



Board Agenda Item 33

DATE: January 31, 2017

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Laurel C. Prysiazny, County Librarian
Penny Raven, Chair, Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

SUBJECT: Historic Place - Mount Tom Fire Lookout

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

- 1. Approve designation and placement of Mount Tom Fire Lookout on the County's Register of Historic Places; and**
- 2. Authorize the Chairman to execute the certificate for a Historic Place.**

There is no Net County Cost associated with these actions, which will allow the Mount Tom Fire Lookout to be placed on the County's List of Historic Places. The Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission recommend historic and prehistoric sites and structures to be listed on the Fresno County's List of Historic Places. Approval by the Board of Supervisors encourages preservation of the County's history.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Your Board could choose to not approve these actions, which would result in Mount Tom Fire Lookout not being placed on the County's Register of Historic Places at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost associated with the recommended actions.

DISCUSSION:

The Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission, with the support of Dean Gould, Forest Supervisor, USDA, Forest Service, recommends your Board approve the application to add the Mount Tom Fire Lookout to the County's List of Historic Places.

The devastating Daulton Fire in 1939 destroyed 18,000 acres and demonstrated the need for a "back country" lookout. Mount Tom Fire Lookout was completed by 1940 and contains a 14' by 14' wooden cab station with a catwalk atop a 30-32' K-braced steel tower. The cab is accessed via a straight stairway along one side of the tower; an unusual feature for fire lookout towers. The Lookout is estimated to be one of the last built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in California.

The Mount Tom Fire Lookout is located in the Sierra National Forest, High Sierra Ranger District approximately 90 miles northeast of the City of Fresno. The lookout is located with a panoramic view of both the high mountains and the valleys in the area. It is still manned annually and continues to serve its original function as an integral part of the warning system for forest fires.

This structure was placed on the National Historic Lookout Register in 1999 due to its integrity of design, quality

of workmanship, intact interior, local variations on a common design, height of the tower, date of construction, and rarity in the region in addition to other factors. Although it is on federal land and is already listed on a National Register, the inclusion of this structure in a local listing may add to local public knowledge and boost area interest for recognition, preservation, and study.

The Forest Service's only condition regarding the application and placement of the structure on the County Register is that any listing of the Mount Tom Fire Lookout contains language to note that, while the site is accessible to the public, the tower itself remains operational and is therefore not open to the public. The Commission recommends full support and agreement to this condition as a matter of public safety and will include such language in the County Register if approved.

The Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission reviewed the application during its November 10, 2016 meeting and unanimously voted to recommend that the structure be listed on the Fresno County's List of Historic Places.

OTHER REVIEWING AGENCIES:

Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - Historic Place Certificate

CAO ANALYST:

Samantha Buck