

CHEWS NEWS Volume 41 05/11/2024

<https://ffla-monterey.org/chews-ridge-lookout/>

Monterey Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association

2024 Fire Season Dates



The CRLO webpage calendar is now open for scheduling for the 2024 season.

We are hoping to have the Chews Ridge Lookout Tower ready for staffing by Wednesday May 22, 2024. We still have the lookout to restock, and several non-trivial maintenance issues. We will let you know if these issues delay our season opening.

The Los Padres National Forest has already started the morning line up ~ 0935 hours. If you are in the Tower prior to morning line-up, it is okay to come up on the radio and call into service. Our official radio callsign is “Chews Ridge Lookout”, although this gets shortened at times.

Tassajara Road Conditions

May 3, 2024, Security Check: The Tassajara Road was being graded, and there were several large rocks and dirt berms in the road. These effectively made the road narrower, and it was harder to pass oncoming cars. Other road sections had moderately deep water runnels. Chews Ridge received an additional 0.75” of rain and snow that following weekend.

Tassajara Gate/Locks Update

The Forest Service lock on the shared gate with MIRA has been replaced with a new and shiny lock. This lock does not have the groove on the backside. The MIRA lock is textured, and as a courtesy, is kept placed in front of our lock. MIRA occasionally leaves the gate unlocked for deliveries or open houses. The general rule is to leave the gate as you found it.

Our policy is to keep the gate on Tassajara Road locked, unless otherwise instructed by the USFS. The gate should never be locked with only one lock—this is a potential major safety issue.

June 21 – June 23: Chews Ridge Amateur Radio Group (POC: Ron Ross)

Each year on the third weekend in June, an amateur radio group camps near the lookout and participates in a national field day radio exercise. They obtain a permit from the USFS. This group

has been coming to Chews Ridge for decades – this year marks their 60th anniversary. They will need our help to ensure that the gate is unlocked at this time. We will need coverage for this weekend so the group can enter and exit. They will be arriving around noon on Friday, June 21 and staying until around 2 pm on Sunday, June 23.

Their group consists of about 8-9 people who enjoy camping and working with their radio equipment. If possible, it would be good for someone to spend the night at the tower in case one of their operators needs to leave after hours and the gate gets accidentally locked.

If you can work this weekend, go ahead and sign up on the website and email Ron Ross (Lookout 33) at ron@chamaranch.com. He will get back to you on the specifics of their operation and the contact information for their leader.

Please respond directly to Ron Ross (ron@chamaranch.com) if you have any questions.



CRLO Website Calendar

A few dates have already been scheduled for training, maintenance, and the annual Chews Ridge amateur radio weekend (June 21-23).

A few reminders:

- (1) Use the calendar to sign up for shifts <https://ffla-monterey.org/operations/>
- (2) Keep the confirmation email in case you need to cancel your shift.
- (3) Indicate an overnight before the shift with (OVN) YOUR_NAME
- (4) Indicate an overnight after the shift with YOUR_NAME (OVN)

- (5) Please coordinate key exchange with the adjacent shift lookout.
- (6) Lookouts sometimes sign up their shift partner with the same shift request. The website calendar will appear to still have one slot open. Before signing up for the second available shift, you can click on the calendar shift request to see whether two or more names are listed.
- (7) Training or refresher shifts are indicated as follows: Nancy Baker (T). The calendar will appear to have one slot open.

Spring Reconnect and New Recruit Training

We had a good turnout for the in-person reconnect training. Unfortunately, the online Zoom did not work as tested/hoped for. An online training video will be provided soon.

Recognition for Most Shifts Worked

Fiscal Year 2023:

Rookie of the Year: Glenn Hunter (9 shifts)

Veteran of the Year: David Dreyer (13 shifts)

Honorable mentions: Lois Van Buren (12), Fred DeLay (11), Terry Spitz (10)

Fiscal Year 2022:

Terry Spitz (18)

Honorable mentions: David Dreyer (15), Fred Delay (14), Brendan Kelly (12)

Treasurer Change

Glenn Hunter (LO #62) has assumed the treasurer responsibilities from Karen Kelly. We are very grateful to Karen for her service to our chapter as a treasurer and lookout.

Thank you, Chews Ridge Lookouts, for helping to make our project a success!

Nancy Baker, Chair Monterey FFLA, baker.smelser@gmail.com; 831-917-4676

Lois Van Buren, Assistant Chair

Jess Mason CRLO Tower and Facility Leader



New Chews Ridge Safety Report Card

FFLA Monterey Chapter

The FFLA-Monterey is a mostly self-supporting, nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to restoring, maintaining, and staffing historic fire lookouts in Monterey County. We are a local chapter of the National Forest Fire Lookout Association, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization (Tax ID 31-1736006). We welcome donations to help support our Chews Ridge Fire Lookout Tower maintenance and operations. Checks may be mailed to:

FFLA--Monterey
 PO Box 22631
 Carmel, CA 93922