



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National
Park

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Grand Canyon National Park Fire Management



Original Hopi
Point Lookout

Four Grand Canyon National Park Lookout Towers Added to the National Historic Lookout Register

Four historic fire lookout towers in Grand Canyon National Park, two on the North Rim and two on the South Rim, have been listed on the National Historic Lookout Register. The National Historic Lookout Register is a cooperative effort of the Forest Fire Lookout Association, the National Forestry Association, the National Woodland Owners Association, the U.S. Forest Service, state forestry departments and Department of Interior agencies. The purpose of the National Historic Lookout Register is to identify historic lookout towers that have played an important role in forest conservation.

A short ceremony in recognition of Grand Canyon's lookout towers listing on the National Historic Lookout Register was held in conjunction with the Grand Opening of the North Rim Wildland Fire and Emergency Services Facility on July 4, 2009. These towers were an important part of the early fire-fighting efforts of Grand Canyon National Park.

The lookout towers in Grand Canyon National Park are part of a broad network of fire lookout towers and associated support buildings and structures in the American Southwest built in the late nineteenth through twentieth centuries. Early park managers were extremely concerned about locating and extinguishing fires in the 1920s to the 1960s. All four of these towers are inactive, which reflects the shift in fire control policy, from one of immediate suppression of all fires to using an array of fire management actions including prescribed burns, wildland use fires, suppression and incorporating fire as a natural ecosystem process to restore natural forest conditions.

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The U.S. Forest Service first constructed wooden lookout platforms at Hopi Point and Grandview Point on the South Rim and on Bright Angel Point on the North Rim prior to the establishment of Grand Canyon National Park in 1919. The National Park Service (NPS) improved this early lookout system by replacing the wooden platforms with steel frame towers at Bright Angel Point and Hopi Point, and by building the Signal Hill and Kanabownits Towers. The Civilian Conservation Corps built tree towers on the North and South Rims in the mid-1930s. The NPS improved emergency communications by installing new phones and establishing a central dispatch at Grand Canyon Village during the 1920s. These lookouts were a part of a very efficient fire suppression program: fires rarely burned more than one hundred acres in the park each year until modern fire management guidelines were initiated.

The **North Rim Lookout** was originally constructed in 1928, and moved to its current location in 1933 by the CCC. This lookout tower is also famous for one its operators: author Edward Abbey worked there for four years in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The **Kanabownitz Tower**, also on the North Rim was constructed in 1940 by the CCC in one of the last major projects they completed in the park.

The **Hopi Tower** was constructed near Hopi Point in 1927 and probably replaced an earlier tower there that was a wooden crow's nest and likely was the first fire tower in Arizona. The **Signal Hill Tower** is near Pasture Wash on the South Rim was constructed in 1929.

Amy Horn, Grand Canyon National Park's Archeology Program Manager and Dave Lorenz, Director of the Arizona Chapter of Forest Fire Lookout Association, collaborated on the nomination of the four Grand Canyon lookouts to the National Historic Lookout Register. Horn said, "This listing recognizes the important role Grand Canyon's lookout towers and the firefighters who manned them played in

