

# FOREST LOOKOUTS

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POLK COUNTY

## BALD MOUNTAIN

Polk County FPA  
9S-7W-9

**1913:** "There is now a telephone line connecting Falls City with the Cobb-Mitchell headquarters in Section 36, Township 8 South, Range 8 West, and from there to the lookout station on top of Bald Mountain in the southwest corner of Section 3, Township 9 South, Range 8 West. These telephone lines are owned by the Cobb-Mitchell interest and the one from their headquarters to the lookout station is used exclusively by this association. The trail work, as well as telephone line construction, is permanent and will serve adequately as a basis for a complete system of trails and telephone lines throughout the entire forest district." (**Report of State Forester - 1914**)

**July 30, 1914:** "The Polk County Fire Patrol Association has just completed five miles of telephone line from Black Rock to a look-out station located on the divide between the Luckiamute and La Creole rivers, thence to a fire warden's station on the LaCreole river." (**Polk County Itemizer**)

**April 16, 1916:** "The directors of the Polk County Fire Patrol association held their annual meeting in this city this week. W.V. Fuller was reelected secretary treasurer and manager. He was instructed to build a new lookout station on top of Bald mountain and run a telephone line to it. An assessment of .018 cents per acre was levied on its members. The association controls about 130,000 acres of timber land in Polk county." (**The Oregon Daily Journal**)

**June 9, 1916:** "A force of men under the direction of District Supervising Fire Warden W.V. Fuller, are engaged in the construction of about four miles of new telephone line in the timber in the western part of the county. The new line will run from the main line to a lookout station on the top of Bald Mountain. The new station at this point will be a great help to the patrolmen as an observer can obtain an almost unobstructed view of the whole Siletz Basin and can therefore warn the patrolmen in the different districts if he sees a fire. The old telephone lines are also being put into repair and the trails cleared of timber that has fallen into them during the winter months and the whole district being put into shape for the handling of fires should any occur the coming summer." (**Daily Capital Journal**)

**June 24, 1916:** "Another new lookout is one placed on Bald mountain, in southern Polk county, and a telephone line running from Falls City to Siletz basin has been connected with this point." (**Statesman Journal**)

**June 15, 1918:** "Mr. Fuller and a gang of men have about finished the construction of a high lookout tower on the summit of Bald mountain which rises some 3700 feet west of Falls City. From this station it will be possible for the fire warden to obtain a clear view of

the vast timbered section of the entire western part of the county and with telephone connections in the tower he can notify wardens throughout the district of any fires he may discover.

Polk county is without doubt one of the best patrolled counties in the state and Mr. Fuller has had trails cut in every direction through the timber to allow quick travel in case of fires." (**The Oregon Statesman**)

**July 4, 1920:** "One of the best lookout stations in this part of the country has just been established on Bald mountain where a landing field for airplanes has been established and a wireless plant will be installed in the near future. The station is in charge of T.C. Stockwell, a graduate of the Y.M.C.A. wireless school in Portland." (**Statesman Journal**)

**July 17, 1920:** "Tom Stockwell, who has been on the lookout post on top of Bald Mountain since the forest patrols went out, is spending a few days in town. Jim Braden has relieved him." (**Capital Journal**)

**July 20, 1920:** "W.V. Fuller, Polk county fire patrol warden, has been busy this week with large forces of men, preparing the trails and repairing the telephone lines through the timbered section of Polk county.

A number of patrolmen have already been placed on duty and within the next few days several more will be added. Among those who entered the employ of the fire wardens office this week was T.C. Stockwell, a wireless operator who will have charge of the Bald mountain station.

Last year there were but few fires in Polk county and it is Mr. Fuller's intention still to reduce this number this year, which he believes can be done." (**Morning Oregonian**)

**August 20, 1920:** "W.V. Fuller, district fire warden for Polk County, reports a big forest fire raging on the line of the Valley and Siletz railway south of the lookout station on Bald Mountain and that all efforts up to the present to stop the rush of flames have been futile.

Large crews from the logging camps in that vicinity have been fighting fire for the past several days, but apparently have made little headway, Mr. Fuller says." (**Medford Mail Tribune**)

**June 25, 1921:** "The federal government will send a wireless outfit to be installed at the fire patrol lookout station on Bald mountain, in the southern part of Polk county. The station is in charge of T.C. Stockwell, formerly a naval wireless operator." (**The Oregon Daily Journal**)

**July 12, 1921:** "The chief fire warden of this section of the country, W.V. Fuller, has just reported that the work of installing the wire receiving outfit at the fire patrol lookout station on the top of Bald mountain has been completed and the plant is now in operation in charge of T.C. Stockwell. Mr. Fuller also reports that up to the present time there has been no fires reported by the Polk county patrolmen." (**Capital Journal**)

**July 29, 1921:** "The value of the wireless station recently installed at the fire patrol lookout station on top of Bald mountain, in Western Polk county, was proven Sunday when T.C. Stockwell, operator and lookout in charge, received a message from one of the patrol airplanes stating that a small fire had been discovered in the forest over the line in Lincoln county. Stockwell immediately telephoned the information to the patrolman in that district and the blaze was soon put under control. Stockwell 'talks' to the air men every day. So no fires have been reported this season in Polk county forests." (**Independence Enterprise**)

**August 19, 1921:** "T.C. Stockwell, fire patrolman and wireless operator of the government lookout station on top of Bald mountain in the western part of Polk county picked up a wireless message from Eureka, Cal., this week telling ships that a heavy fog was along shore and advising them to keep well out to sea.

Mr. Stockwell, whose station is somewhat isolated and who rarely gets a daily paper had not heard of the wreck of the Alaska at the time but after finding out the details of the wreck understood just why the warning was being sent out to ships.

Mr. Stockwell was formerly in the merchant marine as a wireless operator and made several trips up and down the coast and across both the Atlantic and Pacific." (**The Oregon Statesman**)

**June 17, 1922:** "Under the supervision and direction of W.V. Fuller, district warden, with headquarters at Dallas, the lookout station at Bald Mountain has been completed. This mountain is located about 23 miles southwest of this city and is in section 16, township 9 south, range 7 west.

The tower is 50 feet in height, the base being 12 feet square and the top four feet. The elevation of the mountain is 3700 feet and from the top of the tower can be seen the central and southern portion of Polk county, the northern portion of Benton county, and the eastern portion of Lincoln county. The tower lookout is a young man who has been taking a course in forestry at the Oregon Agricultural college. He will be stationed at that point throughout the summer, his duties starting about a week ago. Mr. Fuller now has seven men engaged in patrolling the timber." (**Capital Journal**)

**July 4, 1922:** "Fire that started Sunday today was reported sweeping up the west slope of Bald mountain. The mountain, which is the highest in Polk county, is heavily timbered. The forest fire control maintains an outlook on the top, which is entirely bare of trees." (**The Morning Oregonian**)

**July 5, 1922:** "The fire situation in this district was worse tonight, according to officials. Two new blazes have been reported north of Falls City, and the local warden was called to investigate.

The fire on the west slope of Bald mountain had grown worse. The mountain is the highest peak in Polk county, with a bare spot on top, where a lookout station was maintained, and heavy timber on the sides. The lookout left his post today, declaring that he was in danger of being surrounded by the flames. The clearing is but a few acres in extent, and it was said that the station would burn if the flames ran through the timber to the top of the mountain." (**The Morning Oregonian**)

**July 7, 1922:** "According to a Dallas correspondent to a Portland paper the lookout at Bald mountain was forced to flee from his station on account of excessive heat from the approaching forest fires. W.V. Fuller, district fire warden, stated that this was not the case as he is still on duty and has not left that point. Bald mountain is the highest peak in Polk county, with a bare spot on top where a lookout station is maintained." (**The Capital Journal**)

**September 5, 1923:** "Hugh G. Black, stationed at 23; Lynn Black, camp No. 3, and J.C. Gosso, lookout on Bald mountain, have ceased to work, and Thomas Stockwell has been moved from Valsetz to Cold Springs, and will also take care of Bald mountain. Mrs. Stockwell, who has been camping with her husband during the summer, has returned to their home in Dallas." (**Daily Capital Journal**)

**July 25, 1924:** "Last night fire wardens reported that they believed at least two men and possibly more had been cut off by the fire and fear for their safety was expressed. Late today William Caldwell, lookout at Bald mountain, telephoned to Dallas that two men had made their way across the mountain and were safe at Valsetz." (**Morning Oregonian**)

**June 25, 1925:** "Fire fighters were battling to save the big sawmill of the Cobbs-Mitchell Lumber company and the town of Valsetz in western Polk county from the spread of a forest fire that sprung up this morning, according to Will Caldwell, forest ranger on the Bald mountain lookout station. Over the long-distance telephone Caldwell said that the flames fanned by a northeast wind, had burned up to the northern edge of the town. Camp No. 4 of the Cobbs-Mitchell company is reported completely destroyed, and all employees of the company have been pressed into service to fight the fire." (**Morning Oregonian**)

**June 27, 1925:** "A cool night with heavy dew falling and a north wind blowing the fires back over the burned territory have reduced the forest fires in the Siletz basin today. Yesterday the Willamette valley lumber camps were in danger of the rapidly spreading flames but the change of wind reduced the menace for the time being. Will Caldwell, ranger lookout at Bald mountain, reported no new fires this morning." (**Morning Oregonian**)

**May 13, 1926:** "The warm weather following the rains of last week is again creating a fire hazard in the district and Mr. Vernon expects to station Will Caldwell on the Bald mountain lookout station within a few days unless more rains falls." (**Daily Capital Journal**)

**June 1, 1932:** "Hugh Walker, district warden of the Polk County Association, has announced that he has just completed a new lookout tower on the summit of Bald mountain. The new tower is about 60 feet tall and was erected on the same spot where the old tower stood. The old tower had been there for a number of years and had become so badly decayed that it was dangerous for the lookout." (**The Forest Log**)

**July 1, 1933:** "Hugh Walker, district warden of Polk county, recently advised the State Forester that some individual had stolen the fire

finder from the Bald Mountain lookout. While it was one of the old type and more or less obsolete, nevertheless, it served the purpose and the association will now have to provide another. Mr. Walker states that if there are any of the associations who have an extra one at the present time he would like to borrow it for awhile. At the same time he is wondering what use any one would have for a fire finder unless he is going to use it as a calling card when looking for a job as lookout. Associations are warned to be on the lookout for such a man." **(Forest Log)**

**March 1934:** "Hugh Walker, district warden of the Polk county association, was a visitor in the forester's office recently. Mr. Walker stated that the severe winds of last December blew the Bald mountain lookout tower over. This tower was 66 feet high and guyed with four five-sixteenth cables as well as eight buckle guys. While the guys did not break, the turnbuckles were straightened out. Two of the main timbers were broken. Mr. Walker reports that he can repair the lookout at a cost of slightly over \$100." **(Forest Log)**



**June 30, 1936:** Panorama photos taken.>

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**September 4, 1937:** "Hugh Walker, district warden of the Polk county fire patrol association, is a believer in water witching. Reports at present indicate that he is awaiting proof of his ability as a wielder of a forked hazel stick in no less a place than the summit of Bald Mountain at one of the lookout stations in his territory. By means of his stick, Walker located a spot 400 feet from the station and 60 feet below the summit, at which, he declares, water will be found. By his calculations it will show at a depth of 16 feet and the completion of a well at this particular location is all that is necessary for the warden to win his case.

The lookout men took spells at digging last season and went down 13 feet. The final outcome of the experiment is being watched with considerable interest by everyone in the association." **(Daily Capital Journal)**

**October 1937:** "A problem in transportation was faced by the Polk County Fire Patrol Association in getting the materials for the lookout cabin to the summit of Bald Mountain. It was first hauled by truck to Cold Springs, the point where the trail starts. A cat was then used, the lumber stacked on a sled and dragged a distance of three and a half miles through the timber. The final half mile to the summit was too much for the cat so a number of pack horses were secured for the final part of the job. Some of the difficulties encountered can be judged from the fact that the maximum length of the lumber was 18 feet." **(The Forest Log)**



Activated: March 9, 1942. Portland Filter Center.

**June 16, 1942:** "This post was visited June 3. A married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Cameron Mull, were stationed at this post.

The 14x16 ground cabin was built in 1938. It is sealed in and has been quite comfortable. A good cooking and heating stove is needed. A 90-foot tower, without a cab, is used principally for fire detection work but can be used for airplane spotting when weather is suitable. A wood shed is to be built this month and will include a storage shed for supplies.

The Spaulding Lumber Company is building a logging road to within 1/2 miles of this station this summer, and warden walker plans to haul wood logs to the station with a 'cat.' About 12 cords of wood is expected to be needed to heat the cabin this winter." **(Inspection Report from W.N. Parke, AWS Inspector, to James Frankland, USFS)**

**August 3, 1943:** "Use of AWS funds for the construction of the 8 x 14 sleeping room at the Monmouth cabin and shingling roofs of the cabins at Monmouth and Fanno posts is approved." **(Memorandum to the State Forester from James Frankland, USFS Engineering)**

**August 12, 1944:** "Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Thomas and family paid a brief visit to Dallas Tuesday. He is serving as lookout for the fire association, stationed on Bald Mountain. Thomas was principal of the junior high school here last year." **(The Oregon Statesman)**

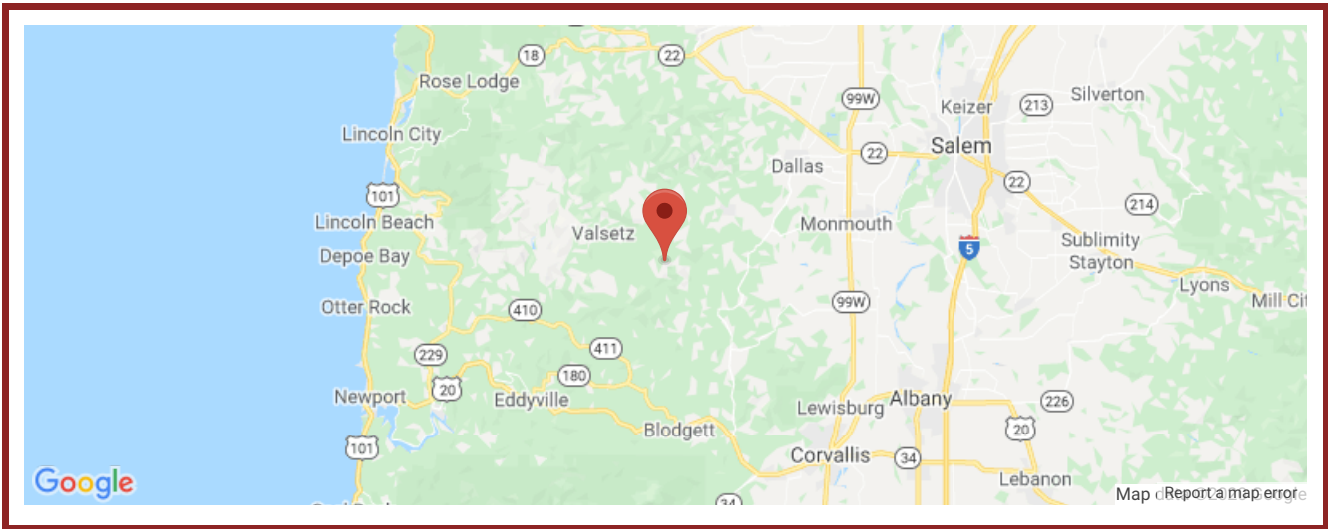
**1947:** A 40-foot timber tower with a 14x14 cab was constructed.

1964: Replacement windows for the cab cost \$448.69.

1966: Four first reports were made from this station.



1969: The lookout was removed.



REX'S FIRE LOOKOUT PAGE



MEMBER: FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT  
ASSOCIATION

