

The Lookout

News of the Tillamook Forest Center

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A Passion for Fire Lookouts — The Lookout Guy

Chris Friend

It all started in the summer of 1982 when Howard Verschoor was on a logging job in northern California and saw smoke rising at the top of the hill. The crew rushed up to the site to find a fire lookout tower was being burned, as it was no longer needed for fire detection. Howard thought, "They're burning Grandma's and Grandpa's history!"

Howard decided right then that he would visit every standing lookout in Oregon before they disappeared. He has been at it ever since, expanding his fire tower journey to 11 states and Canada, visiting over 1600 lookouts or former lookout sites.

Howard is a volunteer site host and fire tower interpreter here at the Tillamook Forest Center. On most weekdays you can find him working around the center performing maintenance and grounds-keeping. On the weekend he becomes a passionate crusader for fire towers and the stories of the life of a fire lookout. A fire lookout is both a structure and the person doing the fire detection work— looking for smokes. And yes, there are still over 90 staffed lookouts just in Oregon.

Howard staffed two lookouts during his employment with the Rogue River National Forest. In 1994, he bought a book on fire lookouts of Oregon and Washington written by Ray Kresek, which furthered his avocation for visiting lookout sites. Howard contacted Ray and was soon introduced to the Forest Fire Lookout Association. Today, Howard is the Director of the association's Oregon Chapter.

Howard began presenting lookout talks and fire prevention education activities in 1998. He loves to share his knowledge and many artifacts related to fire towers and firefighting.

Howard's most memorable lookout experience occurred while on a tower during a storm. Lightning hit a stovepipe above the cabin and it sent blue neon static electricity balls dancing off the wood stove. This phenomenon is called St. Elmo's fire.

For more information on fire lookouts and how to get involved with their preservation please check out the Forest Fire Lookout Association's web site: www.firelookout.org

(The Center's gift shop sells the new volume of Ray Kresek's Fire Lookouts of the Northwest).



Howard Verschoor talks with a visitor about firefighting equipment as part of his lookout program.



Howard engages some youth with his many different lookout artifacts.





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Tillamook Forest Center

*Inspiring people to connect
with the Tillamook State Forest.*

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To regularly receive this free quarterly newsletter, please contact us. We appreciate your comments or questions on this publication or other forest activities.

Thoughts from the Director

During the summer and fall of 2008, Tillamook Forest Center staff members and volunteers distributed and received back 396 visitor surveys from center visitors. Information was obtained from a four page, 20 question survey. The primary objectives for the survey were to assess visitors':

- reasons for visiting the center;
- trip characteristics (e.g., duration of visit, activities/ events at the center);
- overall satisfaction and satisfaction with services at the center (e.g., exhibits, staff);
- beliefs about amount learned at the center;
- beliefs about management of the Tillamook State Forest; and
- sociodemographic characteristics.

**"Everybody
rated the center
positively"**

—Mark Needham,
Ph.D., OSU

The survey was coordinated through Mark Needham, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in the Recreation Resource Management Program of the Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society at Oregon State University.

Some of the results of the survey follow:

- Overall visitor satisfaction at the Tillamook Forest Center was extremely high, as 11% rated the center as "good" and 89% rated it as "very good." In other words, everybody rated the center positively.
- Almost all respondents believed that they learned something during their visit to the Tillamook Forest Center; few respondents (< 7%) said that they learned little or nothing.
- Almost all respondents agreed that their visit to the center gave them more appreciation, support, and understanding of the Tillamook State Forest and its management.
- Respondents were most likely to agree that their visit gave them a better appreciation for the Tillamook State Forest (69% strongly agreed, 27% agreed).
- Most visitors resided in Oregon (74%) with the largest proportion (35%) from Portland and surrounding areas (e.g., Oregon City, Gresham, Beaverton). Most visitors lived within a one to three hour drive of the Tillamook Forest Center.

Our Center's mission is to help visitors make connections to the forest while learning about the many values the forest provides in our lives. The results of this survey will allow Center staff members to continue to improve the services and visitor programs provided for those who come to the Center.

Funding for the coordination and analysis of this survey was made possible through the support of the Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust.

Valuing Volunteers

Volunteers at the Tillamook Forest Center have always played a vital role in our small staff "family." Unfortunately, due to our current budget reductions, our staff family will be losing some of its members. Now, more than ever, the Center needs your help. We are open to many different types of volunteer opportunities, and are willing to work with you or a group to create the best experience for everyone. Opportunities available include, but are not limited to, RV hosting, day work parties or community service projects. Several of our volunteers work with us on a one-day-a-week basis, meeting and greeting visitors. Whatever your interests are, the staff at the Center would love to work with you. Please call (800) 930-4646 to talk with our Volunteer Coordinator to see where you can help!



Receive a Gift with Your Donation

Last April, visitors came by the hundreds to celebrate Arbor Week and plant trees at the Center and in the Tillamook State Forest. In appreciation for their work, planters received a certificate and a tree

medallion to remember their day. Visitors liked them so well that we decided to make them available for anyone coming through our doors. Admission to the Center is free but financial support from the public helps the Center fulfill our mission to connect people with the forest. As a thank you for a \$5 donation, visitors can take home a Douglas-fir medallion with the Oregon 150 logo on one side and the Center's logo on the other. Hurry fast! Our state only turns 150 years old once and we will retire the logo by the end of the year, thereby making these a collectable. Every dollar donated to the Center directly supports public programs and Center operation.



Become a Center Supporter

If you'd like to join our ever-growing list of supporters, consider giving a Donor Tree. These gifts (see order form on this page) allow you to "plant your tree" in a unique forest landscape sculpture located in the Center's entry plaza. In recognition of your \$75 gift, your name, or the name of the person you honor or memorialize, will

be engraved on a tree medallion which will be set against the forest backdrop created by the sculpture. All donor tree gifts are acknowledged with an attractive certificate.



Many other donation opportunities are available; call us for details. As you make your charitable giving decisions, we invite you to keep the Tillamook Forest Center in mind. Please contact the Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust at (503) 359-7474 for more information on various donation opportunities.

Yes! I want to help support the Tillamook Forest Center

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone () _____ Email _____

Enclosed is \$ _____ for _____ tree(s) @\$75 per tree

Here is my check

Please charge my Visa/Mastercard

Card # _____ Exp _____

Signature _____

In Memory of... In Honor of... Name Only

Name to appear on tree:

Line One:

Line Two:

Line Three:

The Trust is pleased to recognize donations made as gifts, or to honor or memorialize a special person. Send recognition of this donation to:

Name _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

All gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Donor trees are available on a first-come basis. If requesting more than one tree, please make photocopies of this form.

For more information on making a gift, contact the Tillamook Forest Heritage Trust at (503) 359-7474.



National Take your child outside week!

Chrissy Smith

September 24th – 30th

www.takeachildoutside.org

To help you celebrate the national "Take a Child Outside Week," we have put together activities that are fun for everyone. We have also included some handy information about how kids learn at different ages. Get your gear ready and try some of these activities!



- **Investigate & Inquire!** All kids, particularly older kids, learn by discovery, investigation, and inquiry. Promote exploration and experimentation of the outdoors.
- **Don't tell the meaning — help make it!** Help your children learn by asking them questions about their observations instead of telling them the answer.
- **Use your senses!** Activities that play on the 5 senses (see, hear, feel, smell, taste) are great for helping all ages learn.
- **Run, crawl, throw & kick to learn! Build, mold, & bead to learn!** Kids benefit from activities that help them practice their large (hiking on uneven surfaces and climbing) and fine (make a mini shelter out of sticks, inspect flowers and leaves without tearing them, or

pick up an insect without squashing it) motor skills. An outdoor adventure is a perfect way to work on these skills!

- **Act things out!** Younger children (6 and under) learn valuable lessons by role playing (pretending to be an animal or plant, etc).
- **Learn in multiple ways!** Children learn by painting a picture, writing a poem, counting points on a leaf, making comparisons between two flowers and more!



Infants & Toddlers Meet Nature in a Hike

Take your child out on a walk. Along the way, stop and pick up interesting items (a soft leaf, a stick, a piece of bark, some moss, a nice smelling flower). Let your child touch and smell each item and then place it in a bucket for them to investigate later. Take a moment to stop and let your children explore on their own. Lay down a blanket under a tree where the leaves are casting shadows on the ground. Let your crawler move around and get a feel for the texture of the grass and the ground. Review your nature collection and explore each item again. Help your children place the items in categories (soft or hard, smooth or rough). Modified from: www.ehow.com/how_2177910_teach-infant-nature.html

Role Play Animal Adventure Hike:

Go on a hike with your children. Have them pick an animal to be and then explore with them. Try to get them to use their 'animal' senses to touch, smell, and listen. Explore the plants and be on the lookout for other animals in the forest. Talk about what they might eat and what might eat

them. Bring along props or use items in nature to help them imagine their adventure! Set up mini challenges for them. For example, have them pretend they are hopping from rock to rock like a frog, balancing on a tree limb like a squirrel, or hiding like a rabbit.

Find Colors in Nature:

Collect color samples (paint sample cards, fabric and ribbons from home, cut outs from magazines). Put them in a bag and give them to kids during a hike. Have them try to find all the colors in the forest.

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Take Your Child Outside Week

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Plot Study:

Good for all ages! Use a hula hoop or wire coat hanger stretched into a circle to help kids concentrate on a small area. Have them explore the area inside the hoop, searching for wildlife and plant evidence. They can move the hoop to another area and compare habitats (field, forest, and stream). Let them use tools to explore (magnifying glasses, bug viewers, hand shovels, etc.). Let the questions flow! End your hike with ideas and thoughts to investigate at home.

Other Activities:

- **Painting with nature** - collect different items (such as soil, leaves, etc) from nature and use them to paint pictures (good for toddlers and up)
- **Dig in dirt** – younger kids can explore how it feels and what is in it. Older kids can compare different types of soil. (12 years and under)
- **Splashing in water** (great for kids under 2)
- **Explore rocks** – look at the shape, color, and texture (All ages)
- **Picking up seeds, leaves, and sticks** (kids under 2)
- **Recreation** (biking, fishing, camping, hiking, and swimming are fun for all ages)
- **Scavenger Hunts** (good for all ages)
- **Sketch** (good for preschoolers and up)
- **Plant / tree ID** – use dichotomous keys and ID books to identify plants and trees (8 years and up)
- **Silent 'animal senses' walk** – walk quietly through the woods. Stop and share what was seen and heard while walking (6 years and up – do a longer 'quiet' walk with older kids)
- **Sit Spot** – find a nice spot to sit and observe nature. Have kids write or draw what they see and hear (8 years and up).
- **Nature Photography** (8 years and up)
- **Full Moon Hike** – No flashlights! (all ages)
- **Backyard campouts** (leave it up all summer long – all ages)

Resources used for this article:

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- Thompson, M. (2008). 10 ways to bridge your child and nature. <http://geoparent.com/featured/2008/04/29/10-ways-to-bridge-your-child-and-nature/>



Chris Friend Photo

Come by the Tillamook Forest Center or logon to our website (www.tillamookforestcenter.org/events_01-4.html#worksheet) for some helpful resources. Find useful investigation tools (like bug viewers), ID books (animal, animal track, animal scat, tree & plant ID books), exploring nature books for kids and adults, hiking and backpacking books, and more at our bookstore.



Forest Renewal at the 3rd Return from the Burn Event

Lisa Gibson



Chris Friend Photo

Families get creative in our craft room.

This year's Return from the Burn event was the best ever! Over 1000 people attended the event on the weekend of August 22nd and 23rd; commemorating 76 years since the first of the Tillamook Burn fires in 1933. This was 340 more people than at last year's event.

Visitors had fun engaging in many activities. The community room was buzzing with artistic kids



Chris Friend Photo

Putting the firefighting gear on during the firefighter relay is harder than it looks.

and adults creating wonderful crafts. Kids made their own trees out of paper, created funky bugs out of beads and pipe cleaners, made wood cookie name tags, and tied pieces of wood together to make boats. We also featured a recreation display, an animal skins display, and Howard Vershoor's 1920s fire lookout replica.

Among the other events, Smokey Bear made an appearance twice each day, shaking lots of small hands and posing for photos. A barbecue lunch was available and there was a fire engine demonstration. Many attended a guided program called Flames to Forest, about forest recovery.



Chris Friend Photo

Smokey gives great bear hugs.



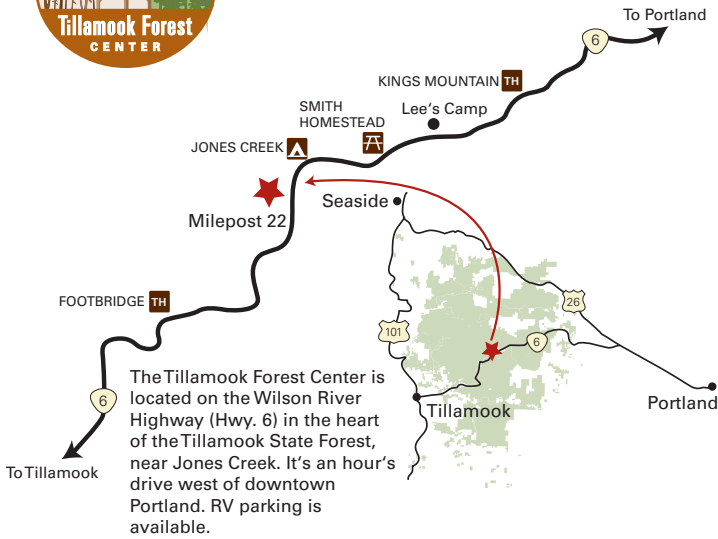
Chris Friend Photo

Trying out the fire hose at the engine demonstration is fun!

Each afternoon we had a kids' firefighter relay race, where the kids raced to put on firefighting gear and rescue a (stuffed) forest animal. It was determined that the race winners had great potential to be firefighters, but everyone got a prize! We had a fun puppet show on the bridge and everyone who made a boat had a chance to launch it on our pond. All in all it was a busy, beautiful, fun-filled weekend!



Tillamook Forest Center



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Please Note!

Fall operating hours began
September 9, 2009
Open Wednesday – Sunday
10:00 am to 4:00 pm

TFC will be closed for the winter
from November 30, 2009
to March 2, 2010

TFC will reopen for spring
on March 3, 2010



Mark Your Calendar

Important
DATES!



Save the Date!

Holiday Wreath-making

November 28th & 29th

Advance registration fee of \$12 required.

Fun for the whole family!

We will help you craft your own wreath
with materials we provide from the forest.

Call (866) 930-4646 to register.

Check our website for other
upcoming programs
www.tillamookforestcenter.org

