

TOBIAS PEAK LOOKOUT

SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST



Tobias Peak Lookout is located on the Western Divide Ranger District of the Sequoia National Forest. Easy access makes Tobias an ideal point of interest for the young and the “young at heart”. You can drive (during the summer months only, typically June through October) to the base of the lookout on Forest Service paved and dirt roads, some of which are narrow and fairly steep in places. A high clearance vehicle is recommended, but 4 wheel drive is not necessary. Once you have reached a small parking area, you feel you are on top of the world, and you very nearly are! The elevation is 8,284 feet, with a sheer drop off on the west side of 200 feet. Just a short hike up a dirt and gravel walkway, climb a short distance on slabs of granite placed like haphazard steps, and you are there! This is possibly a 50’ moderate climb, including the walkway. There are three or four short wooden steps up to the catwalk surrounding the Lookout structure which is 14 feet by 14 feet.

To reach the Tobias Peak Lookout, a map has been provided for your convenience on the back side of this brochure. There are a few different routes that you might take, depending on your point of origin. In all instances you would be on Forest Service Road 23S16, and then taking 24S50 (towards Frog Meadow), or 24S24. Your origination could be from California Hot Springs, Posey, Thompson Camp, Johnsondale, or even Greenhorn Summit. Be sure and carry water with you as none is available along the way or at the lookout.

Upon reaching the lookout, 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 Tobias Peak 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 5 p.m., Saturday through Wednesday, but

may have the lookout closed due to fires or repair work. If the gate is open, you are welcome to visit the lookout, talk with the Forest Service employee, and enjoy the view, which is spectacular.

No more than 4 – 5 people are recommended on the lookout at a time, as there is very little space. 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 the catwalk railing or lean against any part of the building, particularly the windows or smudge them. The lookout needs a clean, unobstructed view at all times. The windows are very fragile and break easily.

The panoramic view from Tobias Peak includes Mt. Whitney and the Golden Trout Wilderness, the Great Western Divide made up of the beautiful Kaweahs, Dome Rock, and The Needles; the western face of the Kern Plateau, Kern River Valley in the South Lake Isabella area as well as Kelso Valley; North Cold Springs ridge where giant sequoias are visible, as well as Deer Creek Grove; Pine Flat and Hot Springs area out to the great San Joaquin basin and on to the coastal foothills; and close by, Poso Station (a Forest Service Fire Station cabin recently renovated for rental to the public) in Posey by beautiful Linn’s Valley.

Tobias Peak is a great area to study and watch the raptors in flight, which on any given day includes Goshawks, Golden Eagles, Red Tail Hawks, Sparrow Hawks, Turkey Vultures and maybe just possibly a condor. Sunset is awesome much of the time, and although the Tobias Lookout closes to guests at 5 p.m., we welcome you to watch the sunset from the lookout catwalk or surrounding rock base. Morning hours are the best times to view the valley on the western side. Bring your lunch with you...a picnic table is located on a level surface just a few feet away from the lookout, and is for your use and enjoyment. Of course, be sure and take all your scraps, cans and trash with you when you leave.

Tobias is still very old fashioned in many ways with history to be told and many recognizable pioneer names on the list of lookout personnel. Great stories are exchanged here also ... and a part of the old fashioned way is the little house down on the rocks called a "privy". It is still operable, and available for your use.

Tobias was built as a working fire tower in 1935, by the Civilian Conservation Corps. All materials and equipment used were packed in by Mule Train. Tobias still operates with all the original fixtures. It was first manned by "Harold" from June 1 to October 18, 1936.

Most Forest Service gated roads are closed Nov. 15 and reopened May 15, depending on weather.



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Forest Service
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Western Divide Ranger District
Sequoia National Forest

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