



HISTORY OF RED MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT

In 1921, the forest service began the use of a lookout tree on Red Mountain in the upper Cow Creek Valley. The Red Mountain lookout site, at an elevation of 4,797 feet, was selected to detect fires in the surrounding mountains and valleys of the upper Cow Creek and Applegate Creek drainages. The tree was replaced by a cupola style lookout in 1928, which is the present lookout structure at the Tiller Ranger Station.

Henry Looney served as the Red Mountain lookout for 19 years. He achieved local acclaim as a successful hunter of wolves and ringtail cats. It is recorded that one day, a wolf chased Henry's pup into camp to the tent at the base of the lookout tree. Henry confronted the wolf with a big bar as his gun was not handy. The wolf was frightened away but it was a tense moment.

Gertrude Looney, Henry's wife, packed in food and supplies for him on a horse from their home on Applegate Creek four miles from the lookout. She was paid \$5.00 per month some years.

One summer, while Henry was at Red Mountain, there was a large fire in upper Evans Creek (on the Rogue River National Forest) that covered the whole area with smoke and ashes.

Mrs. Looney reported staying up all night at their ranch to protect the buildings from falling embers.

Less than ten cupola style lookouts remain within the state of Oregon. Red Mountain was moved to the Tiller Ranger Station in the fall of 1985 after consultation with Douglas County Museum, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the National Park Service. A memorandum of Agreement was entered into by the Forest Service, SHPO, and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation which provided the guidelines for moving and restoration of the building. Restoration was completed in June 1986.

The Red Mountain Lookout building measures 12 by 12 feet square and is surmounted by an eight foot square cupola. Construction is frame with wood-shingled hip roofs. The exterior wall materials are narrow, rounded ship lap with end boards. The building is accessed through a single leaf, wood panel door, offset on the north facade. The Osborne Fire Finder (used to locate the exact position of a fire) and glass legged lookout stool (to be stood on during lightning storms), were gathered from Forest Service sources and private donors.

