now their kids and grandkids identify with what Grandma and Grandpa did when they got married. Dale said, “It was not only good for us but good for the family...we couldn’t have spent it better any other way.”



*Mel Ruder photos, courtesy of Glacier National Park*



**In Memory of Bill Morgan**

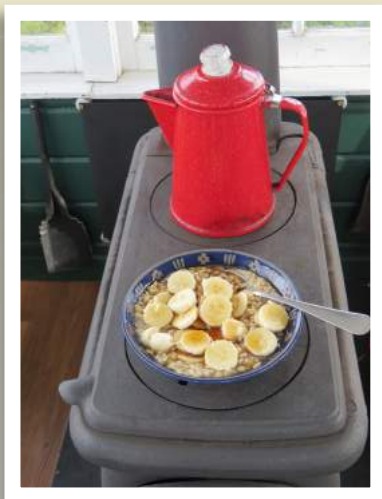
Bill Morgan was a Forester with the U.S. Forest Service for 30 years, and spent almost 20 years at Hungry Horse Ranger District. Bill retired in 1994. He and his wife Devvi loved to hike and they visited and photographed many of the lookouts in NW Montana. Bill passed away in February of this year. Lynne C. Brett, made a generous donation to NWMT-FFLA in Bill’s honor, and Devvi has asked that it be put towards needs at Firefighter LO. Many thanks to both Lynne and Devvi for their generosity.



FALL 2016

# Happy Holidays!

Hope you have a warm stove and a good book to keep you company through the winter. Or better yet, go visit a lookout in its winter glory! Wishing you all the best!



## The Lookout Association Board

Chuck Manning

Lori Roberts

Nancy Manning

Cathy Calloway

Rick Davis

Marli Davis

Beth Hodder

Kjell Petersen

## NWMT-FFLA

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