

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Clay Butte Lookout

other names/site number Clay Butte Tower; Clay Butte Fire Lookout; Site 48PA2492

2. Location

street & number Approximately ½ mile north of US Route 212 and Forest Service Rd 142

city or town Clark

state Wyoming code WY county Park code 029 zip code 82414

x

not for publication

Vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national x statewide local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public – State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		Buildings
		Sites
1		Structures
		Objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT

Sub: fire station/fire lookout

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

Sub: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: fire lookout tower

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Wood, weatherboard

roof: Metal: steel

other: Glass, stone

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Clay Butte Lookout is located in the northern Absaroka Range in the Shoshone National Forest about four miles south of the Wyoming-Montana state line and about sixteen miles east of Yellowstone National Park in northwestern Wyoming (see Figures 1 and 2). It is located in northwestern Park County about twenty-two miles southeast of Cooke City, Montana, and seventy-five miles northwest of Cody, Wyoming. The lookout is perched on the crest of Clay Butte at an elevation of 9,811 feet. The Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River cuts a wide deep valley that the structure overlooks to the south. The lookout is located at the south end of a north-south trending ridge spur that increases in elevation to the north. Beartooth Butte (10,514 feet), a steep rugged feature, rises above timberline about one mile to the east and dominates the skyline in that direction. Clay Butte Lookout is accessed via a gravel road (Forest Service Road 142) that diverges north from U.S. Route 212 (Beartooth Highway) about one mile to the south and switchbacks by a circuitous route three miles to ascend to the crest of Clay Butte. North of Clay Butte Lookout, the top of the butte is rounded, open and grass-covered. A heavy growth of mixed conifers covers three steep sides of the spur ridge (east, west and south). The trees extend onto the lower crest of the ridge at its south end where the structure is located. The conifers consist of limber pine, Engelmann spruce, Douglas fir, and subalpine fir. The nominated area consists of 2.5 acres of land in the SW/SW/SW Section 1 and SE/SE/SE Section 2, T57N-R106W (see Figures 3 and 4). The nominated historic structure is the fire lookout; there are also minor resources, not substantial in size or scale—a small modern vault toilet, a flagpole, a gravel parking lot, and informal foot trails. Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees constructed the access road previous to the construction of the lookout and began quarrying stone for the foundation during the fall of 1941. However, the CCC was disbanded in the summer of 1942, and final construction of the lookout structure took place after that date. It was officially completed by early October 1943. The tower is a well-preserved structure that is representative of early twentieth-century Forest Service architecture as applied to fire lookouts, which were an integral part of the fire control program on the national forests during this time period. Therefore, Clay Butte Lookout conveys a strong and undisturbed sense of time and place. Physical changes are limited to a one-story stone addition constructed in 1962-63, now approximately fifty years of age. The structure is currently in the process of being renovated for preservation maintenance and public safety. The renovation is well-planned and sensitive to the historical design, materials, and overall appearance. The lookout served as a fire observation facility from 1943 until the 1970s, when modern technology obviated the need for it. Clay Butte Lookout represents one of several standardized designs used by the Forest Service during this time period. The stone addition utilized locally available materials and was built for use as a small interpretive center for the public.

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Physical Description

The site covers a 2.5-acre square, at the center of which is Clay Butte Lookout. Also within the square are minor resources, including a gravel parking lot, informal foot trails, a small modern vault toilet, and a flagpole.

Exterior

Clay Butte Lookout is a square, three-story wood-sided enclosed structure with a low-pitched pyramidal hip roof. The framework consists of 8" x 8" wooden beams bolted through the columns and through the beams and fastened with angle iron clips. The original wooden walls consisted of horizontal tongue and groove siding. The siding, similar in appearance, was replaced with horizontal wooden weatherboard in the early 1990s. The tower structure is 26'3" in height from the top of the poured concrete foundation to the roof eaves. The concrete foundation extends about 3' above ground surface. The walls of the structure taper vertically (battered walls) from the 19'6" square base at ground level to 14'6" square at the deck level of the third floor. The third floor of the structure is glassed in on all four sides. Each side has a similar window arrangement except for the north side, which has a centered single entry one-light wood door. Otherwise, the window arrangement consists of three basic window types. Type 1 consists of a 6'0" x 5'0" nine-light window. The central three lights of the unit are wider than the side lights. The central three lights across the nine-light unit are also wider, and the middle and bottom lights of the central segment are operable and swing inward. The window hardware is located on the interior and consists of two handles. The bottom handle is vertically aligned and pivots from side to side into a catch to lock the window in place. The upper handle is aligned horizontally and serves to pull the window inward after it is unlocked. Type 2 windows are arranged in the same way with two operable windows, and the overall dimensions are 5'5" x 5'0". Type 3 windows consist of a three-light unit aligned vertically, and the bottom two lights are operable. The overall dimensions are 3'6" x 5'0". All the windows have wooden frames and muntins. A 28"-high wall is located below the windows on all four sides. It is interrupted on the north wall by the single entry door. Wooden shutters are applied to the third-floor windows in winter to protect the glass. The original shutters have been rehabilitated with epoxy repair and repainting, and the existing hinges have been replaced with 8" heavy duty strap hinges. A wooden catwalk with handrail runs continuously around the third story, except where the stairs come through on the east side, and overhangs the first two stories. The wood deck of the catwalk has been replaced during the current renovation. Chain link fencing was previously added above the third-story handrail as a safety feature but was removed during rehabilitation. The wooden railing has also been removed and replaced with steel pipe and tube railings for safety purposes. The bottom portion of the railing is covered with wood sheathing. The finished railing system closely approximates that the original structure as shown in historic photographs.

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During the renovation the existing metal roof was removed. Beneath it, a layer of wood shingles that may have been original was also removed. A new standing seam metal roof was installed over underlayment. The eaves of the hipped roof are extended with exposed rafter ends, and there is a round metal vent on the east roof slope.

The ground floor of the north side of the structure contains a centered and slightly recessed 8'0" square two-light, wood slab overhead garage door. The door retains all its original hardware. It bears a routed wooden sign inscribed "ELEVATION 9,811 FEET." The garage entry has a poured concrete apron that extends beyond the building line. The slightly recessed area extends upward to the second floor. Two four-light casement windows (1'6" x 4'6") are paired above the door. The lights are horizontally aligned with wooden frames and muntins. Vertical wood paneling surrounds the windows in the recessed area. The window bays appear to extend below the existing four-light unit, but this area has been filled in with vertical wood paneling. On the third floor, a central door with a large fixed window allows access to the glassed-in fire detection area. Nine-light windows (as described above) are located on each side of this door.

The east and west sides of the tower structure are similar with centered four-light vertically stacked casement windows (1'6" x 4'6") on each of the first two floors. The intervening area is covered with vertical wood paneling. A steel stairway on the west side leads to the observation deck on the roof of the stone addition. A steel stairway on the east side leads to the third-story catwalk. A telephone pole was originally located on the west side of the tower but has been removed.

The one-story, flat-roofed stone addition (15'5" N-S x 19'6" E-W) was built onto the south and west sides of the tower in 1962-63. It is ell-shaped, wrapping around the southwest corner of the tower and extending about 3'10" north along the west side. The addition rests on a poured concrete foundation that extends about 1' above ground level. The lower walls of the addition are covered with natural stone on the outside to a height of about 3'. This stone extends to the eaves adjacent to an entry on the west side. In addition, an ell-shaped stone windbreak wall (6'0" N-S x 16'0" E-W) protects the entrance on its north and west sides, forming a vestibule. The protected entrance has a single wooden door (2'8" x 6'11"). A second single entry is located on the east side of the addition where the east wall joins the main structure. It has a similar wooden door. The majority of the addition is glass enclosed. The west side has two large rectangular plate glass display windows, the south side consists of five similar display windows, and the east side has two display windows. All windows are set in metal frames with wooden surrounds. A concrete sill runs along the top of the stone wall below the windows. Each window has a sturdy removable wooden shutter for protection during the winter months. The flat roof of the addition supports an overhanging observation deck that extends across its length. During the current renovation, the old deck has been replaced with vinyl composition tile (VCT) flooring and wall base. The old railings that enclose the observation deck have been replaced with steel pipe and tube handrails and railings. The railings

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have seven horizontal members spaced so that a 4" sphere will not pass between them. The north side of the addition has a steel stairway with railings that leads from the ground surface to the observation deck. The steel stairway replaces the original wooden unit. A poured concrete apron is located at the base of the stairs and continues along the west side of the addition to the ell-shaped entry.

A set of wooden stairs was eliminated during the construction of the 1960s addition. These stairs began near the southwest corner and ascended to the second-story entry to the living quarters and continued along the east side to the third floor. A first-story centered four-light window was also covered by the addition. A photovoltaic panel and metal pole has been removed from the southwest corner of the third-story.

Interior

The ground floor of the tower structure contains a garage and storage area that is accessed via the overhead garage door on the north and a single entry on the south. The garage has a poured concrete floor and unfinished walls and ceiling. The diagonally laid wood sheathing and studs walls are exposed, as are the second-story floor joists and flooring that form the ceiling. Natural light is obtained from the four-light casement windows in the east and west sides. The overhead garage door and wooden entry door and hardware are original. The interior of the garage includes a riveted steel water tank that also appears to be original.

The second floor contains the living quarters. Natural light is obtained from the two centered windows on the north side and single casement windows on the west and south sides. The floor consists of 2" x 10" joists covered by 1" x 8" milled pine lumber. The room is accessed via a one-light wood door located in the south wall. An enclosed closet with sliding wooden doors is located in the northwest corner of the room. A propane heater is mounted on the north wall between the two windows. A set of wooden cabinets, counter, and sink with hand pump are built onto the east wall. Wooden cabinets are located beneath the sink and counter. The cabinetry with sink and counter appears to be a single unit that was probably installed in the 1960s. The ceiling consists of tongue and groove wood paneling and molding painted white and is original. Portions of large supports beams in the ceiling and the gypsum wall board are also painted white.

The third floor consists of the fire observation area and is glassed in on all sides. The interior is finished in pine board paneling that covers the ceiling and serves as wainscot on the lower walls. The paneling is finished with natural varnish or polyurethane. A trapdoor in the ceiling leads to attic crawl space without a floor. The room has pine board floors. The wooden base for the Osborne Firefinder is located in the center of the room. The instrument was removed for safekeeping during renovation. The base is finished in plywood and bears two wooden signs on its north side. A small routed sign is inscribed "1942." A larger sign mounted below it reads "Fire Danger is Low Today" and "Lookout is on Duty." The words "low" and "on" can be altered, depending on

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conditions. The top of the Firefinder base has several legible penciled signatures and dates. The first grouping consists of three lines on one of the cross members. The first line is printed "Robert Allen Young, Lookout & Foreman"; the word foreman is underlined with the additional words, "ha, ha." The second line is in cursive script and reads, "Shoshone & Cody, Wyo., July 29, 1943"; the third line is printed and reads, "Age - 15 years." The second grouping reads: "Rex S. Chamberlain USFS, SP 6"; the second line reads "July 29 - 1943." The third line reads "Greeley, Colorado".

The Osborne Firefinder is a tool used to locate fires. It consists of a flat disc with a forest map overlay, divided into range, township, and section numbers, which correspond in layout to the land around the lookout tower. A vertical peep-sight is mounted opposite the view sight. To locate a fire, the lookout sights through the peep-sight, centers the cross hairs on the base of the smoke column, determines the azimuth reading from the circular scale around the Firefinder, and then estimates the fire's location on that line based on topography. A low worktable and counter with drawers and a second counter are located along the south side of the observation room. The top of the counter without drawers was constructed from a former routed Forest Service sign.

The interior walls of the stone addition are finished in composition wood paneling with a hard painted surface. Currently, the pine floor is exposed. This floor was covered with vinyl tile, and new tile will be laid during the current renovation. The ceiling consists of natural finished tongue and groove wood paneling and evenly spaced large wooden beams with a natural finish. A number of interpretive displays are mounted on the walls as well as on horizontal pedestals. Many depict the views from the observation windows and identify distant mountain peaks and formations. Others interpret wildlife in the area, particularly grizzly bear, and camping and hiking precautions.

Integrity

Overall, Clay Butte Lookout retains good physical integrity; therefore, it is a fine example of Forest Service Architecture as applied to fire lookouts. It admirably represents a specific CCC-era Forest Service standard design (Plan L-601) for its wood frame tower and glassed-in wood frame observation cab (Plan BC-301). The structure retains integrity of location as verified by historic photographs and maps. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are rated as good. Clay Butte Lookout retains its essential physical characteristics with minimal modifications and improvements over time. The current renovation has been planned and executed in a historically sensitive manner approved by the Wyoming SHPO. It serves to rehabilitate and maintain the building and its materials and make the structure safe for use by the general public.

The 1962-1963 one-story flat-roofed addition, the roof of which serves as an observation deck, has reached about fifty years of age. Its rustic stone finish is compatible with the alpine environment, and it does not

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substantially detract from the original lookout structure. It also provides an ideal location for the general public to view interpretive displays and the surrounding topography through the large glass windows, protected from the consistent winds. The integrity of setting is excellent; the surrounding country remains essentially the same as that viewed by lookouts in the 1940s to the 1970s. Prominent landmarks such as Pilot and Index peaks and Beartooth Butte dominate the skyline. Integrity of feeling and association is rated as excellent, because of the good integrity of wetting and the physical integrity of the lookout.

In addition to a gravel parking lot and informal foot trails, two minor resources are located within the current district boundaries that are not of sufficient size or scale to contribute to the property's historic significance. One is a small one-story gabled concrete vault toilet (2011) that is visually screened from the lookout by a growth of conifers, and a flagpole is located 30-40 feet southwest of the lookout. It is visible from the lookout but does not intrude upon the setting or the overall view.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Conservation

Architecture

Politics/Government

Period of Significance

1943-1963

Significant Dates

1943 – completion date of tower construction

1962-1963 – one-story interpretive addition

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

U.S. Forest Service L-601 tower and BC-301 cab
standardized plans/U.S. Forest Service

Period of Significance (justification) 1943-1963. The access road was constructed in 1941. The lookout structure was completed for use by October 1943. The one-story stone addition (visitor center) was constructed in 1962-1963.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Clay Butte Lookout is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places as a state significant historic structure under Criteria A and C. It also reflects national trends manifested at the state level and to a lesser degree at the local level. The period of historical significance dates from 1941, the year construction of the access road was completed and quarrying of stone for the foundation was begun, to 1962-63, when an interpretive addition was built onto the base of the tower. The architectural design dates from the early 1930s and also reflects the evolution of fire lookout architecture in the early twentieth century. The lookout is eligible under Criterion A as an uncommon and well-preserved example of a Depression-era fire tower utilizing standard Forest Service plans. Road and foundation construction was begun by Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees in the fall 1941. Final construction of the lookout was carried out by the forest service after the CCC was disbanded in 1942. It was completed in October 1943. The lookout is representative of the history of fire detection and control practices within the U.S. Forest Service, specifically in the Shoshone National Forest in the Rocky Mountain Region (Region 2) from 1943 to 1962-63. It is the only fire lookout that remains standing in the Shoshone National Forest. The lookout is also related to the political and legislative events of the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal policies and programs, in particular, the development and implementation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as utilized by the U.S. Forest Service from 1933 to 1942. The CCC was disbanded in 1942, but the access road, rock quarrying for the lookout foundation, and overall planning and surveying for the lookout were carried out by CCC enrollees. Clay Butte Lookout also embodies the evolution of a distinctive architectural style (Criterion C), which in time became characterized by standardized plans as a result of the specific functional requirements of fire detection, and provisions for the reasonable comfort and housing of the personnel who staffed the often isolated facilities. Clay Butte Lookout incorporates many standard design features, such as the tower, observation cab, and living quarters. However, it represents a now uncommon battered wood enclosed tower with first-story garage and storage area, second-story living quarters, and third-story observation cab used solely for fire detection. The tower represents Forest Service standardized L-106 tower design with a BC-301 cab. The timber type style of architecture was preferred by the Forest Service for use in woodland country during the CCC era, and Clay Butte Lookout is sympathetic to such a high country setting. Although the majority of lookouts were constructed of steel for convenience and durability, it is possible that the scarcity of steel during World War II and the existence of a large labor force before the war influenced the decision of the Forest Service to use this design for Clay Butte Lookout. Hundreds of existing fire lookouts throughout the country were researched for this nomination, but only a few similar examples were found, all in California (Williams Hill, Calandra Lookout, Monterey County; Ball Mountain Lookout and Black Fox Lookout, Siskiyou County). None retain the integrity of setting or physical integrity of Clay Butte Lookout.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The History of Fire Prevention in the National Forests and Fire Lookout Architecture

Federal involvement in fire control began with the National Park Service and was later taken up by the forest reserves. In February 1905, the forest reserves were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. Forestry was in Division R, which was soon renamed the United State Forest Service, headed by Gifford Pinchot. As more land was set aside by the federal government in the early twentieth century, the need for detection and control of fires increased. However, the chief catalyst was the Great Fire of 1910, also known as the Big Blowup. A series of fires burned throughout the summer on several western states, and on August 20, hurricane-force winds swept through the region, creating a conflagration that was impossible to fight or contain. A total of 1,736 fires burned over 3,000,000 acres in Washington, Idaho, and Montana, and at least eighty-five people were killed. Several small towns were completely destroyed. It is considered the largest forest fire in recorded history. The smoke from the fire drifted across the entire country as far as Washington, D.C. As a result, in 1911 Congress passed the Weeks Act, which provided increased funding for fire control, state cooperative fire protection programs, and research. At this time, the Forest Service was in its infancy and was forced to create a new policy of fire suppression. Many of these fire rules, organizations, and policies remain in effect today.¹

Gifford Pinchot, Chief of the Forest Service, was the driving force behind fire control. He attempted to convince the public that part of the Forest Service mission should include fire detection and prevention. Pinchot and his followers believed that fires should be prevented whenever possible and suppressed once they had started. However, the Forest Service was hampered in these goals by lack of funding until the 1920s and 1930s.²

The earliest fire lookouts were logically located on high peaks with an unobstructed view of the surrounding forest. Tents were often used as shelters, and short mapboard stands were used for pinpointing the smoke on maps. Tall trees, crude observation-only towers, platforms and small log cabins also came into use. By about 1911, forest personnel were constructing cabins and cupolas on mountaintops, many from readily available local materials such as stone.

In 1911, Coert duBois, credited with developing early fire detection techniques, created a plan for the Stanislaus National Forest in northern California. He stressed the designation of key mountain tops as permanent lookout points and the recording of fire statistics. In 1914, duBois published a comprehensive study of fire control, and in it he introduced a standardized plan for a 12' x 12' wooden live-in cab and recommended the use of Aermotor Company steel towers. In 1917, duBois presented Plan Number 4-A, Primary Lookout Building Standard for District 5, which featured a 14' x 14' wood live-in cab. This plan established the basic

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design and floor plan for all subsequent live-in cabs. Plans for the duBois cab indicated that it could be placed on timber towers, but no height specifications were provided. The tower design was similar to that used on railroad water-tank towers. The duBois design emphasized the use of a live-in observatory so that the operator could view his area both day and night.³

In 1914, the Aermotor Company began to manufacture observation-only towers (the lookout resided in a different structure) with 7' x 7' wood or metal cabs. These towers were approved by the Forest Service for use in several regions, standardizing lookout designs. The Aermotor Company of Chicago, Illinois, began manufacturing windmills, pumps and tanks in 1888. Under president L.W. Noyes, Aermotor established a special relationship with the US. Forest Service as a major supplier of prefabricated steel lookout towers. (The company was endorsed by duBois in his 1916 report.) Aermotor provided thousands of lookout towers for both federal and state forestry departments for over fifty years. The company remained in business until the late 1960s. In Region 5 (New Mexico and Arizona) nearly fifty percent of fire lookouts inventoried in 1986 consisted of Aermotor towers. Several models of the steel tower were manufactured by the company including the MC-24, MC-39, X-24, MC-99, MI-25, LL-25, MC-40, and LS-40. The models differed chiefly in the design of cab shape, windows, stairs, ladder placement, and size. The towers of many of the early fire lookouts were later replaced by Aermotor steel towers. The towers were all battered (slanting gradually inward from the base to the top) and utilized an "X" brace support system. Timber towers were used as early as 1914 with a design borrowed from wooden derricks used by the oil industry.⁴

Basically, the fire lookout structure consisted of a wooden or steel tower structure with an enclosure called a cab at the top for the lookout. Ground cabs were built on the ground with a stone or concrete foundation without a tower structure. Ground cabs built from the ground up could still reach as high as three stories. Clay Butte Lookout is an example of a ground cab, since it is enclosed throughout its three stories.

In California, the Forest Service experimented with lookout construction as early as 1915. The first lookout tower in Region One (Northern Region) was constructed in 1916 and consisted of a small cab mounted on a windmill tower. Two towers were built in Region 6 (Washington and Oregon) using what became known as the standard District-6 (D-6) design, which consisted of a 12' x 12' frame structure with a 6 x 6-foot second story observation cupola centrally located on the roof. The cupola had a continuous band of windows with shutters. Gradually, the hinged shutters on most of the D-6 lookouts were replaced with removable plywood shutters that could be stored under the building. One of the D-6 towers was constructed on the summit of Mount Hood (11,235') by Lige Coleman, Dee Wright, and Forest Service crewmen in about 1915. Coleman was a mountain guide who climbed Mount Hood 586 times. Over 4,000 pounds of building materials were packed in by men and mules to the summit. Coleman performed most of the carpentry himself and manned the tower through 1919. The tower was manned every season through 1933.⁵ An exception to a standardized

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tower was Cedar Mountain Lookout on the St. Joseph National Forest, which was a unique two-story frame structure that followed an improvised plan.⁶

A lookout design was also needed to obtain a view over the treetops. The structure had to withstand extreme weather conditions, high winds, and lightning strikes. In the late 1920s, Clyde Fickles designed a prefabricated lookout cab that was used in Region 1 (northern Idaho, Montana, and North Dakota). When the windows were installed the structure became rigid. Between 1921 and 1925, 61 lookout structures were built in Region 1. Between 1926 and 1930, an additional 130 were built. By the end of the decade, the total number of occupied lookouts rose to about 800.⁷

The Aladdin L-4 lookout design (1929 to 1954) was a kit manufactured by the Aladdin Company of Portland, Oregon, and may have been based on an earlier design by duBois. A 14 x 14-foot one-story, gable-roofed, wood frame building combined the observation facilities with the living quarters. The models built from 1933 to 1953 featured hip roofs.⁸ More than one thousand L-4s were erected nationwide and were probably the most common type of lookout in the United States. The firefinder was located in the center of the room, and the living facilities were arranged around the outside walls. The bed, cupboards, counters, and other cabinetry were built at window sill level to preserve the 360-degree view from the firefinder. The L-4 usually had a low ceiling, since the materials were generally packed in by mule or horse. Windows were either nine-light or four-light units; most of the later versions had four-light windows. All of the windows and the door were protected by large shutters; when raised they protected the windows from glare. A gable-roofed version of the L-4 was constructed only from 1929 to 1932, because the design created structural problems from uneven snow deposition. The L-4 also had a variant (1936 to 1954) with two-foot extended eaves provided with bolts to which shutters could be fastened.⁹

The L-5 was a smaller version of the L-4 built to 10' x 10' dimensions with either a gable or extended eave hip roof. Built from 1932 to 1942, this model was used for peaks with difficult access and was often built on rocky spires without tower structures.¹⁰

In the Rocky Mountain region, development of standardized tower designs was slow because no official funding was allocated until the early 1910s. As a result, rangers resorted to using scrap materials or locally available materials to build crude cabins and towers, preferable to the use of tents. Standardized designs were less prominent in Region 2 (Colorado, the majority of Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas). Inventories conducted on national forests in Colorado indicate a lack of uniformity in surviving pre-1950s lookout structures. Nationally standardized designs were used in the 1950s in Region 2.

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In 1924, the Forest Service issued a booklet entitled, *Specifications and Plans for Lookout Towers.* It contained designs for steel towers and instructions for purchase and construction. Two designs were emphasized, the LX-24 and LX-25, with towers of varying height—35 feet, 61 feet, and 75 feet. The designs differed only in ladder specifications, the first outside, and the second inside for greater safety. These designs were originated by the Aermotor Company, but the construction of fire towers was generally put out on bid by the Forest Service, which used these designs to compare those submitted by other manufacturers. The steel towers were anchored using masonry piers buried five feet into the ground, and it was recommended that towers over 30 feet high should be reinforced with guy wires. A plan for log lookout towers was also included in the booklet.¹¹

California Regional Forester S.B. Shaw and a group headed by Edward Kotok studied lookouts and completed a report of its findings in 1933, just prior to the inception of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This research culminated in the publication of the *Standard Lookout Structure Planbook* in 1938. The Forest Service and National Parks took advantage of the new labor work force to build lookout towers and cabs throughout the country between 1933 and 1942.¹² Most of the fire lookouts built by the CCC during this time period utilized standardized plans and preselected sites, so that the Forest Service could order and ship all the necessary materials to the regional or district offices. The standardized plans included designs for both steel and timber towers of varying heights and were revised to July 1941. Five types of towers, CT-1 through CT-5, were listed in the plans book. The towers were built to accommodate 7' x 7' and 14' x 14' cabs. The plans for 24', 29', and 30' timber towers and 14' x 14' wood cabs were only available in Region 6 (Oregon and Washington). They are the closest to the design dimensions of Clay Butte Lookout. However, all of the steel and timber towers in the 1938 plan book were straight, open towers. The L-601 tower and BC-301 cab designs utilized for Clay Butte Lookout are not depicted in the 1938 plan book.¹³

The standardized plans also included designs for cupola houses (D-6), towers and cabs. Aermotor towers were incorporated into the standard plans. The USDA Forest Service L-1400 series standard plan represents a generalized Aermotor tower and a cab. Others included the CT-1 observation-only and the L-501 wood platform. Standard plans for 12' x 12' and 14' x 14' observation live-in lookout structures included a variety of Aermotor type designs, the USFS C-2 and the CL-100 to CL-106 series of towers and cabs.¹⁴

Other companies involved in the manufacture of fire lookouts included the International Derrick Company, the Pacific Coast Steel Company, and the McIntock-Marshall Construction Company.¹⁵

In the 1930s, the International Derrick Company provided steel towers and 7-foot square steel cabs that were similar to the Aermotor styles. The Pacific Coast Steel Company was incorporated in 1909 in San Francisco for the manufacture of a variety of metal products including towers; their designs were also similar to

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the Aermotor types. The McLintock-Marshall Construction Company of Pennsylvania and California was incorporated in 1900 in Pennsylvania and was owned by H.H. McLintock, C.D. Marshall, and Andrew and Richard Mellon. The Mellon family of Pittsburgh provided the financial backing for the company, which became a prominent manufacturer of structural steel. The company was later incorporated as a part of Bethlehem Steel. It had a small subdivision that designed and constructed steel towers and cabs.¹⁵

Many of the older fire lookouts were replaced when funding and manpower were supplied by the New Deal. The Forest Service contracted out the architectural work to a private firm in San Francisco that resulted in two lookout types used by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC): observation-only towers with associated residences, and live-in cabs. The first consisted of Aermotor Company products; the latter consisted of a 196-square foot building using Plan No. BC-301. The cab could be placed directly on the ground on concrete piers (ground cabs) or on towers up to thirty feet high. Plans included four basic types: L-101, L-401, L-601, L-701, and L-801. The L-101 plans specified a 10-12' tall, nonbattered enclosed timber tower with 8" square (or larger) timber corner posts and 10" square tower caps (cab stringers). Variations reached 30' high (ground to catwalk). The L-401 was a 20' high nonbattered open steel H-brace tower with 6" x 12" x 20' I-beams. The L-801 was a 30' high battered open steel (galvanized angle-iron) K-brace tower. Both types were in great demand because of their low maintenance and longevity. However, steel towers were in short supply, especially after the start of World War II. The most common types for this time period were the L-601 and L-701. They were 30' and 20' high, respectively, and were battered enclosed timber towers. Corner posts were 8"-10" square or larger, and tower caps were 10"-12" square. Because they resembled the grist mills of Holland, they were nicknamed "Dutch Windmills."¹⁶ Clay Butte Lookout incorporates the L-601 design with a BC-301 cab.

A circular entitled "Forests Protected by the CCC" was issued in 1938 and discussed fire prevention by the CCC. The philosophy of the Forest Service at this time is reflected in two statements that stressed the effort to "prevent forest fires from starting in the first place" and "trying to put them out as speedily as possible after discovery." This was the first time in Forest Service history that such a large force of men was not only available but strategically located throughout the national parks and forests to help prevent and fight forest fires. In the first five years of its existence, CCC crews spent 4,000,000 man-days of labor fighting fires. The year 1934 was considered one of the driest and worst fire years in history. In 1937, the U.S. Forest Service had one of its most successful fire seasons while managing over 200,000,000 acres. Although a number of fires started, the total burned acreage was the lowest in recorded history. Training for CCC enrollees stressed safety: "No enrollee is sent to the fire line until he has received some instruction and training, and unless he is physically fit for such duty...the foremen and other leaders are given intensive training in fire fighting in accordance with nationwide training programs." CCC enrollees often served as lookouts during the fire season. They also constructed roads and fire trails and fire breaks, telephone lines, and lookout towers, and extended the range of efficient forest fire detection, communication, and transportation.¹⁷

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During World War II, the Aircraft Warning Service was established, and operated from mid-1941 to mid-1944. Two or more watchers staffed each lookout 24 hours a day 365 days a year as Enemy Aircraft Spotters until the war ended.

In the 1950s, the Forest Service's CL-100 Series consisted of vandal-proof steel cabs and tower sections that were easily bolted together. Several different plans were used in towers built in Colorado during this time period. The number of lookouts in the nation's national forests peaked in the 1950s, and prototype designs and kits were produced by private companies, although some of the regions continued to develop their own designs.¹⁸

Although the construction of fire lookouts dropped dramatically after World War II, there was a small surge in the 1950s and 1960s consisting of the R-6 "flats" using CL-100 and CL-106 standardized plans. The flats were placed on steel towers and on concrete blockhouse bases.¹⁹

After World War II, a series of changes gradually curtailed the use of lookout towers for fire detection. The increase in air pollution served to limit visibility around large urban areas. As the use of forests grew, road systems expanded, and citizen reports of fire began to equal reports by lookouts. Increased aerial surveillance and improvements in radios decreased the need for fire lookouts. However, space satellite fire detection and modern cell phones have proven ineffective in several environments. Also, modern policy is to manage fires, not simply suppress them. Fire lookouts can still play a role, as they provide a reduction in time of fire detection to time of fire management assessment.²⁰

The firefinder device was the primary piece of lookout equipment and was used to plot fires on a map. It was centrally located in the cab and therefore determined the lookout operator's working location. Several different kinds of firefinders were developed over the years, but the most popular was the Osborne Firefinder developed in 1911 by William B. Osborne, an engineer working on the Mt. Hood National Forest. The device was similar to an engineer's transit and was accurate to one-sixtieth of a degree. It was first used on the Larch Mountain Lookout in 1914. The Osborne was scaled down in size in 1934 and became the standard for all lookouts.²¹

In 1927, a lookout, who probably had many free hours on his hands, wrote a poem about his life high in an isolated tower:²²

The Lookout

Way above the forests, that are in my care.

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Watching for the curling smoke – looking everywhere,
Tied onto the world below by a telephone,
High, and sometimes lonesome – living here alone,
Snow peaks on the skyline, woods and rocky ground,
The green of Alpine meadows circle me around,
Waves of mountain ranges like billows of the sea—
Seems like in the whole wide world there's not a soul but me.
Peering thru the drift of smoke, sighting thru the haze.
Blinking at the lightning on the stormy days,
Here to guard the forests from the Red Wolf's tongue
I stay until they take me down, when the fall snows come.

Robin Adair, *California District Newsletter*, 1927

The New Deal and the CCC

New Deal programs instituted by the Roosevelt Administration to combat the effects of the Great Depression provided the stimulus for the development and improvement of the nation's public lands. These lands had been despoiled by three generations of waste and exploitation, so that the 800,000,000 acres of forests had been reduced to 100,000,000 acres of virgin timber by 1933. The loss of forest resulted in increased soil erosion. By 1934, one-sixth of the continent's best soil was gone, and the nation was suffering from the Dust Bowl. The Civilian Conservation Corps, through President Roosevelt, "...brought together two wasted resources, the young men and the land, in an attempt to save both."²³

The two major programs that most affected the national forests were the Public Works Administration (PWA) and Emergency Conservation Work (ECW). "The PWA channeled special allotments to fund capital improvements in the national parks, such as roads and buildings." The projects were carried out according to Forest Service standards and designs and were accomplished with skilled labor using private contractors. The ECW involved a joint effort among the departments of Labor, Army, Interior, and Agriculture and was administered by an interagency advisory board. Although originally intended as a temporary measure, in 1937 it became an independent agency that functioned for several more years.²⁴

The Federal Unemployment Relief Act signed into law by President Roosevelt on March 31, 1933, called for Emergency Conservation Work to be conducted on the nation's public lands by creating a body of unemployed and generally unskilled men called the Civilian Conservation Corps. President Roosevelt envisioned the bill accomplishing several goals: "It will conserve precious natural resources. It will pay dividends to the present and future generations. It will make improvements in National and State domains which have been largely forgotten in the past few years of industrial development...More important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work." Roosevelt felt strongly that the large numbers of unemployed would infinitely prefer to work. "We can take a vast army of these unemployed out into

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healthful surroundings. We can eliminate to some extent at least the threat that enforced idleness brings to spiritual and moral stability.²⁵

During an April third meeting at the White House with President Roosevelt, representatives of the departments of War, Labor, Interior, and Agriculture discussed the implementation of the legislation. The Department of Labor was to initiate a nationwide recruiting program; the Army was to condition and transport enrollees to the work camps; and the Park Service and the Forest Service were to operate the camps and supervise work assignments. The initial enrollment was limited to single men between the ages of 18 and 25 willing to send up to \$25 of their \$30 monthly wage to their families. The men would be employed in forest fire prevention, prevention of soil erosion, flood control, removal of undesirable plants, insect control, and construction or maintenance of paths, tracks, and fire lanes on public lands. They would be provided with appropriate clothing, daily subsistence, medical attention, hospitalization, and a cash allowance. Each camp was composed of about two hundred men working on programs designed to last for six months. President Roosevelt personally approved camp locations and work assignments. The bulk of the work force was to be drawn from the unemployed in large urban population centers.²⁶

Park Service Director Horace Albright and Forest Service Chief Forester Robert Stuart soon realized that their agencies did not have enough men, equipment, or experience to operate the work camps full time, so the Army was designated to operate and supervise the camps. The Park Service and Forest Service became responsible for the work projects.²⁷

The earliest camps consisted of army tents, which were soon replaced with more substantial wood frame buildings that were standardized and designed to last eighteen months. In the spring of 1934, the Army designed a prefabricated sturdy building that could serve a number of different uses. It was mass produced in 1935, and in 1936, Director Fechner ordered that all future ECW camps consist of prefabricated portable buildings. The camps were laid out in a U-shaped configuration with recreation halls, garage, hospital, administrative buildings, mess hall, officers' quarters, enrollee barracks, and schoolhouse. Approximately twenty-four buildings were constructed in each camp to accommodate two hundred men. In addition, the Park Service was allowed to hire a small number of skilled local experienced men (LEMs), who were familiar with local conditions, building materials, and construction practices.²⁸

President Roosevelt intended the ECW to become a permanent federal agency, albeit smaller than the existing program. Authority for the ECW program ended on June 30, 1937, so Congressional action was required. Roosevelt defined his vision of the new agency in two messages to Congress in the spring of that year. The enrollees would be used for forestry work, soil conservation tasks, flood control, and other simple work tasks. The new independent agency was to be called the Civilian Conservation Corps, and all ECW

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records and property would be transferred to it. Congress passed the new legislation on June 28, 1937. However, the bill differed from the President's recommendations: the CCC was not made a permanent agency and was only extended for three years; the employees were not placed under civil service authority; no action was taken on the presidential age requirement (17 to 23); and a provision was inserted that set aside ten hours a week for general education or vocational training for the enrollees. Despite the changes, the President signed the bill, and ECW Director Robert Fechner was appointed the director of the newly established CCC.²⁹

Funding for the CCC was cut by Congress in 1937 and 1938, reducing the number of camps across the country; however, funding was stabilized by a congressional measure that restored \$50 million dollars to the work relief programs.³⁰

Wapiti CCC Camp

Wyoming's severe weather hampered camps working into the winter. Camp enrollees were often moved south to other locations in Arizona and New Mexico, and southern enrollees were likewise moved north in the summer months. Still, the harsh climate and sparsely-populated state made it difficult to maintain camps. One CCC camp inspector wrote that Wyoming's camps were inferior to any others he had inspected, and desertion rates were high. "The isolation and general lack of recreation, coupled with abnormally cold and windy weather, caused the enrollees to desert. The food was seldom good, due in large part to inadequate supply points within reasonable distances of all camps." Despite the fact that standard, portable-rigid buildings were later required for all CCC camps, they were not well-insulated or constructed with cracks in the walls that leaked in rain, snow and sand. In winter, the temperature indoors was not substantially higher than outside despite heating stoves.³¹

Company No. 1852 occupied Camp F-24, at Wapiti, Wyoming. It was originally organized as a Drought Relief Company in July 1934, by special authorization of President Roosevelt. It was known as the third Drought Relief Company organized in the Arizona-New Mexico District at Fort Bliss, El Paso, Texas. The company originated at Camp PE-76-T, Belton, Texas, where twenty-two enrolled men were chosen as cadre from an experienced group of CCC enrollees for their specialized abilities. Their terms of enrollment would have expired on July 1, 1934. On July 12, 1934, the cadre was ordered to Fort Bliss, where new enrollees were conditioned prior to moving to the camp at Carlsbad, New Mexico. Most of the 180 rookies were of Spanish-American descent and came from counties in northern New Mexico. These men were assigned to Company 1852 on July 17 and 18, 1934. In early September the company moved to its newly constructed camp three miles north of Carlsbad, where the men worked on a Bureau of Reclamation Project created by McMillan Reservoir. On May 15, 1935, Company 1852 moved to the camp at Wapiti, Wyoming and arrived at the railhead in Cody on May 18. An advance detail had prepared the camp for the men, and at first the men were

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housed in hospital ward tents. When equipment arrived from Denver, the men built three fish rearing ponds and constructed telephone lines and horse trails; they also worked on stream improvement and insect control. That summer, the extremely dry conditions resulted in numerous fires, and the camp enrollees spent most of their time fighting fires.³²

The government issued a CCC Forestry Handbook in 1937 for use in the CCC Educational Program. The book dealt with a variety of subjects, but Chapter 4 concentrated on Forest Protection, primarily from forest fires. Since this proved to be one of the CCC's major tasks, this book provided valuable training information. Under causes of forest fires, it stated that only ten percent was caused by lightning, the remainder caused by man, intentionally or accidentally. Other subjects included the "Effects of Forest Fires," and "Fire Prevention" through public education, removal of hazards, and legislation to enforce precautionary measures. Fire Control was a major topic and included detection, which utilized the already established system of fire lookouts, pinpointing the fire via firefinding instruments, reporting the fire via telephone and/or radio, and fire fighting. CCC crews received training for ground fires, surface fires, and crown fires. Various methods included "attacking" the fire by hand, using firefighting equipment, and learning safety precautions.³³

Cody, about twenty miles east, was the nearest town to the camp, and trucks transported enrollees to the city on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Excursions were also taken to nearby Yellowstone National Park on weekends. Enrollees could participate in sports activities, such as baseball games with a highway construction gang and other CCC camps located in northern Wyoming and football games with Cody High School. In October 1935, portable barracks and other buildings arrived and were erected by the company. Company strength was reduced in November when the New Mexico enrollees transferred back to their home state. In January, the company strength was filled by enrollees from Oklahoma. A severe winter hampered work, which was restricted to Douglas fir bark beetle control.³⁴

During the summer season of 1936, enrollees from the Wapiti camp reconstructed six campgrounds in the Shoshone National Forest and built and installed rustic signs at points of interest along the Cody-Yellowstone Highway. They remodeled the Wapiti Ranger Station and installed a complete water system and disposal field. Work began on two truck trails, necessitating a summer side camp near the Sunlight Basin. The men also improved their camp, painting the interior of all the buildings, constructing walks, and planting grass and flowers. During the winter months that year, the enrollees once again worked on Douglas fir bark beetle control. In 1937, the camp was under the command of 1st Lt. James A. Patterson and 1st Lt. Jason L. Beatty, second in command. Morris B. Simpser served as Project Superintendent. On the educational front, Wapiti enrollees attended class lectures and educational motion pictures, and they published a bi-monthly camp newspaper called "The Shoshonean." The camp held religious services once a week, and enrollees enjoyed

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recreational activities after work hours.³⁵ One of the enrollees, Robert L. Robeson, wrote an article in December 1936 about life at Camp F-24:

Now, perhaps, you would like to see something of the personal life of the men. They sleep in barracks (which are long and narrow one-story buildings) on Army cots, using Army blankets and comforts. The sheets are changed each week, to keep the beds as clean as possible. Forty-five men are housed in each barrack. The member's clothes are put in wall lockers beside his bed and this helps to keep the place looking tidy. The boys eat at the "mess hall." They march double file to this hall and stop each morning and evening to pay their respects to their country's flag. In the evening each member must be dressed in his "O.D.'s (Olive Drab), which is the uniform of the CCC. He must be neat in appearance, having his hair well combed and his "meal ticket" --- a tie --- properly arranged. Each morning there is an inspection of the barracks by the officers of the camp, and woe to the man who has not swept out from under his bed or has a wrinkle on his bed.

Now to tell you something of the rest of the camp. The two main interest points to the members are the recreation hall and the educational building. In the recreational hall (building) there is a canteen where the CCC can buy tobacco, candy, soap, toothpaste, and the like. Then there is a pool table, a ping pong table, and several tables for playing cards and checkers. There is also a library and reading room, which is arranged like a living room of a home. There is a rug upon the floor, several couches, and a number of chairs and tables. In the corner is a writing desk and on the wall a magazine rack. The educational building also gets its share of interest. All classes are held there. Several men come from town to give lectures and sermons to the boys. Each and every week there is a company meeting and a moving picture show, which, although the latest pictures are not shown, is well worth the twelve and one-half cents a week that each member pays. The machine is the latest equipment, including sound.

We also have an infirmary, a barber shop, a newspaper, a tennis court and a base ball field. There is an orchestra, comprising of ten pieces, which helps to make this a veritable little city. We also have hot and cold running water and our own electric power plant. Mail is brought to the camp every other day and radios and newspapers keep us in touch with the outside world. As a matter of fact there is a short wave broadcasting station at this camp.³⁶

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On October 1, 1936, eighty-two enrollees were discharged. A week later, thirty more were transferred to Company 2853 in Gillette. The company was maintained at half strength by Wyoming enrollees during that winter.³⁷

At least nine side or spike camps were associated with Camp F-24 during its existence: South Fork Ranger Station, Timber Creek Ranger Station, Sunlight Ranger Station, Crandall Ranger Station, Cody, Whit Creek at the foot of Table Mountain, Rattlesnake Mountain, Bear Tooth Highway on Rock Creek, and Beartooth Lake. Camp F-24 conducted many projects in the Shoshone National Forest, including the initial planning for the Clay Butte Lookout, the construction of the access road, and rock quarrying activity for the foundation of the lookout structure.³⁸

The Blackwater Fire, which started on the afternoon of August 20, 1937, became one of the key events associated with CCC Camp F-24. The first crew was dispatched at 4:00 P.M. with fifty men and two power pumps. Within four hours, the Supervisor ordered an additional 150 men from CCC camps in Yellowstone National Park, Deaver, and Tensleep. Eventually 500-550 men were called to fight the blaze, coming from CCC camps at Wapiti, Yellowstone National Park (Camp NP-3), Deaver (Camp 7), Tensleep (F-35-W), Thermopolis State Park, and the Basin and Worland Grazing Camps. Camp F-24 at Wapiti was closest to the fire, which was centered around Clayton Mountain and the Blackwater Creek drainage. Although a relatively small fire—it burned 1254 acres before it was contained—it resulted in the deaths of fifteen fire fighters and injuries to another thirty-nine. Eight men died in Clayton Gulch, and Ranger Post gathered his CCC (Company 1811) crew of thirty-seven men on a rocky knoll to escape the fire. Several memorials have been erected to the men, and the “finest” is located at the end of a five-mile trail on the northwest slope of Clayton Mountain.³⁹

Clay Butte Lookout

Late in the history of Camp F-24, Clay Butte Lookout was planned and its construction begun. On August 19, 1940, Carl S. Kruger, Forest Supervisor, sent a letter to the Regional Forester in Denver, Colorado. Kruger referred to the “Plan of Work” for the Beartooth side camp of the Wapiti CCC. He requested the elimination of the construction of the Clay Butte Lookout from the plan and to substitute the construction of the Clay Butte truck trail (access road) during the 15th Work Period. He stated his reason for the substitution as follows:⁴⁰

We have furnished Mr. Reddick some CCC helpers for his survey work and are in a position to go ahead with the clearing of the right of way at this time. By clearing the right of way we will be able to take a tractor and stone boat very nearly to the top of Clay Butte. We should therefore like to do the work on the truck trail before anything is undertaken on the lookout itself. Packing of supplies and materials for the lookouts has

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been extremely expensive and if at all possible we wish to have a work road of some description to the top of Clay Butte before actual construction is undertaken.

Allen S. Peck, Regional Forester, replied on August 24, 1940, and approved the substitution of the Clay Butte truck trail during the 15th Period provided that it could be accomplished with funds already allocated.⁴¹

An original "Plan of Work" dated March 1, 1940, lists the Clay Butte Lookout Construction (No. 115) as a project to be conducted by the Beartooth Side Camp (fifteen men) of Camp F-24, Company 1852, from approximately June 1 to September 30. This Plan of Work was altered—Clay Butte Lookout was crossed out in pencil—and the truck trail was later substituted to follow the recommendations of Forest Supervisor Kruger in the aforementioned letter. Because of the wide disparity in dates, it is assumed that no actual work was begun on the fire tower during the summer of 1940 as originally planned.⁴²

On January 20, 1941, Carl G. Kruger sent a "Report on Reserved Site" to the District Ranger, Clarks Fork, Shoshone National Forest. The report stated that the Clay Butte Lookout site was located in the SE/SE of Section 2, T57N, R106W, and comprised forty acres. Under No. 10, Purpose of Selection, he states:⁴³

This administrative site is to include the proposed Clay Butte Lookout. This lookout is to be used by primary lookout and will also be the headquarters for the recreational guard on the Red Lodge-Cooke City highway for a major portion of the summer. A road is to be constructed connecting the lookout with the Red Lodge-Cooke City highway and it is expected that this arrangement will secure considerable recreational use. The entire development is being planned with this in mind. From the Lookout site it is about 18 miles to the Crandall Ranger Station by road.

The "Plan of Work" dated March 13, 1941, for the Muddy Creek Side Camp of CCC Camp F-24, lists the Clay Butte Lookout (No. 115), the Clay Butte T.T. #313 (No. 202), and the Clay Butte Telephone Line (No. 140) as projects slated to be conducted between approximately June 15 and September 30. Presumably, the "Clay Butte T.T." indicates the truck trail to the site of the lookout on the top of Clay Butte. The length was estimated at four miles. It appears that construction of both the access road and the telephone line was already underway. In regard to the lookout, it was estimated that a 13-man crew would require 250 man days to complete the project. The timber trail or access road would require a crew of 25 for 1500 man days. The telephone line required a crew of 15 men for 500 man days.⁴⁴

A "Plan of Work" dated September 19, 1941, for the 18th Work Period for Camp F-24, including the South Fork and Timber Creek Side Camps, was sent by Allen S. Peck, the Regional Forester, to the Shoshone

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National Forest. All affected offices signed off on the work plan by initialing the form. Clay Butte Lookout (cutting stone for foundation) was listed as Project No. 115 and required a crew of two men for fifty man days. Because this plan was not approved until late September 1941, it is not likely that any additional work was begun on the lookout structure that field season.⁴⁵

The Civilian Conservation Corps ceased operations on June 30, 1942. Considering the high altitude, seasonal snow accumulation, and difficulty of access, it appears that the majority of the construction of the Clay Butte Lookout structure took place after the CCC was disbanded. It is possible that the foundation had been laid the previous fall (1941) by CCC enrollees if weather conditions were favorable to work late into the season. The major construction of the Clay Butte Lookout took place during the 1943 field season. The *Cody Enterprise* reported on the completion of the Lookout on October 6, 1943:⁴⁶

The Clay Butte lookout tower, one of the best equipped and constructed towers in this area, was finished this week, according to Bob Lerchen, acting supervisor of the Shoshone Forest. The tower, which is situated on the Beartooth Plateau, west of Beartooth Lake, was specially designed for that location by Forest Service architects.

The structure is three stories in height with a garage and living quarters occupying the first two floors and the lookout tower, glassed-in, at the top.

The signatures found on the top of the Osborne Firefinder base verify that the Lookout was under construction during the 1943 field season: (1) "Rex S. Chamberlain, USGS. S.P.6, July 29, 1943;" and (2) Robert Allen Young, July 29, 1943." Furthermore, a telephone line was completed between the Crandall Ranger Station to the Clay Butte Lookout in late July 1943, to bring the Lookout into communication with the rest of the district.⁴⁷

Don C. Dunlavy worked as a smoke chaser assigned to the Clay Butte Lookout and helped the Forest Service carpenter build the Lookout. He also helped dig ditches for copper lines to ground the beds, stoves, and range finder in the structure as a protection against lightning strikes.⁴⁸

The one-story interpretive addition was constructed in 1962-63 by L.E. Heppel & Son, a construction firm from Powell, Wyoming. The Forest Service contracted with this firm, and the addition was built from plans. Louis Eugene Heppel was a German emigrant who homesteaded in the Powell area in the 1930s. His firm also worked on the Willwood Canal and other ditch-related work. Keith Heppel helped his father with the construction of the addition as part of a five or six-man crew when he was still in high school. John Dawson also worked on the crew, and he and Heppel gathered the stone for the exterior walls on the ridge just north of

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the lookout. Heppel's father was a stone mason and laid the stone walls. The crew lived onsite using an old converted school bus. Heppel remembered that the lookout was still manned while he was working there.⁴⁹

Clay Butte Lookout continued to be manned on a seasonal basis. Dan Krapf, a retired backcountry ranger (Yellowstone National Park), recalled that there were still lookouts at Clay Butte into the 1970s.⁵⁰ After it was no longer used for fire detection, it gradually fell into disrepair and was closed to the public for a short time. Interpretive displays have been added to the stone addition and include photographs with labeled landmarks visible from the tower, grizzly bear information, and history of the Beartooth Highway. The Lookout now serves as an interpretive center, and summer volunteers are generally onsite to interpret Clay Butte Lookout to visitors.

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40. Letter dated August 19, 1940, from Carl S. Kruger, Forest Supervisor, to Regional Forester, Denver concerning Plan of Work for CCC Camp F-24 Wapiti, WY. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Denver, Record Group 95, Operations Records for CCC Projects, 1934-42, Shoshone National Forest, Folder 2, created by the Forest Service Region 2 Office.
41. Letter dated August 24, 1940, from Allen S. Peck, Regional Forester, to Forest Supervisor, Shoshone National Forest, concerning Plan of Work for CCC Camp F- 24 Wapiti, WY. NARA, Denver, Record Group 95, Operations Records for CCC Projects, 1934-42, Shoshone National Forest Plans, Folder 2, created by the Forest Service Region 2 Office.
42. Plan of Work for Beartooth Side Camp, Camp F-24, Wapiti, WY. dated March 1, 1940. NARA, Denver, Record Group 95, Operations Records for CCC Projects, 1934-42, Shoshone National Forest Plans, Folder 2, created by the Forest Service Region 2 Office.
43. Report on the Clay Butte Administrative Site dated January 20, 1941, from Carl G. Kruger, Forest Supervisor to District Ranger, Clarks Fork, Shoshone National Forest. Shoshone National Forest, Wapiti Ranger District Office, Cody, WY.
44. Plan of Work dated March 13, 1941, for the Muddy Creek Side Camp of CCC Camp F-24. NARA, Denver, Record Group 95, Operations Records for CCC Projects, 1934-42, Shoshone National Forest Plans, Folder 2, created by the Forest Service Region 2 Office.
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46. "Clay Butte Lookout Tower Finished," *Cody Enterprise*, Cody, Wyoming, 4 October 1943, p. 6.
47. "Fire Fighter Chiefs Meet at Mammoth," *Cody Enterprise*, Cody, Wyoming, 21 July 1943, pp. 1 and 5.
48. "Don C. Dunlavy," (Obituary), *Powell Tribune*, Powell, Wyoming, 9 July 2013.
49. Keith Heppel (worker on stone addition), Telephonic Communication, April 19, 2012, Arizona, telephone (928)853-2407.
50. Dan Krapf (retired backcountry ranger, Yellowstone National Park), Personal Communication, April 25, 2012.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- _____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
_____ previously listed in the National Register
_____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
_____ designated a National Historic Landmark
_____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
_____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
_____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- _____X State Historic Preservation Office
_____ Other State agency
_____X Federal agency
_____ Local government
_____ University
_____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 48PA2492

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

2.5

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	12	608340	4977564			
	Zone	Easting	Northing			
2	12	608460	4977564			
	Zone	Easting	Northing			
3	12	608460	4977444			
	Zone	Easting	Northing			
4	12	608340	4977444			
	Zone	Easting	Northing			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries are defined by a 2.5-acre square that is centered around the tower. UTM 1 is a point located at the northwest corner of the square. The boundary trends due east 400 feet to UTM 2, the northeast corner of the square. From UTM 2, the boundary trends due south 400 feet to UTM 3, the southeast corner of the square. From UTM 3, the boundary trends due west 400 feet to UTM 4, the southwest corner of the square. From UTM 4, the boundary trends due north 400 feet to point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the lookout structure, a small modern vault toilet, a gravel parking lot located directly to the north of the lookout, and informal foot trails linking the parking lot to the toilet and the toilet to the lookout. The topography drops steeply to the east, west, and south of the tower.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth L. and Robert G. Rosenberg, Historians

Organization Rosenberg Historical Consultants

date June 15, 2012; revised August 2013

street & number 739 Crow Creek Road

Telephone (307) 632-114

city or town Cheyenne

State Wyoming zip code 82009

e-mail rosenhc@dishmail.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Clay Butte Lookout

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- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: **Clay Butte Lookout**

City or Vicinity: **Clark vicinity**

County: **Park**

State: **WY**

Photographer: **Richard Collier**

Date Photographed: **August, 2012**

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Northeast corner of tower, photographer looking southwest.

1 of 7

North elevation, photographer facing south.

2 of 7

West elevation, photographer facing east.

3 of 7

Southwest corner, photographer facing northeast.

4 of 7

Southwest corner and setting, photographer facing northeast.

5 of 7

Top floor interior showing fire finder, photographer facing east.

6 of 7

Top floor interior showing fire finder, photographer facing south.

7 of 7

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

(1) Name USDA Forest Service, Region 2, Shoshone National Forest

street & number 225 W. Yellowstone Avenue

Telephone (307)527-6241

city or town Cody

State Wyoming zip code 82834

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

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Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Additional Documentation: Maps and Figures

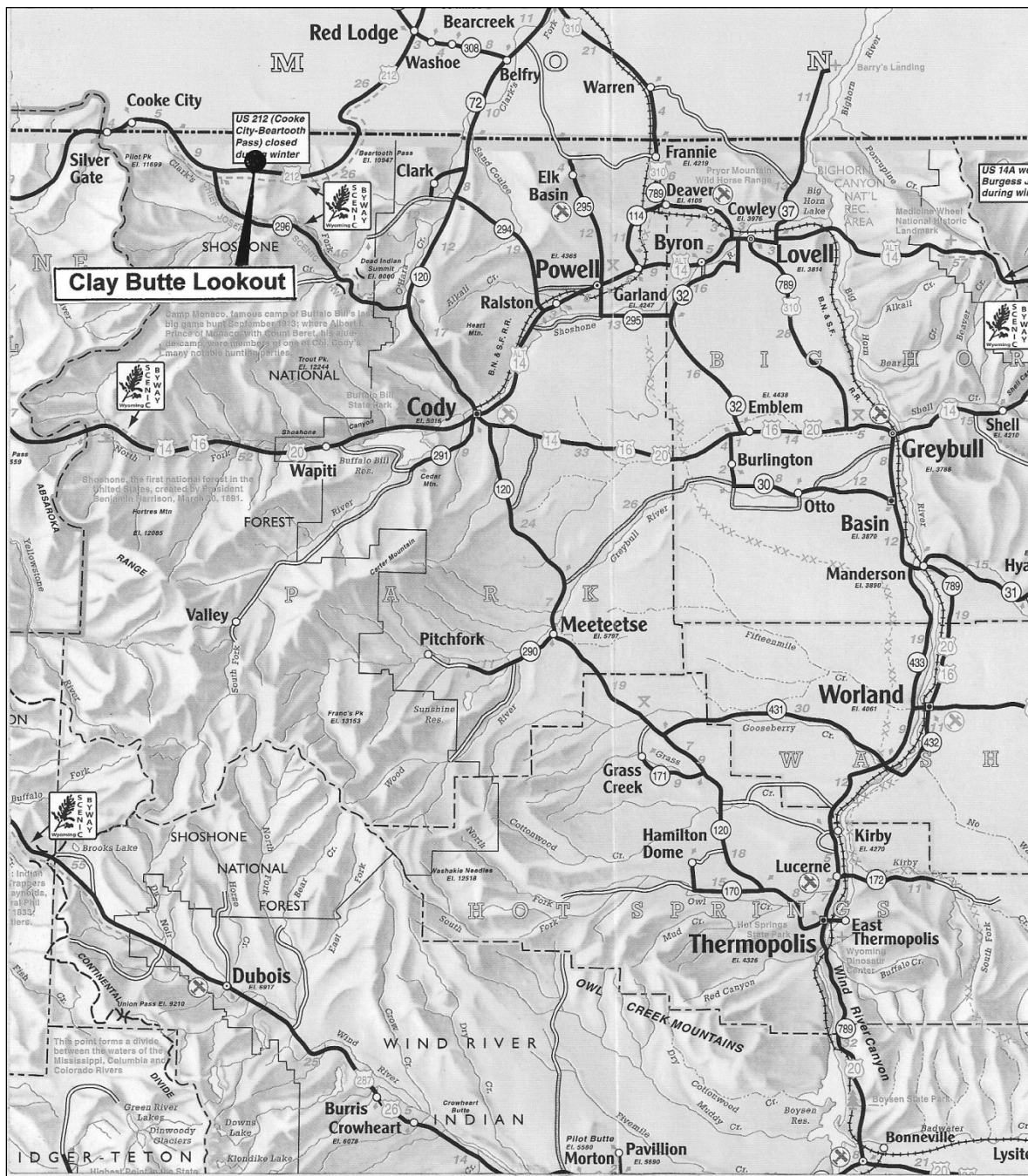


Figure 1. Portion of Wyoming State Map showing the northwest part of the state and the location of Clay Butte Lookout

Clay Butte Lookout

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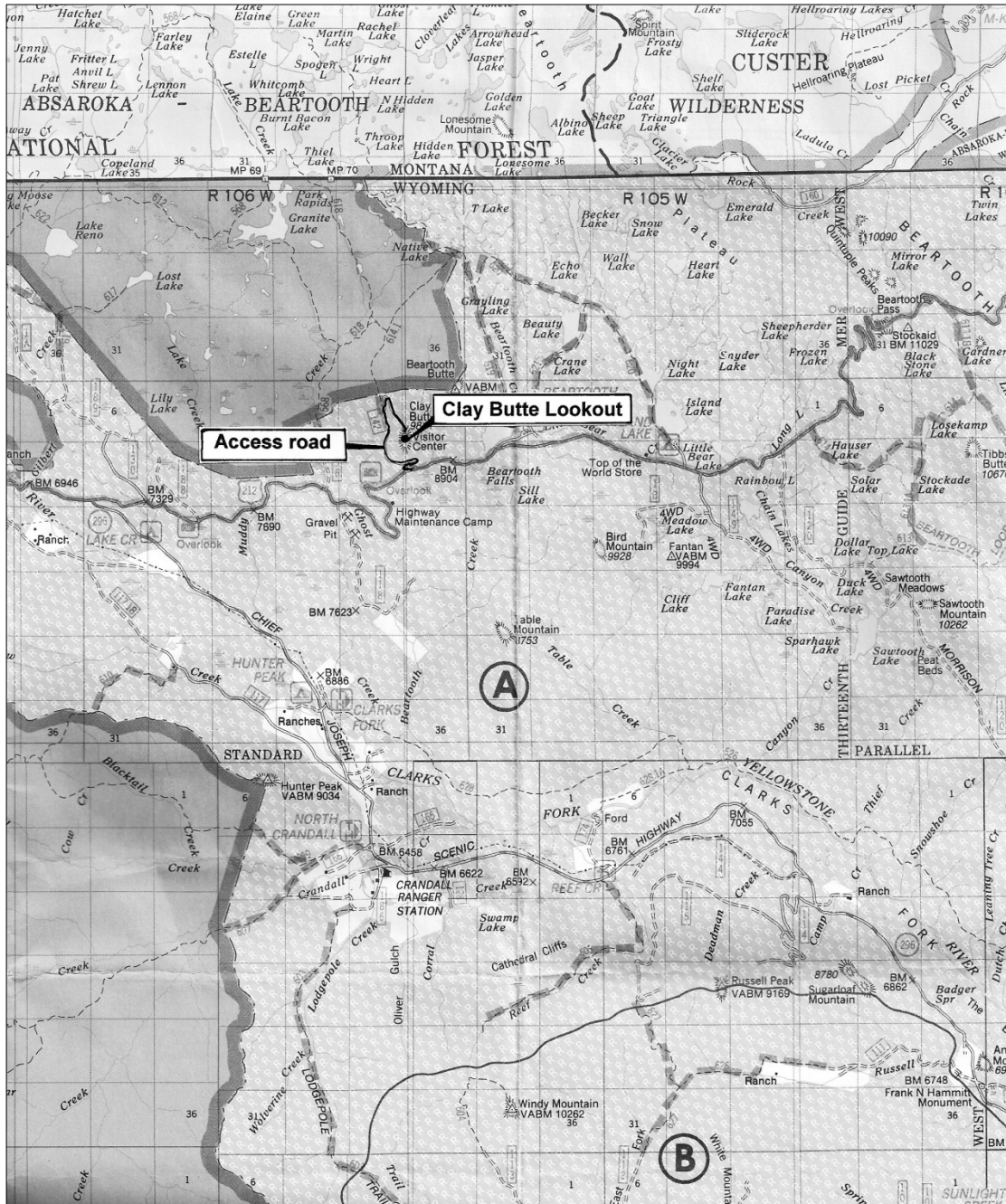


Figure 2. Portion of the Shoshone National Forest Map (North Half), showing the location of Clay Butte Lookout and access road.

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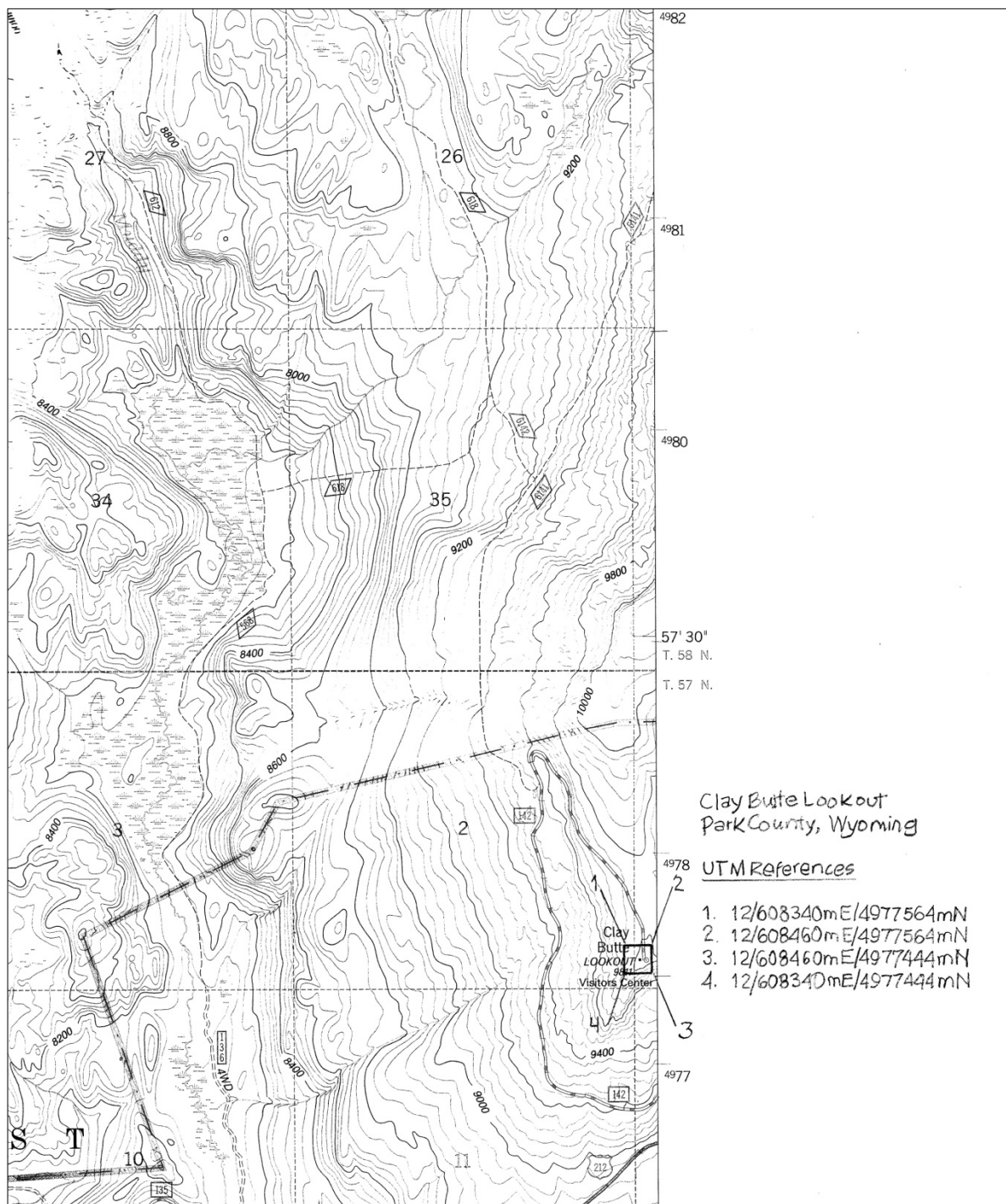


Figure 3. Portion of the Muddy Creek Wyoming 7.5' USGS quadrangle, showing the location of the access road, Clay Butte Lookout, the site boundaries, and the bounding UTM references.

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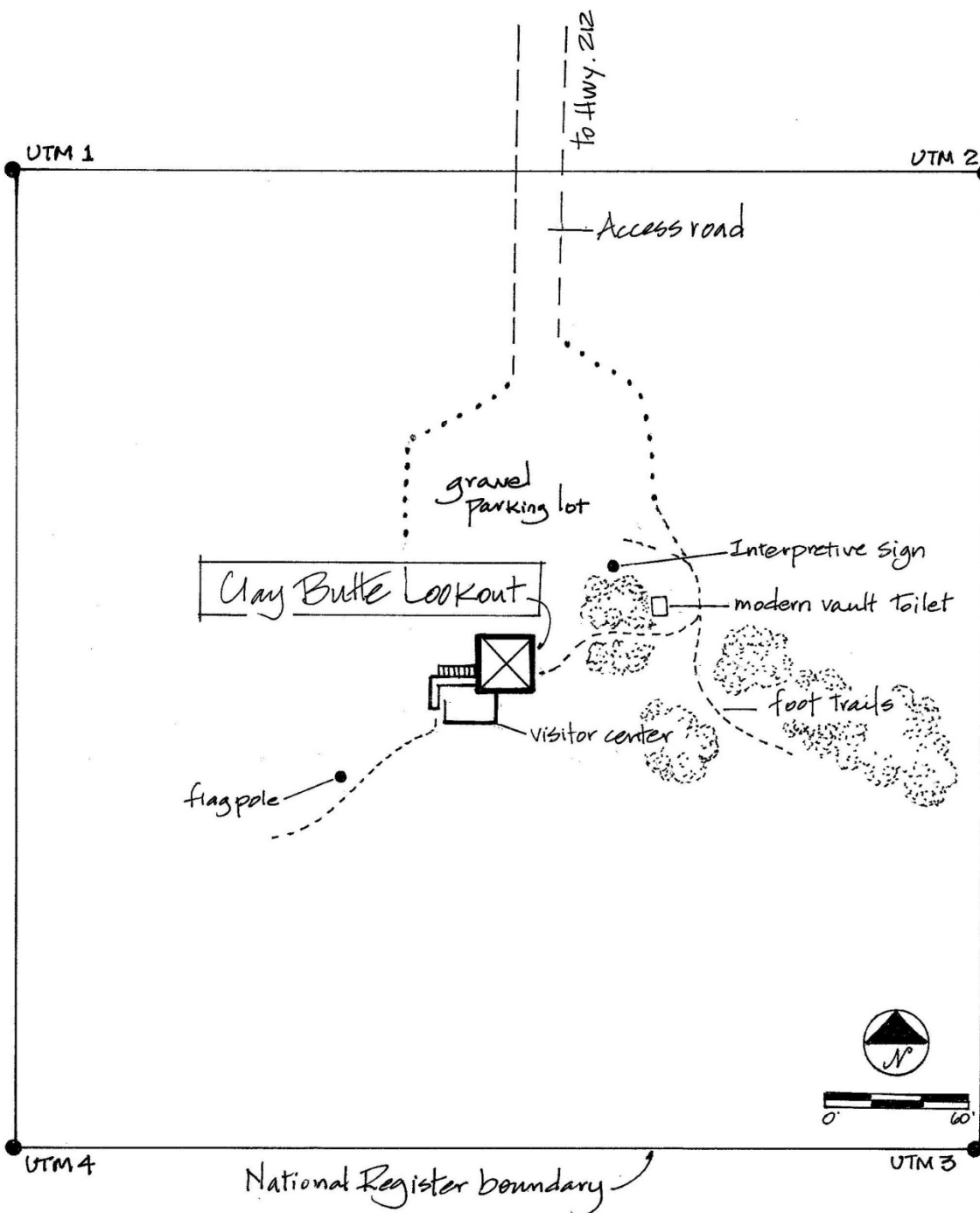


Figure 4. Clay Butte Lookout, site sketch with National Register boundaries and UTM points.

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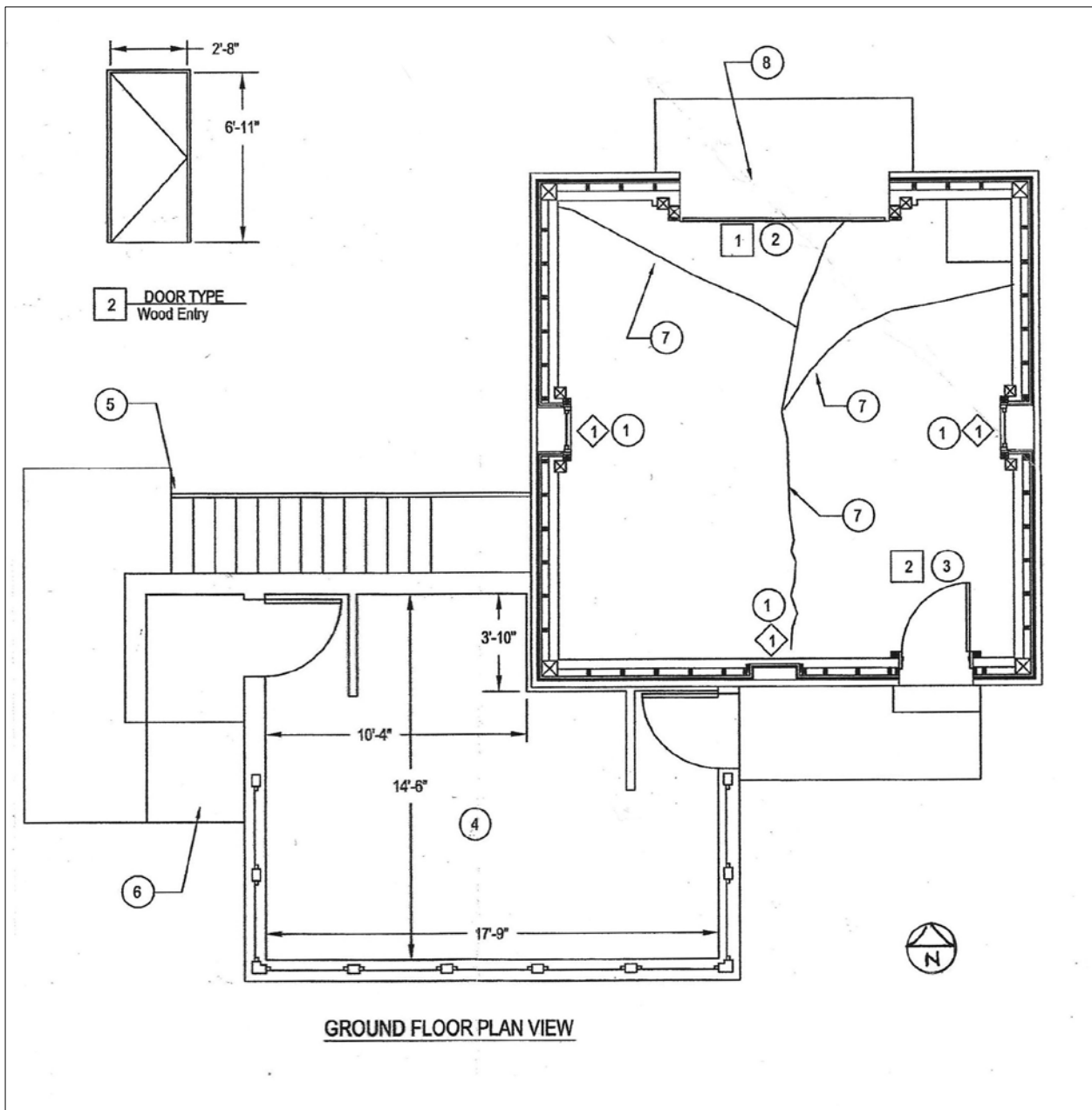


Figure 5. Clay Butte Lookout, Ground Floor Plan View (north arrow added; numbers are keyed to renovation details) (source: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs, 2010)

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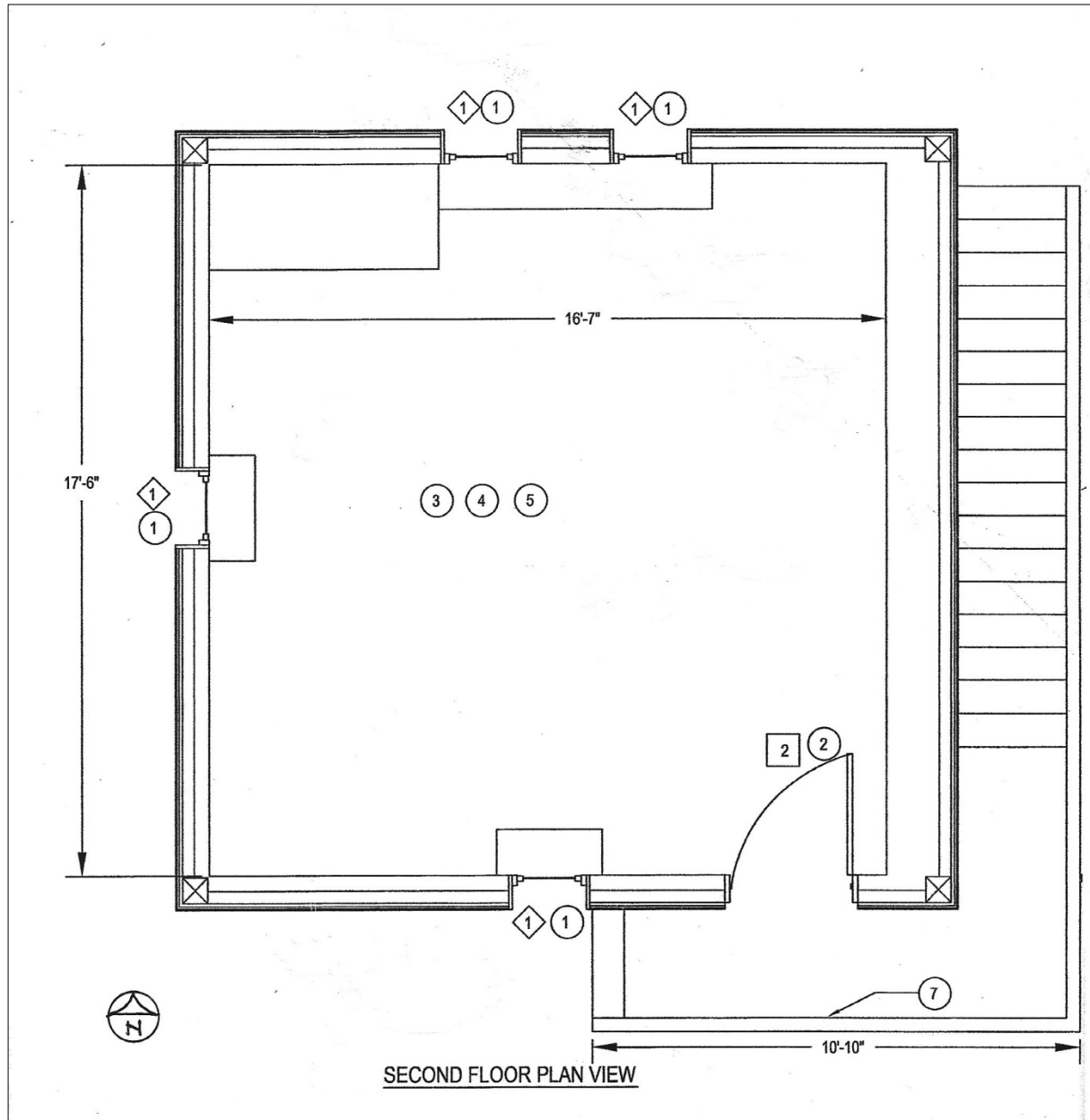


Figure 6. Clay Butte Lookout, Second Floor Plan View (north arrow added; numbers are keyed to renovation details) (source: *United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs*, 2010)

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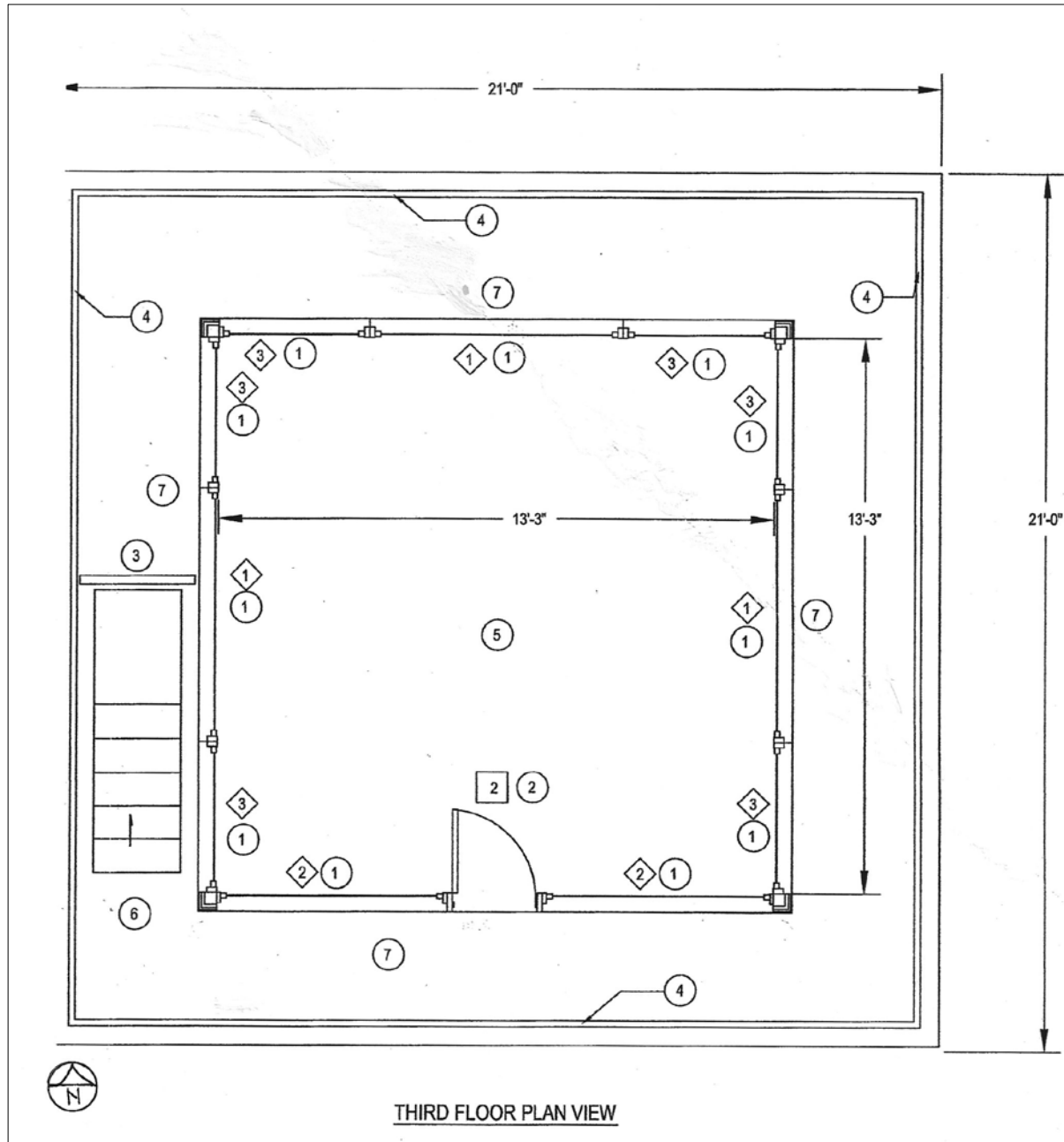


Figure 7. Clay Butte Lookout, Third Floor Plan View (north arrow added; numbers are keyed to renovation details) (source: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs, 2010)

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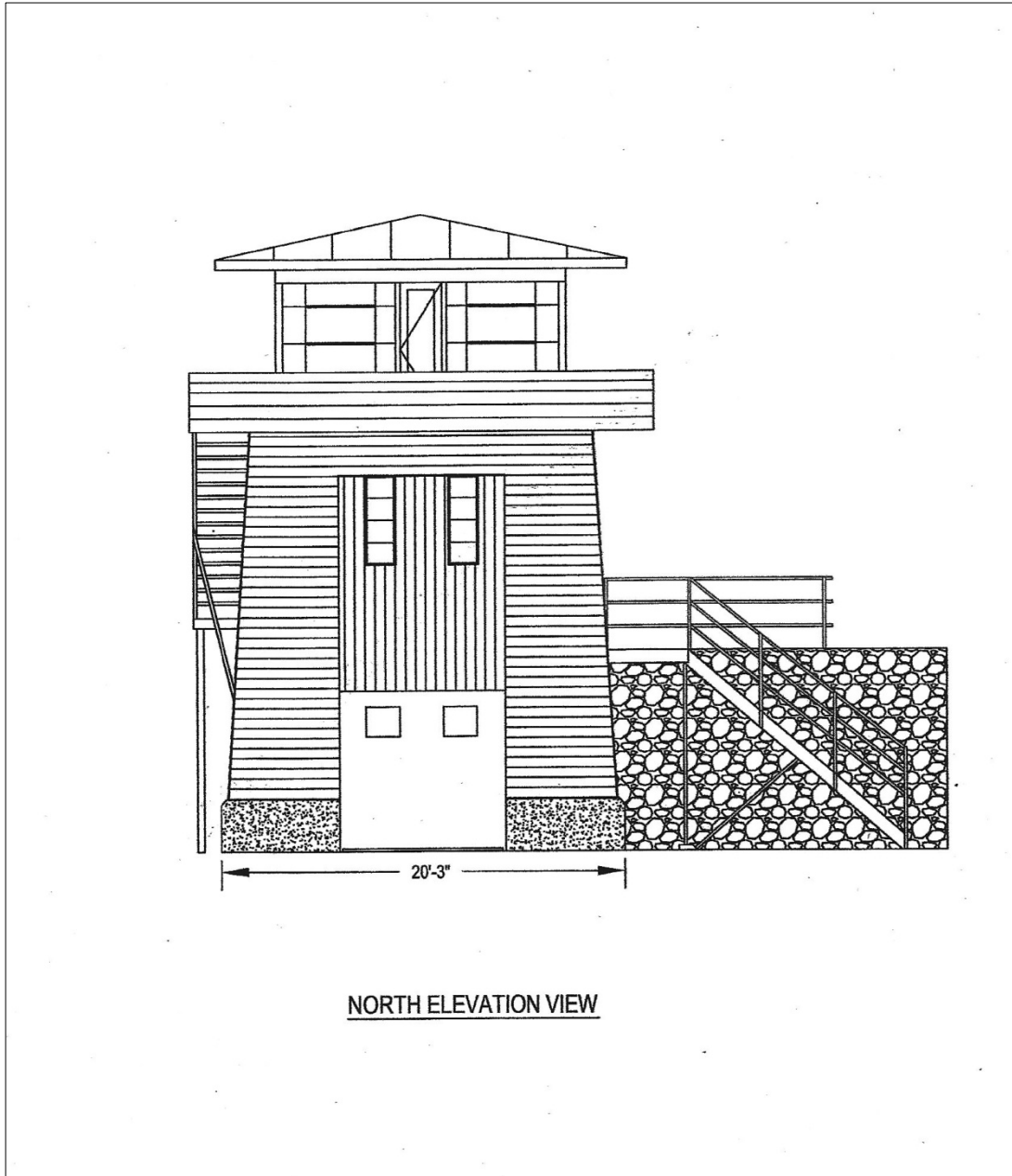


Figure 8. Clay Butte Lookout, North Elevation View (*United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs, 2010*)

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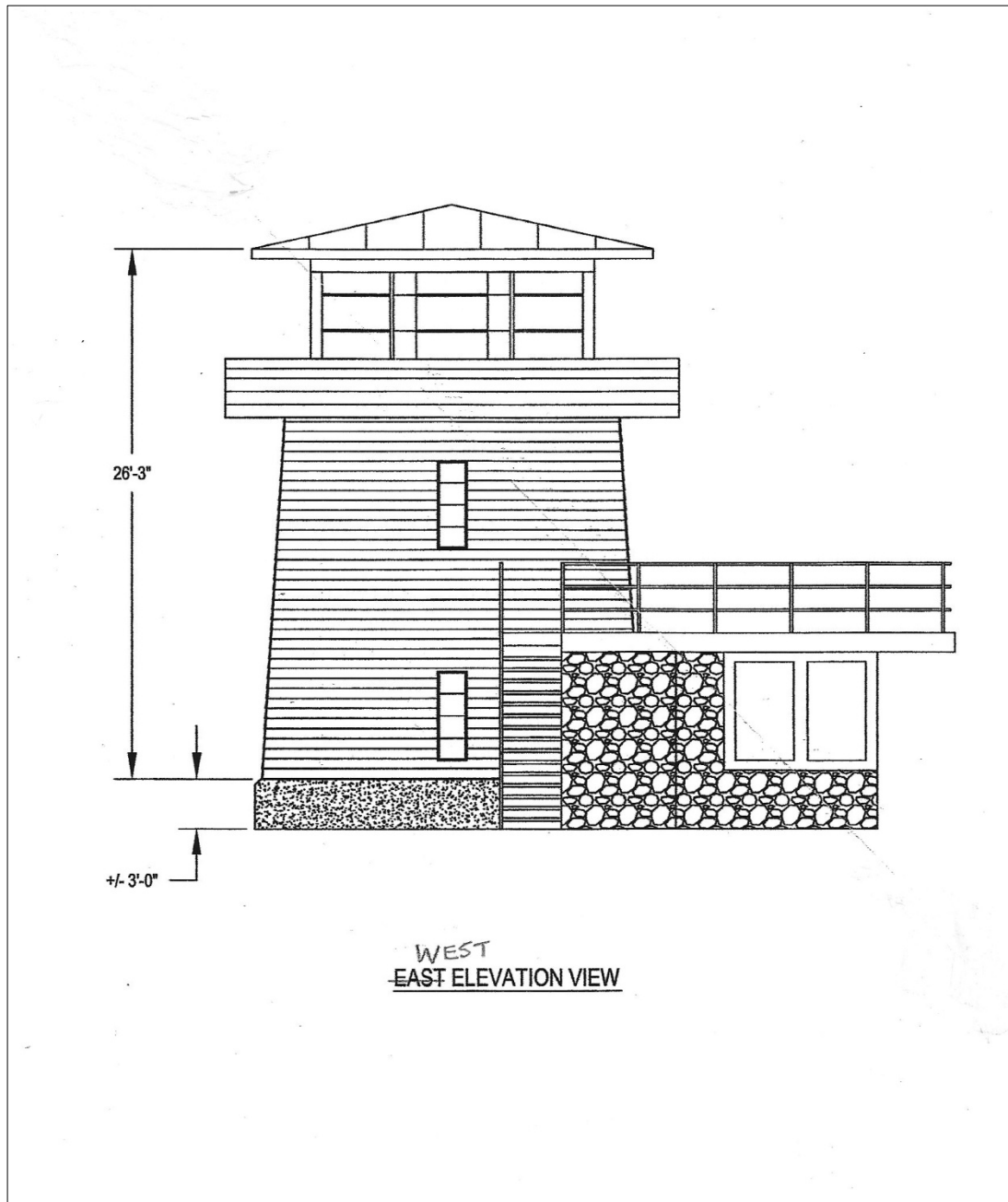


Figure 9. Clay Butte Lookout, West Elevation View (Source: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs, 2010)

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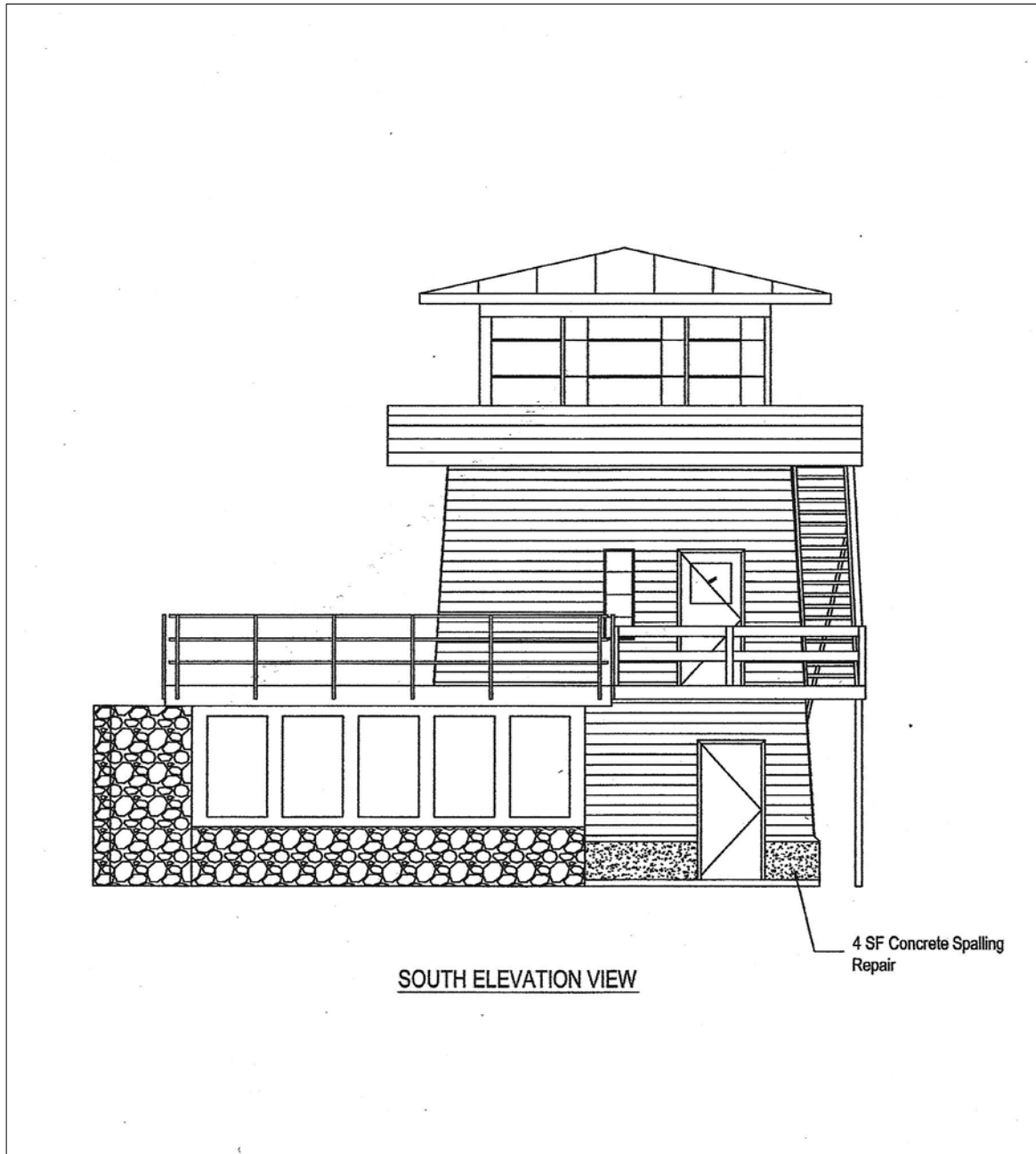


Figure 10. Clay Butte Lookout, South Elevation View (Source: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs, 2010)

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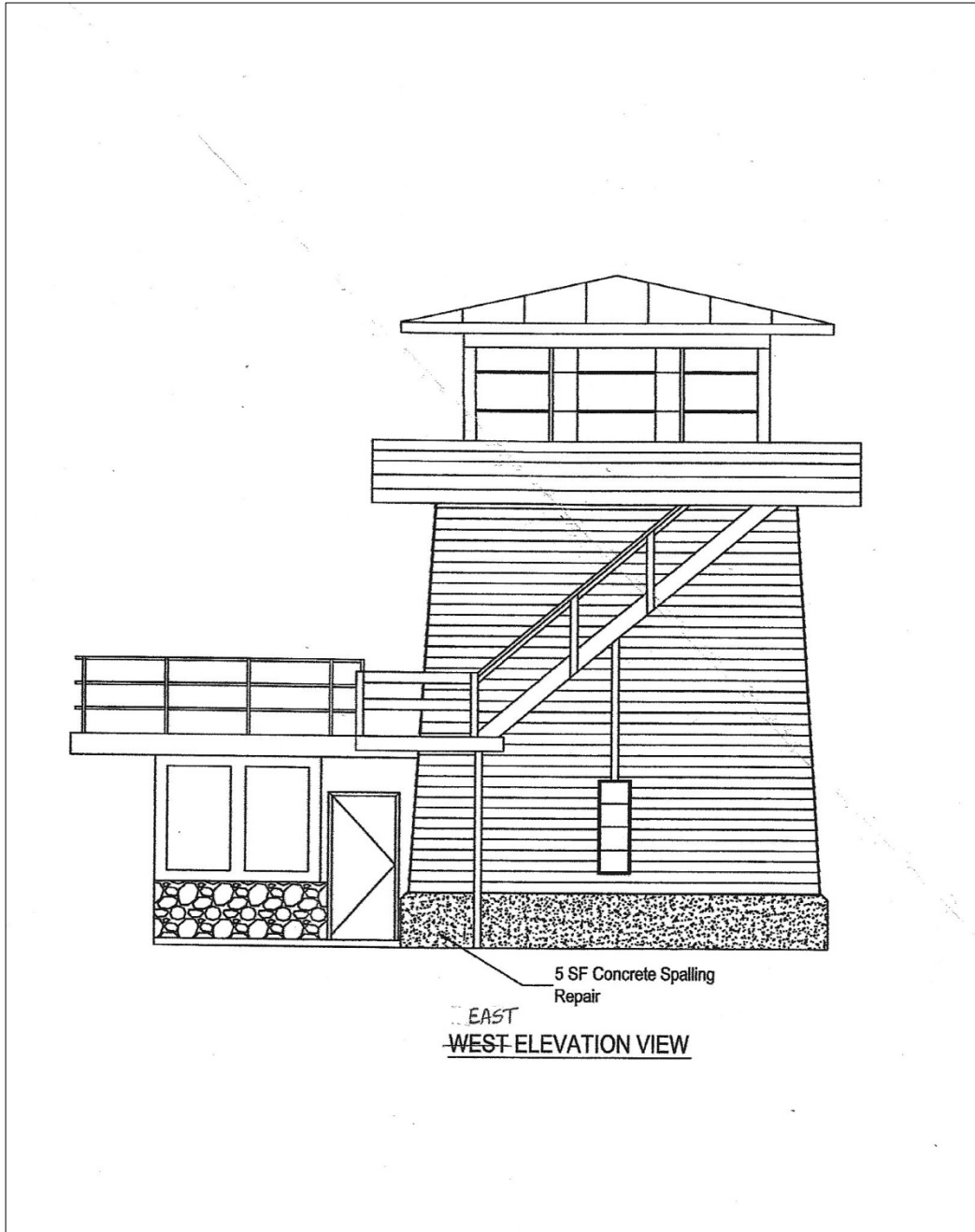


Figure 11. Clay Butte Lookout, East Elevation View (Source: United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Region 2, Shoshone National Forest: Construction Drawings for Clay Butte Lookout Tower Repairs, 2010)

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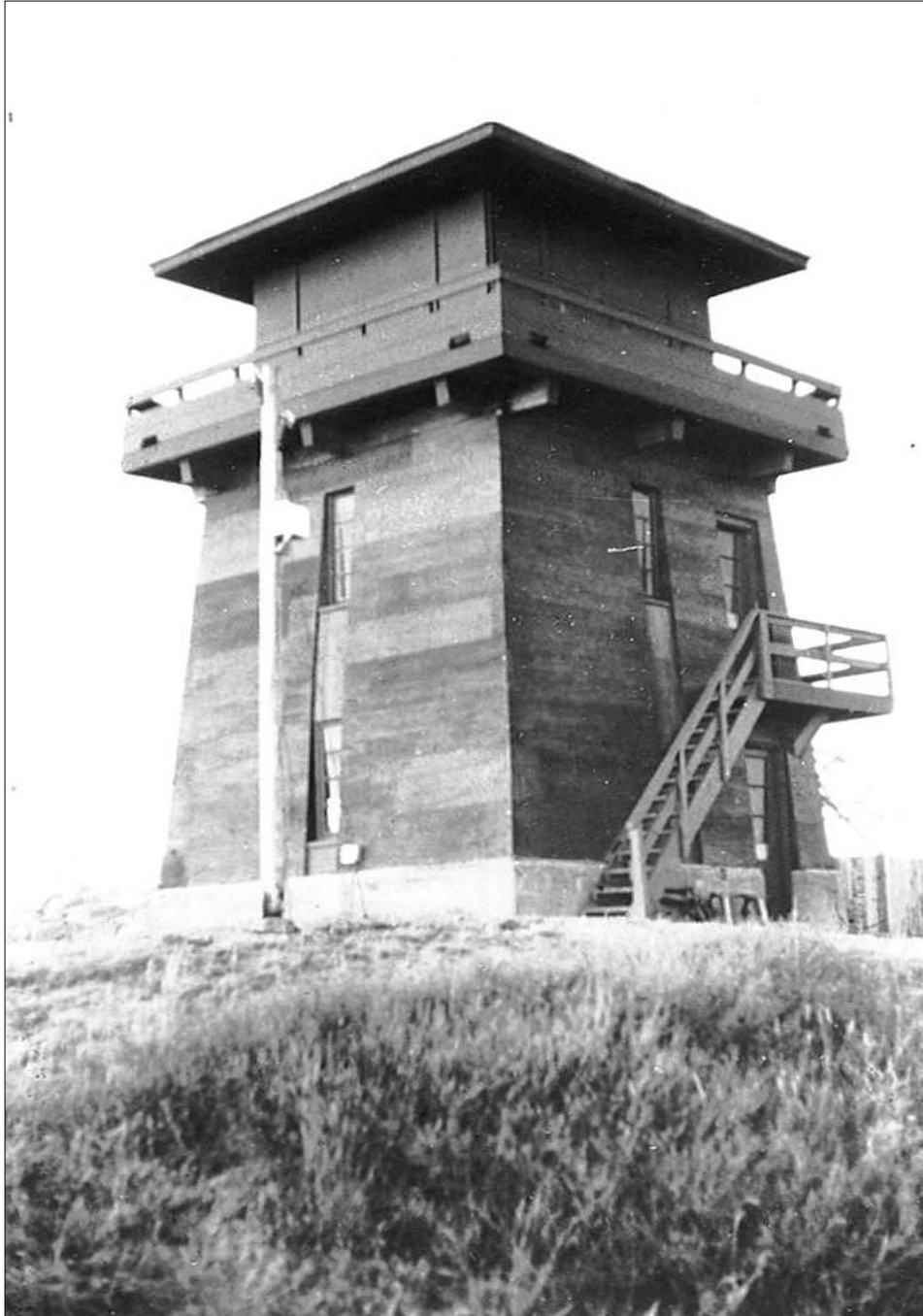


Figure 12. Clay Butte Lookout, 1944 (*courtesy Friends of Clay Butte Tower*)

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Figure 13. Clay Butte Lookout, July 1965 (*courtesy Friends of Clay Butte Tower*)

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Additional Documentation: Photographs



Figure 14. Clay Butte Lookout (caption: "J.D. and Bill Cooper at Clay Butte Lookout – 1966")
(courtesy Friends of Clay Butte Tower)

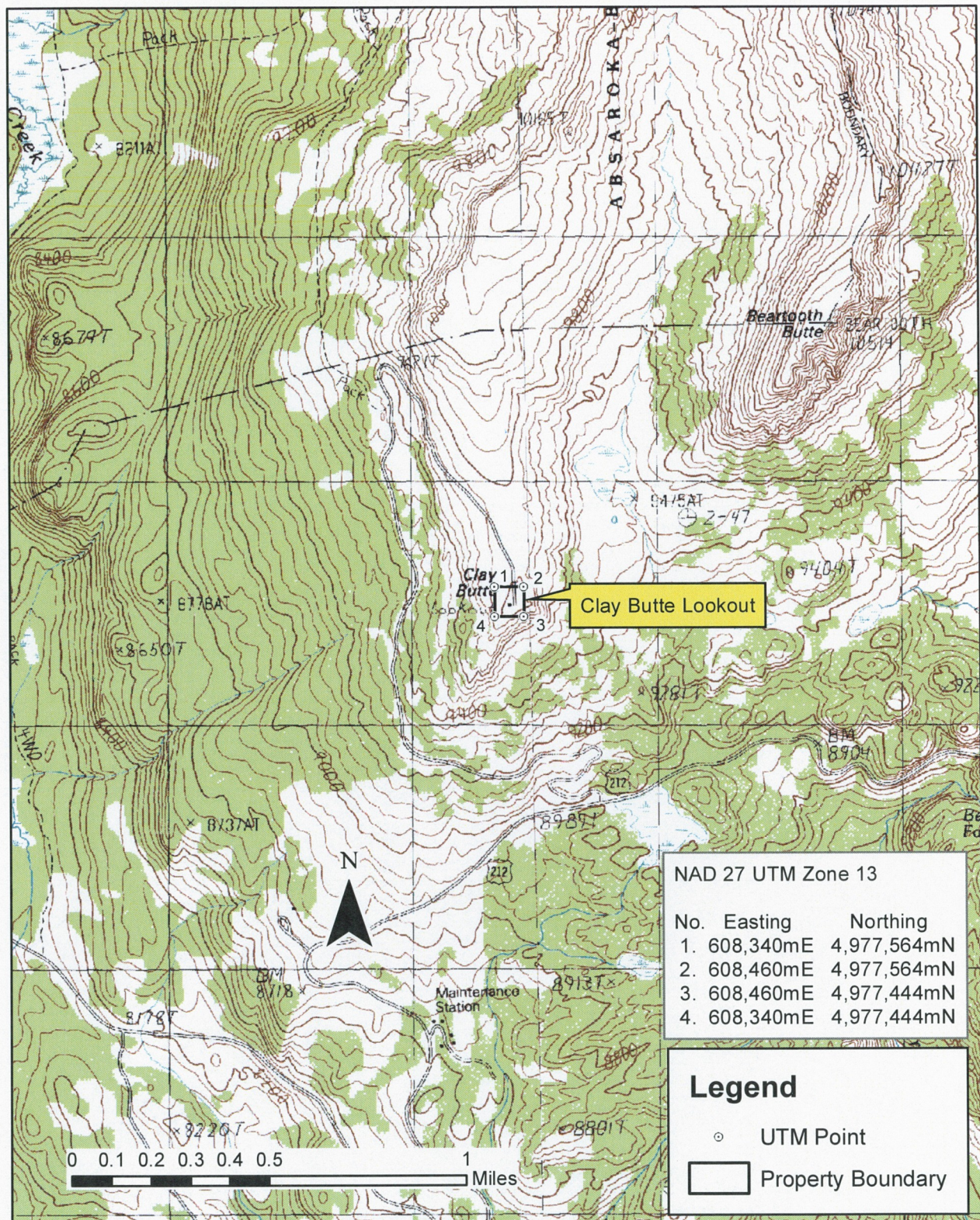
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Figure 15. Osborne Firefinder, used to pinpoint the location of forest fires, 2009
(courtesy Friends of Clay Butte Tower)



Portions of USGS Muddy Creek and Beartooth Butte 7.5' topographic maps showing location of Clay Butte Lookout. The property is in Sections 1 and 2, T. 57 N., R. 106 W., Park County, Wyoming