

# Pennsylvania (Keystone) Chapter Report 2007

Dr. Keith A. Argow, Chairman  
The Board of Directors,  
Forest Fire Lookout Association

Mr. Chairman,

As required, I am happy to submit the following as the Annual Report of the Keystone Chapter, (Pennsylvania), briefly reporting on our circumstances at the close of 2007.

Membership 22  
Chapter Account w/National Treasurer \$ 412.29

(Project) In touch with a Pennsylvania State Parks local volunteer citizens support group, we have suggested their efforts include acquisition and transport of the former Bandana Tower, (1922), for the environmental center they have developed at Codorus State Park, both in York County, PA. The group, a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks & Forestry Foundation is interested and currently investigating costs and feasibility. If approved at all levels this Chapter will be providing technical and engineering support.

(Project) While research has continued, the long sought publication on fire towers and lookouts has seemingly been set aside. With almost five hundred towers and lookout sites, the work has proved massive.. It is to be expected that any book on towers and lookouts will result in plenty of fresh input after publication. In an effort to make the planned book as complete as possible, something new is now being developed. In cooperation with the PA Forest Fire Museum Assn., a series of pamphlets is now planned, publishing known information on a Forest District by Forest District process. It is hoped that this project will yield plenty of added information, input from interested readers, and helping to build more complete data for the major work yet to come. Assistance for the overall project continues to come from FFLA members in several surrounding and other States. The first pamphlet is expected in the Spring of 2008. It will feature the Buchanan Forest District located in South Central Pennsylvania.

(Project) Forest fire towers were the theme of a three-day interpretive exhibit at the annual Fire Expo in Harrisburg during the early Summer, 2007. This was a joint effort of three organizations, including FFLA, the Forest Fire Museum Assn., and volllies representing the PA Division of Forest Fire Protection, a part of the PA Bureau of Forestry.

(Project) A one-day interpretive exhibit on PA fire towers will be provided at at least one historical event during 2008. Two additional awareness opportunities are being considered. At every such opportunity, new information is always discovered as visitors to such sites always include some who knows, knew, or is related to, etc.

(Project) As a part of a year-long exhibit at the PA National Fire Museum in Harrisburg, PA, FFLA materials have been included in a layout entitled 'PA Forestry In War Time.' The activities of family members of forest lookouts, long daylight shifts, reporting aircraft, foreign agents planning incendiary fires, and tower operators intercepting German radio transmissions are some of the items covered.

FFLA members from four States participated in the Annual Meeting of the PA Forest Fire

Museum Assn., in October 2007, strengthening the cooperative ties between the two organizations.

Because the Museum Assn. and the Keystone Chapter, FFLA share facilities and office space at two locations, inquiries and requests for information are sometimes hard to separate as to which organization is being asked, or which is responding. It is easily noted however, that of all the historical aspects of forestry and forest fires, more inquiries are received about fire towers and lookouts, than any other topic.

The PA Bureau of Forestry, Division of Forest Protection, currently has a task force or working group, studying each of the State-owned towers, both those in service and those currently out of service. The group is considering each tower individually, as to condition, use and value or need. There appears in early work of the group, there is a consensus that some towers are still needed, that some require improvement, and that some should be retained as historic examples. No final recommendations on any specific towers have yet been announced. A Pennsylvania FFLA member serves on the task force.

This Chapter respectfully suggests that Pennsylvania, and specifically, the French Creek State Park and the Hopewell Forest Fire Station & Tower be considered as the site for the 2010 Eastern Regional Conference site, or as the site for the 2010 Winter Board Meeting. The 20th Anniversary of the FFLA will occur in January, 2010. If accepted, early word will allow for advance approvals to permit early planning. No action has as yet been taken with State authorities, pending word on whether or not the FFLA Board wishes to accept the proposal. Please note the initial meeting was held at the tower site in January, 1990 and the tenth anniversary was held at the adjoining property, the French Creek State Park, in 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Stephen J. Cummings 01/08/08

Stephen J. Cummings, Director  
Keystone Chapter, (Pennsylvania)  
Forest Fire Lookout Association