

Building Partnerships

In the fall of 2013, the Nahatlatch Lookout was formally established as a recreation site. The Four Wheel Drive Association of BC has entered into a partnership agreement with RSTBC to manage and maintain the site. Some of the many recreational opportunities include: high elevation hiking, breathtaking views of the Nahatlatch Valley and local mountains, distant views of the historical Fraser Canyon, abundant wildlife such as black bears and deer, beautiful alpine meadows, and an extensive network of old mining and forestry roads available for exploring by four-wheel drive vehicles and ATVs.

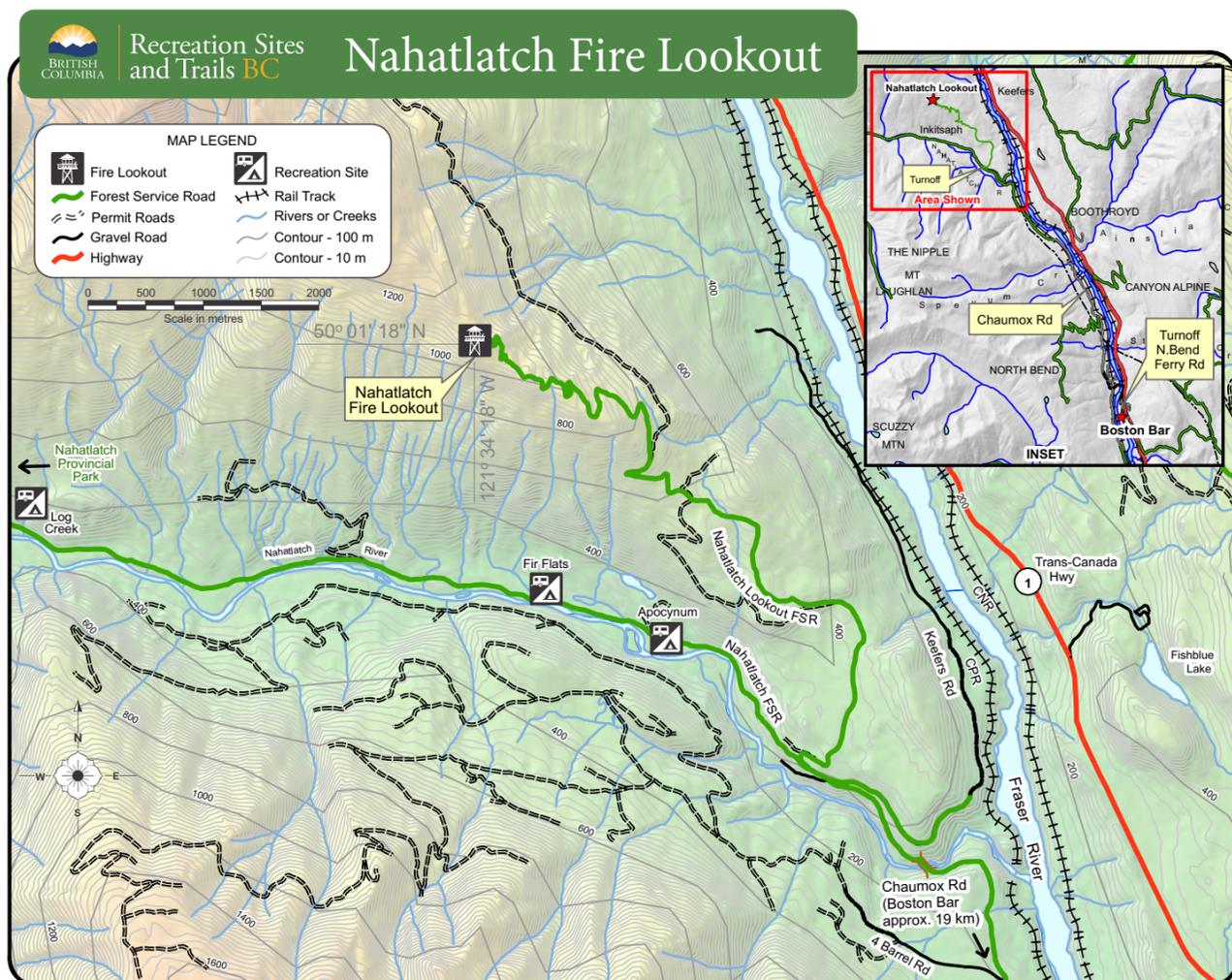


Community Partnerships working together with Recreation Sites and Trails BC

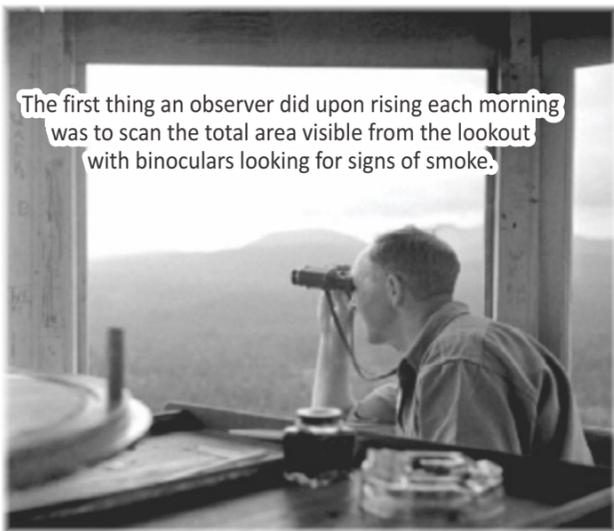
How to Get There

The drive to the Nahatlatch Lookout is very scenic. From the town of Boston Bar, turn west (at the gas station) onto the North Bend Ferry Road and follow it across the bridge over the Fraser River to the small community of North Bend. Stay on the main road through North Bend which is called Chaumox Road. Follow Chaumox Road in a northerly direction for about 6.0 km on paved road and another 3.0 km on gravel until you reach the yellow km signs. At the 0 km sign, take the left fork to stay on the main road which is the beginning of the Nahatlatch Forest Service Road. Carry on to the 3.0 km sign and take the right fork in the road.

Continue on until the road crosses a high bridge over the Nahatlatch River at approximately 4.7 km. After another 1.5 km, turn right onto the road leading to the Nahatlatch Lookout. This is a private road for the first 3.0 km and should be respected as such. Travel along the road for approximately 2.0 km and take the left fork at that point, keeping to the left at all subsequent forks in the road for the remaining 7.0 km to the lookout tower. While the initial section of the road to the lookout does not appear too difficult, it quickly turns into a steep, switch-backed road with water bars and should only be attempted with four-wheel drive vehicles.



Daily Duties of a Lookout Observer



The first thing an observer did upon rising each morning was to scan the total area visible from the lookout with binoculars looking for signs of smoke.

Throughout the day, the frequency of periodic scanning would depend on the current fire hazard rating and recent weather events such as lightning storms or dry conditions. A sleeper fire ignited by lightning could smolder for several days before putting up any noticeable smoke, therefore areas of potential lightning strikes needed to be watched carefully. Areas with active industrial activities or recreation areas with open camp fires were given considerable attention. Twice each day, the observer was expected to standby to receive radio communications from the local Ranger Station, usually at 8:00 am and 7:00 pm.

When smoke was discovered, the observer would determine the location of the fire using the fire finder and lookout photos, and report the fire to the local Ranger Station. The report would include a description of the fire (e.g., single column of smoke or more active moving fire), plus any additional information that could be determined such as access possibilities, forest type and terrain. The observer would keep the fire under observation and report any changes to the Ranger Station and was also called upon to relay radio communications from fire crews and other field staff who were unable to contact the office directly.

Cooking, cleaning and daily maintenance activities were fitted in as permitted. In some cases, water for drinking and cooking had to be packed in from some distance away.

Nahatlatch Fire Lookout Recreation Site

Please obey all posted signs, rules and regulations, respect others and enjoy your stay!

Recreation Sites and Trails BC has recently undertaken a project to restore abandoned fire lookouts and establish them as recreation sites to preserve the historical, cultural and heritage values of these spectacular areas and provide unique public recreation opportunities. During the field season of 2012, a number of formerly abandoned lookouts were restored to their original structures and celebrated as part of the 100th anniversary of the BC Forest Service.



BC FOREST SERVICE
CENTENARY
1912-2012

This program will continue in the years to come as suitable lookouts and effective partnerships are identified.

Pack it In. Pack it Out!
Please take your garbage with you.
Leave the area cleaner than you found it.
Please stay on designated trails only!

Weather conditions can change extremely fast. Be prepared.
Please be respectful and courteous to everyone you encounter.

Please report all forest fires.
Phone toll-free: 1 800 663 5555

For More Information
www.sitesandtrailsbc.ca



Recreation Sites and Trails BC

Nahatlatch Fire Lookout Recreation Site

Visitors Map and Guide



In partnership with
The Four Wheel Drive Association of BC
and Recreation Sites and Trails BC

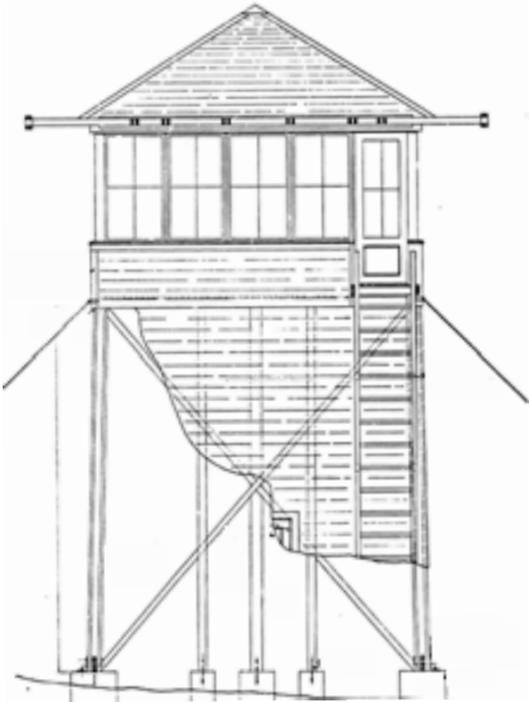


Recreation Sites and Trails BC

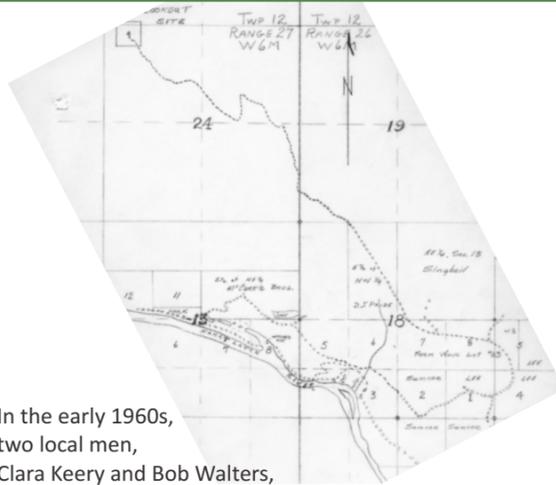
Nahatlatch Fire Lookout - Restoration from the Ground Up

The Nahatlatch Lookout is situated within the Lillooet Range of the Coast Mountains, northwest of Boston Bar. From a height of 1190 metres (3900 feet), it overlooks the scenic Nahatlatch Valley and its unique lake/river drainage system. The Nahatlatch Provincial Park and Protected Area preserve much of the watershed which includes one of the largest remaining intact wetlands in the Lower Mainland area. On a clear day, the lookout can be seen perched high on the mountain top as you approach Boston Bar on Highway #1 from the west.

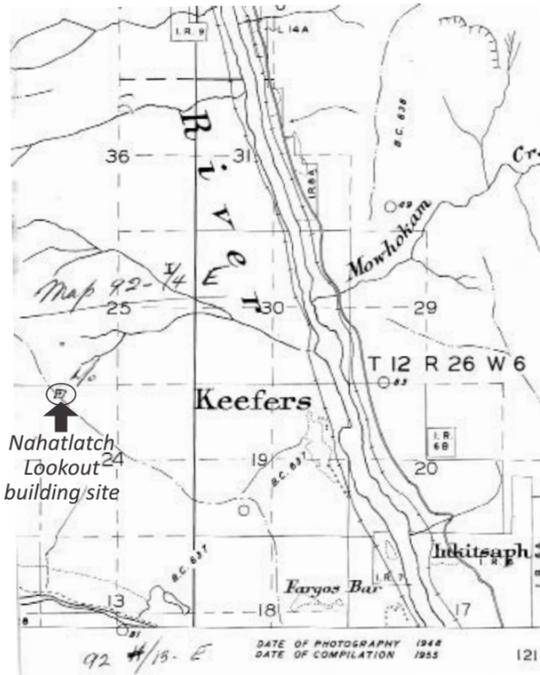
Constructed between 1956 and 1958, the Nahatlatch Lookout is an example of a standard cottage-roof cabin on top of a tapered wooden tower with a full perimeter catwalk - one of two predominant cabin forms constructed by the BC Forest Service from the 1920s to the late 1950s.



The standardized design includes a continuous band of windows on all four sides to maximize the surveillance capabilities of a solitary observer.



In the early 1960s, two local men, Clara Keery and Bob Walters, were hired to construct a road to the lookout to improve access and the delivery of supplies. An observer was stationed at the Nahatlatch Lookout during every fire season from 1957 until the early 1970s when advances in modern fire detection overtook the need for human observers. In 1993, the lookout was officially decommissioned.



Over the years, the Nahatlatch Lookout became a popular destination for hikers, ATV clubs, and geocaching enthusiasts. Visitors would use the site as a day-use area and also for overnight stays. The extremes of a high elevation environment eventually take their toll, however, and in the winter of 2011, the 60-year-old structure finally collapsed under the weight of a heavy snowfall.



As part of a project to restore five retired fire lookouts for the BC Forest Service's centennial in 2012, Recreation Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) selected the Nahatlatch Lookout for a complete restoration. Since the original lookout was completely destroyed, the rebuild had to begin from scratch. All the rubble from the old tower was cleared away and the entire structure was rebuilt on site with new material.



The Nahatlatch Lookout is significant for its role in lookout construction history for the experimental use of helicopters to determine if it was economically feasible to transport pre-fabricated lookouts to remote locations.

Flight log records indicate that 37 flights were needed to complete the delivery of materials to the high elevation site between May 21-23, 1957. The experiment was deemed a success and helicopters went on to play a prominent role in fire lookout construction in British Columbia.

J. Durkie, pilot
R. Sturges, engineer
Bell model 47G2
Helicopter



Prearranged 14 ft. loads ready for transport.



Sacking and weighing sandbags for concrete work up at the building site



Nahatlatch Lookout building site
Liftoff with building more materials north of Boston Bar

Historical Forest Service construction plans and measurements from old remnant timbers from the original lookout were used to ensure dimensional accuracy. In a mammoth volunteer effort over two weekends, more than 25 tireless individuals from diverse backgrounds participated in the project, including representatives from RSTBC, the Fraser Wildfire Management crew, the Four Wheel Drive Association of BC, South Western All Terrain Trails, Nahatlatch Valley cabin owners, and the local geocaching community.



Finishing touches were completed over the following two weeks, which included installing a commemorative plaque recognizing the contributions of the many volunteer organizations that participated in rebuilding the Nahatlatch Lookout.



The end product is a beautiful reconstruction of the original tower which both day-use and overnight visitors are welcome to use. Additional on-site facilities include a picnic table and toilet, with future plans to install historical interpretive displays.

