

The Cross Shot

Do you have follow-up information, corrections, or comments to a story in *LOOKOUT NETWORK*? "The Cross Shot" was initiated just for that. Send responses to fflatreas@gmail.com.

Grave Peak Lookout, Powell Ranger District, Idaho

The recent article "Grave Peak Lookout Preservation" by Cindy Schacher, archaeologist, highlighted the activity of a group who volunteered their time to preserve a high elevation lookout with special historical significance. The narrative and photographs described the restoration of the 1924 Grave Peak Lookout that commands a high panoramic view at 8,228 feet overlooking much of the Powell Ranger District. Special thanks are in order for the dedication and hard work that involved human backpacking of renovation materials for the last few miles because the trail provided no turn-around for the mule train. The Grave Peak area and lookout are famous for several other historical reasons.

The legend of the "secret lost gold" was chronicled by Keller in the Lookout Network, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2012 and Moore in his book "The Lochsa Story, Land Ethics in the Bitterroot Mountains," pages 79-94, that described the story about a Nez Perce Indian named Isaac who died, supposedly while guiding a party to find the gold. The story may be fact or fiction but the lost gold has never been found.

Norman Maclean's novella "A River Runs Through It And Other Stories," including "Logging and Pimping And Your Pal Jim," "USFS 1919: The Ranger The Cook, And A Hole In The Sky," are a collection of stories based in part on his living, working, and experiences while in the Powell Ranger District at Elk Summit, and the Grave Peak area, then part of the Lolo National Forest. The popular movie "A River Runs Through It" is based in part on young Maclean's account of his time in the early 1920s working as part of a fire fighting and trail construction crew, in the Elk Summit area and time alone on lookout duty at Grave Peak. The movie features a Presbyterian minister's family and two sons who are fly fisherman. The setting for the trout fishing scenes occurs mostly on the Blackfoot and Gallatin rivers not far from Missoula, Montana. The film won an Academy Award Oscar for Best Cinematography in 1993 and was nominated for two other Oscars for Best Music: Original Score and Best Adapted Screenplay.

Grave Peak Mountain and Lookout holds a special place in the history of the northwest that merits our accolades for the time and effort given for the preservation and restoration of this famous lookout.

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Grave Peak stands as the tallest mountain in the Powell Ranger District (Harold Keller photo)