

National Fire Plan

Lookout Rebuilt After Fires of 2000

Montana

2002



The unique octagonal shape of the new lookout provides a maximum view of the surrounding area. The lookout was completed on September 21, 2001.

National Fire Plan funding was instrumental in helping rebuild the Sula Peak Lookout. The facility, located in the Sapphire Mountains southeast of Missoula, Mont., was totally destroyed by the fires of 2000. Re-construction was completed September 2001 and the facility was staffed this summer to help spot fires across the forest. Local contractors Mark Brushia and Jeff Diepstraton were hired to design and construct the complex structure and they were instrumental in the successful completion of the project. Building a fire lookout is not a typical construction project. The new lookout is an octagonal shape to maximize the lookout's ability to spot fires and to withstand the high winds that pummel the site. The design uses durable materials that also blend in with the natural landscape.



Sula Peak Lookout in the 1960's

The original facility was built in 1957 and staffed by a "Lookout", trained to detect wildfires early and report them to firefighters, everyday of its operation. During the monumental 2000 fire season, the Lookout

recorded and reported the numerous new lightning caused fire starts in the area and aided firefighters with weather and fire information until fires burned too close and she was forced to evacuate.



Very little of the Lookout remained after the fires of 2000.