



# Updraft

Newsletter \* May 2009

Center for Wildlife Education, Training, Research and Interpretation

## An Old Lookout Finds a New Home

Last year, the CBFIC board discussed the possibility of relocating Badger Mountain Lookout from its present location to a site next to the interpretive building where it would be more accessible to visitors. However, because the costs were prohibitive, the Board looked for other options. They found, with the help of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, another lookout that had been disassembled, sitting on a flatbed trailer and waiting for a new home. That lookout is the East Flattop Lookout that once stood near Trout Lake, Washington. The lookout is ready for reassembly, with donated help from Dick Morrison and Keith Argow of the FFLO.

The lookout has a unique classic design, different from the L-4 type lookouts at the site now. It was built in 1946, designed for the Forest Service by Alladin Company of Portland, Oregon. After this prototype was built, the Forest Service decided to build lookouts with another design.

The lookout will be placed next to the interpretive center with a walkway between them. It will contain lookout

information and artifacts that are more accessible to visitors, and will eventually include multi-media presentations on fire history. CBFIC plans to move the lookout to its site in the early fall. It will take one to two weeks and about \$5000 to reassemble – with all the volunteers that we can find. If you can help with either the costs or the labor, please contact Dave Spies at 884-4139.



East Flattop Lookout looking towards Mt. Adams. This is a USFS photo right after it was built in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest near Trout Lake Washington. The lookout was abandoned in 1960.

Mark your calendars for more fun!!  
CBFIC's next annual, autumn dinner fundraising  
auction will be on October 24<sup>th</sup> at the Cashmere  
Center.

## New Entry Signs Increase Visibility

If you have driven up the river, you will have noticed that two new signs have been installed near the entrance of Columbia Breaks. The huge signs, made of cedar planks and gold paint were constructed by the Wenatchee Alternative School under the supervision of Steve Wellman. The funding was provided by a grant from the Community Foundation of North Central Washington. They were installed with the volunteer help of Bruce & Garci Duncan who used their backhoe to dig holes in the notorious CBFIC rock pile and to lift the signs into place. A future goal, which will compliment these signs and add to the visibility, is to construct an attractive entrance at the head of the driveway.



### **CBFIC Becomes a Visitor Information Center**

With the cooperation of John Huselton and the Entiat Chamber Of Commerce, CBFIC served as a visitor information center for the Entiat area. The center was open Thursday through Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day. It was staffed by volunteers from the Chamber and the Columbia Breaks board. The project will continue during the summer of 2009 and be staffed on weekends only.



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### **Lookouts Need Constant Maintenance**

Board members, Dave Anderson, Wayne Long, and Doug Bowie worked recently to build a safer handrail on Chelan Butte Lookout. The addition is one of several projects that will make the site safer for visitors and keep the lookout in good repair. Both lookouts require constant seasonal upkeep which demands many volunteer hours. Some other maintenance goals for Chelan Butte for 2009 include scraping and painting, replacing boards on the catwalk, refinishing the floor, improving the steps, and replacing boards on the shutters.



If you have time to donate and want to work on an interesting project that needs more help, call Dave Anderson at 548-4125

### **School Visitations Continue at CBFIC**

Last year, Columbia Breaks again provided an exciting field experience for over 600 students and adults from the Eastmont and Entiat Schools. The students came to the site to see what they had been studying in the classroom – how fire is a major component of the shrub / ponderosa pine, eastside forest ecosystems. They walked the trail and searched for answers to questions found on the trail signs. They climbed the stairs to Chelan Butte Lookout to listen to the experiences of veteran lookouts. They learned about fire suppression techniques from Washington State DNR crews and from an experienced smokejumper. The students were able to see visible representations of vocabulary introduced in the fire curriculum provided by CBFIC: terms like “fire-safe property,” “fire scars,” “defensible space,” “controlled burns,” “thinning,” and “fire triangle.” With today’s budget problems, Columbia breaks is indeed grateful that schools are still finding the resources and time to engage in our vision. The schools will again visit the site with a new group of excited learners from May 18 to 22. We have also received inquiries from private and home schools. Because of the increased interest in the program, CBFIC will be looking for support to create more fire curriculum boxes.

## The Challenge

The challenge at CBFIC is to continue to build a center that meets our dream, but does not entail unrealistic building costs and does not require prohibitive expenditures to keep it operating after it is built. We want to create a facility that provides its own interpretation and can function primarily with volunteer efforts.



One proposed design by Wayne Long

## The Next Big Step

CBFIC continues to look for funding to construct an outdoor, covered interpretive shelter. The shelter, about 30' X 60' in size, will have picnic tables and interpretive signs around its perimeter. The signs will include information about the history of fire in the PNW, fire management strategies, and safe home displays. It will be located between the highway and the administrative building and provide a sheltered area for group education. The shelter will be named in memory of Arnie Arneson.

## Trail Becomes More Accessible

One of the short term goals of CBFIC is to widen the interpretive trail to make it accessible to everyone with physical challenges. In 2008, with the help of Randy McLandress, the trail was widened and leveled between the interpretive building and Chelan Butte Lookout. Huge rocks were broken and removed, and a finer, more compactable gravel was laid. The next phase, happening in May will include work on the north side of the trail system. Crews will also build a trail from the west end of the upper parking lot, above the amphitheater, to the west side of the amphitheater -- to provide easy access for those with physical / age challenges



## Amphitheater Available for Activities

CBFIC wants to encourage the use of our amphitheater as a small, outside venue for any interested group. The site now has electricity for sound / light systems and has a portable stage that sits level with the bottom tiers of the amphitheater. If you are interested in using the site for a small group function, please contact Dave Spies at 884-4139



## 2008 Fundraising Report

CBFIC could not operate with the generous support of its many contributors. The entire operating budget depends upon donations. The programs and projects are completed mostly with volunteer help. **Thank You !!** Any donated time and any financial donation, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated. One of our goals is to do a better job of recognizing your individual contributions. In future publications, we will recognize those donors who have supported our project.



Annual Fall Auction	\$5,900
Land Purchases	\$180
Donations	\$900
Memorials	\$3300
Special Events	\$630
Sponsorships	\$400
Grant	\$300
Memberships	\$400



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## Vision & Mission Statement

The Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center will provide a variety of quality learning experiences, interpretation, and research opportunities through active and dynamic exhibits, field trips, talks and lectures, demonstrations, and interaction with interpreters, researchers, curators, and fire managers.

The Center will examine and explain the role of fire in ecology and natural processes with particular emphasis on the Pacific Northwest, and will showcase past, present, and future interactions of people with the world of fire.

Emphasis will be placed on informing visitors on all aspects of natural, prescribed, and human caused fire.

The programs, interpretive exhibits, and facilities will be designed to serve the following audiences and customers:

\*Local community residents, k-12 schools, and colleges

\*Tourists

\*Agency personnel

\*Local, Regional, and national researchers

The Columbia Breaks Fire Interpretive Center will be staffed by volunteers and will operate in a self-sustaining capacity through cooperation with other public agencies and private partnerships.

*Visit our website at [www.wildfirecenter.org](http://www.wildfirecenter.org)*



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