

Methow Valley Fire Lookouts

In partnership with Shafer Historical Museum & Sustainability Pathways

Methow Valley Fire Lookout Practicum

Supervisor:	Mike Liu, Retired District Ranger, Methow Valley Ranger District
Compensation:	\$14.49/hour, 24 hours/week for 10 weeks
Period of Employment:	June 21, 2022 – August 26, 2022 3 days per week
Participation Requirements:	Living in the Methow Valley for the summer Enrollment in UEPP 471 Campus Sustainability Planning Studio course Meets 2 days per week (3 credits) Optional internship credits are available but not required (up to 8 credits)

Overview

The Methow Valley Ranger District on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest is home to many historic fire lookouts. There are a number of community members that have been volunteering to restore and steward some of these lookouts, and there is interest in making some of them available for public recreational use. These community members have been working in partnership with the Forest Service, and retired District Ranger Mike Liu has played a central role in coordinating this group.

This Methow Valley Fire Lookout Fellow position has been created to help assess restoration needs on the lookouts, gather information for a proposal for use of the lookouts, to help convene the community lookout stewards into an association, to assist with hands-on restoration work, and to contribute to educational materials from archives and oral histories from local community members.

This position will work in partnership with Shafer Historical Museum, where archival materials will support project work, especially related to educational programs, and Sustainability Pathways which will support the oral history interviews.

The Shafer Historical Museum preserves and shares the history, culture and sense of place in the Methow Valley to inspire human connection and learning. As one of the Methow Valley's centers for cultural engagement, SHM cultivates the appreciation of history across

generations and is a destination for locals and visitors to the region, the state and the nation. The museum collects and displays artifacts from the pioneer, mining and founding period of the towns in the Methow Valley, from the 1880's-early 1940s.

Responsibilities

The Methow Valley Fire Lookout position will contribute to a range of work projects which will require both independent research and writing as well as working alongside volunteers on restoration projects. In addition, Responsibilities will include:

Stewardship Association Projects

- Help establish a local chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association
- Create a lookout steward annual checklist
- Research and disseminate lookout rental programs on other National Forests

Restoration Projects

- Help facilitate painting of North 20 Mile lookout and coordinate with smoke jumpers to reroof the tower
- Facilitate access and replacement of the shutters at Mebee Pass lookout
- Research lightning protection needs for Lookout Mountain lookout

Education and Outreach Projects

- Research local, county, and USFS archives for materials on lookouts for future use in exhibits, educational programs, and on a website
- Help develop a collection of oral history interviews with lookouts
- Develop a local lookout map and checklist of Methow lookouts and create a corresponding award system for people who visit each lookout (ie: similar to a Jr. Ranger program)
- Develop a program to lead a lookout hike and history storytelling to fellow students that can become a public program in the future
- Develop a presentation on Methow Valley lookouts that can be made to audiences such as at Shafer Museum, the Chamber of Commerce, or other community groups
- Write an article on lookouts to be submitted to the local paper
- Build lookout replica (= extra credit)

Qualifications and Experience

Desired qualifications, experience, and interests for applicants include:

- Coursework / interest in recreation management, cultural resources, historic preservation, museum science / education, public lands management, environmental conservation
- Ability to hike trails in mountainous terrain and be prepared for inclement weather

- Experience with / interest in developing carpentry and historic preservation skills
- Experience with / interest in doing research including primary source documents & oral history
- Experience with / interest in backcountry travel and camping
- First aid training a plus
- Ability to work on own initiative and independently on some projects, and collaboratively as a team member on others
- Ability to provide own vehicle & insurance for transportation to trailheads

Educational/Professional Benefits

The Methow Valley Fire Lookout Fellow will have the opportunity to develop research skills, engage in hands-on restoration work, and contribute to the formation of a lookout association requiring coordination and communication skills. This Fellow will have the opportunity to work with a range of community members, Museum staff, and network with Forest Service staff and other regional and national lookout associations.

Find more information about Sustainability Pathways Fellowships at:

<https://sustain.wvu.edu/pathways>

Please direct all questions to Sustainability Pathways Director, Joshua Porter at:

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