

Colorado-Utah Chapter report for 2022

Membership:

31

Financial Balance:

\$2101.04

Early last week we sent out lookout assessment surveys (same format as the 2019 Survey) to the appropriate agencies but have yet to hear back any of them. In several cases agency contacts have changed and we'll have to chase down the current contact folks.

The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) of 2020 has slated funding for many National Forests and National Parks for infrastructure improvement and the San Juan NF was a recipient. The line item under San Juan NF-Dolores RD Fire Heritage lists the following for lookouts. *This project will renovate historic structures including Benchmark Fire Lookout Tower, Jersey Jim Lookout in the Dolores Ranger District and Eight Mile Mesa Tower in the Pagosa Ranger District providing for safety and longevity of the structures and future operations under a concessionaire or administrative use.* We even had a two person engineering crew assess and measure our fifty-two year old outhouse for possible replacement. We'll see...

The GAOA also listed Pike and San Isabel NF for funds listed under Historicorps Heritage Deferred Maintenance slated, among other projects, for Devil's Head LO. *This project will repair and stabilize Devil's Head Tower stairs and cabin.*

To our knowledge Rocky Mountain NP did not receive GAOA to renovate Shadow Mountain Lookout.

Devil's Head - I haven't heard directly from the South Platte RD about last year's improvements but this is what I gather occurred last year. I believe with GAOA funding and work by Historicorps volunteers, the staircase up and over the rocks to the LO cab was improved and the aging treads were replaced. I haven't been in touch with the current lookout, Ashley Farinacci, lately but she and Devil's Head have been featured in several articles and interviews.

https://gazette.com/thetribune/colorados-newest-fire-lookout-brings-fresh-eyes-to-a-one-of-a-kind-job/article_92e9e604-2f94-11ec-a5ce-c742ea8a7958.html

<https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20210809-the-guardian-of-colorados-front-range>

Squaw Mountain - Now has a new name, **Mestaa'éhehe Mountain Fire Lookout** to honor the Indigenous heritage of the area. At this point I haven't heard back from the Arapaho NF regarding a new official name of the lookout itself. I'm fairly sure that the lookout had a very busy rental season last year.

Benchmark - This is an easy one to report on. Ongoing maintenance by me included replacing fifty five stair treads with Doug Fir treads and painting them and installing 3M traction tape. As of 2021 we have three new 190W Grape Solar panels installed on the roof in addition to an AXIS camera which is used remotely by the Dolores RD fire staff when we're at home on our weekends. We installed a new cab door last summer to replace the door that was vandalized in 2018. I trimmed it out and painted it.

Jersey Jim - Jersey Jim is still a busy rental (sold out) on the San Juan NF operated by the Jersey Jim Foundation. <https://jerseyjimfoundation.org/>

Ute Mountain in Utah - I corresponded with with one of the volunteer lookouts last spring before her stint started. It sounds like they continued staffing it with different volunteers last summer.

Until we receive our LO surveys back, that's the latest from Colorado - Utah

Respectfully submitted,

Rick and Linda Freimuth - Co-Chairs Colorado - Utah
January 10, 2023