

2018 SWOCC ELLIOTT STATE FOREST RECREATION PLAN W/RECOMMENDATIONS

May 29, 2018 Deans Mountain Field Trip

This field trip examines the evolution from canoe routes and foot trails to and through the Elliott that existed since precontact time, to pack trails, wagon roads, logging roads, and modern highways that exist today. Tour guides will be Bob Zybach and David Gould; Jerry Phillips will be unable to attend, but references to his book are given for most stops.

Mill Creek Log Dump. Head of tidewater, in common with Scottsburg and Allegany. Beginning point of precontact foot trails to Loon Lake, Allegany, Tenmile Lakes, Winchester Bay, and Reedsport. Likely location of homesites and/or campgrounds: lunar vs. solar daily time. Sawmill and white settlers in 1850, ship building, ended with 1861 flood (Phillips 1998: 391-393).

Indian Point Trail. Part of a series of “Indian Allotments” along Mill Creek, said to have been occupied by the “Umpqua Johnson” Indian family, who later moved to Reedsport and Siletz. They were said to be living in this location during the 1868 Coos Fire and saved themselves by submerging their bodies in the creek. Huckleberries, fishing location, and logging road along ridgeline conform with other Indian homes along the Oregon Coast (Phillips 1998: 392-393).

Cougar Pass Lookout. Named by an Ash Valley hunter for the cougar(s) he killed in this location. Lookout tower was built in 1935 by the CCCs as their road construction work reached this location. Water source, as typical with ridgeline trail network, is only 200 feet below the road, at the headwaters of Cold Creek. The tower is still standing, but has not been in use for more than 30 years (Phillips 1998: 92-94).

Deans Mountain Lookout. One of the very earliest fire lookouts in Oregon, built between 1910 and 1914, Phillips regards this as “the most famous place” in the Elliott because of this statewide renown. The freshwater source was on the west side of the hill and is known as the “Scholfield Waterhole.” Deans Mountain has a long and colorful history and is one of the few places in the Elliott from which the ocean can be seen (Phillips 1998: 58-61, 82-88).

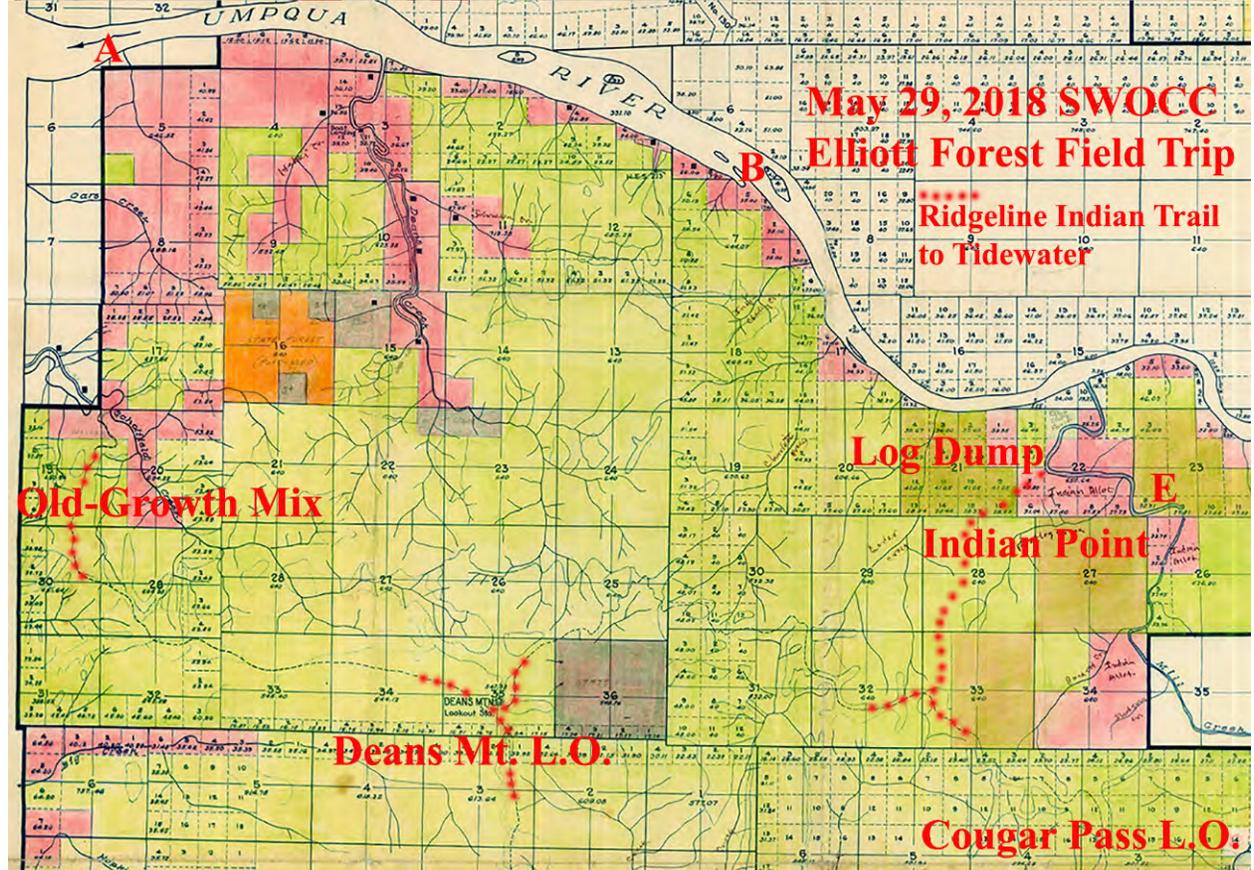
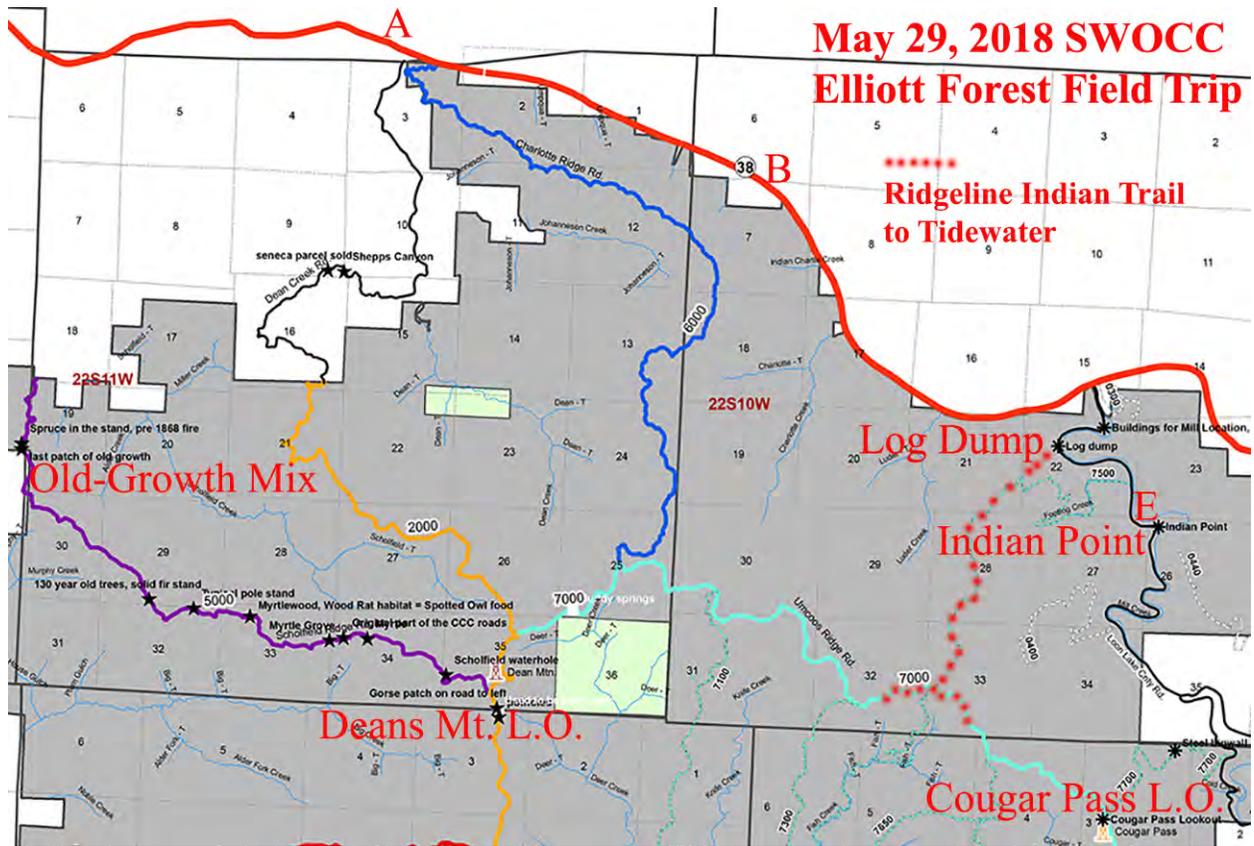
Old-Growth Mix. Unusual pre-1868 Coos Fire mixed old-growth conifer stand of Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, western redcedar, and western hemlock. “Old-growth” red alder also present.

Automobile tours and photography through the Elliott by local expert (4 blog posts: 31 pages):
http://www.orww.org/Elliott_Forest/Recreation/Field_Trips/Hargan_20160000.pdf

Coquille Indian research report on Indian trail history and locations southward from Allegany:
http://www.orww.org/Coquille_Trails/References/Zybach-Ivy_2013/index.html

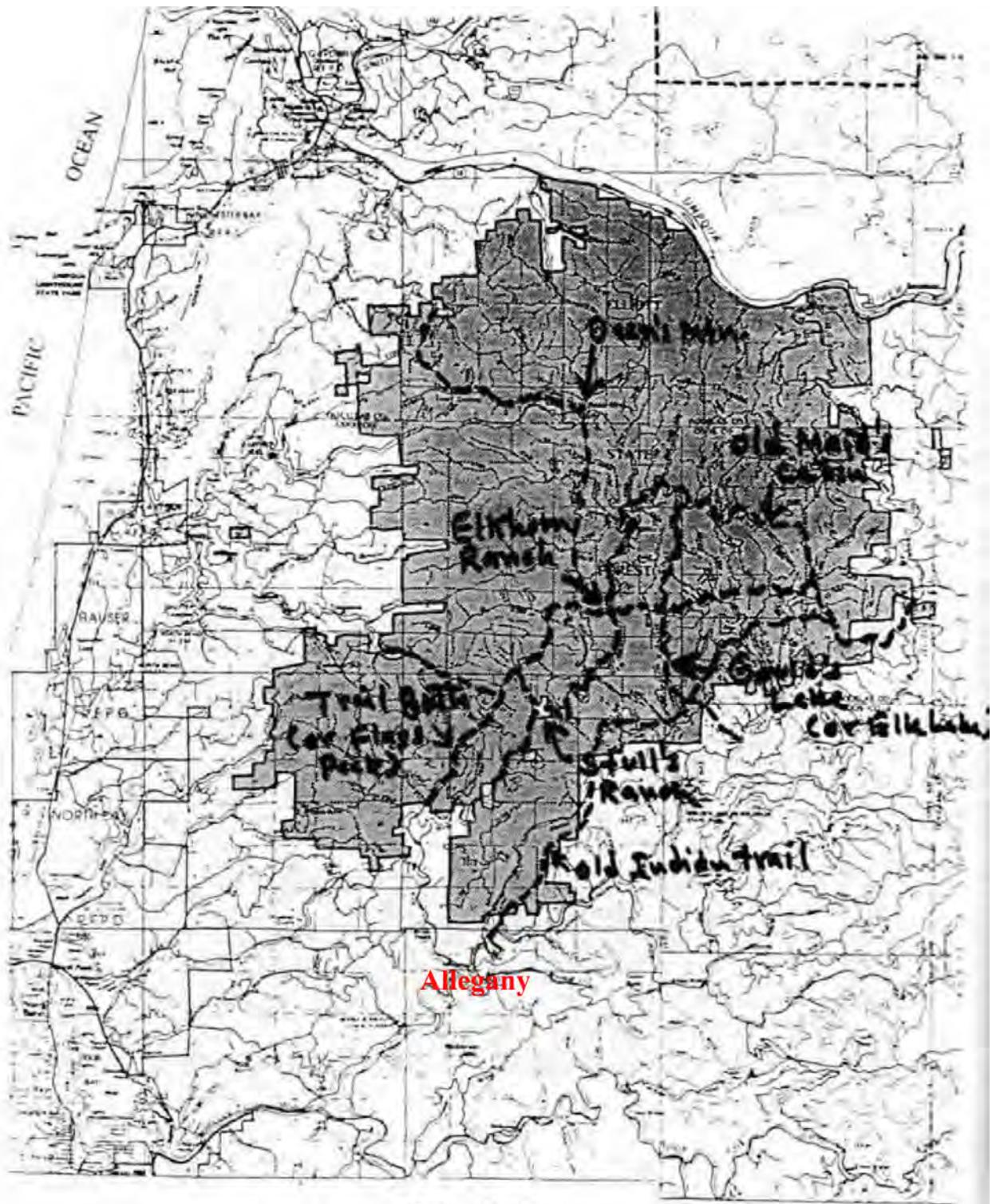
Historical, cultural, and ecological importance of Oregon Coast Range Indian trail history:
http://www.orww.org/Coquille_Trails/References/Braman_1987/index.html

Phillips’ history of the Elliott State Forest (414 pages):
http://www.orww.org/Elliott_Forest/History/Phillips/Phillips_1998-201.pdf

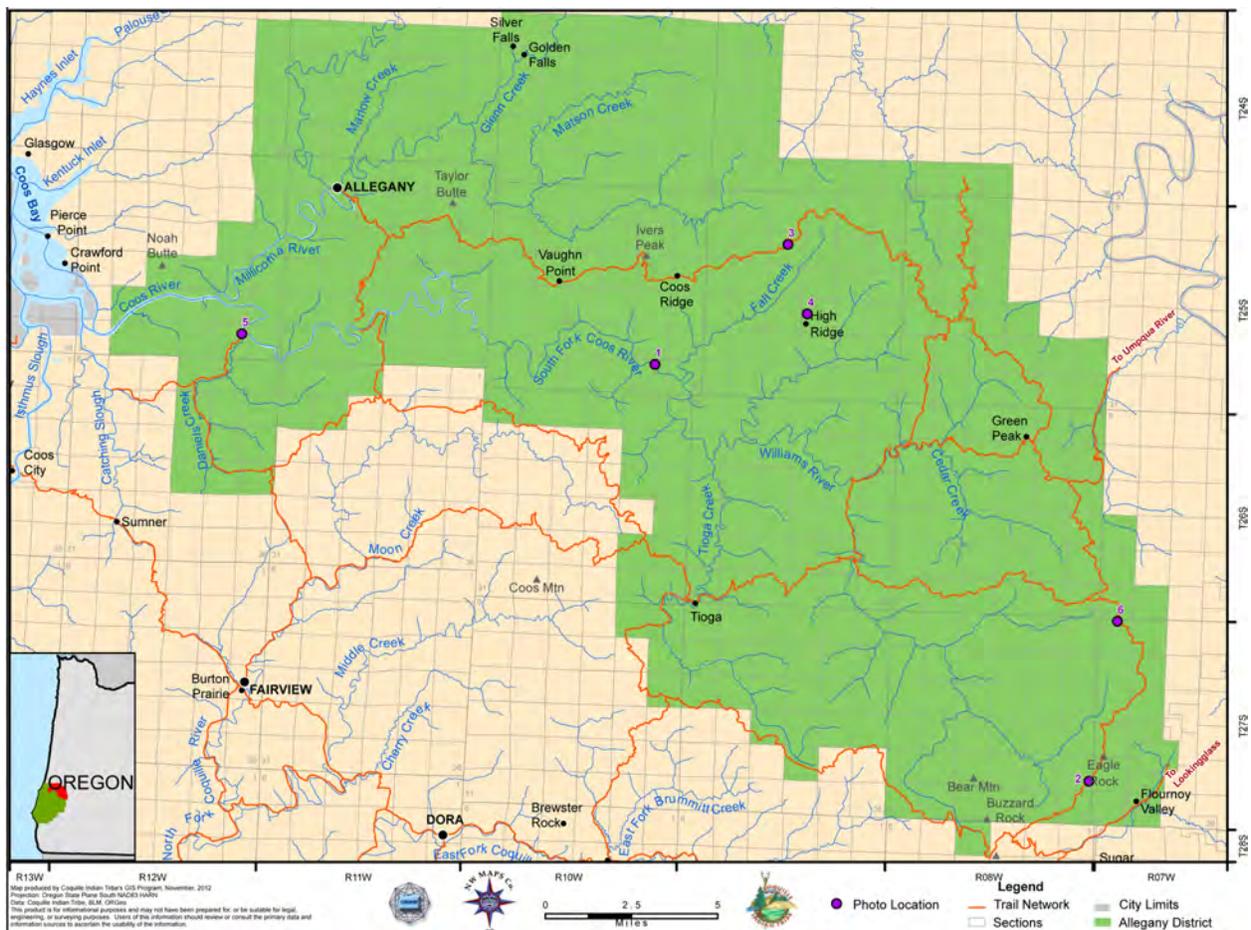




This map shows the theoretical “ridgeline trail” network of local precontact Indian tribes, connecting the head of tidewaters on the Coos and Umpqua Rivers with each other and with the Tenmile Lakes area by foot trails. By probable coincidence, Phillips’ map of the Elliott’s “Historic Foot Trails” (Phillips 1998: 18) shows nearly identical routes. The subsequent map of the “Allegany District” shows the documented Indian foot-trail network to the south of Allegany (Zybach and Ivy 2013: 25) – and directly connecting to the Phillips map (below) and Zybach-Giesy map (above) with head-of-tidewater Allegany as their southern-most point. NOTE: The currently preferred reference to the early historical Lower Umpqua/Kelawatset Tribe is “Quiich” (Patricia Whereat Phillips: personal communication).



(Modern Map Base)
 ELLIOTT STATE FOREST
 Historic Foot Trails — 1890-1955 — by Author



The Umpqua River highway was constructed in the late 1920's. This car stopped under the overhanging ledge for a rest on its way to California. J. Weiss Coll.

And that is the last that we read in the records I researched about the Lakeside Landing Field. It continued to be used after the improvement of Coos Bay area airfields, but perhaps to a lesser degree. Certainly, our Department continued to use it during the remaining years during which CCC Camp Reedsport continued to exist. This has always been an exciting field to fly out of, because when small planes get about one hundred feet in the air and clear the treetops of the surrounding shore pines, they are hit by a strong crosswind off the ocean and the sand dunes, and they seem to sort of jump sideways.

* * *

Note: "TC" above refers to The Courier newspaper and "FL" above refers to Forest Log.

THE DEAN'S MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT

The Dean's Mountain Lookout was one of the oldest, longest-occupied, and best-known lookouts in all of Oregon. To many people, it was the only landmark in the Elliott State Forest they knew. Because of its fame and very long history, including its involvement with the CCC program, I want to provide an in-depth review of its lively past.

After the Siuslaw National Forest was created, back in 1908, one of its first actions on the ground was to build a small number of lookouts to overlook the historically fire-ravaged coast range lands it was mandated to protect. The earliest were built between 1910 and 1914, and one of those was on Dean's Mountain — only 1,818 feet in elevation, but with a good 360-degree view, especially with nearly all the timber in the area having been killed in the 1868 Coos Bay Fire. A simple old-fashioned "ground house" sufficed nicely for the first 25 years.

The first structure there seems to have been just a rough shake "cabin," as pictured on the next page. The Walker family lived at the foot of the access trail, on upper Scholfield Creek, just as their descendants do today, and Jennie Walker was likely only the second person to "man" the Dean's Mountain Lookout. She is pictured here, in 1917, with her saddle horse. Jennie was Al Walker's sister (some of us remember Al), and her niece, Margery Finley, still lives on the ranch today. She remembers that Jennie's Mom and Dad wouldn't let her stay up there alone, so her younger sister went up too. Jennie would have been 23 in 1917. She also says that the shack up there was in pretty bad shape by 1917; even skunks would crawl in through the big cracks between the walls and the dirt floor. As a result, Jennie and her 10-year-old sister hung all their food in sacks suspended from the rafters.

Ron Johnson, of Oakridge, who has documented much of the history of lookouts in Oregon, says that it is known that Dean's Mountain Lookout operated in 1915, also, because it reported a fire that summer which was actually a burning ship off the mouth of the Umpqua. We may never know the precise first year of operation of the Dean's Mountain station, but my estimate is 1914.

The access trail ran up the ridge on the east side of Dry Creek, just across from what later was to become the big CCC Camp Walker, thence up to the Scholfield Divide, then on east to the top of Dean's Mountain. This pack trail brought in all needs, lumber, food, people, and all, for twenty years — until the CCC road crew reached the lookout in 1934, and it was also the location of the "ground line" telephone wire that served for communication until radios came in about 1939.

We are blessed with many photos of the old buildings which have existed on Dean's Mountain over the 77 years of structure history there, and I thank all who have allowed theirs to be used here.

The cedar-shaked shack (right) was the first building on Dean's Mountain, built as a shelter for the Siuslaw National Forest lookout. Note the lone second-growth Douglas-fir tree in the back right hand corner, which is in nearly all Dean's Mountain Lookout photos. The shack had no cupola on top, so where was the firefinder? It had none. Many lookouts in 1917 still simply "shot" the smokes with a hand compass.

One reason I estimate construction of this shack as from 1914 is that Dave Cooper's father's written history of the Siskiyou National Forest includes an entry to the effect that its first lookout building was a **shake shack** built on Bald Knob in 1914 "for a total cost of 25¢ in nails." (Furthermore, it was built by the lookout!). Before the shack, a tent was used, of course, just as on Elk's Peak.

The famous Osborne Fire-finder, first invented in 1911, and repeatedly improved up through 1934, was coming into general use by 1917, and the Dean's Mountain Lookout was likely rebuilt to make use of this new instrument, with the cupola on top for its location.

Fire hazard on the Siuslaw National Forest, including the future State Forest portion lying south of the Umpqua River, was beginning to lessen by the 1920s, but this portion, seen from Dean's Mountain, still contained tens of thousands of tall, rotten snags from the big 1868 Coos Bay Fire.

In the photo on the following page, taken at Dean's Mountain Lookout **imme-**



Jennie Walker at Dean's Mtn. Lookout, in 1917. Note that the materials for each of the first three buildings there had to be brought in on pack horses. The CCC access road finally reached Dean's Mtn. in 1934. This photo is from the Yaquina Tollefson collection, and is used here with permission from her daughter, Margery Finley.



This was the second building which served as the Dean's Mtn. Lookout. It was built by the U.S. Forest Service, perhaps around 1920. Again, note the lone tree. —Photo circa 1925.

diately before the Forest passed from being part of the Siuslaw National Forest to becoming the Elliott State Forest, are: (L to R):

1. Lynn Cronemiller — who became State Forester on June 18, 1930.

2. Porter King — who was, according to retired State Forester George Spaur (who is now 94), a sort of Deputy State Forester.

3. Keith Young — who was with CFPA, and became its District Warden in April of 1934 — the position he still had when I came to work at Coos in 1952.

4. E.H. Daniels — whose position is not known to me.

When the Dean's Mountain Lookout groundhouse was being replaced by the Coos Forest Protective Association during June of 1931, just after they had taken over the fire protection of the new State Forest, it was done by building a 16 ft. by 16 ft. "cabin" with a cupola — something like the 1920s-style U.S.F.S. building which had stood there.

The new one had "bed, stove, chairs, built-in cupboards and sink and a set of white enameled kitchen cabinets," according to the July, 1931, issues of **The Forest Log** and **The Salt** (the Siuslaw N.F. newsletter) of June, 1931, even reported that the new Dean's Mountain Lookout materials "had been transported over ten miles of trail on horseback" and that the new station "will be one of the finest in that section of the country." Clearly, everyone was duly impressed. That new building lasted only eight years, but many interesting events occurred while it was in place:

1. During the summer of 1934 the CCC road construction from Camp Walker reached Dean's Mountain, and for the first time, access (during dry weather) became relatively easy. At this time (or shortly thereafter) lookouts probably began to have cars, and to drive to Elk Wallow for their water, instead of hauling it up on their back from the spring on the west side of the hill.
2. In the summer of 1935, the CCC road construction reached its initial goal, meeting up with the 1933 construction by the Camp Loon Lake CCCs, near the head of Salander Creek. That same summer the CCCs built the lookout on Cougar Pass, and by the summer of 1936 that tower likely was manned and he (or she)



Some historic photos are true treasures, and this is one. It was taken by Ted Rainwater, who had worked for CFPA many years and was our Department of Forestry's Personnel Director when I came to work for the State at Coos in 1952. The date of the photo is 1928. It somehow passed along to Richard Miller, of Pleasant Hill, and on to Ron Johnson of Oakridge, who gave it to me for use in this book.



Circa 1938



The new lookout, built by CFPA in 1931, and road accessed in 1934. (As seen in 1935.)

June 1935



Several views of the 1931 Dean's Mountain Lookout over the eight years of its life. —Photos courtesy of Inez Miller, CFPA and others.

See next page for views of CCC construction in late 1939.



Between August of 1939 and July of 1940, CCCs built a 20-foot lookout tower, a 3-room cabin, and a woodshed on Dean's Mountain. It's interesting to wonder what today's safety standards would call for in the work shown here. —Photo courtesy of Inez Miller, Bandon.



This photo was taken sometime between August 1939 and July 1940. Actually, the 3-room "cabin" closely resembled a guard station. —Photo courtesy of Inez Miller, Bandon.

could talk by 'phone to the lookout on Dean's Mountain. Radios didn't come in until 1939-1940, so I'm sure the social aspect of talking with another lookout — exchanging recipes, etc. — would have been special. I worked on lookouts during the summers of 1944, 1947, 1948, and 1950 on various National Forests, so I know what that life was like in those days.

3. On July 17, 1936, the nationwide "panoramic photo" program for all lookouts reached Dean's Mountain. This should have been an interesting day for the person on the lookout. The travelling photographer ascended to the peak of the roof (a rather harrowing act on many lookouts, especially those with the 110-foot towers, such as I had in Wallowa County). After leveling his wide-angle lens camera there, he took three photos, each covering a 120-degree angle, of the lookout's "seen area." The resulting prints, marked with horizontal and vertical azimuths and horizons, were then placed in the dispatcher's office of the local forest protective organization.

When the lookout reported a smoke to that dispatcher, giving the proper horizontal and vertical readings from his Osborne firefinder, the dispatcher would lay a paper vertical scale on the photo, which already had the azimuth degrees and an artificial zero horizon marked on it — and he could now see the exact spot the lookout was seeing. It was an excellent system and it remained in use for perhaps 15-20 years. By that time, the "seen areas" had changed a lot, and the system fell into disuse. See the next page for one of the three photos taken from the Dean's Mountain Lookout roof. Note the tall stovepipe and that single Douglas-fir tree which appears in most all pictures at Dean's Mountain. Also note the azimuth degrees along the top of the photo, and the zero horizon line.

4. Then, in 1939 and 1940, the Dean's Mountain station was totally rebuilt. State Forester Ferguson, you will remember, had big plans for the Lakeside and Dean's Mountain combination, and while he was in office he pursued them.

The Reedsport newspaper tells us, on August 1, 1939, that "Six CCCs went to Dean's Mountain, where they'll construct a 20-foot lookout tower, a three-

room cabin, a garage, and a woodshed." When those were completed they tore down the "old" 1931 lookout ground-house, of course. The new cabin was beautiful, with knotty pine panelling throughout.

With road access, this new construction likely went along fairly fast. Contrast that with The Forest Log note from May, 1931: "Walsh (CFPA Dist. Warden) says the Dean's Mtn. cabin materials are now being hauled in over



A 1934 photo of the unroaded Elliott (Johnson Creek in the foreground).

a ten-mile trail by backpack (likely mules)."

5. Then, on December 7, 1941, Japanese military forces attacked the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor. World War II began, and everything in the world changed for the following five years, including the situation at Dean's Mountain Lookout.

Dean's Mountain Lookout was identified immediately as one of the key points to be used by the U.S. Defense Forces as a year-round AWS (Aircraft Warning Service) detection station. Keith Young, the Coos Forest Protective Assoc. District Warden, decided to employ George and Inez Miller to "man" Dean's Mtn., and hired them in **March, 1942**, for service.

Prior to their moving to Dean's Mountain in March, they had to undergo testing and licensing in the use of the newly acquired radio equipment, which augmented the long-established telephone service at that station.

George and Inez lived almost continuously on Dean's Mountain from March, 1942, through fall of 1944. When they did get an occasional weekend break during the summer of 1942, it was George's brother, Elmer, and Bill Hughes (who later became the Department's Personnel Director) who filled in for them. Bill remembers that he and Elmer had an "agreement." Bill would watch for the Japanese airplanes if Elmer would milk the goats they had there for a fresh food source. And they both watched for smokes.

(I was on the Chetco Peak Lookout in Curry County in 1944, and I remember that airplane watch. Each of us had a set of cards, showing the silhouettes of all Japanese aircraft, in our lookout towers. The one Japanese plane which did appear the year before I was on Chetco Peak flew somewhat south of my tower and dropped incendiary bombs. The woods were wet, fortunately, and no fires resulted which could spread.)

But back to Dean's Mountain. Ten more years went by. The nearby timber got taller and the fire hazard grew smaller. The last reconstruction at Dean's Mountain occurred during the summer of 1952, when a new 8 ft. by 8 ft. cabin was built on top of the twenty foot "tower" platform. Dean's Mountain was manned each summer through 1963, and then abandoned, as part of a general trend to replace lookouts with air patrols and increased public reporting of smoke.

The State Police and elk hunters continued to use the cabin up through the 1970s and 1980s, and, finally, Elliott Forest reforestation personnel used it as a storage building for vexar tubes. But it became increasingly hard to justify paying annual insurance money for the buildings, and they were finally demolished in 1991. An era of some 77 years had finally closed, and a famous landmark, visible for miles, was gone.

THE TELEPHONE LINE NETWORK THROUGH THE ELLIOTT FOREST

No one can question the value of good communications. And before the advent of radios in forestry (about 1939-1940) all we had was Alexander Graham Bell's invention — the telephone.

In the dim, dark past, someone (maybe Bell) invented the system that was used by **every-one** in rural locations, the so-called Ground Return Line System. Very simply, it consisted of a single No. 9 galvanized wire strung from Point A to Point B, passing through porcelain insulators hung from trees, poles, buildings, etc. On each end, of course, was a very basic



The “Osborne” Fire Lookout photo, above, was taken April 17, 1934 by Robert L. Cooper, hired out of OSC forestry school in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to help complete this project on all western US forests. The 270-degree mark on the photo points due west; the color photo (below) is taken from approximately the same vantage point with an iPhone on December 6, 2017 and is also facing due west. Note the ocean on the horizon and glimpses of sand dunes – also the telephone poles in 1934 (Phillips 1998: 88-91).

