

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: MP100001211

Date Listed: **06/19/2017**

Property Name: Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
(Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks MPS)

County: Plumas

State: CA

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation



Signature of the Keeper

6/19/2017

Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Location:

The Address Box should read: *summit Mt Harkness, Lassen Volcanic National Park*
[Even for isolated, rural resources some address location should be provided. In addition, all properties located in federal designated land areas (forest, parks, recreation areas, etc.) should note the specific name of that area in the location box.]

=====
DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



MP-1211

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Name of Property
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mount Harkness Fire Lookout

Other names/site number: Lassen Volcanic National Park Building 57

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942

2. Location

Street & number: _____

City or town: Mineral State: CA County: Plumas

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national x statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B x C ___ D

| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  | | <u>5/8/2017</u> |
| Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>NPS FPO</u> | | Date |
| State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | | |
| In my opinion, the property <u>x</u> meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. | | |
|  | | <u>30 Sept 2015</u> |
| Signature of commenting official: | | Date |
| State Historic Preservation Officer | | California Office of Historic Preservation |
| Title : | State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government | |

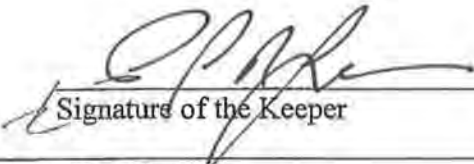
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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

4/19/2017
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

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Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <u>2</u> | <u> </u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u>1</u> | structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions

RECREATION and CULTURE/outdoor recreation
 OTHER/fire lookout

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Current Functions

RECREATION and CULTURE/outdoor recreation
OTHER/fire lookout

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: NPS rustic

Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete, Stone masonry, wood frame and shingles

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout is a rustic style two-story wood and stone structure located on the summit of Mt. Harkness, in Lassen Volcanic National Park. The peak lies in the southeastern corner of the park, which is set in northeastern California. Mt. Harkness is an ancient shield volcano topped by a cinder cone that rises to 8,046.' Access is via one of two trails, the most popular of which is a 1.9 mile foot trail that climbs through forest, meadow and open slopes before reaching the sparsely vegetated summit. The sweeping vistas from the lookout span from the Three Sisters peaks in Oregon to the north, the Sierra Nevada Mountains to the south, and the Coast Range to the west. The lookout is characterized by its wood catwalk on all four sides of the second story and its pitched wood shingle roof. A one-story stone and wood pit toilet is set 200 feet southeast and downhill of the lookout. Native stone masonry is the dominant feature on

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both buildings. The buildings were constructed in 1930, and both are counted as contributing buildings.

Narrative Description

Lassen Volcanic National Park is located in a part of northern California that contains rugged volcanic crags, active thermal features, subalpine forests, pumice fields, and montane meadows. Mount Harkness is situated in the southeast corner of the park and its summit, at 8,046 feet, can be reached by trail from two directions, from either Juniper Lake or the Warner Valley. The shortest and most popular route involves a hike of 1.9 miles from the Juniper Lake Campground that climbs 1,250 feet to the summit where the two buildings are located. Weather permitting, most of the park can be seen from there with visibility extending to the Three Sisters peaks in Oregon in one direction and the northern Sierra Nevada in the other. Views also reach to Nevada in the east and the Coast Range to the west.

Small trees dot the adjacent landscape and ground cover on the summit is somewhat sparse, though the slopes below are covered with a subalpine forest dominated by red fir, lodgepole pine, and mountain hemlock. Mount Harkness is a shield volcano topped by a much younger cinder cone which has a prominent crater located several hundred feet north of the lookout.

The lookout and associated pit toilet were built in the rustic style. Stone masonry is a dominant feature in both buildings on Mount Harkness, making them unusual in comparison to the vast majority of fire lookouts and associated pit toilets in the United States, which are either of wood frame or steel construction. These elements convey NPS design philosophy about park structures during the 1920s and 1930s, where indigenous materials were used in an effort to make structures compatible with their environment and to achieve visual unity among different facilities. The lookout possesses a prominent wood catwalk or walkway on all four sides of the second story and is topped by a pitched wood shingle roof. Masonry of battered native stone extends from the ground to windows on the upper floor, where a commanding view of the surrounding country can be obtained.

Roughly 200 feet southeast of the lookout is a smaller one-story pit toilet building containing two pit toilets that are no longer in use. The building is visually unified with the lookout. Like the lookout, its walls consist of randomly coursed native stone, and in this case extend to the roof structure since there are no windows. The overtly rustic appearance of both buildings is indicative of a design intended to accommodate the needs of employees hired to staff the lookout, but also as a destination for visitors who hike there. NPS rustic architecture has considerable range in expression, even within the confines of Lassen Volcanic National Park. These two structures were some of the first facilities at Lassen characterized by stone masonry, which is most often associated with NPS design of facilities during the Depression era.

Northeast of the lookout there is an original underground tank (cistern) once used for water storage. Stone masonry above the tank forms a ring measuring four feet in diameter and two feet or less above grade, but the tank itself is underground. The cistern is not maintained and is no

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longer used. It is considered a small-scale feature and is therefore not included in the resource count on this nomination.

A ten-foot tall metal tower called the Rohn Tower is set on a concrete pad a short distance east of the lookout. The antenna mounted on it extends upward another ten feet, with conspicuous solar panels below the antenna. This modern structure was constructed outside of the period of significance, and lacks the characteristics that provide visual unity that are associated with rustic architecture, and so is counted as a non-contributing structure.

Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout—Contributing Building

The lookout is a two-story structure on the exposed summit of Mount Harkness. It measures 16 feet square and 25 feet high. Native stone masonry characterizes much of the lookout's exterior and extends 15 feet, from the ground to window sills on the second floor. All construction above the masonry is wood frame. The structure is capped by an observation room with fixed two light sash windows placed completely around the upper story, apart from one door with glass above the sill line. Above the windows on all sides are louvered openings for ventilation. The pyramidal shingle roof is supported by poles for rafters, part of which are exposed under the eave. A prominent part of the lookout is a log and plank catwalk (or "gallery") that extends continuously around the building except on its northwest corner where the catwalk is interrupted by an opening for a wood staircase leading to the ground. The catwalk is about 12 feet above grade and supported by peeled log braces. It also has a log railing above the supports that acts as a safety barrier.

Native stone is randomly coursed on each of the lookout's four sides. It is battered, while also showing some variation in size and color. Each of the elevations is somewhat different on the ground floor, beginning with the south elevation. A fifteen-light panel door is at the center, and two single, fixed four-light recessed windows are framed in wood. The east elevation has similar fenestration, but lacks a door. There are no openings on the north wall, but it has a small projection faced with stone masonry seven feet high and four feet square with a shed roof. The west elevation consists entirely of stone masonry wall, and is fronted by the wooden stairway that provides passage between floors.

Both the stairway and catwalk are three feet wide, with log railings intended to guard against falls. The exposed portion of the catwalk's original support system, including peeled log braces are at each corner, is still extant. These braces extend horizontally outward from the walls but are reinforced by diagonal logs that spring from rock projecting slightly beyond the vertical plane of surrounding walls. One continuous peeled log forms the outer edge of the catwalk on each side and runs horizontally. Above it are posts and rails which seem to match the catwalk's braces, but they are lower than the window sills so the lookout's view remains unobstructed. The railing has a total of 20 upright log posts with angle bracing used at the two middle posts on each elevation that are also in line with braces supporting the catwalk.

Fixed windows extend from sill to plate line on the second story, with the framing placed directly on top of masonry. There are six windows on each side with half of the door located on the observation room's south side also glazed. In contrast to the braces, rafters do not extend

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beyond the roof line. Between the plate line and rafters under the cornice are the stationary vents extending nearly across each wall, used to cool the upper floor.

Both stories consist of one open room. The first story has a concrete floor which is square except for the additional storage space created by the exterior projection on the north elevation. Stone masonry can be seen on the interior at this level, but with no attempt to rake joints between rocks, as on the outside. The second story has a tongue and groove floor, square wood trim placed horizontally between each window, and a flat ceiling. An original Osborne fire finder, an instrument used to determine directional bearing when the fire spotter saw smoke, is supported by a low platform in the center of this room, which is also living quarters during the fire season.

Pit Toilet-Contributing Building

Built into a gentle slope downhill (southeast) from the lookout is a rectangular pit toilet building, divided into two rooms. The pit toilet (building no. 353) measures approximately 6 feet by 12 feet with native stone masonry extending to a height of 8 feet on the south façade. There are two wood panel entry doors on the north elevation and a pair of openings blocked by boards beneath the toilets at grade on the building's south side. A pitched gable roof is covered by wood shingles. The gable ends are also shingled and, like the lookout, the roof is supported by peeled wood poles of uniform dimension. This building is no longer used.

Designed and built by the NPS as part of accommodating public use of the summit area, this building is smaller and simpler than the nearby lookout. It is a secondary structure, yet the use of native materials throughout and the roof assembly serves to unify the pit toilet with the lookout. The building's proximity to native trees and the way it is recessed into the slope exemplifies the way that rustic buildings were meant to blend in to the landscape.

Integrity

Both the lookout and the pit toilet retain integrity. The main features of the fire lookout—the stone masonry walls, shingle roofs, as well as an observation room and braced catwalk at the lookout—are still extant. The lookout has undergone some changes, which largely involve the catwalk. Virtually all of the original braces, decking, and rails in the catwalk have been replaced in kind. Additional alteration included a rail placed horizontally atop of the vertical posts of the walk in 1961, effectively raising the walk's barrier height from 30 inches to 42 inches. The original upright members placed between the posts to support the rails have also been replaced, while the stairway has been rebuilt at least twice. Its supports have changed from peeled logs to notched boards, though the split half rounds for steps mimic the original steps.

Other exterior alterations include a wood cabinet for fuel canisters added to the west elevation in 1961 which is located underneath the stairway. On the south elevation is a small wooden porch located between the ground floor entry and the catwalk's support posts to each side. A chimney pipe has been added to the lookout's roof, as has an instrument related to radio equipment that supplanted telephones for backcountry use at Lassen and other western national parks by the mid- 1950s.

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The lookout's interior alterations largely consist of obscuring the stone masonry on three walls of the lower floor with plywood and sheetrock as part of using the room for housing radio equipment and storage. There have been no interior alterations at the nearby pit toilet. Exterior changes to that building have been limited to in-kind roof replacement in 1961.

With the aforementioned changes noted, both structures retain integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Both are in their original *location* on the summit of Mount Harkness. Access to the site is still by trail, with helicopters employed by the NPS to occasionally transport items such as chemical toilets, fuel canisters, and water containers for administrative use. The original *design* of both structures is still evident in terms of function, spatial organization, and architectural detail. Whether the lookout's lower room was designed simply for storage or specifically to house a seismograph station is unclear from a functional standpoint, though the purpose of the room above it and the nearby pit toilet remain obvious. Spatial organization of the two buildings within the minor developed area remains as it was originally planned and designed, with the lookout remaining at the center of pedestrian circulation. The pit toilet continues to be a secondary structure. The stone masonry and wood framing on both structures is architecturally distinctive. Their rustic appearance is enhanced by the peeled logs and shingles. Each building is part of a largely wilderness *setting*, one that includes the crater of a cinder cone close at hand and prominent points such as Juniper Lake and Lassen Peak in the distance. The lookout affords a commanding view that is critical to the detection of wildfires, blazes most often started by lightning.

Native stone, glass, and wood were the dominant *materials* in the original design and remain prevalent. Metal could only be seen in the form of lightning protection at the lookout, or as part of equipment (such as the fire finder) and appliances in the observation room. No plantings were made at the site during original or subsequent construction there, and impacts associated with the original construction have largely been hidden by regeneration of the native ground cover. Original *workmanship* in both structures is still evident in much of the stone masonry and some of the wood framing. It reflects the fact that this type of construction necessitated the NPS to build on-site, even if materials had to be brought from where the road ended at Juniper Lake and the rock hauled from a quarry on Mount Harkness.

The two buildings maintain a distinct presence within the greater landscape setting, by evoking the era in which they were designed and built. Specifically the *feeling* imparted by them is that of the early 1930s when NPS rustic architecture was still evolving. Mount Harkness Fire Lookout and Pit Toilet are clearly *associated* with NPS rustic architecture. In particular, the lookout demonstrates how a two-story structure built primarily for fire detection also accommodated and encouraged public visitation. The pit toilet is more directly associated with public use, and its rustic appearance complements the lookout.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Architecture
Recreation
Conservation

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Period of Significance

1930-1942

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

National Park Service

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Mount Harkness Fire Lookout is significant under Criteria A and C at the state level of significance. It is significant under Criteria A for its association with the twentieth century movement to develop national parks for public enjoyment while conserving natural features. It is eligible under Criterion C for its association with rustic architecture in National Parks. The period of significance begins with the date of construction in 1930 and ends with 1942, the date that corresponds to the associated Multiple Property Documentation form *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942*.

The lookout is significant under Criterion A at the state level of significance for its association with the association with the twentieth century movement to develop national parks for public enjoyment while conserving natural features. The building was one of the first fire lookouts entirely designed, built and operated by the National Park Service. The lookout and the associated pit toilet are part of a larger group of facilities at Lassen Volcanic National Park designed and built by the National Park Service as part of a master plan implemented between 1926 and 1941. The lookout had dual functions: its primary use was detecting wildfires, while a secondary use was for the enjoyment and education of park visitors. It is the oldest extant fire lookout designed and built by the NPS remaining in a national park.

It is eligible under Criterion C for its association with rustic architecture in National Parks. Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout, built in 1930, was the first rustic-style fire lookout building constructed in any national park in the United States, and it is one of only four extant rustic fire lookouts remaining in California national parks. The Mt. Harkness lookout became the first expression of a new lookout type, with its appearance and methods of construction distinctly different from those associated with the dominant federal entity in fire detection, the U.S. Forest Service. Both contributing buildings, the lookout and the associated pit toilet, exhibit the rustic architecture that predominated in national parks between World Wars I and II. They retain the physical characteristics of the style that was developed for Lassen Volcanic National Park by the National Park Service.

Mount Harkness Fire Lookout and the associated pit toilet meet National Register criteria for listing under the registration requirements laid out in the 1995 Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) form *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942*. Fire lookouts are included as a property type in the MPD. The lookout and associated pit toilet are examples of rustic architecture stemming from NPS efforts to develop national parks for public enjoyment and for the protection and preservation of natural scenery and features during this era. As stipulated by the MPD, the lookout buildings use naturalistic techniques that harmonize the manmade features with the natural surroundings, and possess integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The MPD specifically mentions the Mt. Harkness lookout and describes it as "exemplary" for its stone and timber construction, functional design, and for the way that the building simultaneously is situated on a prominent

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peak without landscape screening, yet blends inconspicuously into its setting.¹ The lookout also meets the registration requirements for National Register eligibility in the Lassen Volcanic National Park Multiple Property Documentation form. This MPD utilizes the same registration requirements for fire lookouts and rustic buildings as *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942*.

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Multiple Property Documentation form *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942* provides context for identification and evaluation of resources related to historic landscapes designed by the National Park Service in national and state parks from 1916 to 1942. This document also provides contextual information on rustic architecture. The *Lassen Volcanic National Park Multiple Property Documentation* form provides additional context for the history of Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Historical Context

Fire detection efforts began on the vast acreage of federal lands in the western United States when the General Land Office began mapping the boundaries of newly established forest reserves between 1898 and 1904. During that period certain mountaintops were considered as detection points, though funding to build even a modest network of lookouts connected by trails and phone lines did not follow until after the U.S. Forest Service assumed control of the reserves in 1905. Rangers on patrol generally performed fire detection on horseback, usually having to travel cross country at some point to reach smokes in order to suppress them before the blaze grew larger. The few lookouts in operation before 1910 consisted of high places with unobstructed views, climbing access on tall trees, wooden platforms, small log cabins, and crude towers.²

The wildfires that raged throughout the West during the summer of 1910 served as a catalyst for improving a network of ridge trails and lookout points on patrol routes. Building the first permanent lookout structures, where staff could use maps to pinpoint fire locations and then alert firefighters by telephone soon followed. Three basic types of structures dominated this first phase of what was called "fixed point fire detection." The "observation only" tower included a work area, with instrumentation such as a rangefinder, with living quarters below, effectively suspending fire detection during meal breaks and after hours. Cupolas sat directly on top of the lookout's residence in a second type of structure, but were observation-only in function and still possessed the same inherent weakness with respect to fire detection, albeit less pronounced. The third type, a live-in observatory or "cab," united living quarters with work area and were either situated on the ground (hence "ground cab") or incorporated into a tower.³

¹ Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, August 8, 1995, 94.

²John R. Grosvenor, *A History of Architecture of the USDA Forest Service*, Publication EM-7310-8, July 1999, 96.

³Mark V. Thornton, *An Inventory and Historical Significance Evaluation of CDF Fire Lookout Stations*, California Division of Forestry, April 1, 1993, 26-27. An expanded typology with definitions is in Thornton, *Fixed Point Fire Detection: The Lookouts*, USDA Forest Service, Region 5, November 1986, 24-25.

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U.S. Forest Service administration of the area that later became Lassen Volcanic National Park stemmed from proclamation of the Lassen Peak Forest Reserve by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1905. It continued after Roosevelt proclaimed two smaller national monuments (Lassen Peak and Cinder Cone) within the reserve (or "national forest") in 1907, using his authority granted under the Antiquities Act of 1906. By 1912, the Forest Service had seven lookouts in the Lassen National Forest, including one within what became the national park four years later. The latter was on Prospect Peak, about 10 miles north/northwest of Mount Harkness. It consisted of a light wood frame ground cab with shiplap siding and windows on all sides, topped by a pyramid roof.⁴ The pieces were made collapsible so they could be hauled to their destination by pack train and then assembled. This type of structure had to be anchored by guy wires due to its exposed location, but the one on Prospect Peak remained in place until 1981, when it was disassembled so that the pieces could be hauled away.⁵ The Forest Service built a similar structure on Lassen Peak in 1913, but it was demolished after being hit by flying debris when the mountain erupted in 1914. Like the lookout on Prospect Peak, this one had a ground cab 14 feet square capped by a shingle roof. As another early example of modular construction, the Lassen Peak structure consisted of pieces small enough for men to carry on their backs.⁶

The Forest Service continued to staff the lookout on Prospect Peak after Lassen Volcanic National Park was established in 1916 and its administration shifted to the newly created National Park Service. In addition, Forest Service employees also built and operated another lookout on Brokeoff Mountain, in the park's southwest corner. The Brokeoff Mountain lookout also followed what became a standard Forest Service design of the time, especially in California. This centered on a 14-foot square cab situated on the ground or on a short tower, usually painted white, and designed so that equipment and occupancy centered around the firefinder.⁷ The Forest Service continued operation of the lookouts in the park throughout the 1920s as a sole responsibility, mainly because the NPS received no funding from Congress for this purpose.⁸

Direct NPS involvement with the design and construction of lookouts did not begin until 1929, when the agency hired John D. Coffman, previously with the Forest Service, to formulate a plan for the control of wildfires throughout the existing system of national parks. Coffman started working with the NPS landscape division in San Francisco to develop standard designs and

⁴Gordon Chappell, Prospect Peak Fire Lookout, Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, listed March 30, 1978.

⁵Emmons and Catton, *Historic Resources Study*, 96. The lookout was later reassembled and became an interpretive exhibit.

⁶Emmons and Catton, *Historic Resources Study*, 94.

⁷Coert DuBois, "Plan Number 4-A, Primary Lookout Building, Standard for District 5," U.S. Forest Service, 1917. It established the basic floor plan for all live-in observatories since then; Thornton, Fixed Point Fire Detection, 25-26, and Grosvenor, *A History of Architecture*, 97. The cabs were often called "D-14" after their designer and dimension.

⁸Jamie M. Donahoe, *Crane Flat Fire Lookout*, Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, listed April 4, 1996, NRIS #96000354, page 5.

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specifications for building lookouts.⁹ Some of the projects that followed, however, received special attention with individualized plans. The main difference between the NPS designs and the vast number of lookouts in national forests was the assumption that a building intended for fire detection might also attract a number of visitors. By offering prime scenic vistas, these vantage points made an ideal location for a dual purpose structure. To accommodate these dual functions, at Mt. Harkness and other lookouts where public use was anticipated, the NPS adapted conventions used in designing fire detection structures and made them individualized expressions of rustic architecture. Specifically, this type of design included a catwalk or platform that surrounded the observation room, incorporation of stone masonry over much of the lookout's two stories, and in this case, provision for a separate pit toilet which complemented the larger building. In concert with their operation by well-trained staff, the lookout facility might attract visitors with platforms or catwalks surrounding the observatory where convincing the public of the need to control fires would prove effective.¹⁰

Another distinction of these specially designed lookouts in National Parks from the other basic types of fire detection structures in National Forests related to the use of materials like wood and stone to create a more rustic appearance. Cupolas (which had faded in popularity by 1930) and the 14 x 14 ground cabs were usually painted white and quite utilitarian, as were the cabs placed on steel towers which usually discouraged interaction between staff and visitors due to safety concerns about the public climbing long staircases or ladders. A rustic lookout of two or even three stories still required unobstructed visibility and the basic layout perfected in the 14 foot square cabs, but NPS designers also borrowed from "observation" or "prospect" towers which more directly accommodated visitor use in parks and often incorporated stone masonry or logs on their exterior.¹¹ The new multi-story lookouts had a live-in observatory that sat over lower levels used for storage or purposes like visitor contact, but were also designed with a wide platform or catwalk around the top floor where visitors could come to enjoy scenic views in all directions.

The new NPS fire lookouts catered to what had become an expectation that park structures should blend with their setting, while at the same time reinforcing how national parks were distinctly different places from surrounding lands. For example, they were painted brown rather than white or light green. The NPS managed a smaller land base than the Forest Service, and the agency was the newcomer to planning and operating fire lookouts in the 1930s. With a staff of architects and landscape architects whose number of projects steadily grew as funding for public works increased during the Great Depression, the NPS could choose to individualize the design of facilities at sites where increased visitation was anticipated.

⁹ McClelland, *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, August 8, 1995, 94. See also McClelland, *Building the National Parks: Historic Landscape Design and Construction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 255.

¹⁰ Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, volume 1, 155. This thinking was not exclusive to the NPS since several USFS designs for observation towers in combination with fire lookouts survive; USDA Forest Service, Division of Engineering, Standard Lookout Structure Plans (1938, rev. 1941), ii-iii.

¹¹ Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, volume 2, 88.

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Park Superintendent L.W. Collins received plans from the regional office in March 1930 for the first lookout to be built and operated by the NPS at Lassen—Mt. Harkness. Its design necessitated that the building crew depart from the light, virtually modular construction that characterized so many Forest Service lookouts. A Fordson tractor pulling a sled brought supplies and material to the summit of Mount Harkness from where the closest road ended at Juniper Lake.¹² Much of the rock used in stone masonry had to be hauled from a site near the trail further up the mountain. Assistant Landscape Architect Merel Sager from the San Francisco office described the project as “a disagreeable job” characterized by “tedious work, under adverse conditions.” However, he lauded the result, writing that the lookout was “well constructed and is the best looking building of its kind I have seen.”¹³ The lookout was the first rustic-style lookout in a national park.

Elsewhere in the NPS praise came from John Coffman and others in the forestry division, who called it “one of the finest, if not the finest, of fire lookout buildings in the country.”¹⁴ A short assessment of the lookout also appeared in NPS guidance on rustic design in the classic three volume *Park and Recreation Structures* that appeared in 1938. The author called the lookout’s railing proportions “vigorous” and its bracing “satisfying.”¹⁵

The lookout’s architects incorporated features that were noteworthy for the time, starting with the use of Flamo gas for cooking, heating, and lights. An underground cistern could presumably be filled with snow for staff use, yet it remained relatively hidden. The lookout’s Osborne fire finder was supplemented by a calibrated panoramic photograph so that the location of a blaze could be shown simultaneously on the map and photo when detected by the fire finder.¹⁶ Introduced in 1915, the Osborne device became the most well-known of the fire locator alidades over the next two decades, while its namesake also designed the camera (a photo-recording transit) for taking high-definition panoramic photos from lookouts.¹⁷ A new telephone line linked the lookout with a ranger station six miles away in the Warner Valley, and this enabled quick suppression of any fires spotted from the lookout.

The lookout also accommodated visitors, and NPS staff anticipated its popularity as a point of interest. The structure could only be reached by trail, but its design allowed “larger parties access to the building without the usual unpleasant crowding” associated with other lookouts.¹⁸ The enticing catwalk catered to visitor use, as did the pit toilet built nearby with separate facilities for men and women.

¹²Merel Sager, Report on Construction Work carried on under Force Account in Lassen Volcanic National Park during the 1930 Working Season, Series 3, Box 10, file 148, p. 2, Administrative Files.

¹³Sager, op. cit., p. 3; Sager, Report to the Chief Landscape Architect through the Superintendent of Lassen Volcanic National Park, September 12 to 15, 1930, Series 3, Box 10, file 151, p. 2, Administrative Files.

¹⁴Ansel F. Hall and John D. Coffman, Report of the Forestry Division, in *Report of the Director of the National Park Service for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1931* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1931), 141.

¹⁵Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, volume 1, 158.

¹⁶NPS press release, September 1930, cited in Chappell, draft nomination, p. 3.

¹⁷In order to find a directional bearing to the fire, the Osborne system has a map oriented and centered on a horizontal table with a circular rim, where two sightings apertures are mounted above the map on opposite sides of the ring and slide around the arc.

¹⁸NPS press release, op. cit.

Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

Plumas County, CA
County and State

The NPS pronounced the Mount Harkness lookout an immediate success. Its strategic location led to detecting seven fires in the park that first season.¹⁹ The lookout also served another function, at least during the first season or so, since the U.S. Geological Survey installed seismographic equipment on the ground floor. By recording earthquakes associated with volcanic activity in the area around Lassen Peak, the seismograph on Mount Harkness served as part of a monitoring network that included two other locations in the park. Four windows on the ground floor and fifteen lights in the entry door allowed visitors to view the seismograph.

The lookout on Mount Harkness is one of five surviving in California that can be classified as National Park Service rustic architecture. All are multi-story, incorporate native stone masonry, and have a catwalk surrounding the live-in cab on their top floor. Each was designed and built under NPS auspices, and all but one are in areas administered by the agency. Both Crane Flat (1931) and Henness Ridge (1939) lookouts in Yosemite National Park are featured in *Park and Recreation Structures*, yet display conventional lumber rather than logs for braces and rails as well as considerably less stone masonry.²⁰ Probably most analogous is the Schonchin Butte Lookout at Lava Beds National Monument (1940), where CCC enrollees used native lava rock to make the structure part of its setting.²¹ Like the Mount Harkness structure, the lookout is situated high above the Lava Beds and had to withstand lightning strikes, high winds, and winter storms, in addition to live loads in the form of visitors concentrated on its catwalk. Closer in appearance to the building atop Mount Harkness is the Gardner Fire Lookout in California's Mount Tamalpais State Park (1936), since stone masonry forms the exterior of a lower story beneath the wood framed cab and roof. Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps from NPS plans, despite being outside a national park, it boasted electrical service in addition to hot and cold running water.

The Mount Harkness Fire Lookout is an excellent example of the National Park Service's attempts to individualize the design of fire detection structures through the use of rustic architecture, and it is significant as part of the agency's efforts to design landscapes in national and state parks prior to World War II. Although the number of fire lookouts constituted an admittedly small part of that total contribution, they represent a response to a difficult design challenge by trying to marry operational needs with the aims of rustic architecture. While the heyday of building this type of lookout was confined to the Depression era, mainly due to the unprecedented low costs of material and labor, the few surviving rustic fire lookouts such as

¹⁹Superintendent's Monthly Report for June 1930, cited in Gordon Chappell, draft nomination of the Mount Harkness Lookout to the National Register of Historic Places, ca. 1975, p. 2, Administrative Files.

²⁰Pictured in Good, *Park and Recreation Structures*, volume 1, 159-160. The nomination form for Crane Flat by Jamie M. Donahoe (1995) provides additional background about rustic lookouts built by the NPS during the interwar period.

²¹Robbyn Jackson, Evaluation of Schonchin Butte Lookout, November 20, 1996, State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation Building, Structure and Object Record; Gordon Chappell, *Historical Survey of Developments at Lava Beds National Monument*, NPS typescript, June 1, 1980, 8-10.

Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

Plumas County, CA
County and State

Mount Harkness are valuable reminders of a time when such structures could be more than utilitarian parts of the larger park landscape.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Major Bibliographic References

Emmons, Ann and Catton, Theodore. *Lassen Volcanic National Park Historic Resources Study*. Missoula, Montana: Historical Research Associates, 2003.

Good, Albert. *Park and Recreation Structures, Volumes I-III*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938.

McClelland, Linda Flint. *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, August 8, 1995.

Archival Collections

The administrative files of Lassen Volcanic National Park (LAVO-4983) are housed in National Park Service collections at Redwood National Park.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

Plumas County, CA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 40.431211 | Longitude: -121.301634 |
| 2. Latitude: 40.431298 | Longitude: -121.301489 |
| 3. Latitude: 40.430931 | Longitude: -121.301336 |
| 4. Latitude: 40.430920 | Longitude: -121.301392 |
| 5. Latitude: 40.431139 | Longitude: -121.301643 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

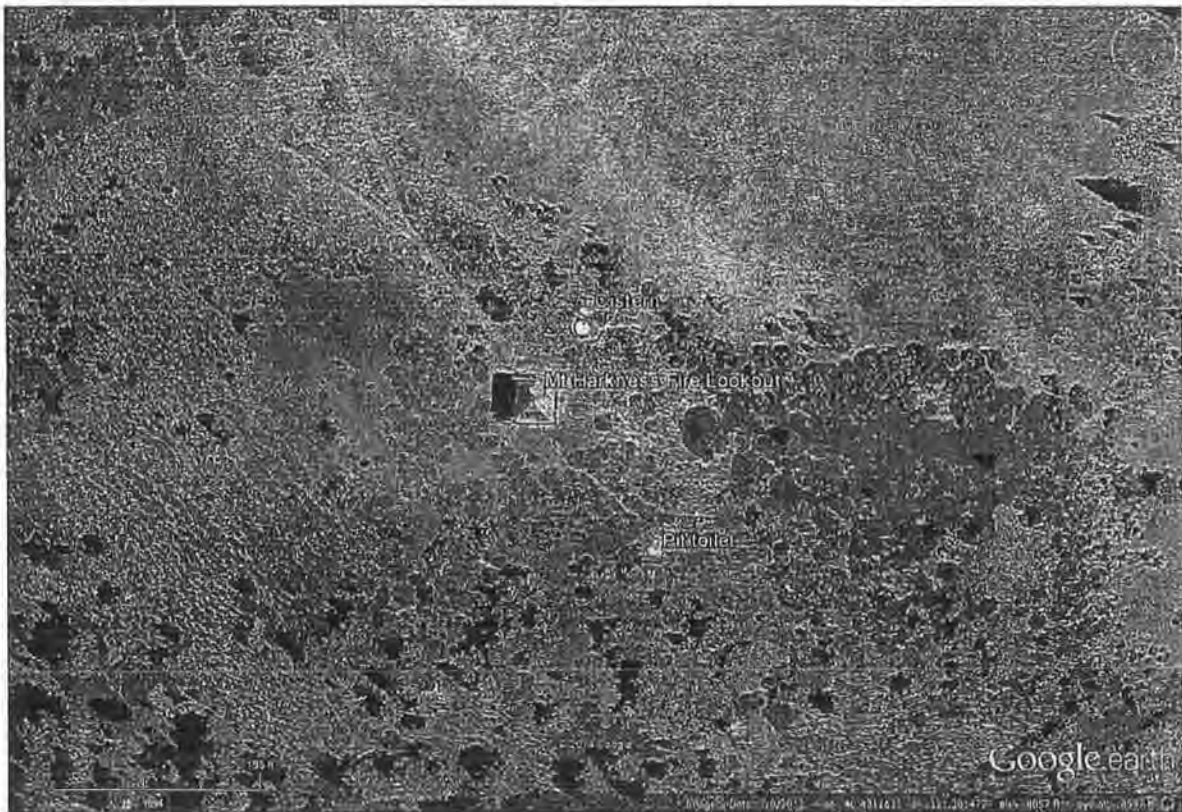
Plumas County, CA
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the lookout's northwest corner, proceed south and then southeast 200 feet to the pit toilet, passing on the south and east sides of the pit toilet building, then north 300 feet to include the cistern, then west/southwest and the point of beginning to include the lookout structure. See the site map, below, and the boundary map using decimal degrees to mark boundary points, on the next page.

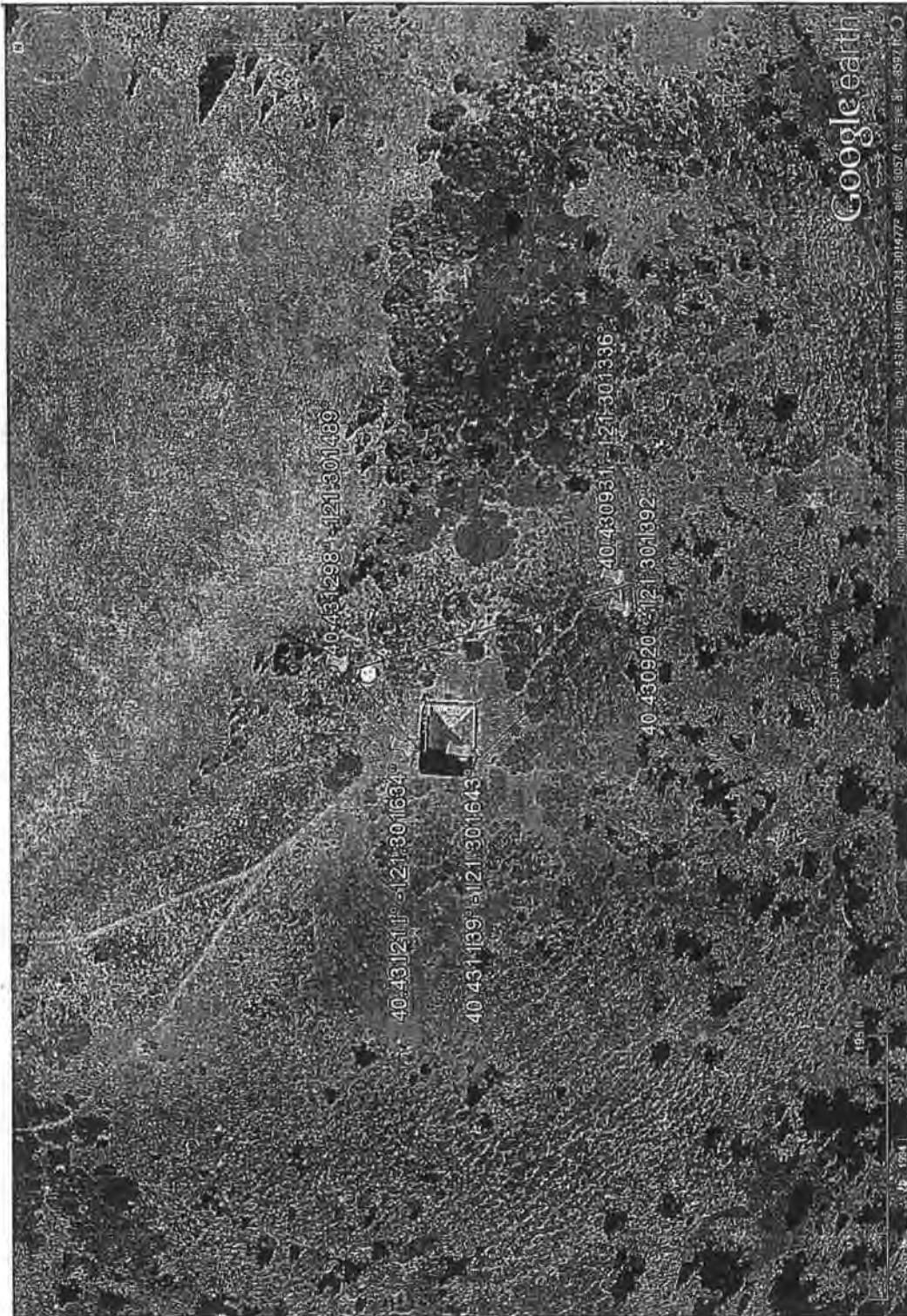
Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the two contributing buildings and one small-scale feature built during the period of significance.



Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

Plumas County, CA
County and State



Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

Plumas County, CA
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Steven Mark, Crater Lake National Park, 2010; Edited and submitted by Christy Avery, 2014

organization: National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office-Seattle

street & number: 909 1st Ave, 5th Floor

city or town: Seattle state: WA zip code: 98104

e-mail Christine_Avery@nps.gov

telephone: 206-220-4127

date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
The Google map is included.

Mount Harkness Fire Lookout
Name of Property

Plumas County, CA
County and State

Photographs

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mt Harkness Fire Lookout

City or Vicinity: Lassen Volcanic National Park

County: Plumas

State: California

Date of Photographs: 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout. View to southeast.

Photo #2: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout. View to northwest.

Photo #3: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout. View to southeast.

Photo #4: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout, catwalk. View to north.

Photo #5: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout, stairs and catwalk. View to east.

Photo #6: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout, stairs.

Photo #7: Pit toilet. View to southeast.

Photo #8: Pit toilet. View to south.

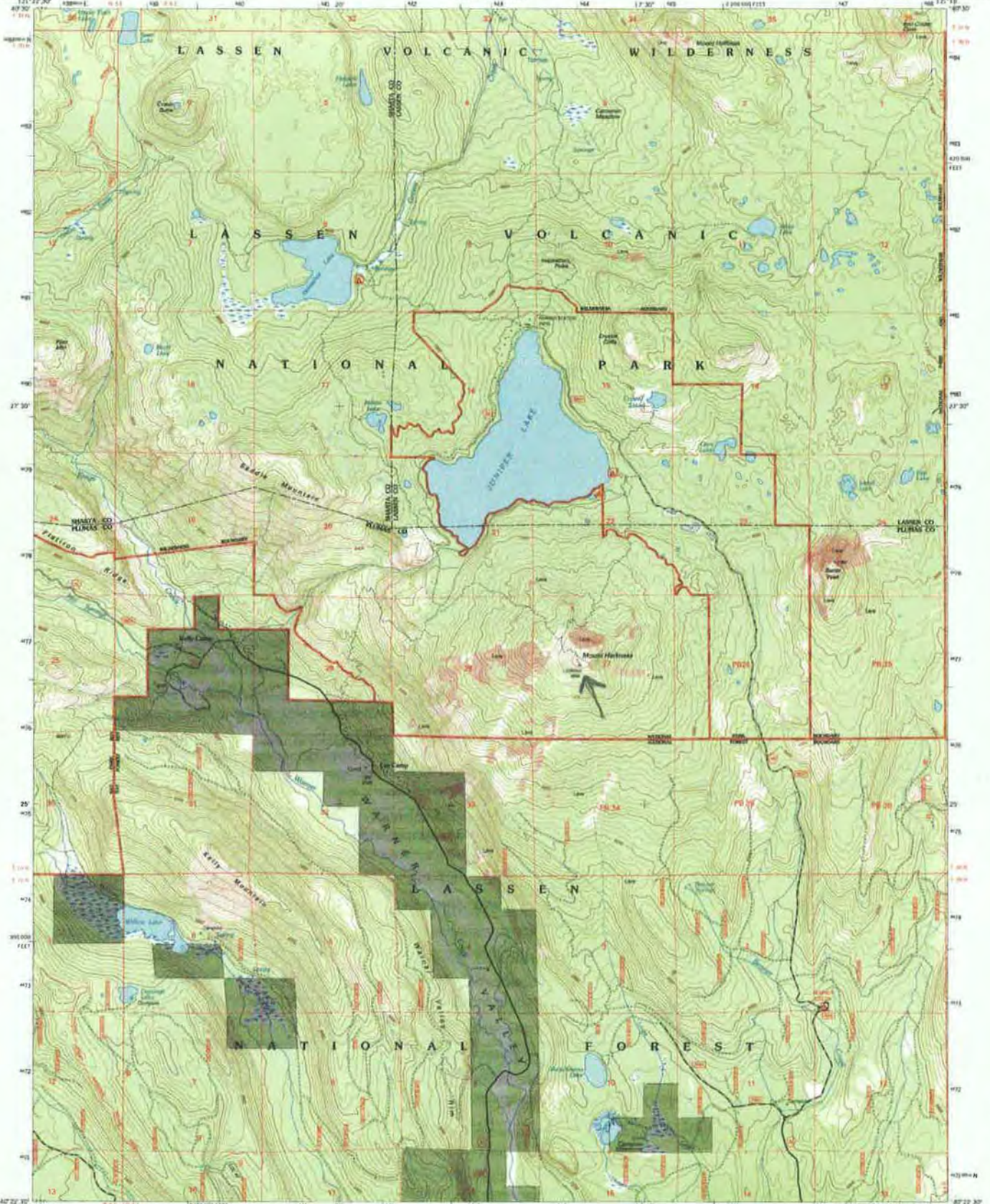
Photo #9: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout (right) and the pit toilet. View to northwest.

Photo #10: Pit toilet, looking southeast to Lake Almanor.

Photo #11: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout (right) and the pit toilet. View to north/northwest.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



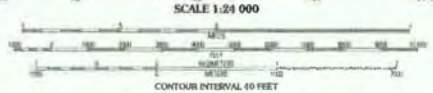
Produced by the U.S. Geological Survey
Reviewed by the U.S. Forest Service

Compiled from aerial photographs taken 1980. Revised from topography dated 1991 and 1993. Parcel field check by U.S. Forest Service 1995.

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 10 000-foot scale. California coordinate system, zone 10. Horizontal datum used: Zone 10 1983 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Vertical datum used: National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1989 (NGVD 89). Contour interval: 40 feet.

The values of the elevations (MAD 77 and MAD 83 for 7.5-minute information) are available from National Geodetic Survey (NADCON software) and National Forest Service maps within the National Forest. Aerial photography may be used to determine the location of the National Forest boundary.

This map is not a legal land title or easement document. Public lands are subject to change and leasing, and may have various restrictions, check with local OFWS. Offsets permitted before issuing permit forms.



| HIGHWAYS AND ROADS | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Interstate | Primary Highway |
| U.S. | Secondary Highway |
| State | Light-duty road |
| County | Private |
| | Classified |
| | Driv. |
| | Composition indicated |
| | Unimproved, 4 wheel drive |
| | Trail |
| | Game |

| MOUNTAIN ELEVATIONS | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | 1 Meter Elevation Point |
| 2 | 2 Meter Elevation Point |
| 3 | 3 Meter Elevation Point |
| 4 | 4 Meter Elevation Point |
| 5 | 5 Meter Elevation Point |
| 6 | 6 Meter Elevation Point |
| 7 | 7 Meter Elevation Point |
| 8 | 8 Meter Elevation Point |

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MOUNT HARKNESS, CA
1995
1004 1744 N.W. SERIES 1995

























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Mount Harkness Fire Lookout

Multiple Name: Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks MPS

State & County: CALIFORNIA, Plumas

Date Received:
5/5/2017

Date of Pending List:

Date of 16th Day:

Date of 45th Day:
6/19/2017

Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: MP100001211

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

Appeal

SHPO Request

Waiver

Resubmission

Other

PDIL

Landscape

National

Mobile Resource

TCP

CLG

Text/Data Issue

Photo

Map/Boundary

Period

Less than 50 years

Accept

Return

Reject

6/19/2017

Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Mount Harkness Fire Lookout is significant at the state level under National Register Criteria A and C, in the areas of Architecture, Conservation, and Recreation/Entertainment. The Rustic-style, two-story, wood and native stone structure was built in 1930 and provided sweeping vistas of the lands comprising Lassen Volcanic National Park and beyond. Representing a key element of government infrastructure within the park, the Fire Lookout is an exemplary illustration of NPS designed and built Rustic architecture and served important conservation and public recreation roles within the early park. The property meets the registration requirements associated with the Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942 MPS, as well as the Lassen Volcanic National Park Multiple Property Documentation form, which utilizes the same registration requirements.

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept National Register Criteria A and C

Reviewer Paul Lusignan

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229

Date 06/19/2017

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : Yes

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



September 30, 2015

Stephanie Toothman
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Mount Harkness Fire Lookout Nomination for the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Toothman:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) nomination for Mount Harkness Fire Lookout. I concur that the properties identified and evaluated in the nomination are eligible for listing in the National Register. The nomination clearly associates the property with the historic contexts of national park development in California (Criterion A) and rustic architecture in National Parks (Criterion C.) The property is nominated under the cover of the Multiple Property Documentation form *Historic Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942* at the state level of significance.

I have signed the application as commenting authority. If you have any questions, please contact William Burg of my staff at (916) 445-7004 or wburg@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Lassen Volcanic National Park
P.O. Box 100 / 38050 Hwy 36E
Mineral, CA 96063

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H32 (LAVO)

March 7, 2017

Robert Sutton
Chief Historian
National Park Service
1201 I (Eye) Street NW, #2261
8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout National Register nomination

Dear Mr. Sutton,

I am pleased to forward to you the National Register of Historic Places nomination form (amendment) for the Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout, in Lassen Volcanic National Park, Plumas County, California. The nomination meets the registration requirements for National Register eligibility associated with the Multiple Property Documentation form, *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942*. The lookout is also associated with the *Lassen Volcanic National Park* Multiple Property Documentation form, which utilizes the same registration requirements as *Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942*. The property has not previously been nominated to the National Register.

The California SHPO has concurred with the assessment that the lookout and associated outbuilding are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance. The signed cover form is enclosed. The SHPO has retained a complete copy of the package, including photographs.

The following materials are enclosed in this submission:

- 2 copies of the nomination
- 1 set of archival color photographs
- One cd containing a Microsoft Word version of the amendment
- One cd containing photographs in TIFF format
- One reduced size USGS Topographic Map

If you have any questions about this submittal, please contact Ashley Phillips at:

Lassen Volcanic National Park
P.O. Box 100
Mineral, CA 96063
530-595-6181
Ashley_Phillips@nps.gov

Sincerely,



Martha Crusius
Acting Superintendent, Lassen Volcanic National Park



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240



May 4, 2017

Memorandum

To: Acting Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

From: Federal Preservation Officer, National Park Service *Jon Belong*

Subject: National Register Nomination for Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout, Lassen Volcanic National Park, Plumas County, CA

I am forwarding the National Register Nomination for the Mt. Harkness Fire Lookout in Lassen Volcanic National Park. It is being submitted as part of the Lassen Volcanic National Park Multiple Property Submission and the Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks, 1917-1942 Multiple Property Submission. The Park History Program has reviewed the document and found the property eligible at the state level under Criteria A and C, with Areas of Significance of Architecture, Conservation, and Recreation. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Spradley-Kurowski at 202-354-2266, or kelly_spradley-kurowski@nps.gov.