**1 NAME**

**HISTORIC**

Prospect Peak Fire Lookout

**AND/OR COMMON**

Prospect Peak Fire Lookout

**2 LOCATION**

**STREET & NUMBER**

Not applicable (on summit of Prospect Peak)

**CITY, TOWN**

Not applicable

**STATE**

California

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT**

- X - Mineral First

**VICINITY OF**

California

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- _DISTRICT__

- _BUILDING(S)__

- _STRUCTURE__

- _SITE__

- _OBJECT__

**OWNERSHIP**

- _PRIVATE__

- _PUBLIC__

- _BOTH__

- _PUBLIC ACQUISITION__

- _IN PROCESS__

- _BEING CONSIDERED__

**STATUS**

- _UNOCCUPIED__

- _OCCUPIED__

- _WORK IN PROGRESS__

- _ACCESSIBLE__

- _YES: RESTRICTED__

- _YES: UNRESTRICTED__

- _NO__

**PRESENT USE**

- _AGRICULTURE__

- _COMMERCIAL__

- _EDUCATIONAL__

- _ENTERTAINMENT__

- _GOVERNMENT__

- _INDUSTRIAL__

- _MILITARY__

- _MUSEUM__

- _PARK__

- _PRIVATE RESIDENCE__

- _RELIGIOUS__

- _SCIENTIFIC__

- _TRANSPORTATION__

- _OTHER: None__

**4 AGENCY**

**REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)**

National Park Service - Western Regional Office

**STREET & NUMBER**

450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

**CITY, TOWN**

San Francisco

**STATE**

California

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

Shasta County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**

P.O. Box 880

**CITY, TOWN**

Redding

**STATE**

California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE**

None

**DATE**

_FEDERAL_ _STATE_ _COUNTY_ _LOCAL_
### DESCRIPTION

**CONDITION**
- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED

**CHECK ONE**
- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

**CHECK ONE**
- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED

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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Prospect Peak Fire Lookout is a square wood frame building with a pyramidal roof. It is about 14 feet on a side, and has a belt of rather tall windows entirely encircling the building, with horizontal ship-lap siding both above and below the windows. It has a shingled roof whose corner angles were sheathed in metal. The building has one door, glazed to match the windows. The window on the door was double-hung; the remainder were a single sheet of fixed glass. The building had a chimney pipe in one corner. The building was secured against wind by guy wires strung from the corners under the eaves to a pin in the ground. The building was originally painted white.

Today, the building is deteriorated, but still intact. All the roof shingles are missing, as is most of the corner metal sheathing. The glass is entirely gone from the windows, and all the paint has weathered off. Inside, the built-in sitting table, and other loose furnishings are intact, although weathered as is the remainder of the wood. The guy wires are, with one exception, hanging loose, and some planks are missing from the roof.
The abandoned U.S. Forest Service Fire Lookout on the summit of Prospect Peak in Lassen Volcanic National Park is of regional level of significance in the category of conservation as one of the oldest surviving U.S. Forest Service fire lookouts in the United States. Although abandoned and exposed to the elements for years, the glass in its windows and shingles from its roof long gone, the building is basically intact both inside and out, including essential furnishings, possesses integrity of site, and embodies distinctive characteristics of type, method, and construction worthy of preservation here. It may be the last surviving building of its type in the United States, although once there were others, as it represents one—perhaps the first—of a number of standard designs for Forest Service fire lookouts.

The precise age of this fire lookout is not known from available data, but it was probably built in 1912, or at least soon thereafter. By the end of that year there were seven fire lookouts in Lassen National Forest of which this was one, but whether or not this building constituted the 1912 Prospect Peak lookout is unknown. The first two permanent lookouts were frame structures of lumber precut and assembled in Red Bluff during the winter of 1911-1912, then packed one each, disassembled, during the summer of 1912 to the summits of Lassen Peak and Turner Mountain for erection on the site. These replaced earlier and more primitive facilities; the first lookout in this national forest was apparently the Turner Mountain lookout which existed as early as 1908, but what the nature of the facility was prior to 1912 is unknown; a Lassen lookout prior to 1912 consisted of no building, merely a table for the alidade and the protractor, and possibly a tent. But by 1912 there were reportedly additional lookouts on Colby Mountain, Pegleg Mountain, Prospect Peak, Harvey Mountain, and McGee Peak. Whether that means that this particular building stood on Prospect Peak in 1912 is unclear, but if it was not built in 1912 it must have been built soon after, probably no more than a year or two later, and almost certainly before the creation of Lassen Volcanic National Park superseded the national forest in 1916. Buildings of this sort were generally manned by June 1 and remained in service until about October 10 each year. All were connected by telephone to one another and to the Forest Supervisor's Office in Mineral (which moved to Red Bluff after the onset of winter weather ended the fire season and the lookouts were discontinued).
JIMAIOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.9

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

A 1 0 6 4 1 0 9 0 4 9 0 2 5 1 0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

C 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

D 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary is a square, 200 feet on each side (40,000 square feet), centered on the peak of the roof of the lookout, which marks the center of the building.

FORM PREPARED BY

Gordon Chappell - Regional Historian

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service - Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

DATE

June 16, 1977

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION SEP 22 1977

YES

NO

NONE

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE NOV 10 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 3.16.78
It may be inferred from a description of the first two lookout buildings compared with the existing structure on Prospect Peak that it was of the same or similar design. Forest Ranger Robert Harvey Abbey described the pioneer Turner and Lassen Lookouts in his memoirs:

At Red Bluff, during the winter of 1911-12, 2 lookout houses were made and set up temporarily to see what they looked like. They were made collapsible so they could be packed either by man or pack animal to the high points on the mountain that was chosen for the lookout house station. Light lumber, preferably shiplap for siding, 2 x 4 for studding and framework. The longest pieces in the whole structure were the 4 rafters, 9 feet. When the house was set up it was 10 x 10 in size. The walls were about 4 feet in height; 8 feet to the eaves. Glass windows filled the balance of space. These windows were placed on all 4 sides of the house. Through these windows the station lookout man sighted the fires. In the center of the house was a raised platform with a table. In the center of the table a protractor was placed over a map of the forest. From this station the stationman located the fires. From year to year more lookout houses were built. After 2 or more houses were completed, cross shot readings were taken. This enabled the rangers and fire fighters to know quite accurately the location of the townships, ranges, and sections.

The Prospect Peak lookout station may be a little bit larger than the two Abbey described, or Abbey's estimates of a ten foot square building may be several feet short of the actual measurements. If not identical to the first two in size, it seems to have been identical in pattern, and for Lassen National Forest, at least, was a "first generation" lookout station in design. (As of the date of this nomination the National Park Service has seven other fire lookouts listed as historic structures, the earliest of which dates from 1928; the Chief Historian for the U.S. Forest Service indicates the earliest fire lookout nominated by the Forest Service to the National Register dates from 1925, and believes the Prospect Peak lookout "might be the oldest such structure surviving . . .") By the 1920s, the U.S. Forest Service began to use in most instances lookouts on steel towers, and the earlier generation of small wooden buildings soon passed into obsolescence.

Resource Management

The significant values to be preserved here are the building, its interior furnishings, and its historic scene. Preservation of the building will necessarily entail some restoration, specifically replacing missing boards from the walls and roof with boards of the same type, reshingling the roof and resheathing the pyramidal corners with metal, reglazing all windows to render the building comparatively weather-tight, and repainting the exterior and treating interior wood and furnishings with a preservative. Replacement material should match the original in substance and form.
Continuation Sheet

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PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

U.S. Forest Service
Prospect Peak Fire Lookout
Lassen Volcanic National Park
Shasta County, California

View from Southwest

National Park Service Photo
1973
Photo 2 of 2
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

U.S. Forest Service Prospect Peak Fire Lookout
Lassen Volcanic National Park
Shasta County, California
1925

National Park Service photo
View from South
Photo 1 of 2