



**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
December 2022**

While we may be blanketed with snow at this time, you may remember that at the beginning of last month, right up until the newsletter, it was still very dry. The Forest Ranger reports from November 15th still held descriptions of several fires.

Town of Jasper, Steuben County Wildland Fire: On Nov. 10th at 10:55 AM, Forest Ranger Captain Rogers, Rangers Cordell and Dormer, and four fire departments responded to a wildland fire in Turkey Ridge State Forest estimated at 10 acres. By 4 PM, 11 fire departments and approximately 75 personnel were helping with suppression efforts on the fire, which grew to more than 25 acres. Due to fuel conditions, topography, and wind, the fire spread rapidly the rest of the evening and overnight. By the following day, the fire grew to approximately 370 acres. Significant rainfall reduced the danger of the fire growing larger. Rangers Oldroyd and Staples continued putting out hot spots throughout the weekend. The fire will remain in patrol status this week with Rangers checking hot spots and mopping up. More information about this fire can be found in this article sent to me by Fred Knauf: <https://wellsvillesun.com/blog/2022/11/16/ny-forest-ranger-report-on-the-turkey-ridge-state-forest-fire/> Additionally, Fred sent this along and is it ever worth 10 minutes of your time – please take a look. Thanks so much Fred! *“Peter Collin, who made this video, is a National Woodlands Owner Assc. forester and friends with Dr. Argow. He published this video where he walks through some of the burn.”* [Turkey Ridge Forest Fire 2022 | The HuntingPA.com Outdoor Community](https://www.huntingpa.com/outdoor-community/turkey-ridge-forest-fire-2022)

Towns of Brasher, Cairo, Denning, East Fishkill, Huron, Port Jervis, and Russia, Dutchess, Greene, Herkimer, Orange, St. Lawrence, Ulster, and Wayne Counties

Wildland Fires: From Nov. 8th-13th, Forest Rangers responded to wildland fires in seven different counties. These fires were caused by a combination of debris burning, smoking, and other issues. All of the fires, which burned approximately 119 acres, are currently out, contained, or in patrol status. Dry weather and windy conditions lead to fires that spread more quickly.

If you are a Plus member, you already know that you receive a second publication, National Woodlands magazine – There are always some wonderful forestry articles and information contained in this publication. I particularly enjoyed an article about the Helicopter Logging in this most recent issue. It is not something that we see often in NYS, though I do recall one harvest near the Hunter Mt. Fire Tower where they were doing this. Forester Peter Collin, who did the video listed above on the Turkey Ridge Fire, often writes for this magazine. To become a member or a plus member (our dues are very low), simply visit the website: <http://ffla.org/learn-more--join.html>

What criteria drives wildland firefighting? Lots of factors are in place, but policies and funding drive a lot of the work. In this article, there is a great explanation of the 10 AM policy which was in place from 1935 to 1978. <https://www.evergreenmagazine.com/why-a-10am-fire-policy>

The winner of this month's photo contest on Facebook was Deb Stone Hill. Deb's photo of Kane Mountain Fire Tower taken in December of 2021 got the most votes and certainly illustrated something we have not seen among our winning photos before, a dog on a fire tower! As always, think about safety with a dog on a fire tower. Congratulations to Deb and thanks to everyone who participated. We really enjoy all of the submissions.



AROUND THE STATE

Mt Arab: The Friends of Mt Arab group is looking to develop a display that includes an Observer's uniform – if you have an old one to donate to their summit museum, housed in the Observer's cabin, please let them know. <http://friendsofmtarab.org/index.html>

Ranger School Graduates: In a unique location, and in a new manner, a class of 38 new Forest Rangers graduated this month. It was unique in that this 23rd academy was a group of all Rangers with no ECO's included. Congratulations to all! <https://www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/news/local-news/2022/12/dec-graduates-38-forest-rangers/>

Dickinson Hill: Two weeks ago for the town of Grafton's Christmas Tree Festival, the Park participated and set up a special display to honor the 10th anniversary of the restoration of the Fire Tower. Educator Tamara Beal, built a true-to-size three-foot replica of the Dickinson Hill Fire Tower and decorated it with lights, mini ornaments, and even a fire tower observer. A big thank you goes out to all the volunteers and the Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park who helped restore the tower 10 years ago! Happy holidays! You can see the "Fire Tower Tree" for yourself on display in the Welcome Center, Wed-Mon, 9am-4pm.



Stissing: New trails, new trailmarkers, new towers – yes I said towers! Friends of Stissing Landmarks (FOSL) have been very busy. They have the 2 current trails remarked with some great new markers. They are also developing some additional plans that include a new trail and the installation of 2 other short fire towers. This group's energy and the local support they receive is tremendous. If you live nearby and would like to get involved, do check them out.

In Memoriam: Just as we went to print last month, we learned of the passing of Fire Tower Author Paul Laskey. Paul's passion for towers and his book "The Fire Observation Towers of New York State - Survivors that Stand Guard" were legendary in the fire tower world. It is interesting to know that Paul developed his love of fire towers following visits to fire towers and as a Fire Tower Steward. We send our heartfelt sympathy to his family and friends.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/dailygazette/name/paul-laskey-obituary?id=37678886>

Around New England: As we know, when our fire towers were in service, communication was a key aspect of an Observer's work. I came across this story today, which illustrates how important communication continues to be. We know that many of our fire tower sites are locations where ham radio operators frequent. Our fire towers continue to be a partner in the communication field!

https://www.laonidaily.com/news/local/ham-radio-repeater-connects-lost-hiker-with-help/article_e26f808-7b2a-11ed-9c25-4ff20590aa2f.html



Our final look at Lighting 2022 Event Photos: Mount Arab, Azure and Utsyantha

Mt. Arab by Sheila Young

Azure by Tom Ortmeier

Mt. Utsyantha by Linda Marie

Last Minute Gifts: Are you still looking for that last minute gift? There may still be time to consider an item from your favorite Fire Tower group. You may be able to get one of the very last of the unique cutting boards from Fred: <http://nysffla.org/> You may be able to purchase a fire tower book at a holiday discount: <https://martinpodskoch.com/books/> Marty says any book for \$20 each, or 2 for \$35, or 3 for \$50, or 4 for \$65, any 5 for \$80. Offer good through 12/19 only. How about membership to the FFLA for a gift? <http://ffla.org/learn-more--join.html>

Openings and Closings

Spruce reopened December 5th. **Swede** reopened December 16th.

Stillwater remains closed. Will reopen on December 21st.

Goodnow and Mt. Tremper – Cabs are closed pending repairs.

Sterling Forest and Jackie Jones - Towers are closed pending inspection.

Beebe Hill - Tower is closed pending repairs.

Seasonal Road Closures

Moose River Plains Recreation Area is closed: This affects the trailhead to Wakely Fire Tower.

Sundown Wild Forest - The section of Dinch Road that leads to the Red Hill Fire Tower Trailhead in the Sundown Wild Forest is seasonally maintained and not plowed throughout the winter. Visitors should note that the Dinch Road Trailhead location is generally inaccessible throughout the winter. Visitors who wish to visit the Red Hill Firetower should consider using the trail and parking area on Denning Road.

Balsam Lake Mountain Wild Forest - The eastern 2-miles of Beaverkill Road / Turnwood Road that leads to the Balsam Lake Mountain Trailhead is only seasonally maintained and not plowed throughout the winter. Visitors should note that this trailhead location is generally inaccessible throughout the winter.

Here in the fire tower world of New York State, December has been filled with gifts from our members and supporters. In no particular order and apologies in advance for anyone I have left out, here are some of the awesome things that have occurred in the recent weeks. John made some suggestions for the new year. Gordon provided some insight into how some repairs were done at Hunter Mt. Fire Tower cabin. Adam offered to steward at a tower next year. Sue offered to do trail work, driving all the way from Connecticut. Michelle supported our fund raising efforts by purchasing 2 more cutting boards. Fred's offer of those unique, one of kind pieces came from the heart and will make a real difference for us. Brian told me of all the good work being done at Stissing while he helped to access the needs of the Balsam Lake Fire Tower Cabin. Bill sent a special gift in the mail. Doug offered his advice on a number of concerns at Balsam Lake. Mom who is 87 years young called and said she had made a map bag to help us carry the new map in and out at Berry Hill.

As I type from the warmth of my home, I think the warmth may be from our member's generosity as well as the wood stove. It must be something about the steel – one touches it and the desire to help fire towers courses through the blood. We are so fortunate to have so many contribute in so many ways. Thank you all for a successful 2022! With your help, we look forward to more successes in 2023!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Laurie

