

USFS fire lookout may become lodging facility

The Forest Service is looking at the possibility of turning the Grouse Ridge Fire Lookout Tower into a rental facility. A preliminary planning meeting will be Sept. 23 at 5:30pm at the Tahoe National Forest Headquarters in Nevada City.

“The lookout is no longer being used to spot wildfires but it is a favorite amongst recreationists and has tremendous potential as a rental facility. This is the oldest lookout on the forest,” stated Jean Masquelier, Yuba River district ranger, in a press release.

The lookout out has suffered quite a bit of damage over the years, however, the structure is still intact.

“We will need to do fairly extensive repairs to make it habitable again and this is where we need the public’s help. We have absolutely no funding for this project, but hope that with some grants and lots of volunteer help, we can recreate a lookout opportunity for the public,” stated Masquelier.

The first meeting will include an overview of the site, the historic renovation needs and information about the lookout rental process. One of the goals of the renovation is to maintain the historic nature of the facility while still providing some amenities.

“We will be looking for ideas, volunteers, and potential partners at this first meeting and would welcome anyone or representative from any group that might want to be involved,” stated Masquelier.

This will be the third lookout on the TNF to undergo restoration. The first two on the Sierraville Ranger District include Calpine Lookout which has been available for rent for

five years and Sardine Lookout which is expected to be available in 2010. The facilities are rented through the National Reservation System for about \$45 per night.

What: Initial Planning Meeting for the Restoration of the Grouse Ridge Lookout

When: Sept. 23 @ 5:30 pm

Where: Tahoe National Forest Headquarters @ 631 Coyote St., Nevada City

Use the employee parking area in the upper parking lot to enter the conference room.

For more information on the Grouse Restoration project, contact Jean Masquelier (530) 288.3231 or (530) 478.6853.