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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR
County and State

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.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
	buildings
	site
2	structure
	object
2	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: air-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:

communications facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Utilitarian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: N/A

roof: N/A

other: CONCRETE; METAL: steel

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

Summary Paragraph

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34, also called the Nugget Butte Airway Beacon, consists of a 63'-tall steel lattice tower and a 56'-long poured concrete arrow on top of Nugget Butte. The location is approximately a mile from the town of Gold Hill, accessed by a steep road up the forested ridge. The Aeronautics Branch of the United States Department of Commerce constructed this lighted beacon, along with others in southwestern Oregon, in 1929 as a nighttime navigational aid for air mail pilots.¹ After serving its original purpose for over two decades, the Nugget Butte Beacon assumed additional duties as a radio transmitting site starting in 1952² and eventually transitioned into the modern communications site still present on the ridge top today. Aeronautical navigation charts still depicted the beacon in 1960 but not in 1965, indicating a terminal date for aviation use.³ Despite the construction of additional structures nearby, including a 12' x 16' equipment shelter and a 150'-tall steel communications tower, the original tower and arrow (the site's two contributing structures) remain largely unchanged. The original tower is intact, minus its lights and with a few added antennas, and the concrete arrow is in good condition. The contributing structures retain most aspects of integrity including location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

Narrative Description

Setting

The beacon is located on a north/south-trending ridgetop called Nugget Butte above a horseshoe bend in the Rogue River. To the south is the small town of Gold Hill and east across the river is Gold Hill's namesake peak. The ridge is forested with a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees including Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, and madrone, with an understory of dense poison oak and manzanita along with grasses, snowberry, and various wildflowers such as cat's-ear lilies, farewell-to-spring, and tarweed.

The airway beacon is situated at the Nugget Butte Communications Site, a modern communications site in active use by its current lessee and right-of-way holder, Day Wireless (as of July 2026). The modern communications site consists of a self-supporting tower and equipment shelter within a chain link fenced compound that also incorporates the historic beacon tower and some components of the historic concrete arrow (Figure 4).

The ridgeline also hosts additional modern communications sites. Two high-power communications towers are located 0.3 mile north up the ridge, and two cell towers are located 0.1 mile south down the ridge.

Contributing Structures

The two contributing structures are the beacon tower and the arrow constructed in 1929 (Photograph 3). The tower is a four-faceted, 63'-tall⁴ galvanized steel lattice tower that once supported a rotating beacon light and two course lights. Traces of orange paint are all that remains of its last paint job. The legs are

¹ "Airway Beacon in Valley View to be Lighted," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 3 October 1929:5.

² Special Land Use Permit Serial No. M-1, Portland District BLM, June 1952.

³ *Klamath Falls* sectional aeronautical charts, U.S. Dept. of Commerce Coast and Geodetic Survey (1960, 1965)

⁴ This is the height listed on current documentation for the communications site, which does not match any standard tower height. It is unclear if the Nugget Butte tower was non-standard, if this is an error in the documentation, or if this height includes the modern collocated antennas.

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made of multiple lengths of angle steel bolted together, with additional lengths used for cross-members and X-supports going all the way up the tower. A narrow steel ladder is built onto the south face of the tower (Photograph 5).

At the top of the tower is a square platform with angle steel guard rails and steel grate deck (Photograph 6). Standard size for a beacon tower platform was six or seven feet square;⁵ while it is not possible to measure this one, it is assumed to be a standard size. The platform has a horizontal disc in the middle supported by angle steel legs; this was where the rotating beacon light (now absent) would have been mounted at the tower's peak. The platform also has the housing for two stationary course lights on the east and west sides.

Visitors have scratched initials and dates on the tower's legs and cross-braces. Much of this graffiti is illegible, but discernible dates include: 1937; 1938; December 6, 1941; 1942; July 22, 1943; and January 26, 1945. No modern graffiti was observed.

The beacon tower was made by the International Derrick and Equipment Company (IDECO), identified by a manufacturer's tag attached to the tower behind the ladder (Photograph 8). It reads, "THE / INTERNATIONAL / IDECO / DERRICK & EQUIPMENT CO / COLUMBUS, OHIO, U.S.A." While IDECO got its start in the oilfields, as the name implies, it also constructed fire lookout towers as well as airport and airway beacon towers. According to its 1928 advertising brochure, "Selection by the U.S. Government of IDECO galvanized structural steel airway beacon towers for use in the U.S. Air Mail service demonstrates beyond question the soundness of IDECO engineering and construction. IDECO Beacon Towers are regular equipment on every important airway in the United States."⁶

The tower was from a standardized design and assembled from a kit of pieces, each of which had to be less than 22' long for transportation to remote locations.⁷ According to the manufacturer brochure, "All members have been standardized and are built over jigs and dies, ensuring absolute interchangeability and eliminating any cutting or fitting in the field... Erection diagrams showing both foundation plans and erection details are furnished with each tower. All members and parts of the structure have erection numbers permanently stamped into the steel" (Figure 11).⁸ These numbers are still readily visible on the tower components at Nugget Butte and include notations like: "230 AT," "406 AT," and "405 ATR."

Five adjoining poured concrete pads form the 56'-long arrow that points to the next beacon site to the west (Figure 4). The middle pad supports the tower; it is flanked by two connector pads that join it to the point on the west end and the feather end to the east. The arrow points 274 degrees, just a few degrees north of due west, toward the next beacon site on the airway. The middle pad and feather end are oriented to 124/304 degrees. The feather end pad is the largest, at 13'-5" x 11'-2", and the middle pad measures 12' square with the tower legs set in from the edge about 6".

⁵ Department of Commerce Aeronautics Branch, *Airway Bulletin No. 1: General Airway Information* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1931):69; "Large Uses of Steel in Small Ways: Airway Beacon Towers," *Steel*, Vol. 89 Issue 14 (1 October 1931):50.

⁶ International Derrick & Equipment Company (IDECO), "Airway and Airport Beacon Towers," advertising brochure (1928). Accessed online 11 June 2026, <https://thesurveystation.com/assets/docs/publications/1928-Ideco-Airway-and-Airport-Beacon-Towers-Brochure>

⁷ "Large Uses of Steel," *Steel*:50.

⁸ IDECO, "Airway and Airport Beacon Towers."

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The pads are all in good condition with a few cracks and limited chipping along a few edges. The arrow point was heavily overgrown with poison oak and manzanita when first documented in 2024,⁹ but was cleared when the nearby new tower was built in 2025.

The arrow originally sported a chrome yellow paint scheme with the beacon number in large black numerals, according to the standards of the time.¹⁰ After 1931, new standards dictated a switch to international orange.¹¹ Given that the tower shows traces of orange paint, it is likely that the arrow was also repainted orange at some point, though the paint has long since worn off.

Alterations and Additions

The contributing structures have had few physical alterations and remain nearly unchanged from when they were first built. As noted above, the tower's beacon lights were removed at some point, and the tower now supports an array of modern equipment including a small satellite dish partway up and a variety of antennas and lighting arresters attached to the sides and top. The chain link fence defining the modern compound goes across the concrete arrow in two places but has not physically impacted it as the posts are set to the side (Photograph 10). One now-unused fencepost in close proximity to the arrow was left when the fence was modified in 2025, because removal risked damaging the arrow.

Structures Outside the Historic Property Boundary

As the Nugget Butte Communications site evolved, the Oregon Highway Department and various private companies added structures for radio and, later, cellular communications. These structures are not included in the historic property boundary because they are not related to the airway beacon, but are discussed here because of their close proximity. They consist of an equipment shelter of indeterminate age, a concrete pad or foundation poured in 1964, and a communications tower constructed in 2025 (Figures 2 and 4). Prior to 2025, there was a 40'-tall guyed tower next to the equipment shelter, but it was removed when the new tower was built. An electrical line also runs along the ridge spine.

Immediately north of the beacon tower is a prefabricated 12 x 16' equipment shelter with a standing-seam metal roof, situated on a concrete slab. A 1966 aerial photo shows a building of a similar size in this location (Figure 11); the highway department constructed it for their radio transmission facility in the 1950s, and Oregon Mobile Radio bought it in 1961 and used it for the same purpose for an indeterminate period.¹² The current building has the same or similar footprint but appears to be a newer building constructed in the same location (Photograph 13).

North of the building is a smaller concrete pad into which someone scratched "LM 64" when it was wet, indicating a construction date of 1964. The pad actually consists of two pads: a larger square pad (approximately 5' square) with bolts set into the edges and a smaller square pad centered on the larger one (Photograph 13). The smaller one has four bolts set into it, suggesting it was an equipment mount of some sort. The 1966 aerial photo shows a small structure in this location. The 1964 date places it near the beginning of Oregon Mobile Radio's tenure, but its function is unknown.

Approximately 15' northwest of the beacon tower is a 150'-tall, self-supporting steel tower constructed in 2025. This tower is triangular, with the legs anchored by concrete piers (Photographs 1 and 2).

⁹ Jennifer Sigler, *A Cultural Resource Inventory for the Nugget Butte Communications Site Project and Determination of Eligibility for the Nugget Butte Airway Beacon* (Medford BLM Report OR110-24-25, Medford District BLM, 2024).

¹⁰ "Airway Beacon in Valleyview to be Lighted," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 3 October 1929:5.

¹¹ DOC, *Airway Bulletin No. 1*, pg 69.

¹² Bill of Sale for radio transmission facility building from Oregon State Highway Commission to Oregon Mobile Radio Company, dated 15 September 1961.

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The electrical line that powers all the communications sites on Nugget Butte runs up the ridge spine immediately west of the beacon site. The right-of-way is likely in the same place as the original line that powered the airway beacon. While some airway beacons were powered by generators, the California-Oregon Power Company (Copco) built electrical lines to power the ones between Delta, California and Drain, Oregon.¹³ However, the line has been in continuous use since its construction, and all the original components have been replaced as the line has been upgraded and modernized over the years. Therefore, the boundary of the historic property was not extended to include the electrical line.

Integrity

The airway beacon has good integrity. As the contributing structures remain largely unchanged from when they were originally constructed, they retain high degrees of five of the seven aspects of integrity: location, design, materials, workmanship, and association.

While the contributing structures themselves have undergone few changes, the growth of a modern communications site around them has affected the remaining two aspects of integrity: setting and feeling. Despite this, the airway beacon is still located on a rural ridgetop above the town of Gold Hill, and the addition of a few more recent structures has only somewhat compromised the property's setting and feeling. The beacon was built to be strictly functional and the location retains the basic physical condition under which it was intended to serve, i.e. a highly visible place along the airway. Adaptive reuse of the property has impacted the integrity of feeling to some degree. However, not only is this reasonably expected for a site that has been in continuous use for nearly one hundred years, but is also the main reason it was preserved.

¹³ "Start Soon on Electric Lines for Air Lights," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 15 April 1929:1.

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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.)

- ☒ 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.
- ☐ 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.)

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1929-1960

Significant Dates

1929 - construction

1960 – last year the Klamath Falls Sectional

Aeronautical Chart depicted the airway beacon

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (if applicable)

N/A

Architect/Builder

International Derrick & Equipment Company

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance reflects the period in which the airway beacon was in use as such. The local newspaper reported the completion and lighting of the beacon in the fall of 1929.¹⁴ References to its use as an airway beacon continued until 1960, the last year it was depicted on aeronautical charts.¹⁵

¹⁴ "Beacon Light Throws Beams High Over City," *Gold Hill News*, 24 October 1929:1.

¹⁵ *Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Chart* (U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, September 1960)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34, also known as the Nugget Butte Airway Beacon, is eligible for listing under Criterion A for its association with early air transportation and the development of the commercial aviation industry. The period of significance is from 1929, when the beacon was constructed, to 1960, the last year aviation maps referenced the beacon as a navigational aid.¹⁶ It is regionally significant for its contribution to the Pacific Coast portion of the Transcontinental Airway System, reflecting the U.S. government's concerted effort to develop interstate air transportation infrastructure. Nugget Butte's lighted beacon helped demarcate the San Francisco to Seattle Airway and guide pilots along the route, facilitating air mail service along the Pacific Coast. Located on Contract Air Mail (CAM) Route 8, it was part the contract air mail system that laid the foundation for commercially viable aviation companies. Pacific Air Transport, the initial contractor for the route, was one of the companies that later formed United Airlines, demonstrating the link between air mail, passenger air service, and modern commercial airlines.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Geographic Location Background

This area was originally home to the Takelma people, who inhabited the region since time immemorial and had winter villages along the Rogue River. From 1853 to 1856, Nugget Butte was part of the Table Rocks Indian Reservation that covered over 120 square miles from Table Rocks west to the town of Rogue River and north to The Meadows on Evans Creek. Increasing conflicts with European-American settlers drawn to the area by gold discoveries and the Oregon Donation Land Law of 1850 led to the United States government relocating indigenous people to the Grand Ronde Reservation in 1856. Today the descendants of the region's tribes are members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe. They take an active role in the stewardship of their ancestral lands as well as conveying to future generations their traditional culture and practices, including a salmon ceremony at Ti'lomikh Falls on the river between Nugget Butte and Gold Hill.¹⁷

The names of Nugget Butte and Gold Hill reflect the optimism surrounding the discovery of gold at Gold Hill in 1860. The Gold Hill lode proved to be a small pocket, though, and Nugget Butte never lived up to its name. Evidence of mining and prospecting are scattered throughout the area but only one small mine of indeterminate age has ever been identified on Nugget Butte. Mining was of some local economic importance and contributed to the area's development, but it was never economically significant on a national scale.¹⁸

The town of Gold Hill traces its origins to 1883, when Thomas and Rosa Chavner sold a right-of-way through their farm to the Oregon and California Railroad and began platting an adjacent town site they named after the nearby famous hill.¹⁹ Its location on the railroad helped establish a small but steady population supported by surrounding industries largely related to farming, ranching, and timber. From 1914 through 1967, it was also the home of a cement plant started by the Beaver Portland Cement Company with ownership later passing to Pacific Portland Cement and then Ideal Cement. Production ceased in 1967 but Ideal used the location as a storage and distribution center for about another decade.²⁰ The plant was one of the largest employers in the area and a mainstay of the Gold Hill economy; in the 1930s Gold Hill even fielded a bush league baseball team

¹⁶ "Beacon Light Throws Beams," *Gold Hill News* (1929); *Klamath Falls Sectional Chart* (1960).

¹⁷ Ellie Kaplan, "Agnes Baker-Pilgrim," in *Women's History in the Pacific West – Columbia-Pacific Northwest Collection*. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/agnes-baker-pilgrim.htm>, accessed 6/2/2026.

¹⁸ Duane Ericson, *Archaeological Survey of 23 Abandoned Mines and Related Sites in the Gold Hill Mining District* (Medford BLM Abandoned Mining Lands Report #3, Medford District BLM, 2012).

¹⁹ "Chavner Depot," *Oregon Sentinel* (Jacksonville, Oregon), 3 November 1883:3.

²⁰ Jennifer Sigler, *A Cultural Resource Inventory of 7 Acres for the Advanced Aggregate Quarry Expansion* (BLM Report No. OR110-22-49, Medford District BLM, 2023).

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called the Cement Makers.²¹ It remains a small town with a current population of about 1,300 people, and serves partially as a bedroom community for the larger nearby cities of Medford and Grants Pass.

Airway Beacon Background

The Nugget Butte Airway Beacon was located on the San Francisco-Seattle Airway, part of a national system of designated air navigation routes called airways. Airways are essentially roads in the sky. As described in 1929, an airway is, "An air route between traffic centers which is over terrain best suited for emergency landings, with landing fields at intervals, equipped with aids to air navigation and communication systems for the transmission of information pertinent to the operations of aircraft."²²

It started with a sack of mail, because it was the United States Postal Service (USPS) that got the airway system off the ground. In the first years after the Wright Brothers' famous 1903 flight at Kittyhawk, aviation was the stuff of daredevils and county fair exhibitions. However, where others saw only novelty, forward-minded Postmaster General Frank Hitchcock saw an opportunity for faster mail delivery. In 1911, he appointed pilot Earle Ovington to carry a satchel of U.S. mail on a flight from Long Island to Mineola. The journey was only thirty miles, but it was front page news across the country.²³

Air mail remained mostly a curiosity for a few years, but WWI soon introduced the world to the concept of airplanes as a legitimate mode of transportation. The USPS used army planes and pilots to launch the first official air mail service on May 15, 1918, with mail delivered between New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C.²⁴ After a few months, the USPS operated the air mail service on its own. It first flew between New York City and Chicago, then on to Omaha, and finally established the transcontinental route all the way to San Francisco in September of 1920.²⁵

The early aviation industry faced two main challenges. The first was economic; in the late 1910s and early 1920s, private airlines struggled to be financially viable. Because passenger service had yet to catch on and planes were too small to carry much in the way of freight, the U.S. mail was the only frequent flyer. Private carriers could only stay aloft if they transported mail, but because USPS still flew its own planes on domestic routes, companies could only contract those few routes with a foreign terminus.²⁶ The number of commercial airlines actually decreased from 1922, when there were 129, to 1924, when the number had fallen to 60. FAA historian Nick Komons described commercial air transportation in 1924 as an "economic disaster area."²⁷ Without intervention, the industry was poised to fail before delivering on the early hype.

The turning point was 1925 when Congress passed the Kelly Act, also called the Air Mail Act. This allowed the USPS to contract domestic air mail service to private companies, providing crucial financial support to fledgling airlines. USPS awarded the initial twelve Contract Air Mail (CAM) routes by early 1926, and the first commercial domestic air mail flight in the country occurred in February of that year.²⁸ This was the boost the industry needed. Amendments to the Kelly Act soon made air mail contracts more profitable and encouraged air mail carriers to add passenger service, incentivizing the technological and safety improvements that would

²¹ Various local newspapers including *Gold Hill News*, *Jacksonville Miner* (Jacksonville, Oregon), *Medford Mail Tribune* (Medford, Oregon), and *Southern Oregon Miner* (Ashland, Oregon) covered baseball games in which the Gold Hill Cement Makers played from 1934 to 1939.

²² Archibald Black, *Civil Airports and Runways* (Simmons-Boardman Publishing, New York, 1929), as quoted in David Valentine, *A Cultural Resource Inventory for the Mountain Home El Paso Gas Distribution Line ROW Renewal, Elmore County, Idaho* (Idaho Power Company Cultural Resources Project Report 17-11, 2017).

²³ "Aeroplane Mail Delivery May Be Found Practicable," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 8 October 1911:1.

²⁴ "U.S. Mail Makes First Air Journey," *Morning Oregonian* (Portland) 16 May 1918:3.

²⁵ "Air Mail: How the Federal Government Bolstered Early Commercial Aviation," Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum (NASM) website, accessed 12 June 2026, <https://airandspace.si.edu/explore/stories/air-mail>.

²⁶ Nick Komons, *Bonfires to Beacons* (Smithsonian Press, Washington, D.C., 1978):17.

²⁷ Komons, *Bonfires to Beacons*, pg. 17.

²⁸ USPS Historian, "Airmail: A Brief History," USPS website (March 2018), accessed 13 June 2026, <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/airmail.pdf>.

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coax a reluctant public onto airplanes.²⁹ Some of today's major airlines can trace their roots to the original twelve CAM routes. CAM Routes 1 (New York-Boston) and 2 (Chicago-St. Louis) were awarded to carriers that were later acquired by a holding company called Aviation Corporation or AVCO, which then consolidated into American Airways and eventually became American Airlines.³⁰ CAM Routes 3 (Chicago-Dallas), 5 (Elko, NV-Pasco, WA), and 8 (Seattle-San Diego) were awarded to three different carriers that eventually merged to form United Airlines.³¹ CAM Routes 4 (Los Angeles-Salt Lake City) and 12 (Cheyenne, WY-Pueblo, CO) went to two carriers that would become part of Transcontinental and Western Air, later Trans World Airlines or TWA, a major name in passenger air travel until its bankruptcy in 2001.³² By 1930 there were 34 CAM routes, each one a lucrative air mail contract for the successful bidder.³³

The second challenge facing the early aviation industry was logistical. Early pilots were limited by the primitive navigation technology of the time, relying on visual landmarks such as railroads, roads, river, and lakes (so-called "contact flying"). Getting lost was a common occurrence and flying at night was particularly dangerous. As an adage at the time went, "Flying at night is no different from flying in the daytime, except that you can't see."³⁴ Because of this, early air mail was actually "air and rail mail," with pilots flying the mail during the day and transferring it to trains at night.³⁵ That seriously impacted the air mail service's efficiency and profitability, which in turn threatened its government funding.

Since the development of more technologically advanced navigation systems such as radio ranges was still years away, the interim solution was to improve the means of contact flying so pilots could safely fly at night. Taking inspiration from the U.S. Army's WWI runway lighting methods, the USPS devised the lighted airway beacon system (Valentine 2014:80).³⁶ The goal was to install these beacons as navigational aids across the entire Transcontinental Airway System, the coast-to-coast system of designated airways, and its success was crucial to the continued existence of air mail.

The USPS completed beacon lights along the Cheyenne to Chicago segment of the transcontinental route in 1923, and started regular night air mail service between New York and San Francisco in July 1924.³⁷ The time saving was substantial. With the air-and-rail leapfrog system that started in 1920, a coast-to-coast trip took about 3 ½ days (still nearly a day faster than by rail alone). In 1924, night flying had reduced the trip to around 33 hours.³⁸ Air mail had finally outpaced the railroad and proved its worth.

²⁹ "Air Mail and the Birth of Commercial Aviation," NASM website (9 December 2021), accessed 28 July 2026, <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/air-mail-and-birth-commercial-aviation>.

³⁰ The two carriers were Colonial Air Transport (CAM 1) and Robertson Aircraft (Cam 2). "From Robertson Aircraft Corporation to American Airlines: The Carriers That Built A Global Aviation Giant," American Airlines website (2025), accessed 28 July 2026, <https://news.aa.com/centennial/our-stories/robertson-aircraft-to-american-airlines/>.

³¹ The three carriers were National Air Transport (CAM 3), Varney Air Lines (CAM 5), and Pacific Air Transport (CAM 8). Charlotte Smith and Brian Smith, "Contract Air Mail Routes," Arrows Across America website, accessed 15 June 2026, https://web.archive.org/web/20251216033738/https://www.dreamsmithphotos.com/arrow/airmail_routes.html.

³² The two carriers were Western Air Express (CAM 4) and Colorado Airways (CAM 12). Colorado Airways was quickly subsumed into Western Air Express, which later merged with Transcontinental Air Transport to form Transcontinental and Western. "TWA: Transcontinental and Western Air and Trans World Airlines," Cavalcade of Wings Aviation History Museum (Albuquerque, NM) website, accessed 28 July 2026, <https://www.cavalcadeofwings.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/PAST-Major-and-Regional-Airlines-Trans-World-Airlines-TWA.pdf>.

³³ Smith and Smith, "Contract Air Mail Routes."

³⁴ Ralph Williams, "Navigation: From Dead Reckoning to Navstar GPS," in *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, 1 December 1984, accessed online 15 June 2026, <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/article/1284navigation/>.

³⁵ Steve Wolff, "Sky Pioneers: The Airmail Crosses Wyoming," (Wyoming Historical Society, 2016), accessed online 13 June 2026, <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/sky-pioneers-airmail-crosses-wyoming>.

³⁶ David Valentine, "Archaeology from Thin Air," *Nevada Archaeologist* Volume 14 (1996) as reprinted in *Nevada Archaeologist* Vol. 27 (2014):80.

³⁷ "Air Mail is Held Success," *Oregon Statesman* (Salem), 3 July 1924:1.

³⁸ USPS Historian, "Airmail Route Maps," USPS website (April 2018), accessed 13 June 2026, <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/airmail-route-maps.pdf>.

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Following this success, air mail took off in the mid to late 1920s, witnessing multi-faceted growth and change. By 1927, additional airways branched off the main New York to San Francisco line (Figure 5), and airlines, as noted above, competed for CAM routes made available by the 1925 Kelly Act. To oversee the burgeoning new industry, the Air Commerce Act of 1926 passed control of civilian aviation – including the transcontinental airway – from USPS to the Department of Commerce (DOC) Aeronautics Branch on June 30, 1927. At that time, the transcontinental route was lighted from Salt Lake City to New York (2,041 miles), with 92 intermediate landing fields, 612 electric and acetylene gas beacons, and 17 radio stations.³⁹ Additional lighted routes brought the total mileage up to 4,121 and included: New York to Boston, St. Louis to Chicago, Dallas to Chicago, Boise to Pasco (Washington), and part of Los Angeles to Salt Lake City (Figure 5).⁴⁰

Once DOC took over, they continued the work of expanding and lighting the airways, and were responsible for constructing and maintaining beacons. They also standardized airport and airway infrastructure. In 1927, standard beacon sites were described as follows:

“Beacon sites are located about 10 miles apart between intermediate [landing] fields. A plot 15 x 60 is required for each site, and the rental averages \$25 a year. Where the flying terrain is bad, closer spacing of lights, and special lights marking buttes, obstructions, mountain passes, and other natural features are necessary.

The beacon towers are 50 feet high, of light galvanized structural steel, with a 6-foot square platform upon which a 24-inch standard revolving beacon, 6 RPM, is mounted. The standard beacon, using a 1,000-watt T-20 electrical lamp and 24-inch parabolic mirror, has a candlepower of 2,000,000. The lights are elevated 2° above the horizon. Where commercial electric power is available sun relays or astronomic clocks automatically control the light and no caretaker is needed. Otherwise a 2-kilowatt engine generator set is installed in a small power house. Part-time caretakers are employed to operate the beacon lights in these instances.

A concrete arrow is laid out at the base of the beacon tower pointing along the direction of the airway. Beacon numbers are painted on the power-house roof or the feather end of the concrete arrow, in black figures on a chrome yellow background.”⁴¹

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, DOC continued to build and maintain beacons to support the expanding air mail routes. This included developing radio technology to address the inherent weakness of the contact flying method – visibility. While lighted beacons allowed night flying in good conditions, the system had obvious drawbacks when rain or fog compromised visibility. In the late 1920s, DOC’s plan was to finish the lighted beacons and then install radio beacons to augment them.⁴² By 1929 it had developed and standardized a four-course radio range that told pilots when they were on course.⁴³ By 1934 pilots had two-way radio communications and could navigate accurately without being able to see the ground thanks to directive radio beacon instruments.⁴⁴

The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey began producing sectional aeronautical charts (sectionals) around 1930 to aid air navigation, and they help track the evolution of air navigation infrastructure. The earliest sectionals show that some of the intermediate landing fields, and presumably also their beacons, fell out of use within just

³⁹ U.S. Dept. of Commerce (DOC), “Airways Division (Bureau of Lighthouses),” *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Secretary of Commerce* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 7 November 1927):26.

⁴⁰ DOC, “Airways Division,” 1927, pg 29.

⁴¹ DOC, “Airways Division,” 1927, pp. 27-8.

⁴² “Government to Put Night Lights in the Siskiyou,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 16 July 1928:3.

⁴³ Linda Burdette, “Lighting the Night for Virginia Airways,” (Virginia Aeronautical Historical Society, April 2008):20. Accessed online 18 June 2026, <https://www.vahsonline.com/pdf/Lighting-the-Night-for-Virginia-Airways.pdf>.

⁴⁴ “Coast Air Route Eight Years Old,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 19 September 1934:2.

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a few years because of the switch to multi-engine airplanes, which had fewer emergency landings.⁴⁵ For a few decades, sectionals show lighted beacons operating in tandem with low frequency radio ranges. The number of beacon lights peaked in the United States in 1941, when 2,274 were in operation,⁴⁶ and had only slightly dropped off by the end of WWII, with 2,112 still in operation in 1946.⁴⁷

In the 1950s, development of high frequency omnirange radio increasingly rendered the lighted beacons obsolete, and they began to fall out of use. Even fewer beacons remained through the 1960s, and during that decade the federal government officially decommissioned most of them. Federal Register volumes in that period are full of revocation notices for air navigation site withdrawals,⁴⁸ and those only reflect sites on federal land. For those on private land, the leases were simply not renewed. The last federal airway beacon shut down in 1972; it was on the pass between Mount San Jacinto and San Geronio Mountain in California.⁴⁹ Most decommissioned beacons had their towers scrapped and their arrows abandoned in place. In Montana, the FAA transferred about 20 beacons to the state, which operated them until 2017.⁵⁰

Airway Beacons in Southwestern Oregon (Jackson and Josephine Counties)

For regional context, this section focuses on airway beacons in southwestern Oregon, particularly Jackson and Josephine Counties. The airway that crossed this part of the state was part of CAM Route 8, along which air mail delivery commenced on September 15, 1926.⁵¹ Oregon's first contract air mail flight had happened a few months earlier (April 6) on CAM Route 5 on the other side of the state, the Pasco-Elko route.⁵²

CAM Route 5 also had the first lighted beacons in Oregon, with the Boise to Pasco stretch lighted by December 1927 (Figure 5).⁵³ CAM Route 8 took a little longer to light in its entirety; it was a much longer route with three airways (San Diego to Los Angeles, Los Angeles to San Francisco, and San Francisco to Seattle).⁵⁴ By the end of 1927 they'd only made it from Los Angeles north to around Redding.⁵⁵ The DOC completed the beacons in southwestern Oregon in 1928-29, and started regular night flights between Los Angeles and Seattle in fall 1930.⁵⁶

⁴⁵ Comparison of beacons and landing fields shown in "Airway Bulletin 1: General Airway Information" (DOC Aeronautics Branch, 1 September 1931) versus *Klamath Falls* Sectional Aeronautical Chart (U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, February 1936).

⁴⁶ W.E. Jackson (editor), *The Federal Airways System* (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, 1970), as quoted in Valentine, "Archeology From Thin Air," 2014, pg. 66.

⁴⁷ Roger Connor, "A Guiding Light: The Airway Beacon Tower," NASM website (5 April 2019), accessed 18 June 2026, <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/guiding-light-airway-beacon-tower>.

⁴⁸ For example, revocation of air navigation site withdrawals occurred in 1961 in Alaska, California, Montana, Oregon, and Utah (26 FR 1215, 3151, 3248, 3424, 3425, 3700, 9226, 9585, 9994, 10729); in 1962 in Alaska, Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon, and Wyoming (27 FR 777, 2605, 4515, 5707, 9918, 10455); in 1967 in Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon (32 FR 12412, 13072, 13412, 14060, 15482, 17479, 17479); and in 1968 in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming (33 FR 4333, 5417, 5418, 5418, 9175, 10401). This is only a partial list – every year of that decade had multiple revocations.

⁴⁹ Connor, "A Guiding Light," 2019.

⁵⁰ Jon Axline, "Sentinels of the Airways: Montana's Airway Beacon System, 1934-1979," NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form (August 2018).

⁵¹ "Contract Air Mail First Flights: CAM-8," Aerodacious website, accessed 13 June 2026, <https://web.archive.org/web/2025112210710/http://www.aerodacious.com/ccCAM008.HTM>.

⁵² The southern terminus of CAM Route 5 was soon moved from Elko to Salt Lake City.

⁵³ DOC, "Airways Division," 1927 pg. 30.

⁵⁴ Charlotte and Brian Smith, "CAM #8 San Diego-Seattle," Arrows Across America website, accessed 15 June 2026, https://web.archive.org/web/20251215015523/https://www.dreamsmithphotos.com/arrow/airmail_routes/route_01_10/08/cam_08.html.

⁵⁵ "Medford Airport A Fixity," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 31 August 1927:1.

⁵⁶ DOC, "Completion of San Francisco-Seattle Airway Provides 24-hour Airway Facilities Between Los Angeles and Seattle," in *Air Commerce Bulletin* Vol. 2 No. 7 (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1 October 1930):170.

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The DOC designated Medford as one of the original terminal airports for CAM Route 8 in 1926, meaning that Medford's landing station predated even Portland's (whose first landing field was actually in Vancouver, Washington) as the first in Oregon.⁵⁷ The USPS awarded Pacific Air Transport (PAT) the contract for the route between Los Angeles and Seattle that same year.⁵⁸ PAT offered passenger service almost immediately, flying its first two passengers in January 1927; by August it had carried 216 passengers.⁵⁹ In the late 1920s, PAT encouraged people to "fly with the air mail" to increase their passenger revenue. A 1929 brochure included a timetable and route map on one side and a portfolio of alluring host city photographs on the other, touting the beauty of the Pacific Coast Route and benefits of air travel; Medford was represented by a bucolic orchard (Figures 9 and 10).⁶⁰ At a time when the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad's Natron Cutoff meant the main railroad line now bypassed Medford in favor of Klamath Falls, the importance of this new transportation link cannot be overstated.⁶¹ As noted above, PAT would go on to merge with three other early pioneer air transport companies to form United Airlines in 1931;⁶² United still flies out of the Medford airport to this day.

The DOC finished the first beacon in Jackson County in October 1929 on the Gallatin Ranch off Valley View Road between Medford and Ashland. The local newspaper included the following description:

"It is equipped with a standard beacon light of approximately two million candlepower mounted on a sturdy steel tower. The beacon, which is mounted at 1 ½ degrees above level, has a carrying power of over 10 miles, which is the interval at which these new airway beacons are spaced up and down the coast air route. There are approximately 95 of these beacons to be located on the San Francisco-Seattle air route and about 35 of these huge lights are being installed in "Copcoland," the territory served by the California Oregon Power Company in southern Oregon and northern California. The local power company has made splendid progress in building extensions to existing power lines to serve the air beacons and is ready to hook up the new installations as soon as they are made by the contractors.

It is interesting to note that each beacon tower will have a cement base in the form of a huge arrow which points to the next beacon or airport. These will be painted in chrome yellow with the beacon number in large black numerals."⁶³

The DOC constructed nine numbered airway beacons and two unnumbered auxiliary beacons in Jackson and Josephine Counties (Figure 6).⁶⁴ Jackson County had both auxiliary beacons and five numbered ones (including Nugget Butte), while Josephine County had four numbered beacons. One beacon site in Josephine County, Sexton Mountain, was also an airway weather station, with a teletype reporting station and living

⁵⁷ Hattie Becker, "The History of Rogue Valley International-Medford," (Jackson County Airport Authority and Gandee Printing Company, Medford, Oregon, 1995):9; Susan Mathistad, "Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport History Part II: 1996-2017," (Jackson County Airport Authority, Medford, Oregon, and Mead & Hunt, Inc., 2017):11. The first terminal was at Medford's original landing field at the fairgrounds south of town, Newell Barber Field, not the current Rogue Valley International Airport (which wasn't completed until late 1929).

⁵⁸ "Air Mail Starts Early in June," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 9 May 1926:8.

⁵⁹ Marvin Berryman, "A History of United Airlines," United Airlines Historical Foundation website, accessed 28 July 2026, http://www.uahf.org/united_history.asp.

⁶⁰ Pacific Air Transport timetable (1929), kindly provided to this author by Bjorn Larsson in July 2026. Larsson is author of the Timetable Images website which also has a partial reproduction of this brochure, accessed 6 June 2026, <https://www.timetableimages.com/i-or/pat2.jpg>.

⁶¹ Southern Pacific completed the Natron Cutoff in 1926, with passenger service starting in 1927. Whereas previously the railroad had gone north from Weed, CA through Medford and Roseburg, it now bypassed them to the east and went through Klamath Falls instead. It did not rejoin the original route until Natron, outside of Eugene. "Central Oregon Historic: Railroad Shortcut Built from Eugene to California," *Central Oregonian*, 8 August 2025.

⁶² "Consolidation of Four Plane Lines Announced Today," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 1 June 1931:8.

⁶³ "Airway Beacon in Valley View to be Lighted," *Medford Mail Tribune*, 3 October 1929:5.

⁶⁴ DOC, "Beacon Lights, Intermediate Landing Fields, and Airports on the Federal Airways," *Airway Bulletin No. 1* (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1 September 1931):45.

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quarters for an on-site weather observer.⁶⁵ Three of the beacons (Nugget Butte in Jackson County, and Beacon Hill and Sexton Mountain in Josephine County) were on federal land where the parcels involved were withdrawn as air navigation sites, while the rest were on private land leased from the landowners.

There were also airport light beacons at the Medford airport (the “new” airport completed in 1929) and the Grants Pass airport (the original location in Grants Pass), but lighting at municipal airports was the responsibility of the cities and not the DOC.⁶⁶ Jackson and Josephine Counties each had one Richfield Oil Company beacon, as well. Jackson County’s was on the Siskiyou Summit along the Pacific Highway and the one in Josephine County was next to the original airport on the north side of Grants Pass. However, Richfield beacons were a private enterprise related to 1930s automobile travel. They were used largely as a marketing tool for their automobile service stations and they did not have any formal association with the airways.

Serial iterations of the *Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Chart*, which include Jackson and Josephine Counties, provide evidence of the beacons’ tenure through the years.⁶⁷ Earlier ones (i.e. 1936-1938) show nearly all the originally constructed lighted beacons except for #31A Barron Ranch and #36B Grave Creek (Figure 7). Barron Ranch and Grave Creek were intermediate landing fields, and as noted above, those became obsolete after airlines replaced single-engine planes with multi-engine planes and emergency landings were less frequent. The beacon outside Wolf Creek, #36C, was the next one to disappear, last shown in 1938. Starting in the late 1940s, additional beacons drop off the sectionals: the unnumbered beacon at Fielder Mountain after 1948, the unnumbered beacon at Steinman Butte after 1953, #32 at Valley View after 1954, and #34 at Nugget Butte after 1960 (Figure 8). In January 1965, the remaining four are still shown: #30 at Siskiyou Summit, #31 at Dunne Butte, #35 at Beacon Hill, and #36 at Sexton Mountain. Just a few months later, the July 1965 version shows none.

Nugget Butte Airway Beacon - Site History

Extensive research yielded a handful of references to the Nugget Butte Beacon, the first during its construction in 1929. In October of that year, the *Medford Mail Tribune* reported on the completion of the first airway beacon in Jackson County at the Gallatin Ranch near Talent. The article referred to the in-progress Nugget Butte Beacon, stating, “The next beacon to be finished in this territory is located at Gold Hill and is expected to be ready for service in the next few days.”⁶⁸

The claim proved true; three weeks later, the *Gold Hill News* reported, “The huge government beacon light which has been under construction on the hill above the city of Gold Hill now sheds its beams across the heavens. The beacon was constructed at considerable cost and trouble due to the inaccessibility of the site... The Beacon is lit by electricity and consists of a high powered search light which rotates, continually all through the night and serves as a guide for night flying.”⁶⁹

The beacon was initially something of a novelty, and children would watch for the light to come on every evening.⁷⁰ Locals incorporated it into the geography of their lives, turning it into a hiking destination. The newspaper reported shortly after the tower’s completion that a Mrs. Melissa Sargent hiked to the top in an hour and challenged others to beat her record,⁷¹ while other ladies enjoyed more casual Sunday afternoon ascents.⁷² Graffiti still visible today shows that many people documented their visit by scratching their names or initials on the tower, often including the date. Legible dates range from 1937 to 1945.

⁶⁵ “Air Weather Station for Sexton Mountain,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 17 October 1931:4; “Oakland-Portland Teletype to Aid Coast Pilots,” *Oakland Tribune*, 15 March 1930:B13.

⁶⁶ “Government to Put Night Lights in the Siskiyou,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 16 July 1928:3.

⁶⁷ Sectionals are available online from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/maps/?fa=segmentof:g3701pm.gct00089/&q=klamath+falls&sb=date&sp=2&st=gallery>.

⁶⁸ “Airway Beacon in Valley View to be Lighted,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 3 October 1929:5.

⁶⁹ “Beacon Light Throws Beams High Over City,” *Gold Hill News*, 24 October 1929:1.

⁷⁰ “Airways Beacon Seen By Beagle Children,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 25 October 1929:12.

⁷¹ “Local Happenings,” *Gold Hill News*, 14 November 1929:3.

⁷² “Local Happenings,” *Gold Hill News*, 19 January 1933:8.

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For motorcycle riders, the Nugget Butte climb would be a years-long quest, and their attempts became something of a spectator sport.⁷³ They finally succeeded in 1941, with the momentous occasion described by the local paper as follows:

“Beacon Hill near Gold Hill, unconquered by scores of motorcyclists who had been trying for years to send their mechanical steeds roaring up its steep and treacherous slopes, finally yielded to two young men Saturday afternoon. Emmett Woods and Dick Twyman, both of the old Pacific Highway, rode their Harley Davidsons to the top of the mountain in a three-hour battle to become the first ones to ever accomplish the feat. It took them three hours to do it, but they descended in five minutes.”⁷⁴

It is unclear what route either the hikers or the motorcycles used, as the road from Gold Hill to the tower wasn't built until 1950.⁷⁵ They may have followed the power line.

The beacon soon faded into the background of commonplace infrastructure. Feats of pedestrian and mechanical fortitude notwithstanding, the newspapers found little to report for most of its service career except for tidbits such as in 1932 when an 8,000,000 candlepower light replaced the original 2,000,000 candlepower one,⁷⁶ and in 1935 when it received a fresh coat of paint.⁷⁷

The beacon started taking on additional duties in 1952, when the Oregon State Highway Department began using it as a radio transmission site for their Land Mobile Radio (LMR) system. LMR systems are two-way wireless communications systems based on a network of base stations, repeaters, and mobile radios, often used by public safety personnel and government agencies.⁷⁸ The BLM granted a Special Land Use Permit to the highway department to install and use a radio transmitter at the site, including a portion attached to the beacon tower, to service the Rocky Point-Blackwell Hill Section of the Pacific Highway.⁷⁹ Because the Nugget Butte site was part of a federal land withdrawal,⁸⁰ it required additional approval and a special stipulation added to the permit, “As the area of this permit is included within air navigation site withdrawal #31, May 24, 1929, 45 State. 726, attachments on and installations adjacent to the existing beacon are limited to the approval granted by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, January 8, 1952...”⁸¹

The radio transmission site permit was for a five-year period starting June 1, 1952. When the permit was up for renewal in 1957, the BLM approved a 50-year right-of-way (ROW) to the highway department.⁸² Again, the transaction required the approval of the Department of Commerce Civil Aeronautics Administration, which approved with the condition that “it does not interfere with the operation of our Beacon.”⁸³ One can infer from this language that the beacon was still in use at that time.

In 1961-62, the highway department transferred their ROW to the Oregon Mobile Radio Company and sold them a building they'd constructed at the site. The 1961 bill of sale for the building describes it as, “That certain

⁷³ “Local Happenings,” *Gold Hill News*, 14 November 1929:3.

⁷⁴ “Beacon Hill is Finally Scaled,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 7 September 1941:2.

⁷⁵ “Beacon Road Approved,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, 7 April 1950:11.

⁷⁶ “Airways Division Installs Stronger Beacon Here,” *Gold Hill News*, 3 November 1932:1.

⁷⁷ “Local Happenings,” *Gold Hill News*, 8 August 1935:4.

⁷⁸ “Land Mobile Radio 101,” National Council of Statewide Interoperability Coordinators, February 2016. Accessed online, https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/LMR%20101_508FINAL_0_0.pdf, 11 June 2026.

⁷⁹ Letter from Forrest Cooper, Oregon State Highway Department Right-of-Way Engineer, to T. Edwards, Division Engineer, dated 22 July 1952.

⁸⁰ A land withdrawal is a federal action that removes a specified parcel of public land from settlement, sale, location, or entry for a certain purpose; in this case, the withdrawal was for the air navigation site.

⁸¹ Special Land Use Permit Serial No. M-1, Portland District BLM, June 1952.

⁸² Right-of-Way Decision by Portland District BLM for Oregon State Highway Department, Serial No. OR 05443, effective 1 June 1957, recorded 3 October 1957.

⁸³ Letter from Ted Rodarm, Property Management Branch Chief, Department of Commerce Civil Aeronautics Administration, to Irving Anderson, Portland District Manager, BLM, dated 19 July 1957.

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building constructed by State and formerly utilized by State as a radio transmission facility..."⁸⁴ A 1966 aerial photograph shows this building, a small rectangular building north of the beacon tower, though research identified no additional documentation for it.

A January 1962 memo documents the highway department's formal assignment of "right, title, and interest in and to the transmitter site right-of-way... serial number Oregon 05443, to the Oregon Mobile Radio Co."⁸⁵ This time, unlike with the special land use permit or the original ROW, there is no accompanying approval from the agency responsible for airway beacons at that time, the Federal Aviation Agency (which succeeded the Department of Commerce Civil Aeronautics Administration in 1958 and would become the Federal Aviation Administration in 1967). It is unclear if this is because the airway beacon was no longer in use by 1962 or because this reassignment of the 1957 ROW still carried the original approvals and stipulations.

Oregon Mobile Radio included the Nugget Butte radio transmission facility in a new LMR system they established in Medford in the early 1960s.⁸⁶ By the 1970s Oregon Mobile Radio would also have two-way stations at the Medford airport and on either side of downtown Medford.⁸⁷ This marked the beginning of Nugget Butte's use as a private commercial communications site, now called the Nugget Butte Communications Site, which continues to this day. Oregon Mobile Radio's licenses expired in 1999, and the current tenant at Nugget Butte is Day Wireless.

Effective January 4, 1968, the withdrawal for the Nugget Butte air navigation site was revoked,⁸⁸ but it had ceased functioning as an airway beacon years before. Many air navigation site withdrawals were revoked that same year, including ones in Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming as well as Oregon. The cautious pace of government bureaucracy created a few years of lag time between a beacon's last use and when the land withdrawal was revoked. The *Klamath Falls* sectional aeronautical charts show the Nugget Butte Beacon in 1960 but not in 1965, indicating a terminal date during that period.

Comparative Analysis

The most relevant sites with which to compare the Nugget Butte Airway Beacon are other airway beacons, of which there were over 2,000. However, there is no authoritative list of every beacon site that ever existed, much less how many still retain any historic features. A few are listed in the NRHP, including one in Oregon: Portland-Spokane Beacon #0 at Rocky Butte Natural Area in Portland (a contributing element of the Rocky Butte Scenic Drive Historic District). Extant beacons listed in other states include a multi-property listing in Montana with seven contributing beacons, an individual beacon in Harper County, Kansas, a relocated beacon at the Grants-Milan Municipal Airport in New Mexico, and a beacon that is a contributing element of the Willows-Glenn County Airport complex in California.

Archaeologists and architectural historians have documented several airway beacons in Oregon and neighboring states (mostly Idaho and Nevada) during federal undertakings requiring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.⁸⁹ The general public has also less formally documented many beacons; some people have even created online forums for sharing locations and photographs. The most

⁸⁴ Bill of Sale for radio transmission facility building from Oregon State Highway Commission to Oregon Mobile Radio Company, dated 15 September 1961.

⁸⁵ Memo of Assignment of Right, Title, and Interest signed by Floyd Query, Secretary of Oregon State Highway Department, dated January 26, 1962.

⁸⁶ "Docket Nos. 14866-14870, Oregon Mobile Radio Et Al.," Federal Register Vol. 27 No. 243 (15 December 1962):12457.

⁸⁷ "Applications Accepted for Filing, Domestic Public Land Mobile Radio Service," Federal Register Vol. 37 No. 9 (14 January 1972):630.

⁸⁸ "Partial Revocation of Air Navigation Site Withdrawal No. 31," Federal Register Vol. 32 No. 235 (6 December 1967):17479.

⁸⁹ Archaeologist David Valentine is responsible for a disproportionate share of the documented beacons in Nevada and Idaho, including the "Airway Beacons in Southern Idaho" project with Rebecca Lange.

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notable is Charlotte and Brian Smith's "Arrows Across America" website, which lists 126 sites throughout the country including a handful in Oregon.⁹⁰ To find beacons without such documentation requires identifying them on historic maps (e.g., USGS quadrangles, DOC Airway Bulletins, sectional aeronautical charts) and then verifying them on the ground by field survey and/or using high resolution aerial photographs.

To assess the significance of the Nugget Butte Beacon, it was first compared to a sample of beacon sites in Oregon previously documented by archaeologists/architectural historians, using their Oregon site inventory forms. It was then compared to all beacon sites in Jackson and Josephine Counties as identified through archival research, aerial photograph analysis, and limited field survey. This provided first an understanding of what has made other beacons in Oregon significant (or not), and then a basis for assessing the Nugget Butte beacon's integrity relative to other beacons in close proximity.

Three previously documented sites in Oregon were compared: the Coyote Point Beacon in Baker County (Salt Lake-Pasco [SL-P] Airway Beacon #41), the Ladd Canyon Airway Beacon in Union County (SL-P Airway Beacon #43), and an unnamed beacon south of Meacham in Umatilla County (appears to be SL-P Airway Beacon #45). As addressed below, in each case the determining factor for significance was integrity.

Larissa Rudnicki, architectural historian for ODOT, recorded the Coyote Point Beacon in 2024 and determined it not eligible for the NRHP due to its lack of integrity.⁹¹ The site currently retains a single concrete pad upon which a beacon tower once stood. It is unknown whether it originally had an arrow, but if so, only the single pad remains.

Jonathan Held and Kurt Perkins of Archaeological Investigations Northwest recorded the Ladd Canyon Airway Beacon in 2009 and recommended it not eligible due to lack of integrity.⁹² The site consists of a poorly preserved generator shed on a deteriorated concrete pad. It is unknown whether it originally had a concrete arrow, but if so, only the portion under the shed remains.

Scott Billat of EarthTouch, Inc. recorded SL-P Beacon #45 south of Meacham in 2012 and recommended it eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with early air transportation, as conveyed by the beacon's intact features.⁹³ The site retains its steel lattice tower with IDECO manufacturer's tag and two associated sheds. The tower and one shed have concrete foundations, but Billat did not identify an arrow at this location.

The Nugget Butte Beacon was then considered relative to the other ten beacon sites in Jackson and Josephine Counties. This two-county area was somewhat arbitrarily chosen as a manageable sample size given the intensive research necessary to identify and analyze each physical location. Of the eleven beacon sites in Jackson and Josephine Counties, only Nugget Butte has been formally recorded.

A review of high-quality aerial photographs of the other ten sites, and field visits to two of them (#36A Sexton Mountain and #36B Grave Creek), show that Nugget Butte, with both a tower and arrow, is the best-preserved beacon in these two counties. Sexton Mountain has neither tower nor arrow but it does still have the weather observer's house (built in 1932) as of July 2026; however, NOAA has slated the house for removal. Five locations do not have towers but still have concrete arrows or portions thereof: #30 Siskiyou Summit, #31 Dunne Butte, #31A Barron Ranch,⁹⁴ #35 Beacon Hill, and #36B Grave Creek. The other four sites (#32 Valley

⁹⁰ Arrows Across America website:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20251215033924/http://www.dreamsmithphotos.com/arrow/index.html>.

⁹¹ Larissa Rudnicki, Coyote Point Beacon Section 106 Documentation Form, 2024.

⁹² Jonathan Held and Kurt Perkins, Ladd Canyon Airway Light Beacon Shed Section 106 Documentation Form, 2012.

⁹³ Billat recommended the site eligible for the NRHP but it has not been nominated or listed. Scott Billat, *An Archaeological Assessment of Proposed USCOC Oregon RA #2 Project: Meacham/OR385449 Wireless Telecommunication Service Facility Near Meacham, Umatilla County, Oregon*. Prepared by EarthTouch, Inc, Layton, Utah, SHPO Biblio 25457, 2012.

⁹⁴ Very little may remain of the Barron Ranch arrow; it is difficult to discern on more recent aerials.

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View, #36C Wolf Creek, and unnumbered Fielder Mountain and Steinman Butte) had no remnants discernible on aerial photos.

It should be noted that other beacon sites retaining only their concrete arrows (i.e. no extant towers) have been determined eligible (e.g., 10AA798 and 10EL2464 in Idaho⁹⁵). While Nugget Butte may be the best example left in southwestern Oregon, with both tower and arrow, that does not mean others with only arrows may not also be significant.

Given that the Nugget Butte Beacon is the only fully documented one in the vicinity and the other known beacons lack similar integrity and/or are located on private land to which access was not obtained (and may be unobtainable, depending on landowner sentiment), it was evaluated individually. A linear historic district would be an avenue for future research should additional beacons on the San Francisco-Seattle Airway be documented in the future. However, even standing on its own, the Nugget Butte Beacon conveys its association with the airway and CAM Route 8, and the contract air mail system that played such an important role in the development of commercial aviation.

⁹⁵ David Valentine and Rebecca Lange, Idaho Site Inventory Forms for 10AA798 and 10EL2464, 2014.

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- 1957 Right-of-Way Decision for Oregon State Highway Department, Serial No. OR 05443, effective 1 June 1957, recorded 3 October 1957. Provided by ODOT (Rudnicki), copy on file at BLM Medford Interagency Office.

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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

County and State

Connor, Roger

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- 1952 Letter to T. Edwards (Division Engineer), 22 July. Provided by ODOT (Rudnicki), copy on file at BLM Medford Interagency Office.

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- 1929 Beacon Light Throws Beams High Over City. 24 October:1.
1929 Local Happenings. 14 November:3.
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1933 Local Happenings. 19 January:8.
1935 Local Happenings. 8 August:4.

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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

County and State

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- 1928 Government to Put Night Lights in the Siskiyou. 16 July:3.
- 1929 Start Soon on Electric Lines for Air Lights. 15 April:1.
- 1929 Airway Beacon in Valley View to be Lighted. 3 October:5.
- 1929 Airways Beacon Seen by Beagle Children. 25 October:12.
- 1931 Consolidation of Four Plane Lines Announced Today. 1 June:8.
- 1931 Air Weather Station for Sexton Mountain. 17 October:4.
- 1934 Coast Air Route Eight Years Old. 19 September:2.
- 1941 Beacon Hill is Finally Scaled. 7 September:2.
- 1950 Beacon Road Approved. 7 April:11.

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- 1918 U.S. Mail Makes First Air Journey. 16 May:3.

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- 1883 Chavner Depot. 3 November:3.

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- 1962 Memo of Assignment of Right, Title, and Interest for Radio Transmission Facility, 26 January. Digital document provided by ODOT (Rudnicki), copy on file at BLM Medford Interagency Office.

Oregon Statesman (Salem, Oregon)*

- 1924 Air Mail is Held Success. 3 July:1.

Pacific Air Transport

- 1929 Timetable. As reproduced in the Bjorn Larsson collection, online document,
<https://www.timetableimages.com/i-or/pat2.jpg>. Accessed 6 June 2026.

Rodarm, Ted (Property Management Branch Chief, Department of Commerce Civil Aeronautics Administration)

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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

County and State

Sigler, Jennifer

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United States Department of Commerce, Aeronautics Branch

- 1930 *Completion of San Francisco-Seattle Airway Provides 24-hour Airway Facilities Between Los Angeles and Seattle*. *Air Commerce Bulletin* Vol. 2 No. 7, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1 October.
- 1931 *Airway Bulletin No. 1: General Airway Information*. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Lighthouses, Airways Division

- 1927 *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Secretary of Commerce*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

United States Department of Commerce, Coast and Geodetic Survey

- 1936-1965 *Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Charts*. Made available online by the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/maps/?fa=segmentof:g3701pm.gct00089/&q=klamath+falls&sb=date&sp=2&st=gallery>.

United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management

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United States Postal Service (USPS) Historian

- 2018 *Airmail: A Brief History*. Online document, March 2018, <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/airmail.pdf>. Accessed 13 June 2026.
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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

County and State

Valentine, David

- 2014 Archaeology from Thin Air. *Nevada Archaeologist* Volume 14 (1996) as reprinted in *Nevada Archaeologist* Vol. 27 (2014):80.
- 2017 *A Cultural Resource Inventory for the Mountain Home El Paso Gas Distribution Line ROW Renewal, Elmore County, Idaho*. Report Prepared by Idaho Power Company, Cultural Resources Project Report 17-11, for BLM Boise District, Four Rivers Field Office, Project 17FRFO37.

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William, Ralph

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*Newspapers were accessed on University of Oregon's Historic Oregon Newspapers website, <https://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/>; Ben Truwe's Southern Oregon History, Revised website, <https://truwe.sohs.org/>; and University of California, Riverside's California Digital Newspaper Collection website, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc>.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: _____

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

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage; enter "Less than one" if the acreage is .99 or less)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 42.447944°

Latitude

-123.056562°

Longitude

3

Latitude

Longitude

2

Latitude

Longitude

4

Latitude

Longitude

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is an irregular polygon drawn to encompass the tower and concrete arrow.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was drawn so that it includes the two contributing features of the airway beacon (the tower and concrete arrow). The other nearby structures are not related to the airway beacon and were thus excluded.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jennifer Sigler, Medford District Archaeologist and Tribal Liaison date 7/29/2026

organization Medford District Bureau of Land Management telephone 541-618-2335

street & number 3040 Biddle Road email jsigler@blm.gov

city or town Medford state OR zip code 97504

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Regional Location Map**
- **Local Location Map**
- **Tax Lot Map**
- **Site Plan**
- **Floor Plans (As Applicable)**
- **Photo Location Map** (Include for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map and insert immediately after the photo log and before the list of figures).

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
City or Vicinity: Gold Hill
County: Jackson **State:** OR
Photographer: Jennifer Sigler, Dakota Slaton
Date Photographed: 2024, 2026

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photograph 1 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0001**
Overview of Nugget Butte Communications Site from the road with modern electrical line in foreground, airway beacon tower to right, and modern tower to left. Facing 16° (northeast). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 2 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0002**
Overview of Nugget Butte Communications Site from the road showing both towers (modern tower to left, airway beacon tower to right) and the modern electrical line, with the modern equipment shelter in the background. Facing 162° (southeast). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 3 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0003**
Airway beacon tower and concrete arrow, with modern tower partly visible to the left and modern equipment shelter in the left background. Facing 94° (east). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 4 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0004**
Airway beacon tower with modern tower to the left and modern equipment shelter in the background. Facing 32° (northeast). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 5 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0005**
Airway beacon tower. Facing 34° (northeast). 5/7/2024.
- Photograph 6 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0006**
Detail of top of airway beacon tower showing historic features including base for non-extant center rotating beacon light, housing for course lights on either side, and electrical junction box. Also visible are modern antennas and wiring attached to the tower. 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 7 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0007**
Detail of south side of airway beacon tower showing manufacturer's tag behind the ladder with some graffiti visible to the left on a cross-brace ("JULY 22, 1943"). Facing 40° (northeast). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 8 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0008**
Detail of International Derrick & Equipment Company manufacturer's tag behind the ladder. 6/4/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., OR

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- Photograph 9 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0009**
Detail of southwest corner of middle concrete pad and southwest airway beacon tower leg. Facing 74° (east). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 10 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0010**
Concrete arrow point with airway beacon tower base and modern equipment shelter in background. Facing 94° (east). 6/11/2026.
- Photograph 11 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0011**
Eastern (feather) end of the concrete arrow with airway beacon tower base partly visible inside the fenced compound to the left. Facing 32° (northeast). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 12 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0012**
Eastern (feather) end of the concrete arrow. Facing 124° (southeast). 6/4/2026.
- Photograph 13 of 13:** **OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0013**
Overview of communications compound showing modern equipment shelter and 1964 concrete pad behind it, with airway beacon tower to left and modern tower to right. Facing 256° (west). 6/4/2026.

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
#34

Name of Property

Jackson Co., Oregon

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all document should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.)

Figure 1: Regional Location Map

Figure 2: Local Location Map

Figure 3: Tax Lot Map

Figure 4: Site Plan Map

Figure 5: Map of U.S. Airways as of December 31, 1927

Figure 6: San Francisco-Seattle Airway Map, Redding to Portland Sections

Figure 7: Detail of February 1936 Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Chart

Figure 8. Detail of September 1960 Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Chart

Figure 9. Pacific Air Transport Timetable, 1929, Side 1

Figure 10. Pacific Air Transport Timetable, 1929, Side 2

Figure 11. International Derrick and Equipment Company Brochure, 1928

Figure 12. Detail of 1966 Aerial Photograph

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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
#34

Name of Property
Jackson Co., Oregon

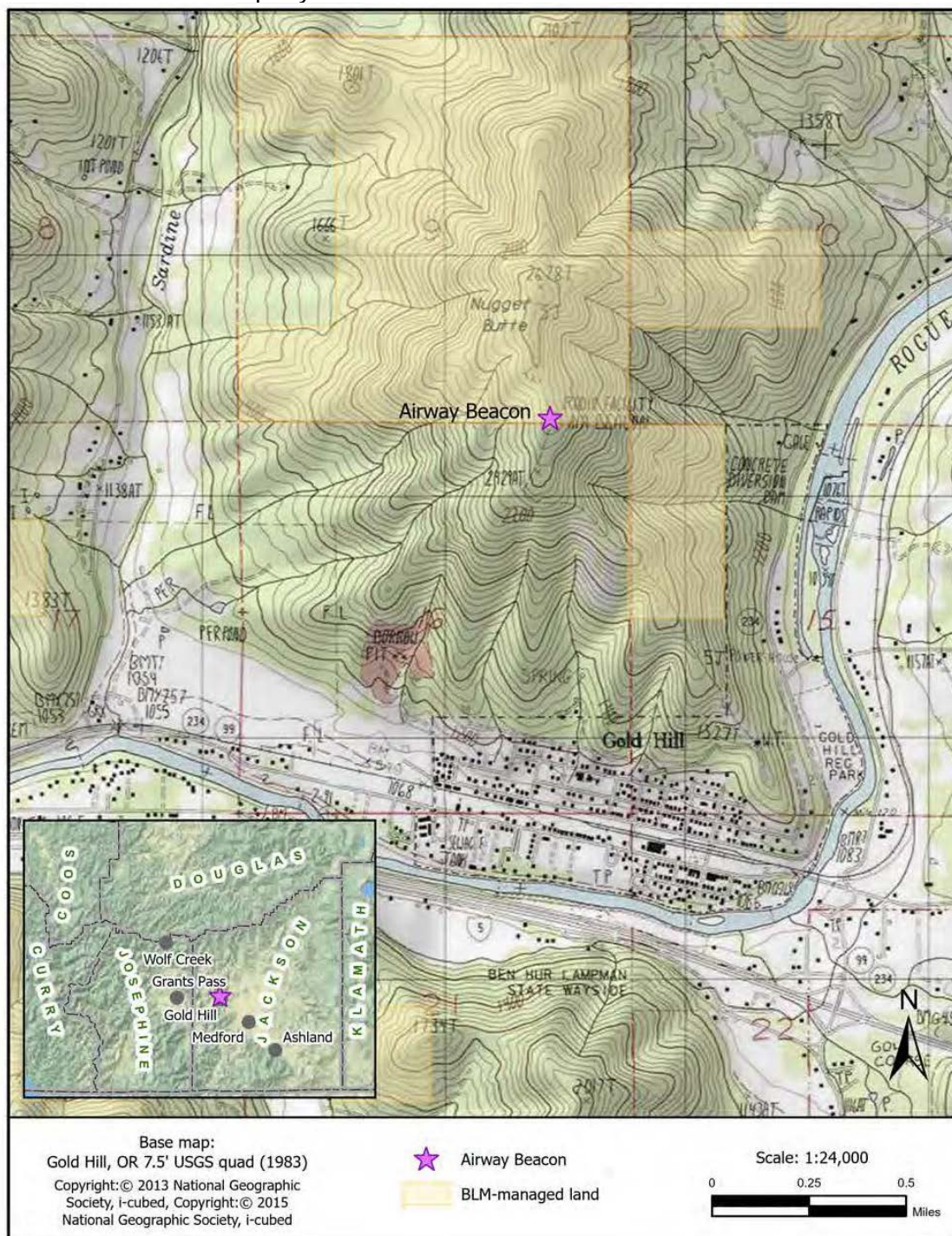
County and State
N/A

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Figure 1. Regional Location Map
Property Coordinates: 42.447944 / -123.056562



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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
#34

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Jackson Co., Oregon

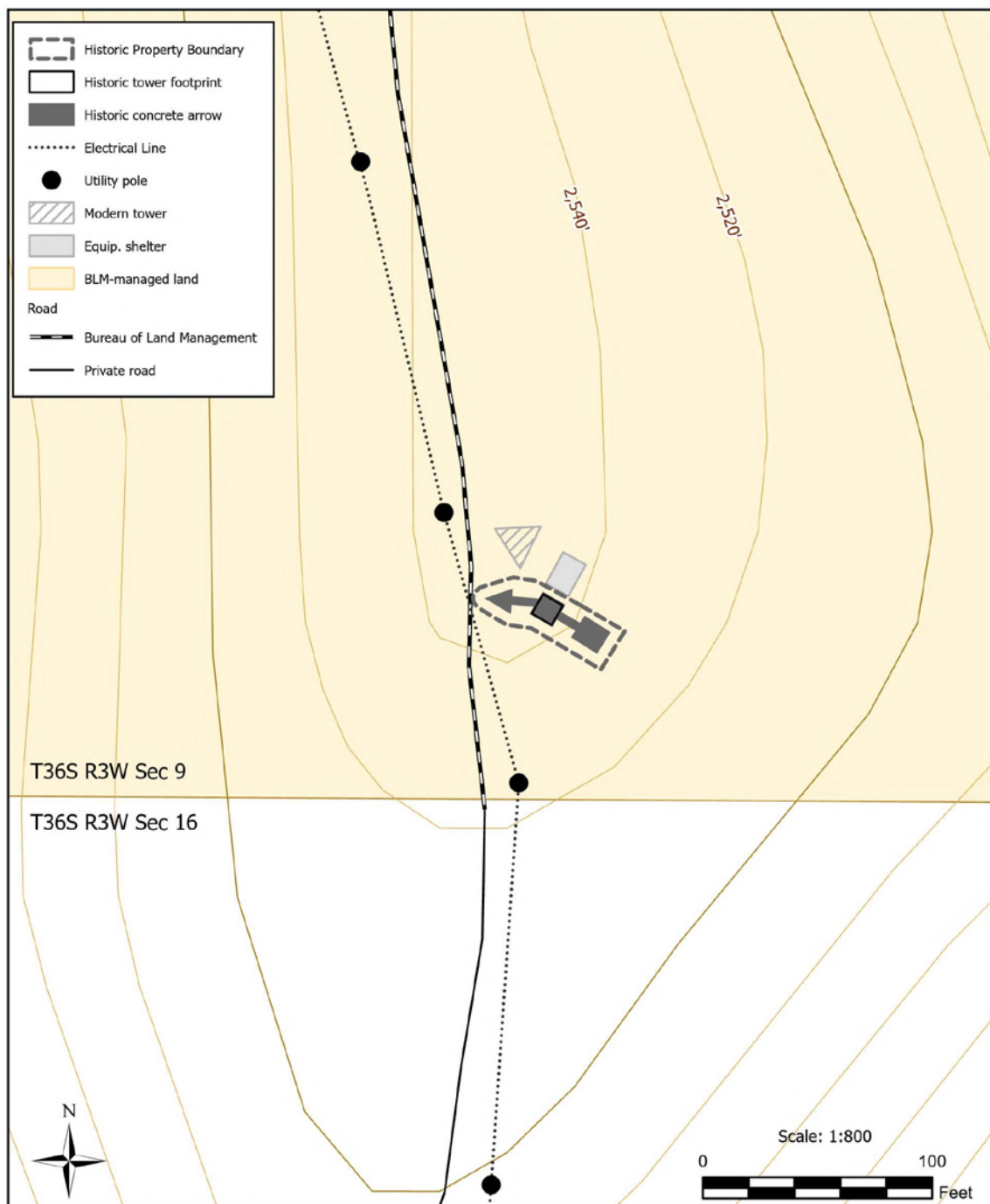
County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Figure 2. Local Location Map
Property Coordinates: 42.447944 / -123.056562



Map created from field data collected by Sigler and Slaton in June 2026 and from Medford District BLM background GIS layers for land ownership, roads, and 20' contour intervals.

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363W09

Jackson County, Oregon
SEC.09 T.36S. R.3W W.M.
Scale 1"=400'

CANCELLED TAX LOT NUMBERS

LEGEND

- Tax Lot Lines
- Anno Arrow
- Historical Boundary
- Land Hook
- Railroad Centerline
- PLSS Corner
- Subdivision Line
- TaxCode
- Water Body
- EX. 49-15

Nominated boundary (smaller rectangle)

363W09

Updated:06/01/2026

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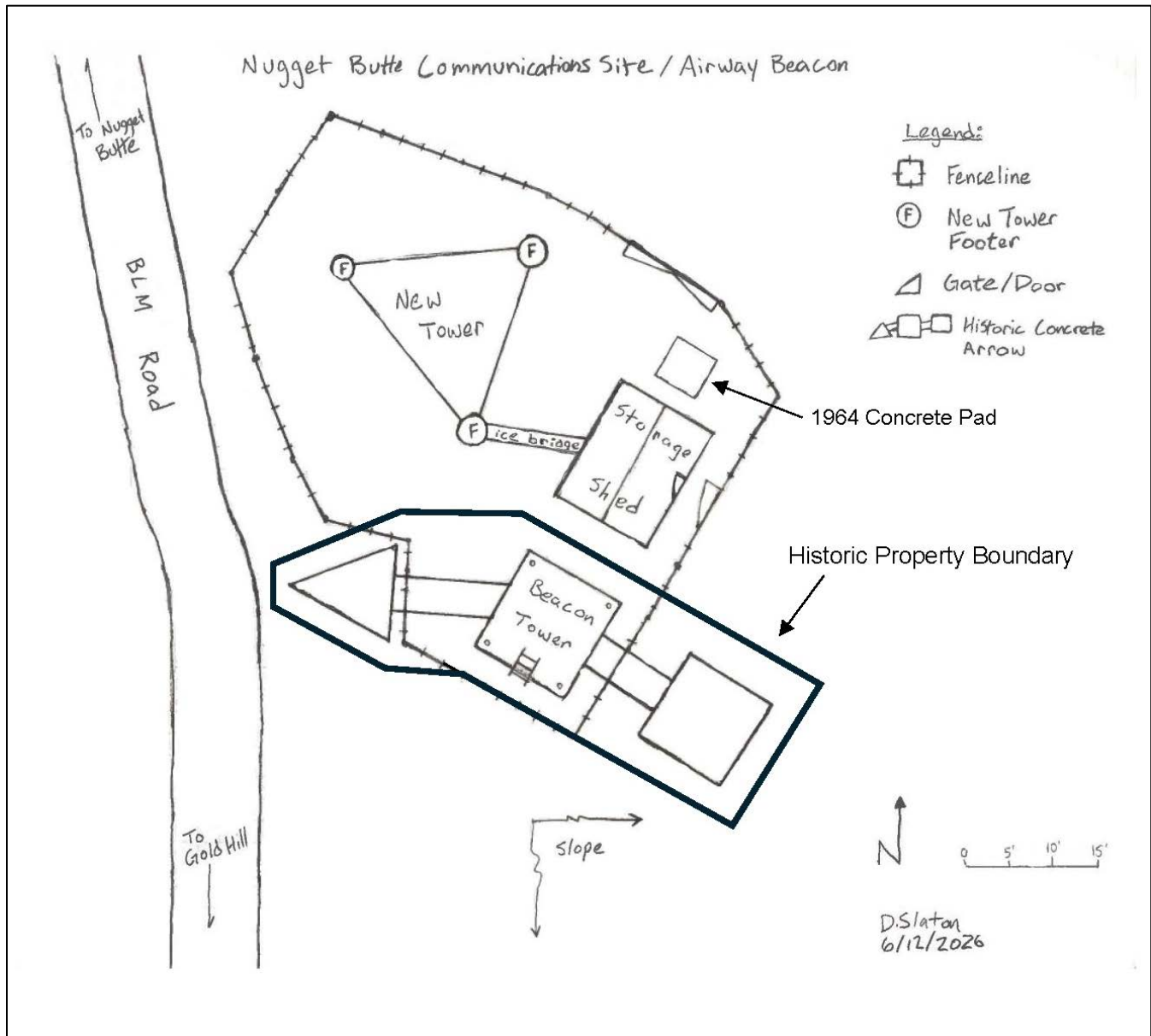
San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
#34

Name of Property
Jackson Co., Oregon

County and State
N/A

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Figure 4. Site Plan Map



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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
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Name of Property

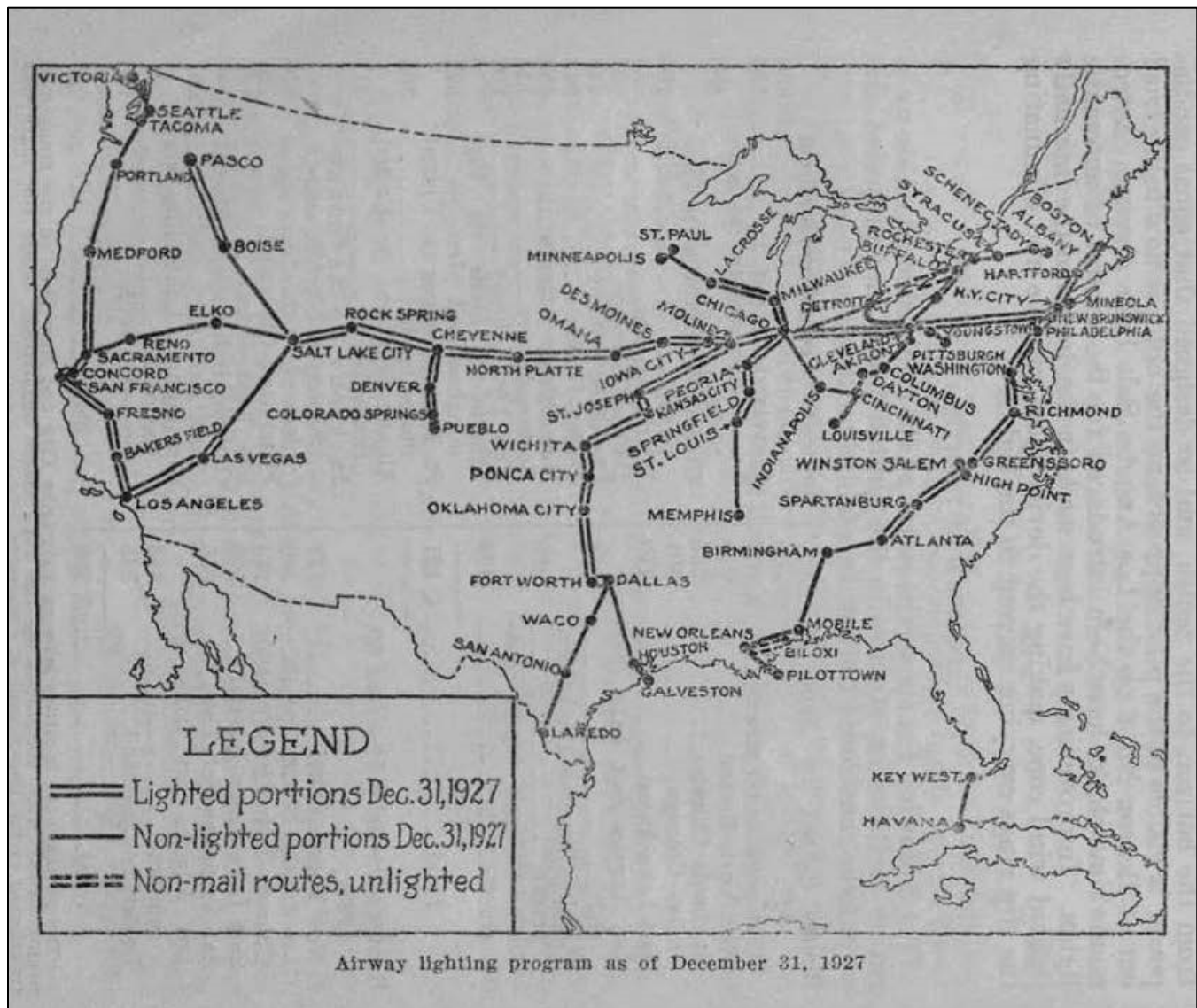
Jackson Co., Oregon

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 5. Map of U.S. Airways as of December 31, 1927⁹⁶



⁹⁶ DOC Airways Division, 15th Annual Report to DOC (1927):45

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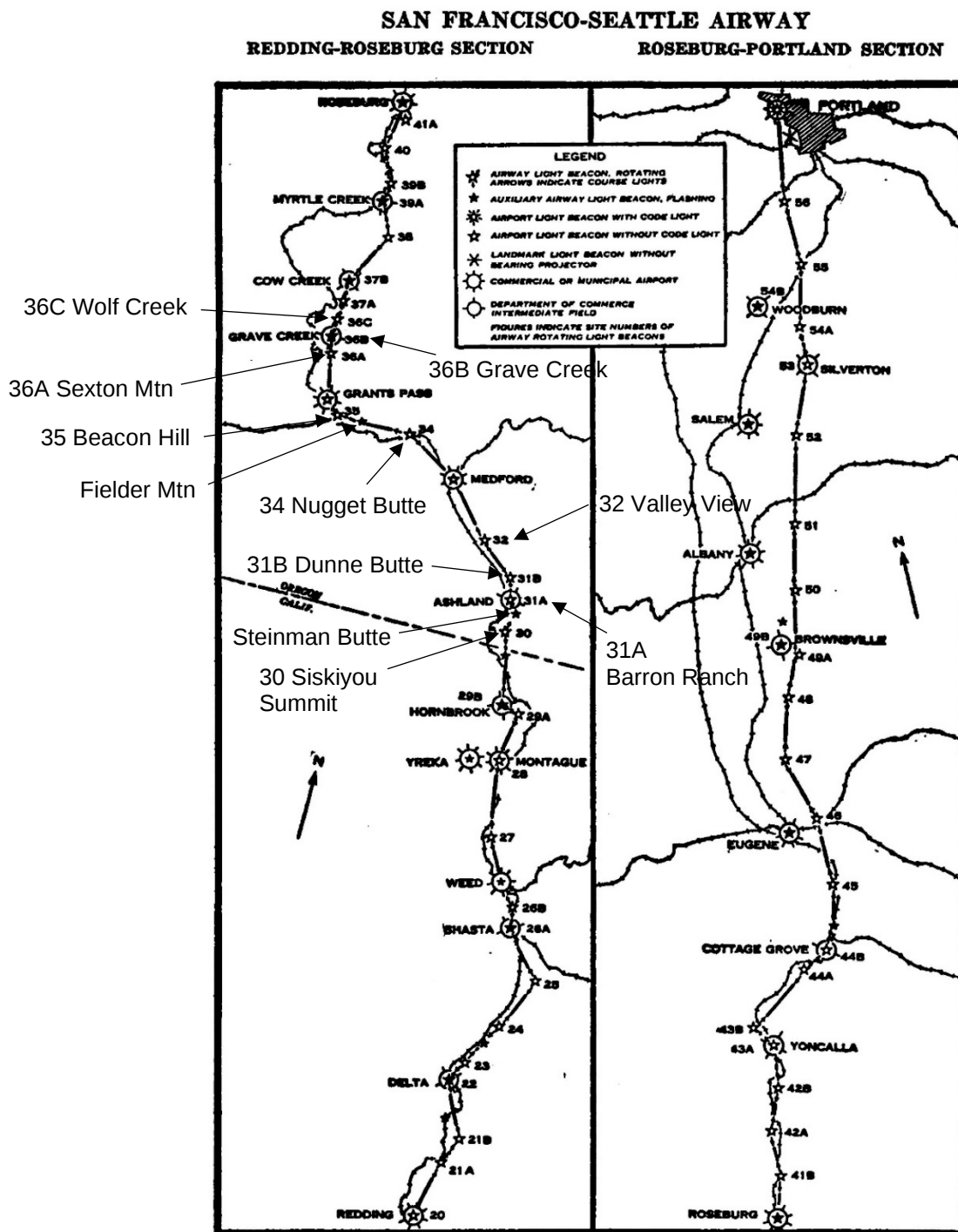
San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
#34

Name of Property
Jackson Co., Oregon

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 6. San Francisco-Seattle Airway Map, Redding to Portland⁹⁷



⁹⁷ DOC, Airway Bulletin No. 1 (1931):45, with added notations from this author for sites in Jackson/Josephine Counties

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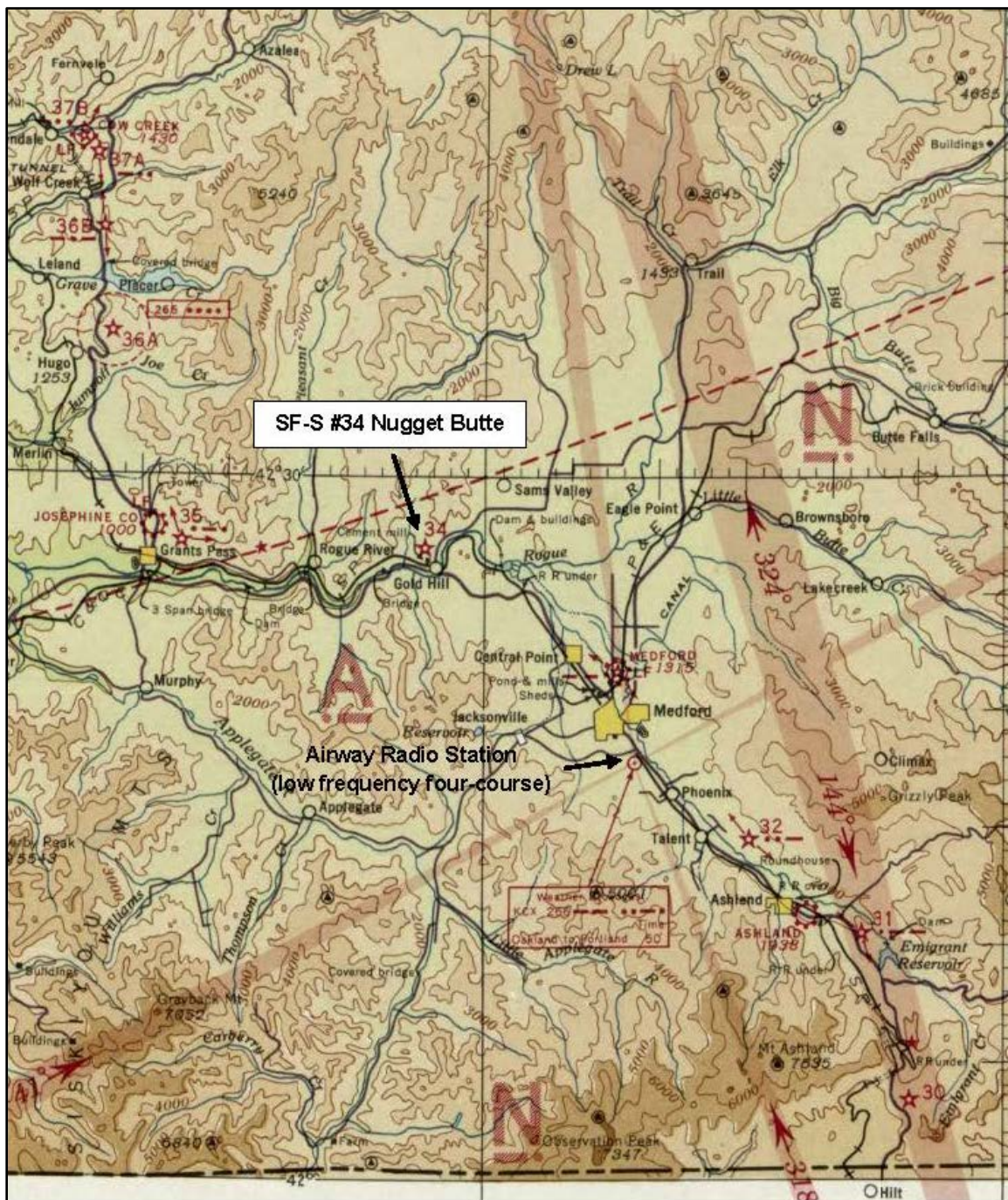
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 7. Detail of February 1936 Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Chart Showing San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34 (Nugget Butte)

Note that compared to the 1931 Airway Bulletin map, #36B Grave Creek is gone and #36C Wolf Creek from has been renumbered #36B, and #31A Barron Ranch is gone and #31B Dunne Butte is now #31.



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Figure 8. Detail of September 1960 Klamath Falls Sectional Aeronautical Chart (last sectional to show San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34 Nugget Butte)
Red arrows point to the five remaining airway beacons in Jackson and Josephine Counties.



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Figure 9. Pacific Air Transport Timetable Brochure, 1929, Side 1⁹⁸



⁹⁸ From the Bjorn Larsson collection, kindly provided in digital format to this author in July 2026.

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⁹⁹ From the Bjorn Larsson collection, kindly provided in digital format to this author in July 2026.

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San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon
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Jackson Co., Oregon

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 11. International Derrick and Equipment Company Airway Beacon Tower Brochure, 1928¹⁰⁰

IDECO AIRWAY BEACON TOWERS



Standard IDECO 51-foot Airway Beacon Tower

Airway and Airport Beacon Towers

SELECTION by the U. S. Government of IDECO galvanized structural steel airway beacon towers for use in the U. S. Air Mail service demonstrates beyond question the soundness of IDECO engineering and construction.

IDECO Beacon Towers are regular equipment on every important airway in the United States. They have been specified for thousands of miles of the lighted airways by the U. S. Department of Commerce and are also used by many privately owned airports.

These towers are especially constructed to resist high winds and storms. They are protected against the weather, rust and corrosion by hot dip galvanizing and are fire and lightning proof—essential requirements for structures of this type. Ease of erection has been stressed, due to the many out-of-the-way locations where transportation and erection is naturally difficult.

All members have been standardized and are built over jigs and dies, insuring absolute interchange-

IDECO AIRWAY BEACON TOWERS

ability and eliminating any cutting or fitting in the field. The best quality of structural steel is used, conforming to the specifications of the American Society for Testing Materials. Hot dip galvanized after fabrication, there are no exposed surfaces for rust and corrosion to attack and weaken the structure. Erection diagrams showing both foundation plans and erection details are furnished with each tower. All members and parts of the structure have erection numbers permanently stamped into the steel.

Heights vary from the short 20' tower used on the deserts and plains country to towers 87' or more in height. The standard tower is 51' in height but due to the topography of the site or other conditions additional heights are frequently required.

For beacons located on isolated spots, inaccessible to electric power, IDECO Towers with small houses built in the base are furnished for housing the small electric light plants or acetylene tanks.



20-foot Beacon Tower with house in base

IDECO beacon towers are designed for use with all standard makes of beacon lights with suitable mountings for attaching them. Neon lights and other fog and mist penetrating lights can be also mounted on these towers utilizing special fixtures to hold this special lighting equipment.

In addition to these standard towers International is in a position to furnish special towers to meet any requirement. International also manufactures flood-light towers, ground light supports, radio towers, mooring masts, hangars and all of the various types of buildings needed for an airport or airway. IDECO engineers will gladly assist in the preparation of plans and specifications without obligation.

For further information write **The International Derrick & Equipment Company**, Columbus, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Shreveport, La.; Houston, Tex.; Dallas, Tex.; Tulsa, Okla.; Torrance, Calif.; New York, N. Y.

¹⁰⁰ From Zhanna's Survey Station website, <https://thesurveystation.com/assets/docs/publications/1928-Ideco-Airway-and-Airport-Beacon-Towers-Brochure>. Accessed 11 June 2026.

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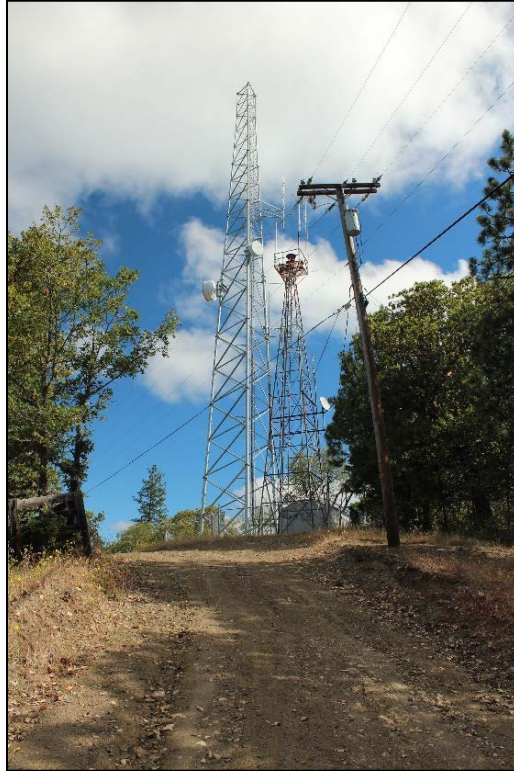
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 12. Detail of 1966 Aerial Photograph Showing SF-S Airway Beacon #34 Nugget Butte



San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0001

Overview of Nugget Butte Communications Site from the road with modern electrical line in foreground, airway beacon tower to right, and modern tower to left. Facing 16° (northeast). 6/4/2026.



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0002

Overview of Nugget Butte Communications Site from the road showing both towers (modern tower to left, airway beacon tower to right) and the modern electrical line, with the modern equipment shelter in the background. Facing 162° (southeast). 6/4/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0003

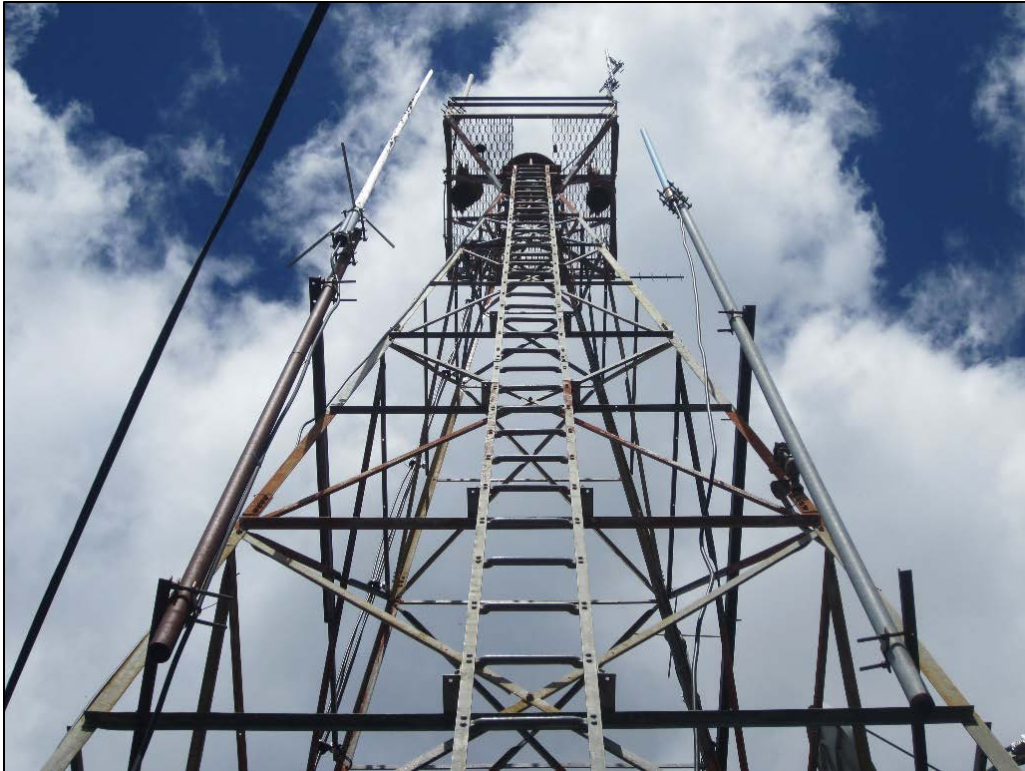
Airway beacon tower and concrete arrow, with modern tower partly visible to the left and modern equipment shelter in the left background. Facing 94° (east). 6/4/2026.



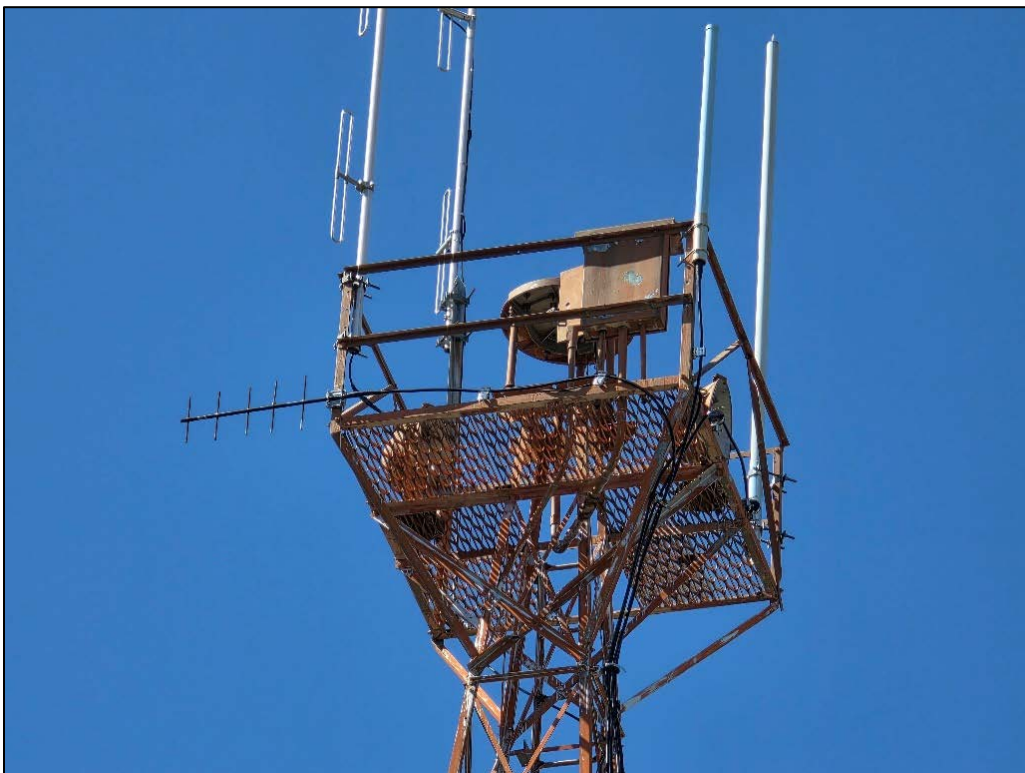
OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0004

Airway beacon tower with modern tower to the left and modern equipment shelter in the background. Facing 32° (northeast). 6/4/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0005
Airway beacon tower. Facing 34° (northeast). 5/7/2024.



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0006
Detail of top of airway beacon tower showing historic features including base for non-extant center rotating beacon light, housing for course lights on either side, and electrical junction box. Also visible are modern antennas and wiring attached to the tower. 6/4/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0007

Detail of south side of airway beacon tower showing manufacturer's tag behind the ladder with some graffiti visible to the left on a cross-brace ("JULY 22, 1943"). Facing 40° (northeast). 6/4/2026.



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0008

Detail of International Derrick & Equipment Company manufacturer's tag behind the ladder. 6/4/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0009

Detail of southwest corner of middle concrete pad and southwest airway beacon tower leg. Facing 74° (east).
6/4/2026.



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0010

Concrete arrow point with airway beacon tower base and modern equipment shelter in background. Facing 94° (east). 6/11/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0011

Eastern (feather) end of the concrete arrow with airway beacon tower base partly visible inside the fenced compound to the left. Facing 32° (northeast). 6/4/2026.



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0012

Eastern (feather) end of the concrete arrow. Facing 124° (southeast). 6/4/2026.

San Francisco-Seattle Airway Beacon #34
Jackson County: OR



OR_JacksonCounty_SanFranciscoSeattleAirwayBeacon#34_0013

Overview of communications compound showing modern equipment shelter and 1964 concrete pad behind it, with airway beacon tower to left and modern tower to right. Facing 256° (west). 6/4/2026