



BALD BULLETIN



The official monthly newsletter of the Eastern Sierra Local Chapter of the FFLA

End of June, 2026 - Volume 1

Welcome everybody to the first official newsletter of the Eastern Sierra Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association. So far this season, our schedule has been filled daily, and we warmly thank Shirley Joyal, Bob Yandow, and Tim Villanueva for stepping up to fill last-minute emergency vacancies. Speaking of stepping up, we salute and thank these members for volunteering for chapter duties:

Shirley Joyal & Bob Yandow - Webmasters

Paula Dueweke & George Fenimore – Quartermasters

Charlotte Kaufman – Social Media Coordinator

You have been using Shirley & Bob's great website already, and next month we'll get into the swag and social media projects. Stand by.

The season is off to a great start and our visiting trainers are prepping new lookouts weekly. We've got a number of new happenings to tell you about, but first a word from Patrol 11, Chris Fabbro:

Thanks to everyone for coming to 2026 training and starting shifts for the season. Please be sure to always follow protocol on your daily checklist. Make sure your cell phone is charged up and that the ringer is always on. There have been multiple people that I have been unable to reach this month, having to contact them by radio to ask them for a phone call. Imagine that was my fire chief trying to reach you...

Great news, the plumbers are coming this week to start repairs on the lookout. Hopefully by July, we will have a fully functioning facility. That said, there are going to be some new holes in the bathroom wall, so if anybody is handy, your coordinators are all ears on suggestions for making the place shine again.

We have had some early monsoon activity, starting unusually late in the day and requiring extended staffing. Many thanks for hanging out later to keep an eye on the landscape.

The Inyo National Forest and Bishop BLM jointly entered stage one fire restrictions on June 22. No campfires or charcoal use outside developed sites. Open fires are still OK in developed campgrounds. Propane campfires and stoves in dispersed areas are still OK. We will likely stay in restrictions for the rest of fire season until snow flies this fall.

We are also looking at hosting monthly events at the lookout, including stargazing, game night, and with any luck, something music or art related. The District Ranger, Stephanie, is a big supporter of the volunteer program and encourages us to find meaningful ways to keep connecting with the public. Any additional suggestions are welcome.

Chris Fabbro
Project Manager

What's New:

1. **NEW MINI-VIDS** - Be sure to visit the website and check-out the four additional new Docent Training 3-minute videos that were produced this month.
2. **RELATIVE HUMIDITY** - This month our staff were called by field units and a Duty Officer who asked about the Relative Humidity (RH) at the mountain top. RH is critical to wildfire ignition and behavior. It is easily determined with the Kestrel weather meter kept in the pedestal. We added an RH box in the Weather section on the physical log, to be recorded twice a day. Any reading under 30% is considered low and requires heightened vigilance. When it gets down to 25%, we know that the fuel is being dried out – bad news!
3. **TWO POTTIES** – Our friends at Mammoth Disposal brought up a second portable toilet in order to reduce their trips up the hill to do pump-out service. Instructions for regulating traffic into the comfort stations are posted on the donation collections board in the living quarters.
4. **AUCTIONEER AWARD** - One of our visiting trainers, Mike Guerin, recorded a Morning Resources Report that was read so fast it explodes the brains of us unaccustomed volunteers. Know that these are read speedily on purpose so as not to tie-up the radio channel in case somebody has emergency traffic. For training (and amazement), we posted the audio in the Training Materials section of the website, and provided a translation. Give it a listen and take the challenge to follow along

5. **SOMEBODY CARES (sometimes)** – So far this year the Communications Center has not put us on their list for the 1700-hour status check roll call. No problem, that shouldn't hurt our feelings. The Cheat Sheets have directions for normally going out-of-service at 1750. However, early this month one dispatcher called us on the radio at 1743 hours and inquired into our status. She was just clearing her list of resources so she could go home on time. Our staff was caught off-guard, since this had never happened before, but correctly replied "Bald Mountain out of service at 1745 hours". We mention this in case it happens to you.
6. **SHIFTS AVAILABLE** – As of this morning, Thursday July 30 and Friday, July 31 are vacant and available. If you want to work those days, go to the website schedule and click on "[Request a Shift Here](#)" at the top of the calendar. First come, first served.
7. **FOR FUN** – Here is a nostalgic treat for our Baby Boomer staff: a 1961 "*Lassie*" episode that involves lookout tower duty, a nasty wildfire, and the obligatory Collie heroics. I hope our Gen X, Millennial, and Gen Z folks appreciate it for the historic artifact that it is. Enjoy! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTTcAiYOKkl>
8. **CALL FOR GRAPHIC DESIGN** – I have been told by an Inyo National Forest employee (whose call sign is somewhere between Patrol 10 and Patrol 12) that this newsletter is ugly to the point of eyeball abuse. So, if anybody has the know-how to make next month's issue more visually appealing, please reach out and help an aesthetics-challenged brother out. Thanks!

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Volunteer Coordinator

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Photos of the Month attached



Bald Mountain (dead center) as seen from near Sentinel Meadows Road



Early monsoons, this one near Crowley Lake



Monsoon cloudburst forming over Sentinel Meadows Road Early



Bald Mountain Spring—currently a small tree is blocking access to the camping area. Fire managers have been alerted and will send a crew when able