



**Forest Fire Lookout Association  
New York State Chapter  
July 2018**

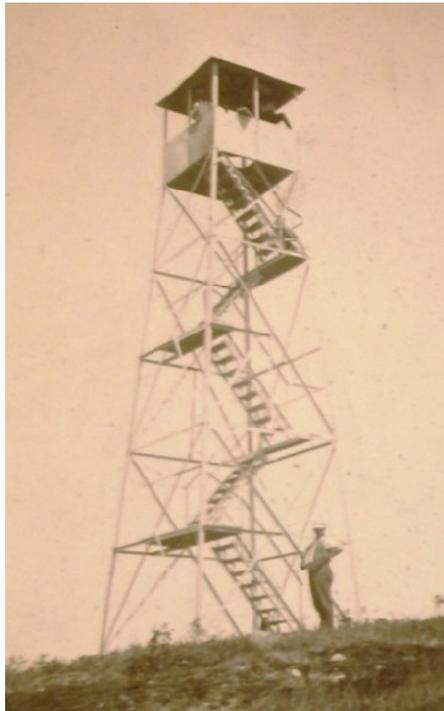
With summer fully upon us in New York State it is time to celebrate! First, we celebrate the re-opening of Wakely Mountain Fire Tower. Then we have 4 Centennial Celebrations coming up. Yes, 4 parties! Azure, St. Regis, Mount Arab and Swede Mountain Fire Towers all turn 100 years old and will be celebrating in the next month!

Wakely is reopened! In early May of 2017, NYSDEC Forester Jon DeSantis took immediate action when it was discovered that the Wakely Mountain fire tower was literally swinging in the wind. Jon contacted Dave Vana of Davana LLC and his crew went in and made an evaluation and temporarily stabilized the structure. A look at the tower at the time provided by Dave: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iy-pYNYtW-o&feature=youtu.be> From there, a plan was developed that required major logistics. Led by Forester DeSantis, those logistics included such things as reaching out to partners to assist, securing the necessary funding, the actual repairs, equipment needed, how to get manpower and equipment there and more. Efforts to get this project completed in 2017 were thwarted by weather, helicopter breakdowns, scheduling conflicts and became a bit frustrating at times. But it all came together this spring. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, under blue skies the crews and materials were taken in and work was begun. Let me share a few numbers with you; 6000 pounds of concrete, tools, gear and camp supplies for a week, 100 gallons of water for concrete and washing, and 40 gallons of water for drinking and coffee, had to be flown in, 8 new footings, and new stainless steel anchor bolts is just a partial list! When the crews returned 8 days later Wakely was standing tall and proud again! With much gratitude to all who made this happen, many thanks to Jon and the other Lands and Forest staff, Operations, Forest Rangers, SCA Back Country Stewards, State Police Helicopter support and Dave Vana and his crew – you guys are the best!!!! Here is the official press release from the NYSDEC: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/114117.html> (Photos courtesy of Dave Vana)



**Azure Mountain Centennial Celebration: On Saturday, July 29th** The public is invited to join the Azure Mountain Friends as they celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Azure Mountain fire tower. There will be 2 events. Summit events (upstairs) begin at 10 am. There will be a short reading by Azure Mountain Friend and author Neal Burdick, recollections by former chairs of Azure Mountain Friends Carolyn Kaczka, Mike McLean, and Joe Berner, and DEC personnel. Events at the St. Regis Falls Adult Center (downstairs) will begin at 2:00 pm with the doors opening at 1:30. There will be remarks by Chad Rivers, Town of Waverly Supervisor, DEC Region 5 Natural Resource Supervisor Tom Martin, and Marty Podskoch, author of the book *Adirondack Fire Towers: Their History and Lore*. There will be recognition of past Azure Mountain Friends officers. There will be community members recollections of the mountain, the fire tower, and its observers, cake, punch, and ice cream! Drawings will be held for raffles, including an original oil painting by Sandra Hildreth, a gift basket from the Laurentian Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, and a framed poster made by SUNY Potsdam Wilderness Education students. There will also be displays and a slide show. The photos here are from 100 years ago and show the fire tower when it was first built and the crew who built it; Tebeau, Finney, Pond, Parks, and Smith. In the 1936 photo you see the fine work of the CCC in building the cabin and the smoke rising from the well built chimney. For more information check out their web page:

<http://azuremountain.org/>



OBSERVER'S CABIN

Newest type of cabin being erected on mountain tops for use of Observers. This is located at Azure Mt. Erected by Barnum Pond CCC enrollees and Forest Rangers

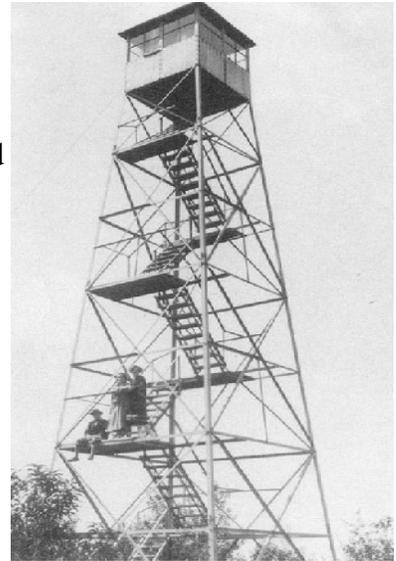
**St. Regis Centennial Celebration: On Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup>**, the Friends of St. Regis Fire Tower cordially invite you to attend the Centennial Celebration of the St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower. The work of the Friends group, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, the Student Conservation Association, the Adirondack Watershed Institute and the many volunteers & supporters has resulted in the tower being re-opened to the public on September 1, 2016. Now it's time to celebrate these accomplishments as well as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tower! Join the Friends at Lake Clear Lodge and Retreat located at 5319 State Route 30 on beautiful Lake Clear with a fabulous view of the tower from their shore. Hors d'oeuvres prepared by the Lodge staff will be available, as well as a cash bar. In addition to guest speakers and an opportunity to purchase fire tower gifts & raffle tickets, musical entertainment will be provided by The Birch Boys. A special dinner rate will be available to anyone interested in staying for dinner. The Friends also encourage you to attend a presentation of the Restoration and History of Adirondack Fire Towers presented by author Marty Podskoch on July 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at Paul Smiths College VIC at 8023 State Route 30. Reservations are not required, but if you are a Facebook user, go to the Friends event page and let them know you are coming please. The early photos here of St. Regis are of Observer Leander in 1939 on watch with the American flag flying. The 1936 style cabin was photographed in 1974 by Bob Eckler and was obviously well cared for. For more details and information visit <http://www.friendsofstregis.org/centennial-celebration/>



**Mount Arab Saturday, August 11<sup>th</sup>** Mt. Arab's Centennial celebration will take place at the trailhead and atop the summit. From 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Friends of Mount Arab board members will be at the trailhead, and their faithful Steward and board member, Tom Cullen, will be at the summit observer's cabin. It is a short jaunt to the summit, 1 mile each way, and the ascent is very family-friendly. The Mount Arab fire tower is the only one still standing in St. Lawrence County. The Adirondack Mountain Club recently organized a Trail Steward Workshop on Mount Arab, and all the water bars were magnificently improved. Mount Arab is one of three summits that comprise the Tupper Triad; the other two are Coney Mountain and Goodman Mountain. Memorabilia will be available at the trailhead. They look forward to meeting you at the Mount Arab Centennial Celebration. For more information visit: <http://friendsofmountarab.org/abouthistory.html> This 35 foot Aeromotor LS 40 tower was placed on the summit in 1918. In 1922 the Tupper Lake Herald reported the name was changed from Lake Pleasant tower to Mount Arab. They also reported that the fire tower "extended about 100 feet above the summit of the mountain." (Ed: Truth in journalism?) The photo here is from 1920 and shows there was hardly a tree on the summit. I love the photo of Observer Doc La Vasseur with his jeep, the tower and the cabin. That photo is dated 1950 and there had been little growth of trees even then.



**Swede Mountain Fire Tower** also turns 100 years old this year! On August 7, 2018 several people will be presenting a program on Swede Mt. Fire Tower at 7 p.m. at the Horicon Town Hall in Brant Lake and Marty Podskoch is doing a book signing of his *Adirondack Fire Tower* Book for the 100th anniversary. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the Horicon Historical Society. The photo here shows visitors to the tower in the 1930's. The tower and cabin were still in fairly good condition in the 1970's photos.



### Quick Updates

**Western Wildfires:** Wildfires are burning all across the western United States. A huge loss of personal property in this one, but thankfully no persons were injured. Sending good thoughts to all for some rain and relief. Stay safe: <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/wildfire/sd-me-alpine-blaze-20180706-story.html>

**NYS Wildfire:** From NYS Forest Ranger Report Buck Mt Wildfire. On June 19, Forest Rangers were notified of a possible wildland forest fire on Buck Mountain in Crown Point. Rangers responded and found that a lightning strike resulted in fire burning aerial, surface, and ground fuels. The fire was contained at 3.5 acres within 24 hours. Forest Rangers, with assistance from two inmate crews from Moriah Correctional Facility, worked for another two days to control and extinguish the fire. Rangers will continue to check the fire area and extinguish hot spots within the fire control perimeter.

**Stillwater:** – On June 21<sup>st</sup>, the Friends of Stillwater crew pooled their resources and their volunteers and successfully completed a roof repair. Cathy Percy, granddaughter of Stillwater Fire Observer Ken Hite (1964-74) walked the plank in a safety harness to repair cracks in the roof. Counterbalancing was done by Sandi Payne, Bill Sanzone & Jim Fox on the other end. Terry Perkins cut the steel patches, handed tools and patching materials to Cathy. Harry Peck's custom fabricated brackets bolted on all four sides should hold the roof down from the wind. Pop rivets, and adhesive donated by Adirondack Steel Works contributed to solving the problem.

**Answers to last months crossword puzzle:** Across: 8 Poke-o-Moonshine, 10 Utsayantha, 11 Slide, 12 Ferncliff, 14 Wakely, 15 Gore. Down: 1 Balsam Lake, 2 Blue, 3 Stillwater, 4 Whiteface, 5 Dickenson, 6 Moosehead, 7 Beacon, 9 Hunter, 13 Lyon. 2 People solved the puzzle, congratulations!

**CIC Tower:** Some news about this tower. Perhaps 2019 will be the year we add another fire tower in NYS. Check out the DEC Commissioners update. <https://youtu.be/Sy9Qh4GVHbA>

**FFLA Affiliate Chapters:** The Kent Conservation Foundation who manages the Ninham Mountain Fire Tower have become our latest FFLA Affiliate. They are a hard working group who replaced all of the wood on their tower last year, a very tall tower at 82 feet 6 inches! That is a lot of wood! And they are now spelling their name a bit differently, Nimham. More to come on that in a future issue.

**Could we pull off a statewide Lighting of the Fire Towers event?** In 2018 the Lighting of the Fire Tower event will take place on Saturday, September 1<sup>st</sup> from 9-9:30 pm. This event was the brain child of Doug Hamilton, Chairman of the Red Hill Fire Tower committee in the Catskills. He thought it would be nice to "reconnect" with local communities by placing a light in the fire tower cabs at a set date and time and publish information locally to encourage people to find a location and look up. The beacon that they see shining is a reminder of the men and women who were in the fire towers protecting their properties from forest fires. We use a simple light and provide the public with a list of possible viewing sites in our press information. Sometimes we get folks who will hike to a nearby peak and flash lights at us. Sometimes we have to go with our rain date – this year that will be Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup>. What do you think? Would you like to join the event? Check out the Friends of St. Regis web page and see what they are planning to do for this.

Would your group like to become an FFLA Affiliate? Would your group like to have their web address or facebook page link on our upcoming State Chapter web page? If so, please let me know.

### Calendar

Saturday, July 28, 2018 at 2:00 pm I will be doing a family friendly presentation at the Thompson Park Zoo, located in Watertown that will include a trip to the fire tower and activities.

Saturday, July 28, 2018 from 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm A presentation by fire tower historian Marty Podskoch at the [Paul Smith's College VIC](#)

Wednesday, August 8, 2018 Meet at 9 a.m. At the parking lot. Trail work day on the Observers trail to Poke-O-Moonshine. Call David Thomas-Train at 518-576-4592 with questions or to sign up.

Saturday, September 29, 2018, 11:00AM Sterling Forest Fire Tower as part of the Hudson Valley River Ramble. The Fire Tower Ramble is a moderate 4 mile loop highlighted by scenic views of Sterling Forest. Hikers are able to observe the surrounding Hudson Highlands from a 60 foot fire tower built in 1922. <http://www.hudsonrivervalleyramble.com>

October 21st- The 26<sup>th</sup> annual Ridge Walk and Run will be taking place. Several of the routes pass by the Alma fire tower and Observer's cabins which are on private property. This may be your only chance to get a photo! Registration is open <http://www.ridgewalk.com>.

Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup> – Ravens Rock Run to bring back the [Cross River Mountain Fire Tower at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation](#) at its former site in the park.

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