United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic name</th>
<th>Twinton Fire Lookout Tower</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other names/site number</td>
<td>Colliers Rock Lookout Tower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of related multiple property listing</td>
<td>Tennessee Division of Forest Fire Lookout Towers, 1933-ca. 1975</td>
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<td>(Remove “N/A” if property is part of a multiple property listing and add name)</td>
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2. Location

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<tr>
<td>State:</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
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<tr>
<td>County:</td>
<td>Overton</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vicinity:</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Zip:</td>
<td>38554</td>
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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination _ _ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets _ _ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide _X_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: _X_ A _ _ B _X_ C _ _ D

Signature of certifying official/Title: ____________________________ Date: ________________
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official: ____________________________ Date: ________________
Title: State of Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower
Overton County, Tennessee

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:)

____________________________

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private
Public – Local
Public – State
Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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<th>Noncontributing</th>
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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Located in Overton County within the Upper Cumberland Plateau Region, the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower is an 80-ft. bolted, truss frame, steel structure constructed in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The tower provided a high, sheltered location for fire observation through its square cab featuring a band of windows that provide a 360° panoramic view of the surrounding terrain. The nominated property is situated within a one-acre clearing surrounded by mature forests and includes one contributing resource, a ca. 1933 fire tower. Also situated within the one-acre parcel are six non-contributing resources. These include: a ca. 2000 radio tower, a ca. 2000 equipment shed, two ca. 2000 propane tank ports, a ca. 2007 concrete block building, and a ca. 2013 equipment shed. Although the immediate setting of the Twinton Lookout Tower has been compromised by modern construction, the tower itself has not been significantly altered since its date of construction in 1933. As a result, the structure retains a high level of historic integrity.

Twinton Fire Lookout Tower, ca. 1933 (C)
Located approximately 0.67-miles northwest of the community of Twinton in Overton County, the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower was constructed ca. 1933 by the CCC (Kirksey 2014). The tower is situated at an elevation of 1,863 feet within the Upper Cumberland Plateau on one-acre parcel situated on the northwest side of Threet Road. Located roughly 65 feet east of the tower is a one-story crew cabin that appears to date to ca. 1933. Both the tower and crew cabin are accessible from Threet Road by a gravel driveway measuring

Narrative Description

CONCRETE; METAL/Steel; WOOD; GLASS
approximately 0.1-mile. The immediate setting of the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower is characterized by a cleared lot surrounded by mature trees.

Architecturally, the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower is constructed of structural steel members that are connected by a series of bolted connections. Overall, the four-sided, truss frame tower stands 80 feet tall and is topped by an enclosed cab (Kirksey 2014). The structure is supported on four legs secured to concrete footers. Steel X-bracing is affixed to the structural frame at each of the tower’s eight levels, spanning the distance between every level of the tower with diagonal support members on each face. The lower portion of each section of X-bracing is further reinforced by T-bracing, which traverses the distance between each leg and is bisected by a single steel member at center. Additional steel bracing is installed at the juncture of each level of the tower. Oriented on a horizontal plane, the bracing extends from each of the staircase’s seven landings to the opposing section of the tower, thereby forming a rectangular figure.

A steel manufacture plate affixed to the northeast leg indicates that the tower was designed by the Aerometer Company of Chicago, Illinois. Aermotor was the premier manufacturer of steel fire towers in the early twentieth century. A successful windmill maker, Aermotor re-tooled their existing designs into fire lookout towers, which were typically topped with a small, 7-foot by 7-foot square cab (Grosvenor 1999:96). The Twinton Fire Lookout Tower appears to be an 80-ft. Aermotor MC-39 type tower.

The lookout tower tapers in width from the base to its apex and is ascended via an open steel staircase with metal handrails. A total of 120 treads, consisting of wood planks, complete the climb to the top of the structure. The first run of stairs consists of 8 steps. Each successive 16-tread staircase rises diagonally across the interior of the tower to a triangular landing, also constructed of wood planks. The first landing is located at the northwest corner of the tower. The second landing is located at the next level of the structure at the southeast corner. This alternating, dogleg pattern continues through seven landings, with the eighth stringer reaching the apex of the tower, which is accessed via a trapdoor at the base of the square observation room.

The observation room is steel-framed, partially clad in metal sheeting, and topped with a hipped metal roof. The floor of the cab is comprised of wood boards. Each elevation contains two, nine-light, pivot windows constructed of metal. The windows are oriented side-by-side and encompass the entirety of the width of each elevation, thereby forming an unobstructed 360° view of the surrounding terrain. Entry to the cab was prohibited by forestry staff at the time of survey.

Utility Building, ca. 2007 (NC)
A ca. 2007, non-contributing utility building is located 25 feet east of the lookout tower. The one-story, rectangular plan building sits on an north-south axis and is of concrete block construction. The gabled roof of the 32 feet by 23 feet building is oriented on an east-west axis and is covered with standing seam metal. There are no windows extant on any elevation. Entry to the utility building is on the south façade, with a metal entrance door located east of center. The entry is protected by a partial-width porch with a shed roof supported by wooden posts sited over a concrete slab foundation. The interior of the utility building was inaccessible during the site visit.

Radio Tower and Associated Structures ca. 2000 (NC)
Situated approximately 120 feet northwest of the fire observation tower is a radio/cellular communications tower, which was built ca. 2000. The cantilevered structure is constructed of steel and features a lattice of triangular cross-sections. The tower tapers in height from its base to its apex.
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

East of the base of the tower and located within a chain-link fence topped with barbed wire is a ca. 2000 radio equipment building. The walls of the building are constructed of concrete blocks, and the south elevation is differentiated by a centered, metal entry door with a total of four ventilation panels: two vents flanking each side of the door at ground level and near the roofline. Also enclosed within the chain link fence are two, ca. 2000 propane tank ports. The first propane tank sits on a concrete slab foundation 12 feet east of the radio equipment building. The port is open to both the north and west elevations, and the south and east elevations are constructed of concrete blocks. There is no roof. The second propane tank port is sited 10 feet east of the first tank. It also features a concrete slab foundation and cement block walls. The second structure, however, is enclosed on every elevation with the exception of the west elevation, upon which a three-foot-wide passage is provided at the northernmost portion of the wall.

Second Radio Equipment Building, ca. 2013 (Non-Contributing)

Finally, a second radio equipment building, ca. 2013, is located approximately 50 feet to the northwest of the fire lookout tower. It is a rectangular-plan, metal frame building with composite walls of indeterminate composition. Sited on a north-south axis in a graveled lot, the equipment building is accessed via two, metal doors on the south façade: one door is located toward the west elevation, while the other door is situated at a point just east of center. Both entries include a ground-level concrete stoop and small fiberglass awning. Every corner of the pre-fabricated building is securely bolted to its concrete slab foundation with metal plates. Moreover, a ventilation pipe protrudes from the center of the west elevation near the flat roof.
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower
Overton County, Tennessee

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Conservation

Period of Significance
1933-1971

Significant Dates
1933

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Civilian Conservation Corps
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Overton County, Tennessee

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Twinton Fire Lookout Tower is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as part of the "Tennessee Division of Forestry Fire Lookout Towers, 1933- ca.1975" Multiple Property Document under National Register Criterion A in the area of Conservation as a reflection of changing conceptions regarding forest management and fire control in the twentieth century. Additionally, the tower is eligible for the NRHP under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of an Aermotor MC-39 fire lookout tower. The tower retains its original design features, and its rural, forested historic setting has been preserved. The tower was constructed as part of the Tennessee Division of Forestry's (TDF) statewide efforts to protect forested land in the state through its fire control program. The period of significance begins in 1933, when the tower was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The period of significance terminates in 1971, which is approximately the time when Tennessee fire lookout towers were largely abandoned in favor of other methods of fire identification.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Located in rural Overton County, Tennessee, the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower was completed in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) (Kirksey 2014). This fire tower was used for observance of the surrounding area for fire detection, which was an important local representation of state-wide conservation efforts. Very little historical information is available regarding the Twinton fire lookout tower, and while the TDF holds records of land transactions for the parcels surrounding the fire tower, the record of indenture for the tower site is unavailable. It is likely, however, that the State of Tennessee entered into a contract with the site's landowner which allowed the construction, use, and maintenance of a fire lookout tower on the property. The contract allowed the State to use the property for fire detection, gave the State the right of ingress and egress, and the right to construct a telephone line to the lookout tower. In the event of the State's abandonment of the property, the land title will revert to its original owners, and all structures and appurtenances will remain the property of the State.

The lookout tower is eligible under National Register Criterion A in the area of Conservation as a reflection of changing conceptions regarding forest management and fire control in the twentieth century. Tennessee, along with many other states, benefited from the early shift in public policy allowing for improvement in fire detection as a result of the conservation movement that led to the construction and staffing of fire towers. The TDF relied heavily on CCC labor, and the CCC was responsible for the construction and operation of many of Tennessee's fire lookout towers built in the 1930s. While it is unknown exactly which CCC Company constructed the Twinton tower, and Overton County contained no known CCC camps, neighboring Putnam County was home to Company 1471, based at Camp P-60 in the Cookeville vicinity. It is possible that the TDF drew from this camp for workmen.

In Region 8, and particularly in the State of Tennessee, with large areas of difficult-to-access mountain terrain and thick forest canopy, fire towers have served as a particularly important fire management tool. At its peak, the state had 208 lookout towers of which 142 were extant as of March 26, 2014 (University of Tennessee-Knoxville 2014). The lookout tower is a prominent symbol of the history of fire management and a key component of the conservation movement. From its establishment, the Forestry Service played a significant role in shaping national fire control policies as well as in the development of state-level fire
The Twinton Fire Lookout Tower is eligible for the NRHP under National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of an Aermotor MC-39 observation-only fire lookout tower. The MC-39 design was one of the most popular steel designs by the Aermotor Company of Chicago, Illinois (Forest Fire Lookout Association; Starr). The tower design was based on standardized plans adapted from Aermotor windmills (Steere 1987). The type is characterized by a 7-foot by 7-foot steel cab, an internal stairway that doglegs from corner to corner. Each run of stairs terminates at a triangular landing. This type was available in a number of heights, ranging from 33 feet to as tall as 176 feet (Forest Fire Lookout Association n.d.). This type is very similar to an International Derrick Tower model from 1933, which was designed by Aermotor and the U.S. Forest Service. The International Derrick Towers often had issues with swaying staircases, however, and were unpopular (Forest Fire Lookout Association; Starr). While no schematics were located for the MC-39, schematics are available for the nearly-identical International Derrick 1933 model, and are located in the additional documentation section. The Aermotor MC-39 improved upon the International Derrick 1933 design, and the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower represents an important stage in the evolution of lookout tower architecture.

The Twinton Fire Lookout Tower retains its original design and a high level of its original fabric, and therefore maintains integrity. The historic setting has been compromised by the construction of two modern radio towers, but no additional development has taken place in the area. Until the 1970s, the tower was used during high-fire season for fire detection and was constantly manned. Since the mid-1970s, however, when forestry employees became more dependent on fire-spotting planes and fire reports from 911 emergency calls, the tower is no longer used for observance, but is occasionally ascended by forestry staff for maintenance checks.

For additional information, please refer to the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Tennessee Division of Forestry Fire Lookout Towers, 1933-ca. 1975".
9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

Forest Fire Lookout Association

Grosvenor, John R. and United States Forest Service.

Kirksey, John
2014 Personal communication. John Kirksey, Fire Management Unit Leader, Tennessee Division of Forestry.

Starr, Bill

Steere, Peter L.

University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Refer to the Multiple Property Documentation Form "Tennessee Division of Forestry Fire Lookout Towers, 1933-ca. 1975" for additional related sources.
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower                               Overton County, Tennessee
Name of Property                                         County and State

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A


Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Name of Property

Overton County, Tennessee

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1

USGS Quadrangle Crawford 334 SW

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.291422

Longitude: -85.138641

Verbal Boundary Description

The proposed boundary of the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower property follows the boundary of Overton County parcel 094 007.00, and is shown on the accompanying site map entitled "Twinton Fire Lookout Tower Boundary."

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundary for the Twinton Fire Lookout Tower property includes those resources that are historically associated with the fire observation complex during its period of significance (1933-1975) and retain adequate integrity.
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower
Overton County, Tennessee

USGS Map

Located on USGS 1961 Crawford 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle.

Location of Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Fire lookout tower location
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower Boundary
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Name of Property

Overton County, Tennessee

County and State

11. Form Prepared By

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Historic David Sprouse</th>
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<td>Organization</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.

- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register Photo Policy for submittal of digital images and prints)

- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Photo Log

Name of Property: Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Photographer: Meghan Weaver, Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research, Nashville, TN

Date Photographed: January 2, 2014

Note from SHPO Staff: This section will be revised with recent photographs for final submittal

All digital images labeled as follows:

TN_Overton County_TN Fire Lookout Towers MPS_Twinton_.tif (also .jpg)

0001. Fire lookout tower (C) south and east elevations. Camera facing northwest. 1 of 27.

0002. Fire lookout tower (C) cab south and east elevations. Camera facing northwest. 2 of 27.

0003. Fire lookout tower (C) cab north elevation. Camera facing south. 3 of 27.

0004. Fire lookout tower (C) cab north and west elevations. Camera facing southeast. 4 of 27.

0005. Fire lookout tower (C) north and west elevations. Radio equipment building (NC) in foreground and utility building (NC) in background. Camera facing southeast. 5 of 27.

0006. Fire lookout tower (C) west and south elevations. Utility building (NC) in background. Camera facing northeast. 6 of 27.

0007. Fire lookout tower (C) concrete pad detail. 7 of 27.

0008. Fire lookout tower (C) bracing and stairway detail. Camera facing southeast. 8 of 27.

0009. Fire lookout tower (C) stairway detail. Second radio equipment building (NC) in background. Camera facing west. 9 of 27.

0010. Fire lookout tower (C) bolts and plating detail on foot. Camera facing
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Name of Property

Overton County, Tennessee

County and State

west. 10 of 27.

0011. Fire lookout tower (C) bracing detail. View looking up from base of tower. 11 of 27.

0012. Fire lookout tower (C) "AERMOTOR CO. CHICAGO, ILL" plaque on leg. Camera facing west. 12 of 27.

0013. Lookout operator's cabin (C) interior. Camera facing northwest. 13 of 27.

0014. Fire lookout tower (C) stairway and bracing detail. Camera facing west. 14 of 27.

0015. Utility building (NC) south elevation and lookout operator's cabin (C) south and west elevations. Camera facing northeast. 15 of 27.

0016. Lookout operator's cabin (C) north and east elevations. Camera facing southwest. 16 of 27.

0017. Lookout operator's cabin (C) north and west elevations. Camera facing northeast. 17 of 27.

0018. Lookout operator's cabin (C) interior with boarded-over window. Camera facing northeast. 18 of 27.

0019. Lookout operator's cabin (C) interior with electrical panel. Camera facing south. 19 of 27.

0020. Utility building (NC) north and east elevations. Camera facing southwest. 20 of 27.

0021. Utility building (NC) south and west elevations. Camera facing northeast. 21 of 27.

0022. Second radio equipment building (NC) south and west elevations. Camera facing northeast. 22 of 27.

0023. Second radio equipment building (NC) north and east elevations. Camera facing southwest. 23 of 27.

0024. Radio equipment building (NC) and associated structures (NC) south and west elevations. Camera facing northeast. 24 of 27.

0025. Radio tower (NC) with radio equipment building (NC) and associated structures (NC) south and east elevations. Camera facing northwest. 25 of 27.

0026. Radio tower (NC) and associated structures (NC). Camera facing northwest. 26 of 27.

0027. Radio tower (NC) and radio equipment building (NC). Camera facing north. 27 of 27.
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower
Overton County, Tennessee
Name of Property
County and State

Site Plan

Map Not to Scale

Radio Equipment Building
Radio Equipment Building No. 2
Radio Tower
Fence
Utility Building
Lookout Operator's Cabin
Fire Tower
Service Road
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower

Name of Property: International Derrick Model 1933

County and State: Overton County, Tennessee
Twinton Fire Lookout Tower  
Overton County, Tennessee

Name of Property  
County and State

Aermotor Standard 7x7 Lookout House Schematic, ca. 1943
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Cookeville</td>
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TWINTON FIRE LOOKOUT TOWER

CRAWFORD, OVERTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
TWINTON FIRE LOOKOUT TOWER

CRAWFORD, OVERTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE