

Forest Fire Tower Operations



Chews Ridge Lookout
Los Padres National Forest

History of lookouts

- ▶ Early 1900s: Identified the need for protection of timber and water resources



- ▶ Started with patrolman concept

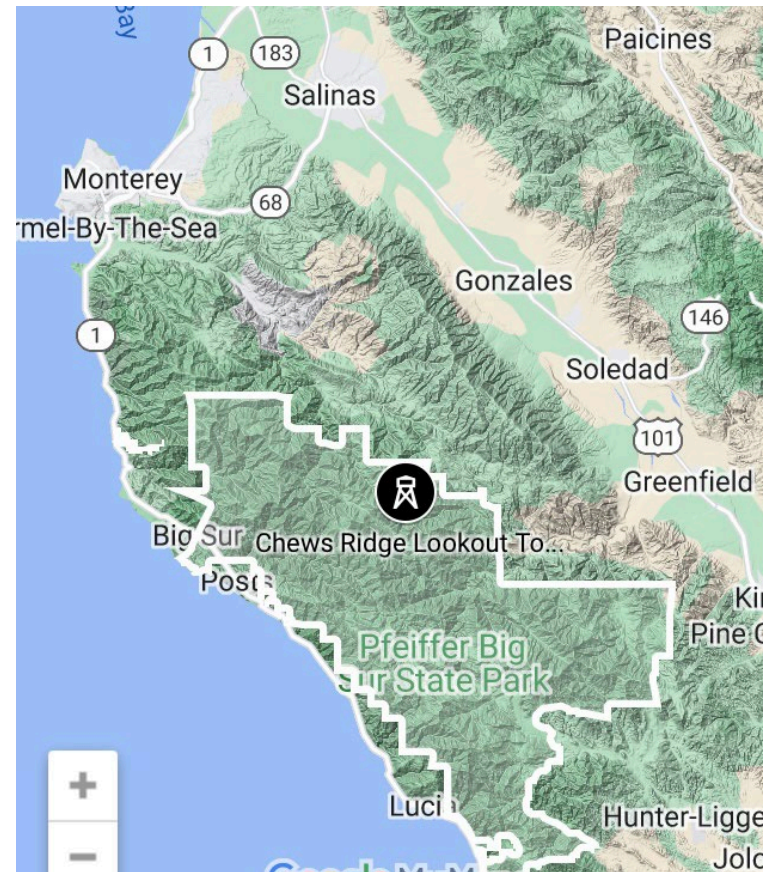
History of lookouts

Gradual transition
to permanent
lookouts



Chews Ridge

- ▶ Monterey Ranger District – LPNF
- ▶ Tassajara Road, 20 miles south of Carmel Valley
- ▶ 5,043 feet elevation



History

- ▶ Built 1927
- ▶ Burned in Marble Cone Fire in 1977. Rebuilt 1978
- ▶ Closed due to budget cuts in 1990
- ▶ Saved from the 2016 Soberanes Fire by foil wrap

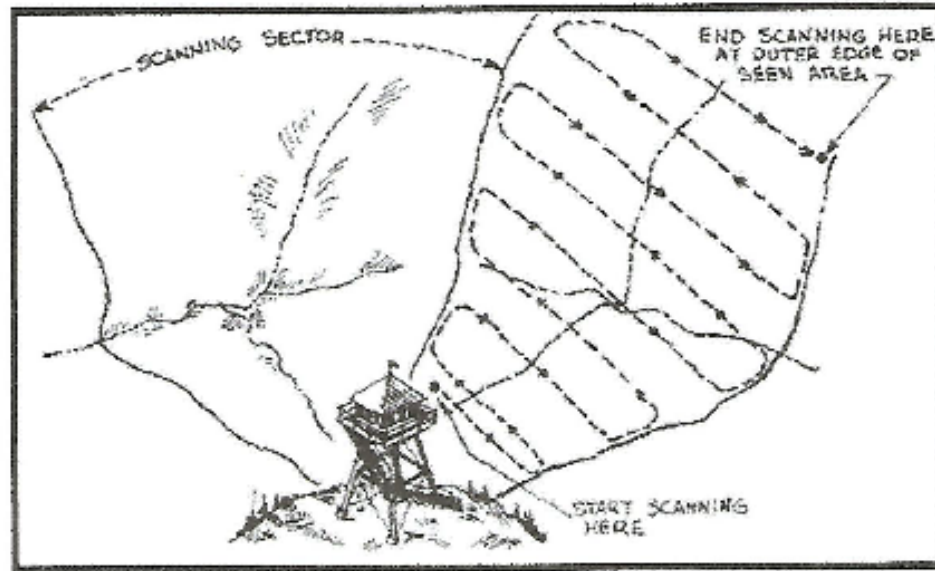


- ▶ Decision was made in 2019 to reopen Chews Ridge with volunteers
- ▶ Extensive work done over the summer
- ▶ Training program developed
- ▶ First shift was on August 25



Fire watch

- ▶ How it's done?
- ▶ What are we looking for?



Osborne Fire Finder

- ▶ We need degrees and distance from tower



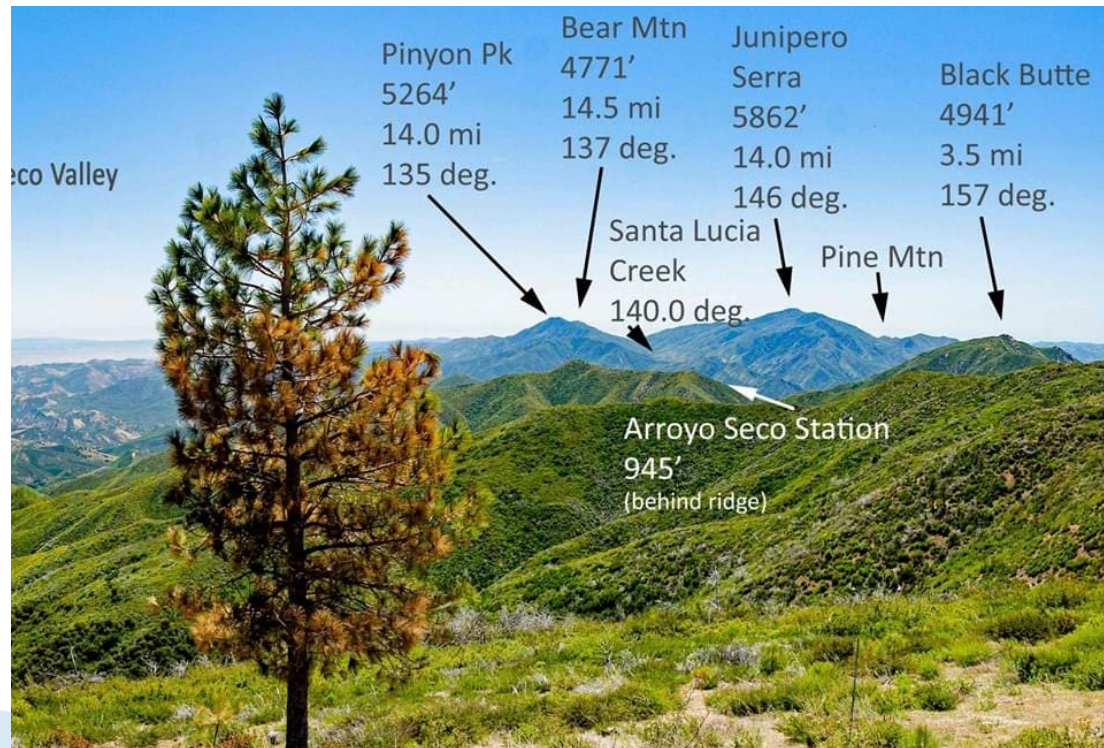
Osborne Fire Finder

- ▶ Once spotted, line up smoke on the Osborne



Reporting smoke

- ▶ Get degrees (from true north) from the ring on the Osborne
- ▶ Get distance from the map on the Osborne or from the panorama pictures at the tower



Reporting smoke

- ▶ Contact
Forest Service
Comms Center
in Santa Maria



Los Padres communications

- ▶ Los Padres Forest is 220 miles long: LA County line to Carmel
- ▶ 16 repeater sites, each has specific PL tone



- ▶ Forest, Admin and Service net repeaters at each site

Forest – fire dispatch

Administrative – rangers

Service – fire camp

- ▶ When calling, the name of the frequency along with the repeater tone is verbally identified

Chews Ridge repeater

- ▶ Dispatcher's remote base located on Santa Ynez Peak
- ▶ 152 miles between SYP and CW
- ▶ Signal quality is subject to conditions, changes during the day



Chews Ridge repeater

- ▶ Repeater housed in deployable pod
- ▶ Check out those anchors!



Search & Rescue

- ▶ Pre positioned antenna for SAR operations



Ham Radio DX

- ▶ Field Day



- ▶ My record = 172 miles simplex!

Future of Lookouts

- ▶ Despite advances in technology with satellites, remote cameras and drones, none of these technologies so far is as accurate or sensitive as the human eye



Do you like?

- ▶ Outdoors
- ▶ No running water, power, phone
- ▶ Looking at distant views
- ▶ Very few people
- ▶ Maps
- ▶ Radios



- ▶ Then checkout:
www.ffla-monterey.org