

# **NEEDLES FIRE LOOKOUT**

## **WESTERN DIVIDE RANGER DISTRICT**

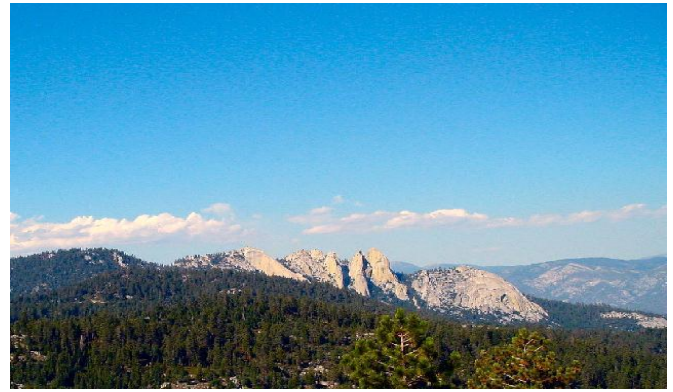
### *GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT*

### **SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST**

The Needles Fire Lookout is located off of Western Divide Highway, on the Tule River Ranger District within the Giant Sequoia National Monument on the Sequoia National Forest. This site is a unique monolith granite rock formation with several spires and faces, each being quite different than the other in size and shape. It is accessible from May to October, depending on weather.

Highlighting the features of the Needles, the word is SPECTACULAR! To reach the Needles, you turn off of Western Divide Highway just a mile from Quaking Aspen Campground on Forest Service Road 21S05 going east. After traveling 2.5 miles on a fairly good dirt road, you will reach the trailhead. Parking area is ample. The hike out to Needles Lookout Tower is moderate, approximately 2.5 miles long, which includes a steep long staircase leading into the tower itself. Be sure to carry water with you as no water is available along the way, or at the Lookout.

Upon reaching the tower, a gate with a sign may be posted that will inform you if the lookout is open for public visitation. A Forest Service employee resides at the Needles Lookout Tower. It is utilized as an office as well as the home for the summer months while the lookout is on duty. This person is responsible for detecting fires and relaying radio messages to a dispatcher, who in turn sends firefighters and support equipment to extinguish the reported fire. The employee is usually on-duty from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wed. thru Sun., but may have the lookout closed due to fires or repair work. If the gate is open, you are welcome to climb the 189 stairs to the Lookout Tower at the top, and enjoy a spectacular view of the Kern River Drainage, Mt. Whitney, Olancho Peak, Farewell Gap, and Dome Rock. The tip of the Needles is 8,245



feet in elevation, with a sheer drop off on three sides varying from 60 to over 400 feet.

No more than 4 people at a time are recommended on the lookout, as there is very little room once you reach the top. Please sign the daily log so we know you have been there. The Lookout has just a couple of simple rules for safety; please do not sit on or lean against any part of the building, particularly the windows, and do not touch the windows or smudge them. The lookout needs a clean, unobstructed view at all times. The windows are very fragile and break easily.

The rock formation that the lookout is perched upon is used for rock climbing and has become popular over the past 20 years. Several books and publications have been written on The Needles. Most rock climbers access the Needles from the top, off of Western Divide Highway. Rock climbers have given names to the various rock formations, such as Sorcerer, Wizard, and Witch. The Needles Fire Lookout is perched atop what is known as "The Magician". Rock formations known as Voodoo and Demon Dome are accessed for climbing from the east at the base of the rock formation, just off of Lloyd Meadow Road.

The actual construction of the lookout began in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and all materials and equipment used were packed in over 5 miles from Quaking Aspen by Mule Train. Needles Fire Lookout is certainly one of the "top" highlights of Sequoia National Forest.



United States  
Department of Agriculture



Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest Region

Western Divide Ranger District  
Sequoia National Forest

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.”