

FABYAN GUARD STATION RESTORATION 2014

The Project

During July 2014 HistoriCorps, with sponsorship by the White Mountain National Forest, is performing repairs and restoration on the Fabyan Guard Station (a.k.a. Fabyan Cabin). HistoriCorps is a national initiative that works through partnerships to mobilize volunteers to save and sustain our nation's special places while providing educational and outdoor experiences. The work is being done by a team led by historic preservation specialists and staffed by veterans and local volunteers. The team will provide a number of improvements to the historic cabin to ensure it is safe and suitable for proposed future uses. Repairs will include: (1) installation of stone foundation piers, (2) replacement of the first (and possibly second) tier of sill logs, (3) resetting the granite doorstep, (4) regrading the site to improve drainage, (5) application of chinking and daubing to replacement logs, and (6) rehabilitation of door and windows.

The Cabin

The Fabyan Guard Station, dating back to 1923, is one of the oldest structures built by the Forest Service on the White Mountain National Forest, and is the last remaining example of a Guard Station on the forest. The story behind this log cabin helps illuminate the early history of the national forest. In the years after creation of the White Mountain National Forest, activities were managed out of an office in Gorham, NH. Managing these lands from Gorham was impractical in those early years. Travel was largely by train and then by foot or horse. Road travel was not easy in the winter with many roads unplowed. The Forest Service lacked vehicles in those days. To cut down on travel time the Forest Service stationed employees, whose job was to protect the forest, in remote cabins that were strategically located. These employees were called Forest Guards and the cabins they worked out of were called Guard Stations. The Guard Stations were located in areas that had close access to the newly acquired lands.

One of the first such cabins to be constructed was the Fabyan Guard Station, built near Bretton Woods by Clifford L. Graham. Later in his career Graham became a noted Supervisor of the White Mountain National Forest. The Guard Station is located on the old Cherry Mountain Road near the Fabyan train station. The Cherry Mountain Road first went into operation in 1811 as the Jefferson Turnpike. This early toll road was authorized to provide access for freight and coaches between the towns of Jefferson and Lancaster and the 10th New Hampshire Turnpike with access to Portland, Maine. Although its life as a toll road was brief the Jefferson Turnpike survives today as the Cherry Mountain Road and is maintained as a seasonal road by the Forest Service. It's likely the longest intact piece of a 19th century turnpike in New Hampshire. Graham built the cabin in 1923 using native red spruce logs cut on



Fabyan Guard Station: 2013



Fabyan Guard Station: 1926

the site. The walls were chinked with oakum and fitted with scribed wood slats between the logs. The one room log cabin is 16 by 20 feet, once had two bunks, and was heated by a wood cook stove. Water came from an unnamed stream out behind the cabin and there was a rustic outhouse nearby that still remains. A horse corral and barn were on the opposite side of the Cherry Mountain Road. The cost of building the cabin in 1923 was \$75.

The duties of Forest Guards were numerous and varied. In the spring, summer and autumn the guards would work on trails and campgrounds; build and maintain phone lines to the fire lookout towers, fight forest fires; assist the public and protect the forest resources. In the winter, the Forest Guards would often work scaling timber to determine how much a logger

would have to pay for logs being cut on the Forest. These guard stations served a very practical need in providing local lodging and work places to manage and protect the forest.

The Fabyan Guard Station is the last of its kind on the White Mountain National Forest. It is one of the oldest remaining guard stations in the eastern United States. It is an outstanding example of a modest but well-crafted structure showing the skills of early Forest Service personnel. The close association with Clifford Graham is an important aspect of the cabin's history and significance. The structure has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

National Forest History

By the first decade of the 20th century the White Mountain Region had been damaged by poor logging practices and forest fires. As environment, scenery, and water quality deteriorated tensions grew between industrial and recreational interests. By the early twentieth century, a growing consensus between widely diverse interests was building that something had to be done in the White Mountains. On March 1, 1911 after years of efforts by organizations such as the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and the Appalachian Mountain Club President Taft signed the Weeks Act. The Act authorized federal purchase of forest lands at the head of navigable streams and provided for cooperation in fire control between federal and state authorities. The federal government began in 1914 to acquire neglected and mismanaged private lands. In 1918 the White Mountain National Forest was established by Presidential Proclamation and it was in this context, to manage newly acquired lands, that the Fabyan Guard Station was constructed.

For More Information

<http://historiccorps.org/fabyanguardstation/>
http://whitemountainhistory.org/Fabyan_Guard_Cabin.html
<http://weeksactlegacytrail.org/trail/sites/28-fabyanguard/>



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