



Sandbox Designs

Home

Sandbox Towers

Sandbox Lookout Towers

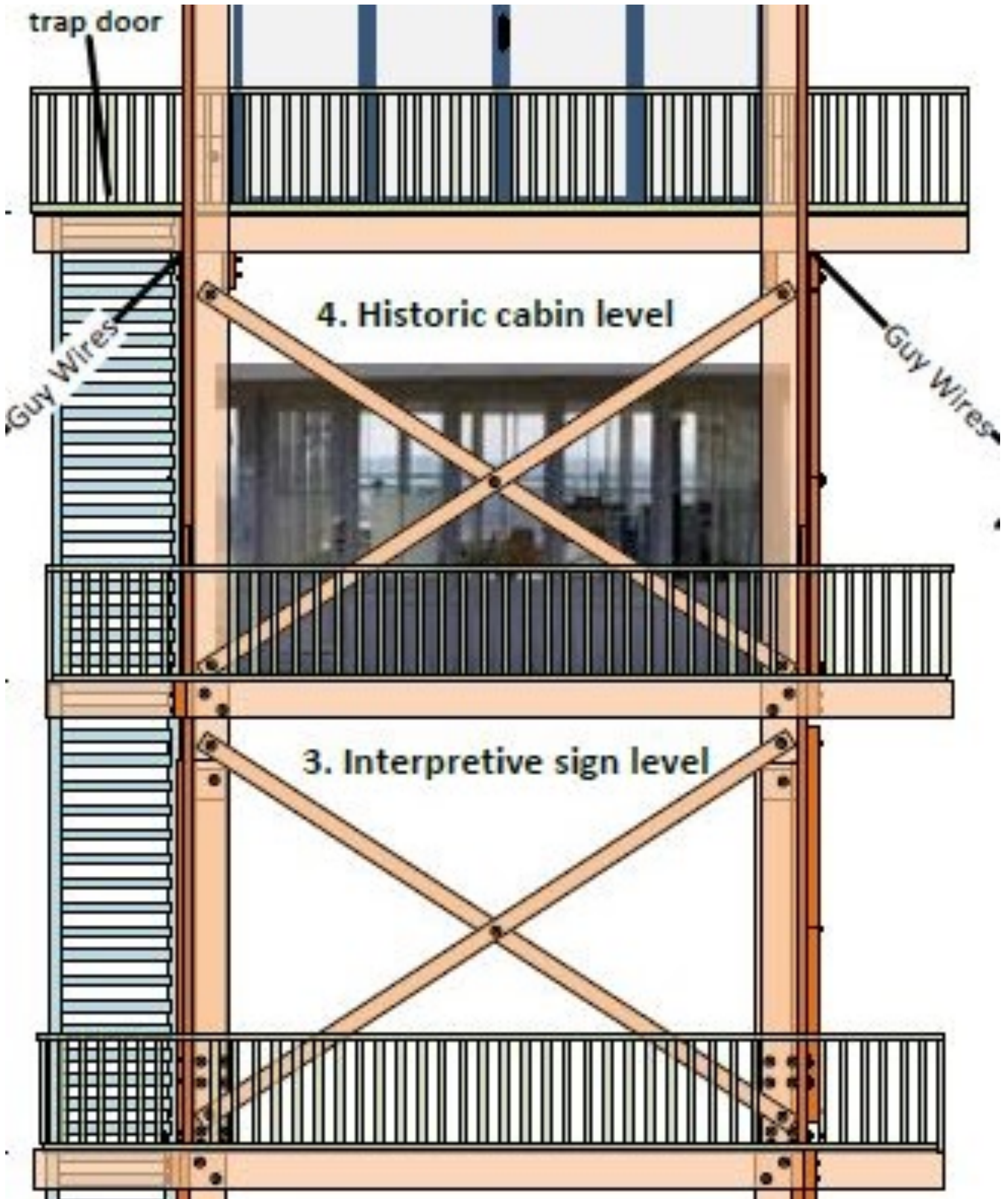




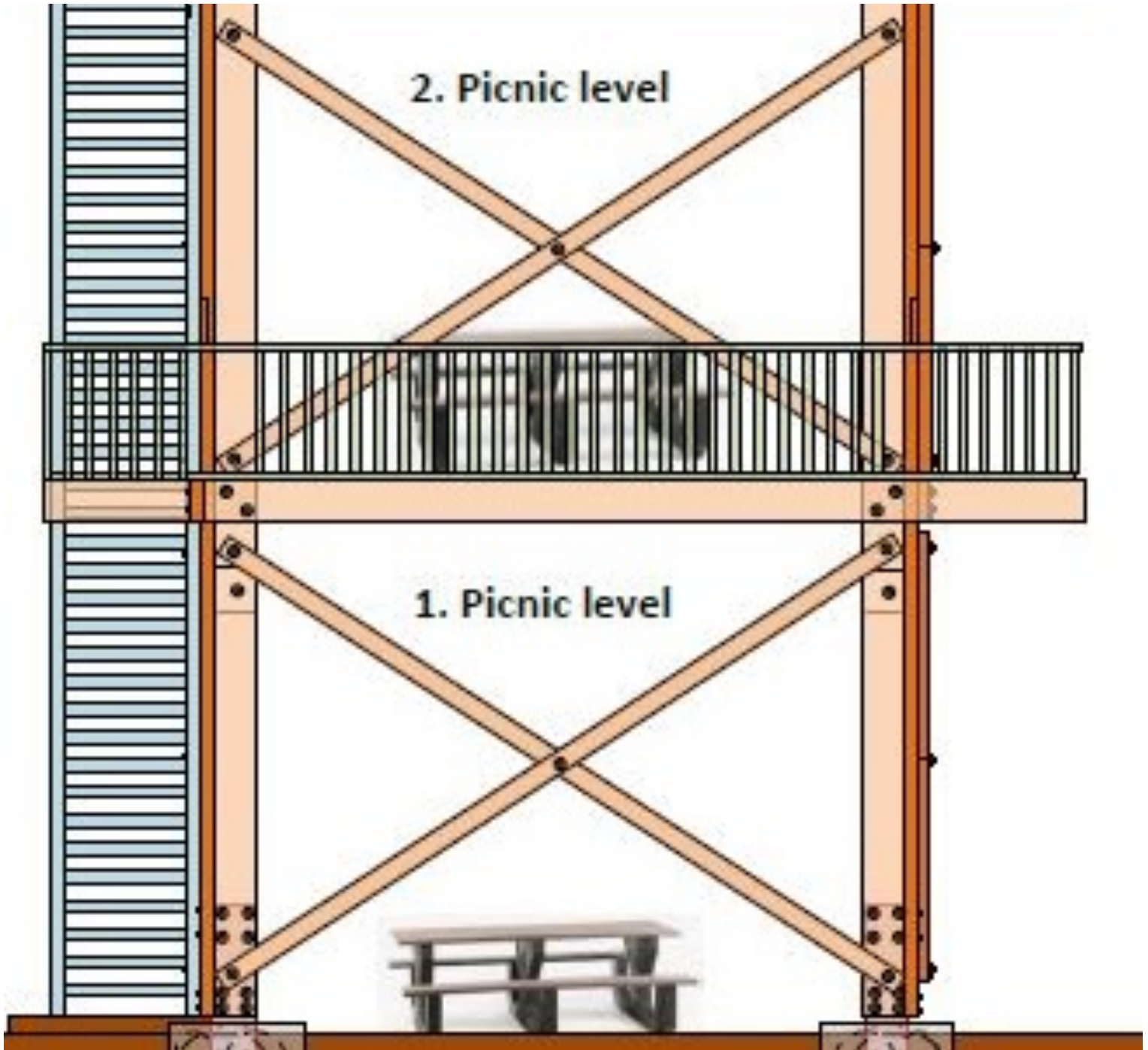
Cougar Pass Fire Lookout as photographed by Bob Zybach on October 10, 2018

# Cougar Pass Lookout









Front view of the proposed Cougar Pass Fire Lookout Tower and Visitor Center.

---

# Cougar Pass Lookout Visitor Center

---

The Cougar Pass Fire Lookout is the only remaining lookout in the Oregon State Elliot Forest. It is located roughly ten miles east of Reedsport on the Oregon coast and can be reached by a rather twisty road that leads up to the peak from Highway 38.

Sadly, it's in terrible shape and is unsafe for the public to visit. Without a better plan, it is likely to be deliberately removed (just as many other fire lookout towers in Oregon have silently disappeared).

Taking all this into consideration, Dr. Bob Zybach launched an effort to rebuild the Cougar Pass by writing:

- "The Elliott is Oregon's first State Forest (1930), and the only one owned by Oregon's schoolchildren, through the Common School Fund. I think there would be all kinds of educational value to keeping the Cougar Pass fire lookout intact, and possibly with an interpretive sign regarding its history.
- "Cougar Pass is in terrible state and unsafe for students to visit or experience. It is also listed on the National Historic Lookout Register: <http://nhlr.org/lookouts/us/or/cougar-pass-lookout/>
- "Rather than remove the tower in the reasonable interests of public safety, I think it would be great to reconstruct a modern tower of similar height and appearance, but up to current safety and building standards. This could be a wonderful resource for educating Oregon students and others regarding the 1910-1969 period of Pacific Northwest forest management history."

You can learn more about Dr. Zybach at [this biography on The Heartland Institute's website](#).

The plans for a Cougar Pass Lookout Visitor Center described on this page were a direct response to Dr. Zybach's call to action. This page describes an alternative fate: to rebuild and convert the Cougar Pass Lookout into a historic interpretive and visitor center. As a first step, this would involve carefully removing and preserving the current 14'-by-14' cabin along with its contents, and then tearing down the current tower.

Next, a new 16'-by-16' tower would be constructed in its place that uses modern building materials and methods. For example, the stairs would meet current building codes for run, rise, width and landings. While the new tower would look generally similar to historic towers, it would be built with more steel and plastic so it wouldn't rot, and would have a well-insulated cabin.

Each of the upper four levels would have a solid deck that is entirely surrounded by a catwalk. The new tower would have five levels:

1. Ground level with picnic tables, countertops and a propane BBQ

2. Lower picnic level with more tables
3. An interpretive sign level with historic photographs and information about fire towers in Oregon
4. A historic cabin level where the original cabin would be reconstructed so visitors could see what a 1930s fire lookout tower cabin actually looked like. Because this cabin would be entirely surrounded by a catwalk, people could look in all its windows to see it just like a museum exhibit, but the door could remain locked.
5. A modern cabin level that visitors could rent so they could stay there overnight.

By placing solar panels on the roof, the site will have enough power to provide lighting and a security system. The security cameras would send images in real time to the cloud (think Google Photos) to provide deterrence against vandalism.



CougarPass.pdf

---

# Cougar Pass Lookout Tower Design

---

- This one-page PDF contains front and side views of the proposed Cougar Pass Fire Lookout Tower and Visitor Center.