

To the Friends of Comanche Lookout Park,

Hello, my name is Joshua Doyen and I was referred to you by Sandy Jenkins of the San Antonio Parks and Rec. dept. I have been a resident of San Antonio for nearly forty years. I live on the northeast side off Nacogdoches rd. and Judson roads. I live within walking distance of Comanche Lookout Park, where I often go for runs or bike rides or sometimes for a casual stroll. I am so happy the city purchased this land and turned it into a beautiful park with winding trails and access to the beautiful and unique Julia Yates Semmes Library. Perhaps my favorite part of the park is the beautiful view of downtown San Antonio upon reaching the summit. Yet, as beautiful as it is, I can't even imagine how much better it would be if you could have an unblemished, 360-degree view. That is something that I would love to see at the park. I'm sure some people have suggested opening the existing tower, though I believe it is too old and would not be able to support the structural changes to make it into an accessible view tower. I also wouldn't want any of the beautiful oak trees that line the top of the hill to be removed. That being said, I have a solution that I truly hope you will enjoy as much as I do and hope you will look into this.

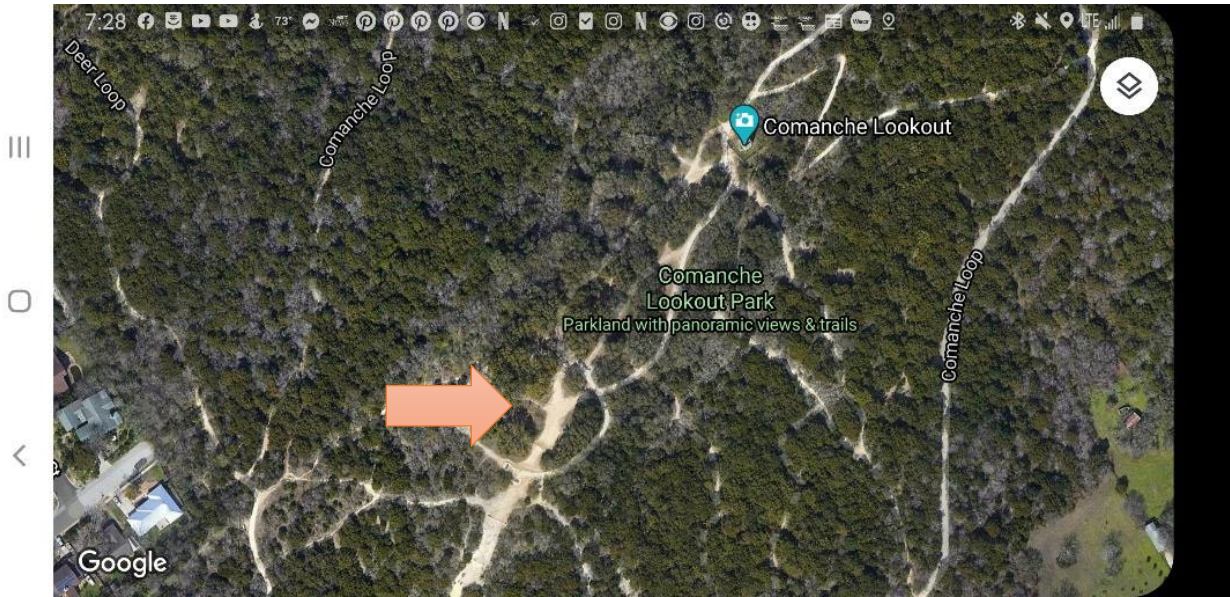
For many years, I have an Aunt who owns a summer home in northern Minnesota. I'm not sure if you've ever been to this part of the country but it is quite beautiful. Nearby lies Itasca State Park. Itasca is known as being the headwaters of the Mississippi river and has tens of thousands of visitors yearly. Among many of the various amenities, there lies Aiton heights tower, a lookout tower that pierces through the extremely tall trees of the region and gives park visitors a 360-degree unobstructed view of the park. It is quite beautiful as you can see the land all the way to the horizon in every direction.

This brings me back to Comanche Lookout park. I would like to propose that a lookout tower, similar to the one at Itasca be built there. It doesn't have to be as tall as the Itasca tower as the trees in Texas are not as tall as in Minnesota, but it would be amazing to be able to climb a tower that would give park visitors a 360 degree unobstructed view of all of San Antonio and Bexar county in every direction. I believe this tower would greatly enhance the uniqueness and splendor of the park and would attract visitors from all over San Antonio and not just those who live in the area. There is definitely room for a tower at the top of the hill near what is the southeastern edge of the hilltop. There is a large area that is without trees near the top that would be an ideal location for a tower like this.

I have provided a map of Comanche Hill park where I believe would be the perfect spot for a tower. I have also included material from the Aiton Heights tower at Itasca state park to give you an idea of what I am talking about. I truly hope you look into this. Thank you so much for your time, I appreciate it.

Joshua Doyen

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The area that would be best for a tower is highlighted here. There is a large area near the southwest corner of the hilltop devoid of trees and large enough to support a lookout tower without having to remove any trees or disturb the natural surroundings.

The following pages highlight the Aiton Heights Tower at Itasca State Park in northern Minnesota. I think this tower would be ideal for Comanche Lookout Park.

Minnesota's Historical Fire Lookout Towers

Exploring the history of Minnesota's fire lookout towers. Contributions welcome - email your photos or other material: mnfiretower@gmail.com Readers are free to use materials not otherwise credited in accordance with Creative Commons Attribution (4.0).

Monday, June 25, 2012

Aiton Heights Fire Tower

Aiton Heights is accessed from Wilderness Drive in Itasca State Park. This tower once stood near the park headquarters. A map from 1928 shows the tower and notes "New M.F.S. Tower - 110^{ft} high." It was moved to the present location in 1937 and fully erected in 1940.



June 2012



June 2012

The tower is open for climbing and has an interpretive program. It is a 100 foot stairway tower.

Both map and survey sources refer to this tower as Alton Heights Lookout Tower. Maps as late as 1972 show another tower near the park headquarters. Databases refer to that as the Itasca Fire Tower and describe that as a 94 foot ladder tower dating to 1939. That tower apparently was built when the stairway tower was moved to the Aiton Heights site.

A [1914 map prepared by W.T. Cox, State Forester](#) shows a tower near where the park headquarters would be located and refers to that as the East Base Tower.



Minnesota Historical Society
Itasca State Park fire lookout tower. Date: 1930
by permission

Neither the 1954 or 1958 USGS Bemidji 1 x 2 sheets show any towers in the park. Somewhat odd, as those maps have been good sources for locating towers.

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The people of this state will forever remember Brower with gratitude as the founder of Itasca State Park and its defender and guardian, amidst many difficulties and discouragements, through his last years. His heavy cares and efforts for truthfulness of the river history and to protect the park and lake against ruthless damage by lumbermen are shown throughout his latest book, the MHS Collections vol. 11, but in the darkest hour, when the biennial session of the state legislature in 1893 adjourned without providing for the maintenance of the park, with unfailing courage he exclaimed, "Itasca State Park shall live forever!" Another subject of much interest is presented by the admirable development of a belt of marginal moraine hills, knolls, and short ridges, traversing the south and west edges of the park. This is part of a very extensive course of such irregularly hilly deposits of glacial and modified drift crossing Minnesota, named the Itasca or Tenth Moraine. It is one of twelve similar marginal moraines traced in this state by the present writer, formed at stages of temporary halt or radiance during the general recession and departure of the continental ice sheet. Most of the information for this list is from Brower's MHS vols. 7 and 11, supplemented with various details from other sources. Like the majestic progress of an epic poem or a grand drama, the history of the gradual discovery of the Mississippi River

runs through four centuries. Begun when Amerigo Vespucci in 1498 mapped the delta and mouths of this mighty stream on the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico, it continued till Brower in 1889-92 mapped the shores and islands of Lake Hernando de Soto in the south edge of Itasca State Park. The moving picture of this history is portrayed in words and in maps by the volumes of the MHS Collections. In the nomenclature of the park, a good number of the great explorers of the river are recalled, De Soto, Groseilliers and Radisson, La Salle, Schoolcraft, Nicollet. The vain endeavors of Glazier to link his name with those heroes aroused the just indignation of geographers and the officers of the Minnesota Historical Society. During a decade or longer a great strife raged concerning the true head of the Mississippi and the rightful name of Elk Lake. In 1905 Glazier and Brower, chief opponents in the strife, died, but the Itasca State Park, which grew from it, "shall live forever." - *Minnesota Place Names, A Geographical Encyclopedia, Warren Upham*

Posted by north central at 6:00 AM

Labels: 1930-1940, Aiton Heights, Clearwater County, Itasca, Itasca State Park, standing tower

Location: Itasca State Park, Park Rapids, MN 56470, USA