

FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION



Indiana CHAPTER

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

MEMBERSHIP: The Indiana Chapter had some membership turn over in 2009 but retained the same total number of 8 paid members as in the previous year.

RESTORATION: The State of Indiana received AARA funds to restore lookout towers on some of their state properties.

One of the towers where restoration work was done was at the Ferdinand State Forest. Here are some photos of this fire tower showing the work done last summer. The wooden steps were replaced with new treated wood and new fencing was



installed on the railings for safety. This same work had last been done over 20 years ago.

When I asked about the history of the Ferdinand State Forest Tower this was all I was able to learn from the Property Manager Doug Brown:

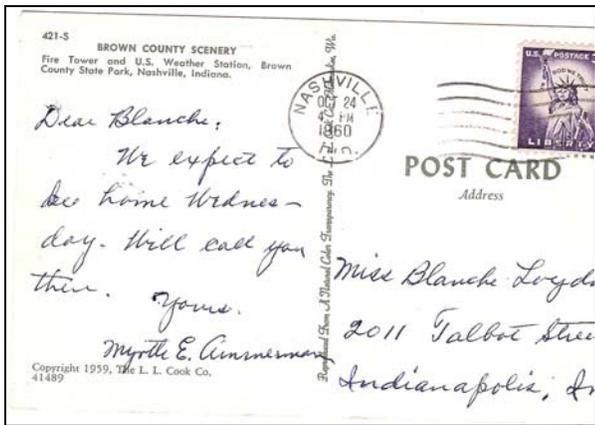
“The tower never has had a special name to my knowledge. I do know that this was the second tower site at Ferdinand. The first one was about 1/2 to 3/4 a mile southeast of the present

site. The original site had a towerman’s cabin nearby but I was told the tower was only there for a couple of years. I was never able to confirm if the same tower was moved or if a new one was erected.

There may be some of the later towermen around. I understand that the tower was last used in the late 50’s or early 60’s. I do not really know who they may be though. My old historian, Cornell Kemper died a few years ago. His father had donated some of the original forest acreage. He had worked with the CCC boys as a local contractor driving a team of horses. After the war he worked for the State as a fire warden and in some other capacities until he was kicked out in a political changeover. Most of the other older folks that were around in those days are either dead or gone.”



The AARA Restoration funds also paid to restore the Jackson Washington State Forest Lookout Tower. This tower was taken down, sandblasted, painted and new planks and steps put in. The Young Hoosier Conservation Corps – YHCC- (another AARA initiative) helped replace the steps and did much of the painting and sandblasting. The fencing failed to come in before winter so the rest of the work was postponed until spring when a contractor will return with his crane and reassemble the tower and put up the fencing. Brad Schneck property manager, said the public has been very interested in the progress of the restoration and constantly checking to see when it will be up. He even had one couple who had planned to be married at the base of the tower but had fortunately come out the week before to do the final practice and found the tower was gone! They were a bit upset to find their marriage plans in turmoil but he was able to accommodate them with another scenic place on the property. Brad didn't have any good pictures to share with me on short notice but did share a postcard someone had sent him that they'd found of another lookout tower in the same county at Brown County State Park.



One last tower was restored with the ARRA funds- the Morgan Monroe State Forest Lookout Tower. This tower was also taken down and much of the work was done with the YHCC. Jeremy Kolaks, Assistant Property Manager and our newest Indiana FFLA member, headed up the effort to restore this tower. He coordinated closely with Brad Schneck and they worked together to restore the two towers and ordered their supplies together. As with Jackson-Washington, when the fencing didn't come in they were unable to complete the restoration job in 2009. The other hold up for the Morgan Monroe Lookout Tower is that the windows of the cab for this tower had been destroyed so Jeremy had to try to find replacement windows. Henry Isenberg was very helpful in his quest to find replacements but in the end, Jeremy is having new windows fabricated. Here are some photos of the work done on the Morgan Monroe Tower restoration.





CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT: I have used the new brochure to do some recruiting but have not had great success so far but am still hopeful! I would like to do an article in the FFLA magazine on our towers once they are completed – I think that might then be promoted state-wide as well as we'll get publicity for our work on towers in Indiana.

ACTIVITIES: None as a chapter; just individual efforts.

PLAN OF WORK FOR 2009;

- Recruit more members
- Develop an article for the Magazine.

Respectfully submitted: Teena Ligman, Chapter Chair
27 January 2010