



NEWSLETTER

Issue # 5 September, 2002



September Notes *from the Moreys*

Wow! September and no bad fires yet in the Angeles! But now come the Santa Anas and the most dangerous part of the season. South Mt Hawkins is of special concern. There is a fire shelter under the Osborne stand and you must know how to use it, so the Sept super session will include a film on how to deploy it. Mike McIntyre agrees that if a fire gets too close to Hawkins for you to get safely down down the road in time you should alert Dispatch and then head for the Helicopter pad with the radio, fire shelter and Osborne. You might also want to take a shovel from the garage. Keep your eyes open and hope there are no fires; but, if there are, may you be the be one to spot and call them in.

Special thanks to the following people for their monetary donations to the program:

BILL CONE **LEX WILLIAMS**
BILL ALBRECHT **CAROL RASCO**

In the future we will be sending out coming events reminders in addition to posting notices in this newsletter and at our website. Special thanks to **Carol Rasco** for taking on this important function. She will be putting a post card in the mail every month to remind us of that month's coming events.

!!!PARTY TIME!!!

We will be having our year-end party a little earlier this season. It will be at Deer Flats campground near Crystal Lake on Oct 27th from 11am to 5pm. Overnight camping will be available and rides will be offered to South Mt Hawkins. It will be a potluck and we will have BBQ tri-tips. The association will furnish the meat and all the drinks and plates and forks and paper products. We need propane BBQ's for this event; so if you have one and we can borrow it please let us know. We can pick it up at your house if you have no way of getting it to the party. We will be sending out flyers and maps on how to get there next month.

Keep up
to date:



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True Story *an eyewitness account by Harry Heflin*

Life in the cab atop South Mt Hawkins tends to be calm and quiet most of the time. Just a few visitors pass by while we lookouts prowl the catwalk, listen to the wind rustle the pine needles, watch the antics of the birds and squirrels, inhale all that fresh air — and simultaneously hope there won't be any smokes but that, if there are, we will be the first to spot them. Tranquility is the norm; excitement is rare..

Then on July 28th there was THE OPALKA INCIDENT. Ric and I were up top on a warm and lazy Friday afternoon. We had finished recording the afternoon weather. I was at the map table studying the topo map trying to memorize some of the various ground features around us, and Ric was standing on the catwalk just outside the cab door. I glanced out through the door just in time to see Ric suddenly hunker over and then begin to methodically spin his entire body around clockwise, all the while peering intently at his hand held out flat just in front of his chest. He rotated completely around two times, then stopped, swaying a bit, but still looking down at his hand. I stood up, map forgotten, trying to decode this mysterious and heretofore undocumented lookout behavior. Pam and George had not told me about this. Then Ric blinked a couple of times and immediately began spinning around again, wobbling even more on his vertical axis this second time.

I headed towards the door hoping to grab his belt before he tottered right on over the rail and down three stories. But just before I reached him, Ric abruptly halted his rotation and grabbed the door jamb and guard rail for support, then looked up at me a little cross-eyed and announced in a somewhat faint voice, "Hey, it worked!"

Turned out he had been calibrating the electronic compass inside his little multi-function GMRS hand-held radio. Later, as we read the radio's directions a second time, we learned that one can "Rotate the radio on the palm of your hand through 720 degrees" rather than rotating one's entire self through a couple of circles. Ah, but that would not be nearly so entertaining!

IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday, Sept 19. 6:30pm. Supersession.

Arcadia SO. Fires near the lookouts: historical overview by Gerry Reponen.

Saturday, Oct 12. 8am. Bridge to Nowhere.

Walk led by Ric Opalka. Details in next newsletter.

Sunday, Oct 27th. Year-end party. Deer Flat campground. More details on this page & in next newsletter.

VETTER

Max temp 99 on 7/9.
Min 60: 7/21 & 7/28.
Wind -31 mph: 7/22.
Precip - 0.
Chilao Ranger Station
Max 97: 7/9. Min 59:
7/3, 7/22 & 7/27.
Wind -35 mph: 7/21.
Precip - 0.
Visitors - 914 (thru 7/30)
Tower staffed 24 days in July.



SOUTH HAWKINS On August 3rd **Bob Moore** had a visitor who had hiked from Dawson Saddle and when reaching the saddle below the lookout by the heliport, had a bear climb out of a tree and get within 50 feet of him. No problems tho. (*ed note: Dick Wagoner has a bear story too.*)
Max temp - 88 on 7/9. Min 57 on 7/3 & 7/9
Peak wind -20 mph on 7/20. Precip - 0.
Visitors 162 (thru 8/10)
Tower staffed 56 of 84 days (thru 8/10)

We knew that!

On 8/1, 6 visitors wrote in the log, “**Pam** is great!” **Jim Fleming** is no longer the master at getting friends to come up when he is on duty. These 6 came all the way from Ohio!



SLIDE Thanks to **Mike McIntyre**, a fire crew has started clearing a path to the Lookout.

ALL LOOKOUTS

There will be 2 jackets in each lookout this fall to help you face the changing weather. Please don't take them home with you! If you want your own, now is the time to call

Richard Harris (THE UNIFORM MAN) at **686-331-7485** and place your order.

Watch your mail or e-mail for a lookout schedule with your future newsletters; as some of you are unable to access the online schedule. You must still contact Bob Gregg (Hawkins) or Chuck McFate (Vetter) to get in a shift. We hope this will help everyone get more time in and see with whom they might want to work.

Very important: If anyone contacts you to do an in-tower training, tell them they must first contact Bob Gregg, Chuck McFate or the Moreys: who will then confirm arrangements with you. We have people trying to get an in-tower that have not gone through our training sessions. Please be aware of this.

Stay current:
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Sept Fires in the Angeles. (*partial list*). Worst fire month due to ongoing dryness & onslaught of Santa Ana winds.

9/13/1913. 4,000 acres burned on Mt. Lukens.
9/15 - 9/27/19. Rovenna Fire burned 76,820 acres from San Fernando over Mendenhall Peak, east to Mt. Gleason and south along the Big Tujunga Road.
9/12 - 9/27/19. The San Gabriel Fire burned 50,000 acres from the east side of the San Gabriel Dam area, thence east to the San Dimas Experimental Forest area and north over Crystal Lake, South Hawkins (no

lookout then), and up the west slope of Mt. Baldy.
9/7 - 9/22/24. Another San Gabriel Fire burned 50,000 acres from the west side of the area of Morris Reservoir, thence northwest over Monrovia Peak, the West Fork, Charlton Flats, Chilao and up to Mt. Pacifico and over to Mt. Waterman.
Starting 9/6/53. The lightning-caused Fish Fork Fire burned 12,000 acres in the area from South Hawkins east to Mt. Baldy including all the upper East Fork to the Blue Ridge.
9/20/62. East side of Mt. Lukens burned again.
9/9 - 9/11/68. Little Tujunga drainage area burned.
9/10/69. Hills above Sierra Madre burned up to Chantry Flats.
From 9/28 - early 10/70. 36,466 acres burned on the south face of Ontario and Cucamonga Peaks above Rancho Cucamonga.
9/13 - 9/30/79. The Sage Fire burned 29,200 acres from near Red Box north into the upper Big Tujunga Canyon and then east to Vetter and west to Mt. Gleason and north to near Mt. Emma.

National Fire Report

(*excerpted from NIFC*)

So far this season (thru 8/25/2002), 60,672 fires have consumed 6,204,511 acres; compared to a 10-year average of 2,952,066.

Very high to extreme fire indices were reported in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wyoming. The following states are reporting active large fires: Arizona (2) - 3,135 acres; California (3) - 151,290 acres; Colorado (4) - 59,924 acres; Idaho (3) - 6,779 acres; Oregon (4) - 570,374 acres; Utah (2) - 3,011 acres; Virginia (1) - 300 acres; Washington (1) - 802 acres; Wyoming (2) - 5,520 acres.

California Fires:

Cherry (L A County Fire Department): 105 acres: 10 % contained. Burning in light to medium brush nr Lake Elisabeth. Several residential tracts threatened; structure protection in place.

Bobcat (Cleveland National Forest): 765 acres; 85 percent contained. Three miles nw of Morena Village. Town of Lake Morena, Lake Morena County Park and Corral Canyon Marine Corps Base threatened; structure protection in place.

McNalley (Sequoia National Forest): 150,420 acres; 90 percent contained. Nine miles n of Kernville. 23 residences and seven commercial properties remain threatened; structure protection in place.



A VISIT TO LOOMIS RANCH *with Bob Gregg*

Located nearly 4 miles northwest of Vetter Lookout (320 degrees on the Osborne) on Alder Creek and in the headwaters area of Big Tujunga Creek is Loomis Ranch. One of the last homesteads patented in the Angeles National Forest, at 80 acres it is one of the largest private inholdings in the Angeles National Forest. At an elevation of 4,300 feet it's only access is via a twisting 3 mile dirt road descending from Chilao. In the days before roads, it was a 25 mile hike from Mt. Wilson and a 20 mile hike from Acton.

Capt. Lester Loomis, who stood 6 ft 2 inches tall, was born in Peoria, Illinois in August, 1863. He came with his parents to Los Angeles, then a small town of 10,000 people (mostly Mexicans, Chinese and Native Americans) at the age of 11. In 1865 the family moved to Reno and Lester's pioneer years began. He was a miner, teamster, cowboy, range detective, prison guard and owner of a sawmill. On August 25, 1886 he married his boyhood sweetheart Grace Williams. They soon moved back to a much larger Los Angeles and he joined the police force, where he was the first Police Sergeant. In six months he was made Captain and a year later Acting Chief of Police. He did not like politics and so refused the position of Police Chief and took over the management of the Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights for the next 14 years. He built the first modern crematorium and started the perpetual care system. During part of this time he went to the Klondike gold rush in Alaska with no success. He laid out the Inglewood Cemetery, then moved to Portland, Oregon to lay out a cemetery for that city.

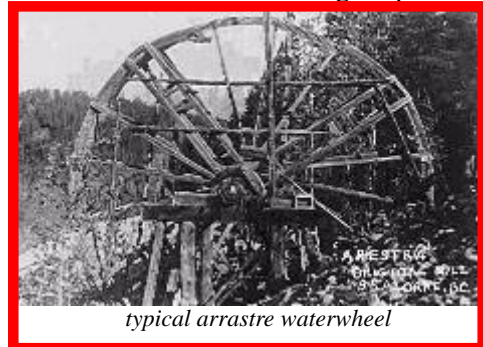
In April, 1913, the mountains and old mining claims called, so, at age 50 with a wife and 3 daughters, he pulled up stakes and returned to the San Gabriel Mtns with the idea of developing mining claims. It was at this time that he drove the first stake for what would become Loomis Ranch. The family first lived in three tents. An old cabin was used for storage. A 20x40 cabin was built with wood for rafters and shakes packed down from Chilao. Mrs. Loomis tended a huge garden. They then built a barn, corral and arrastre driven by waterpower. More land was cleared for an orchard and livestock.



typical arrastre

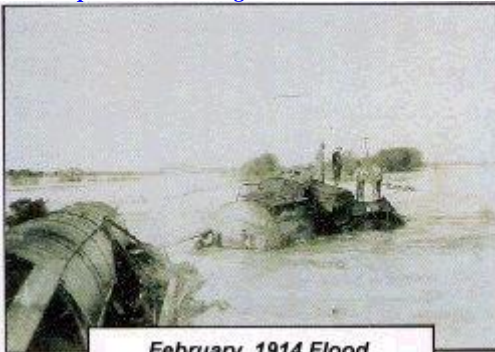
Over the years; their daughters married and left, hikers discovered the ranch and word of the good food and soft beds soon spread. Then, during World War I and the Depression there were lean periods when the Loomis had to go into Los Angeles to live, but others held down the ranch until they could return. Other recurring problems included deer that ate their vegetables and alfalfa as fast as it grew. Their mine did ok from 1932-34 when gold prices were high.

After celebrating their Golden wedding anniversary in 1936 Capt. Loomis's declining health caused them to leave the mountains again. This time was forever for Captain Loomis, who died December 12, 1936 at 73 years of age and was buried at the Inglewood Cemetery. The following Spring, Mrs. Loomis returned to the ranch but her children were concerned for her well-being and convinced her to come down in 1937. The floods of March, 1938 washed away many small buildings and changed the landscape. The Orval Thomas's took over the ranch and rebuilt after the flood and stayed until 1955. Since then there have been a succession of owners.



typical arrastre waterwheel

Once upon a time along the San Gabriel River



February, 1914 Flood

CONTACT SHEET

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So. Mt. Hawkins: Leader: Pam Morey

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RANDOM SHOTS



Sunset near Little Jimmy



Historic photo of Opid's Camp



"Hi! I've moved over to South Mt Hawkins!"



"and I have moved on to parts unknown."



Angeles Crest Hwy



We have to stop meeting like this!

A Message to Our Friends

Short on time? Want to help? We need you.

Many items are required to maintain the operating lookouts atop Vetter Mountain and South Mt. Hawkins. More will be needed to reopen the Slide Mountain lookout.

We have great goals: saving the last lookouts in the Angeles National Forest; hosting visitors; assisting in the protection of our forest. **Help achieve them!**

Don't know how much to give? Consider these options.

For **\$10**, you will get this newsletter for one full season.

For **\$50**, the newsletter and an invitation to our supersessions and field trips for one full season.

For **\$100**, all of the above plus guided tours of the lookouts at Vetter and South Mt. Hawkins.

For **\$200**, all of the above plus the end-of-season t-shirt that is given to our most active volunteers.

For **\$600**, all of the above, plus recognition in the newsletter as an ANFFLA SPONSOR.

The most important thing of course is that you make the donation with which you are most comfortable.

Any assistance will be deeply appreciated. *Please include the lower portion of this sheet with your contribution.*

Enclosed please find my check for \$ _____ made payable to the ANFFLA.

I understand my contribution will only be used to assist in achieving the objectives of the Angeles National Forest Fire Lookout Association (ANFFLA).

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ FAX: _____ email: _____

The Angeles National Forest Fire Lookout Association (ANFFLA) is a 501c(3) corporation and your contribution is tax-deductible. Your employer may match your donation. Please check with your personnel office.

Please mail contribution with this sheet to: **ANFFLA, POB 1409, Arcadia, CA 91077**

