

Pine Mountain Lookout Rental Reservations



Pine Mountain History

This rustic lookout was constructed on the western shoulder of Pine Mountain overlooking the Van Arsdale area. It is located on an outcrop at 4000 feet in elevation, within a mixed conifer forest consisting of ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, black oak and madrone. Bucknell Creek and the Eel River are the major drainages in the area. The historic town of Upper Lake is approximately 19 miles to the south and the Lake Pillsbury recreation area is seven miles to the northeast. The Lookout can be rented from May 17 to September 30.

The lookout was originally constructed in 1933, after lumber mills in the Van Arsdale area were destroyed by fires. The nearby lookout on Sanhedrin Mountain was unable to detect these fires until they were quite large. To remedy this situation, Pine Mountain lookout was built to protect the mills. The lookout has a view of 180° to the west, northwest. This limited view is unusual among lookouts, which usually have a visibility of 360°.

Samuel Henry was the first lookout at Pine Mountain. While most lookouts had to pack by horse or mule to their job site, Mr. Henry was able to drive his Model "A" Ford up to the structure. The Henry family spent several summers at the lookout. Samuel was a carpenter and he completed the interior work of the lookout, as well as helping construct some of the out buildings, including a garage to protect his car. The Henry boys had the job of carrying water from a nearby spring to the lookout.

The lookout was staffed intermittently through the mid 1940s from spring until late fall. The lookout employee made a twice-daily check-in by phone or radio. Antenna trees, insulators and wire from the phone are still visible south of the lookout. During World War II, Pine Mountain Lookout served as part of an aircraft defense monitoring system that extended throughout California. The increase of roads in the area coupled with growing technology caused the lookout to be abandoned in 1945.

Because of the quality of its workmanship, its unusual 180° view, and its association with state level patterns of fire history, Pine Mountain Lookout was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. Restoration work shortly began after that time.

The lookout is currently accessible to modern day vehicles, but it is necessary to bring your own water and pack out your own garbage when renting the lookout. Some other items you will need to bring with you are food, cooking utensils, bedrolls, pillows and warm evening clothes. The bunk bed has metal springs there are no box springs or mattresses. Please remember this site is rustic. The rental fees will help complete the restoration, and maintain the lookout. Thank you, and we hope you enjoy your visit.

Reservation Information

1. Rental of this facility is by reservations only. Reservations cannot be accepted more than six months in advance and must be at least 30 calendar days prior to stay. The season is from May 17 to September 30.
2. Rental of this facility will be under Special Use Permit FS-2700-2e, Government Owned Buildings.
3. Group size will be limited to no more than 6 persons at one time. No overnight camping is permitted within the administrative site outside the rental lookout building.
4. The minimum stay is two nights and the maximum is 7 days. The cost is \$50.00 per night. Check in time is 2 PM; check out time is 12:00 noon.