

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 29 1980

APR 10 1980

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

UTE MOUNTAIN FIRE TOWER

AND/OR COMMON

UTE LOOKOUT, UTE FIRE TOWER, UTE MOUNTAIN FIRE LOOKOUT

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

FOREST SERVICE ROAD # 005

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

TEN MILES S/SW OF MANILA, VICINITY OF UTAH

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

FIRST

STATE

UTAH

CODE

049

COUNTY

DAGGETT

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER UNUSED

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

STREET & NUMBER

437 EAST MAIN

CITY, TOWN

VERNAL, UTAH

VICINITY OF

STATE

UTAH 84078

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

STREET & NUMBER

437 EAST MAIN

CITY, TOWN

VERNAL, UTAH

84078

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

UTE MOUNTAIN FIRE TOWER CULTURAL RESOURCE EVALUATION FILE # 2360

DATE

AUGUST, 1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

CITY, TOWN

VERNAL, UTAH

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1937</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Federally sponsored work projects which developed in response to national unemployment during the Great Depression put hundreds of men to work on public lands. The Ute Mountain Fire Tower, constructed on the Flaming Gorge Ranger District of the Ashley National Forest, was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1937. Evidence of CCC camps and work projects, particularly building foundations, are observable in various locations throughout the Forest. The Fire Tower is unique, however, as it is the only such structure in the entire state of Utah.

The tower consists of four wooden support legs reinforced by metal guy wires, holding an observation deck and habitation room. A staircase with a waist-high railing provides access to the elevated quarters. One double door provides entry into the enclosed room. Pane glass windows on all sides of the Lookout allow for excellent viewing in every direction. Room dimensions are approximately 15'x15'x8'. The distance from the ground to the deck is approximately 30'. The lower three feet of each support leg has varying degrees of rot and will require replacement. The core samples are available at the Flaming Gorge Ranger District at Dutch John, Utah. They were taken October, 1978.

A lightning rod on top of the hip roof is connected to wires which descend down the four ridges to the roof corners. From here, they proceed down the four primary support legs of the tower to the ground. A 1/8th inch copper wire connected to all metal objects in the room for grounding electrical charges during storms. The telephone line connected to the telephone by a single throw-single pull switch. The line was kept open during lightening storms to prevent electrical currents entering the room via the phone line. The telephone tied in with an operator in Vernal so that weather information could be transmitted to the Supervisor's Office daily from the Tower. Weather data were collected at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm daily. Temperature, relative humidity, wind direction and speed, fuel moisture, rainfall and cloud cover were calculated at these times in compliance with the National Fire Danger Rating System.

Ute Tower was utilized by Forest Service personnel for fire detection through 1968 on a full-time basis during the fire season. In 1969 the structure was closed to all public use. As it still housed radio equipment, the Tower was periodically operated during certain fire conditions that year. By the fall of 1969, the Tower was no longer occupied for weather data collection nor fire detection. It has remained unoccupied since, save for a stranded sportsmen in need of shelter or an occasional inspection by Forest Service personnel.

As a protective and safety measure, the lower staircase of the Tower has been removed to prevent access up to the observation deck. An information sign has been posted at the base of the structure describing the reason for denying public access at this time. (copy enclosed).

In the summer of 1966, Fleet Stanton, highway engineer, evaluated the condition of the Tower. He found the overall structure to be very sturdy, with the aid of four guy wires and rot-resistant support legs. However, he indicates that several long deep cracks in the support timber could allow moisture to collect which may accelerate

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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decomposition of the wood. The most critical area of suspected failure is at the base of the four legs as moisture concentrates here from snow and rain penetration. Stanton also recommends that railings be more closely examined and braced to withstand sudden impact.

In March of 1967, Sigurd Nilsen estimated repair costs for replacing the structure's legs and railings and for painting and clean-up. The dated figure for material and labor costs was estimated at a total of \$1,773.60.

In June 1967, Sigurd Nilsen re-examined the Ute Tower and determined the most economical course of action would be to replace the entire structure rather than concentrating on individual problem areas more prone to deterioration. Such action of total replacement would yield a structure which would require minimum maintenance in the future yet involve the destruction of a historically significant site.

Early in 1968, Don Goodrich discussed the status of Ute Lookout Tower in a memo to the Forest Supervisor. His study revealed only an average of 4 per cent of the fires in the area were being detected by the Ute Lookout. He claimed the disadvantages of keeping the tower were primarily financial in that \$10,500 would be required for adequate reconstruction and \$2,200 would be its annual maintenance cost.

Item Number 8 -----continued

set-up, explained the fire detection and suppression activities of the Forest Service and to see the spectacular view from the Lookout deck.

Enclosures: USGS Topographic Map, 7.5' series
~~Two~~ ~~Thirteen~~ 8x10 Black/White photographs
~~Forest Service Cultural Resource Evaluation Report~~
Ute Lookout Tower Information Sign currently posted at site
Summary of fires detected on the District and at the Tower, 1955-1967
~~Newspaper article, Vernal Express, 1937~~

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) FIRE DETECTION	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1937

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally and functionally the Ute Fire Tower is a unique entity in the state of Utah. Contacting State and Federal land administering agencies concluded that like structures were non-existent; that is one which operates or operated for the purpose of fire detection in addition to being designed as a tower.

The structure was occupied by Forest Service employees during the fire season, approximately between May and October. The enclosed table documents the number of fires on the Ranger District between the years 1955 and 1967 discovered by observers from the Tower.

In addition to nominating the site to the National Register and acquiring funding for its structural improvements, the Tower could be maintained for visitor interest and interpretation. If the immediate access road were improved, the Tower restored, and a Visitor Information Service (VIS) employee stationed at the site four hours a day during the tourist season, the Lookout would add varied attraction to the already existing interpretive features within the National Recreation Area of Flaming Gorge. The part-time employee at the Tower could also have the responsibility of Firewatch during his or her work hours as the view from its observatory is excellent in all directions. A pamphlet could be designed with photographs and written information pertaining to the history and nature of the Ute Lookout and a map supplied for reaching its location.

The Ute Fire Tower offers a view over a variety of Forest Service multiple-uses and areas of public interest. From the Observation deck one can see views of the historic Carter Military Road, examples of selective timber harvest, roads, wildlife, parks, the Flaming Gorge Reservoir, as well as views into Wyoming and Colorado. It could be developed to be publically accessible either by road or hiking trail.

Personal comments from Lee Skabelund, a Fire Watchman at the Ute Fire Tower in 1964 are included for interest:

Supplies and food were purchased from either Manila or Vernal, Utah. A trip to town was taken every one or two weeks. Water was available at the Summit Springs Guard Station 2.5 miles to the east. The water containers were hauled up to the observation room using a pully-system. During clear evenings, when fire danger was low, the Firewatch spent time with the seasonal employees at the Guard Station for conversation and relaxation. Other pastimes included taking long walks, a favorite being to Browne Lake to the southwest for fishing, watching wildlife and writing. Each day during the tourist season 3 to 6 groups of visitors would come to the tower to be shown the

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Kent Powell---Preservation Officer, Utah Division of State History. 1978
 Mike Brown----Uintah County Historian, Vernal, Utah. 1978, 1979
 Lee Skabelund-Biological Sciences Information Specialist, USFS, Dutch John, Utah. 1979
 Permanent File #7300 and #2360, Ashley National Forest, Supervisor's Office, Vernal, UT

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ONE

UTM REFERENCES

A	12	601800	4525000	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Located on Ute Mountain at the end of Forest Service Road # 005; in the NE1/4 of Section 33, Range 19 east, Township 2 north, Salt Lake Meridian. Occupies approximately one acre on the knoll of Ute Mountain.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
UTAH	049	DAGGETT	009
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

TISH MCFADDEN FOREST ARCHEOLOGIST

APRIL, 1979

ORGANIZATION

ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

437 EAST MAIN STREET

TELEPHONE

(801) 789-1181

CITY OR TOWN

VERNAL

STATE

UTAH 84078

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

William J. Smith
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Barry R. Flamm
 BARRY R. FLAMM
 Director

TITLE

DATE FEB 26 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

Office of Environmental Quality

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

W. Ray Luce
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

4/10/80

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

William H. Brannon

3-20-80

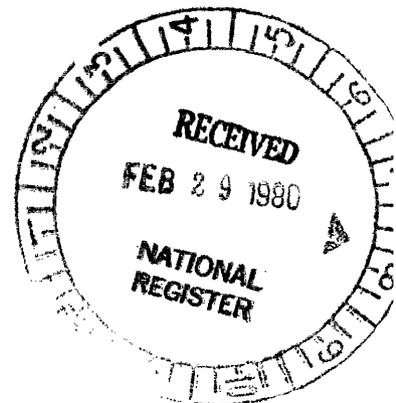
UTE LOOKOUT TOWER

YOU ARE STANDING BY THE ONLY FIRE LOOKOUT TOWER IN THE STATE OF UTAH. UNTIL THE MID-SIXTIES, FOREST SERVICE EMPLOYEES LIVED HERE WATCHING FOR FIRES IN THE SURROUNDING FOREST.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE TOWER IS NOW IN UNSAFE CONDITION AND THE LOWER STAIRWAY HAS BEEN REMOVED TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS. HOWEVER, WE ARE INVESTIGATING THE POTENTIAL OF RESTORING THE TOWER FOR SAFE PUBLIC USE (AS A VIEWPOINT AND HISTORIC MONUMENT).

IN THE MEANTIME, PLEASE HELP US PROTECT YOUR TOWER FROM FURTHER DAMAGE. IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION, COMMENT OR SUGGESTION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT BOX 157, DUTCH JOHN, UTAH 84023 (PHONE: 801-885-3315).

JOHN C. COMBS
AREA RANGER
FLAMING GORGE RANGER DISTRICT
ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST



FEB 29 1980

SUMMARY OF FIRES ON THE MANILA DISTRICT 1955 - 1967

YEAR	MAN CAUSED FIRES	DISCOVERED BY UTE L.O.	DISCOVERED BY OTHER	LIGHTNING FIRES	DISCOVERED BY UTE L.O.	DISCOVERED BY OTHER	TOTAL FIRES
1955	4	0	4	2	2	0	6
1956	6	1	5	9	3	6	15
1957	0	0	0	3	0	3	3
1958	4	1	3	12	2	10	16
1959	1	1	0	18	5	13	19
1960	5	0	5	17	2	15	22
1961	3	0	3	15	2	13	18
1962	9	0	9	10	2	8	19
1963	5	2	3	8	2	6	13
1964	9	0	9	8	1	7	17
1965	1	0	1	4	0	4	5
1966	19	0	19	15	2	13	34
1967	12	0	12	2	0	2	14
Totals	78	5	73	123	23	100	201
13-Year Average	6.0	.40	5.60	9.5	1.8	7.7	15.5