Mormon Lake, Arizona: the sometimes-largest natural lake in the state. Its water level rises and falls with the seasons, sometimes becoming deep enough to boat in and other times drying up almost entirely. For most of the year though, it exists as a riparian marsh, a unique environment in this part of the country. Volunteers were treated to a special camping spot that is not open to the general public and were offered great views of the lake and surrounding landscape.

Flagstaff District Archaeologist Jeremy Haines shared the following history and information with us:

Mormon Lake Guard Station Residence Building

For over 100 years, the Mormon Lake Guard Station Residence Building served the US Forest Service in managing the pine dominated plateau country surrounding the shallow, periodically dry, basin of Mormon Lake. Constructed as early as 1908 and named, without flair, as the Mormon Lake Ranger Station, the building served for decades as both a ranger station and modest residence for rangers and their families. Operating out of this building, rangers managed timber sales, grazing permits, homestead entries, and strategized the suppression of wildfires.

By the 1970s, the a new modern Ranger Station building was constructed closer to Flagstaff, and old station grounds were repurposed as the Mormon Lake Guard Station. This guard station functioned as a staging area compound for wildland firefighters, and the old residence building was used to house seasonal crew members, including the fledgling Mormon Lake Hotshot crew.

Over time, the Ranger Residence building, was referred to by the fire crews as the ‘Cook Shack’ and was used as a communal location for crews to convene and prepare meals. A new modular crew building was constructed nearby in 2002, and the Ranger Residence fell into disrepair.

Over the years, the Mormon Lake Guard Station served as home to hundreds of wildland firefighters and forest service employees. This place still holds a strong connection to many people who live in the area or continue to work on the Coconino National Forest.

It is hoped that the repair and preservation work on the building will eventually lead to its inclusion into the ‘Rooms with a View’ Arizona Cabin Rental Program sponsored by the US Forest Service. This program offers historic buildings to the public for daily/nightly rental.

The building itself...

The Mormon Lake Guard Station is a single story, T-shaped, gable-roofed, wood framed dwelling. The dwelling is clad in beveled shiplap siding with 5” reveal and is painted Forest Service Brown. The roof is sheathed in brown asphalt shingles and in poor condition. The current windows (likely original) are one of two designs: wood six-over-six or four-over-four double hung.

WHAT: Volunteers worked with field staff to learn and improve their skills at the following tasks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Approximate Percentage of Scope*</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Stripping and reinstalling roofing</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Installation of historically accurate siding</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHERE: The site is located just a half hour from thriving Flagstaff, AZ in north-central Arizona (map).

Coordinates: 34.9081018, -111.4390427

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