



**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
January 2023**

The start of a new year always begins with a review of the previous 12 month's activities. We provide an annual report each year to the National office and they maintain those reports on their website. To see the New York report and others, check out <http://ffla.org/chapter-reports.html>. I was very excited and proud to share the work of the NYS Chapter! Thanks to all of you, so much good work was done.

The other big event every January is the Annual FFLA Meeting. This year it was a worldwide meeting with members from as far away as Australia! I always find these meetings to be refreshing and inspiring. Fire Towers/Lookouts/Observatories, whatever you want to call them are truly unique. There are a special group of people who give of their time to preserve these structures and their history, both the human history and the natural history. It is a rather small group of people, but when you attend an annual meeting, you really understand that there are quite a few like minded people out there.

There were a few significant items from that meeting that will certainly be of interest to all of you. Our conferences are back in 2023! Plans are still being finalized, but the dates and locations are done and I will encourage all of you to try to take in one of these fun events. It is an excellent opportunity to visit fire towers, travel, and meet other fire tower enthusiasts.

The 2023 Eastern Summer Regional Conference will be held on August 12-13, 2023, in Andover, N.J., at the Section 3 Office of the N.J. Forest Fire Service. Plans are underway to visit 4 or 5 towers, including one of the new ones recently built in Pennsylvania. There are campgrounds, hotels and motels in the area. These towers continue to actively watch for fires.

The 2023 Western Conference will be held in St. Regis, Montana the weekend of July 8-9, 2023. Plans are underway for the fire towers that we will visit. Just off I-90, it will be a great area to visit!

In 2024 – we hope to bring the Eastern Conference back to NY! We hosted a conference in Keene in 2016 and in Mt. Tremper in 2019, so we will be looking for a bit different location in 2024. All thoughts are welcome for location and guest speakers.

More news from the Worldwide Annual Meeting: Last year, only 1 restoration grant was issued. That means that this year in 2023, there are more grants available. If your Friends group or your tower needs some work, please don't hesitate to reach out to me to discuss this opportunity. It can make a difference and the process is quite straightforward!

Lastly, from the Worldwide Annual Meeting comes two requests for assistance. Remember, no one in the FFLA is a paid employee. Everyone is a volunteer. Volunteers have been working very hard to update and improve the national website using the Word Press platform. Could you help them out?

We see a lot of personal Facebook groups developing that are not associated with an organization. We do hope that if you are part of one of these groups that you will let that group know of the FFLA organization and its work. Please give us a shout out. Thank you!

We have a great snowy, winter photograph as the winner of our first monthly photo contest of the year, on our Facebook page. Each month, we invite our members to post photographs taken on, of, or near a fire tower in New York State and ask our members to then 'Like' their favorites. The contest runs the first 10 days of each month and the photo with the most Likes is featured in that month's newsletter and as our page's cover photo. This month, our winning photo was submitted by Michele Kaminsky, a photo she took of the wintry view from Mount Tremper Fire Tower in January of 2021. Congratulations to Michele and thanks to all who submitted photos and participated in this fun contest.



One of the other things we always do at the beginning of each year is a review of the historical records to see if any fire towers will be celebrating their centennial birthday. We find only one tower that will be 100 years old this year, Cornell Hill*. In 1923 the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors approved an expenditure of \$1000.00 to erect the tower, Observer's cabin, and telephone line. A local landowner contributed the remaining funds and all was accomplished by late fall of 1923. The tower actually went in service for the first time in 1924. Two other towers were completed in late 2022, making 1923 their first year of operation; Sterling Forest and Number 7 Hill.

*Cornell Hill fire tower was moved from its original location in the summer of 2008. A 60 foot tall Aeromotor LS 40 model, this tower was put up at the Boy Scout's Camp Saratoga in Wilton. Larry Gordon led the effort, and the tower was carefully restored and is available to visit on weekends when a steward is present. There are some great historical photos on our website of the Historic Cornell Hill Fire Tower and the restoration work too! <http://nysffla.org/PH/phphotos/phphotoscornellhill.html> We thank Retired Forest Ranger Captain Paul Hartmann for this wonderful collection of photos.

The Number 7 Hill and the Sterling Forest Fire Towers were also Aeromotor LS 40 models that were 60 feet tall. Number 7 Hill was closed in 1970 and later removed. Sterling was decommissioned in 1989. The Sterling Tower still stands today. <http://nysffla.org/sterling.html> We thank FFLA Deputy Chairman East, Mark Haughwout, for this wonderful collection of photos.

Several new Observer's cabins were built in 1923; Mount Arab, Tooley Pond, T-Lake, Snowy, Wakely and Number Seven Hill all had cabins built. All together the fire prevention system consisted of 59 fire towers in 1923. Snowy – R, Tooley Pond - L



There were other historic events that happened in 1923 regarding the fire fighting systems in New York State. According to the Conservation Commission reports, a need was identified for a pump which could be carried conveniently anywhere in the woods by one man and that could be operated by the man as he walked along. A new type of French pump was obtained in early 1923 and supplied to the District Rangers for testing. The French Vermorel spray pump was a can shaped like a knapsack which was carried on the back with a lever easily operated by one hand which enabled the operator to deliver a stream of water on the fire through a short length of hose held in the other hand. While it worked well when spraying in a vineyard, it lacked the water pressure necessary for wildland fire fighting. But what an improvement this must have been to get water directly to a fire rather than having to form a bucket brigade line or fight a fire without any water. It was replaced after a few years with another more common item, the Indian Tank, made right here in New York. This proved satisfactory and it was planned to equip each ranger with one in the future.

Read What Users Say About
INDIAN FIRE PUMPS!

ACTUAL UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM OUR FILES



"Saved A Store And Several Buildings"

We consider your **INDIAN FIRE PUMPS** one of the most important pieces of equipment in our company. Just two days ago we saved a Dry Goods store and several other buildings with small water damage by using **INDIANS**. **INDIANS** play a large part in extinguishing many of our fires and we intend to get more in the near future.

J. S. Williams



"Firemen Prefer INDIANS To Any Other Extinguisher"

I once thought **INDIAN FIRE PUMPS** had use only where a volunteer department was putting out grass fires. Since including a No. 90 galvanized **INDIAN** on our apparatus, however, I found that the men would not use any other type of extinguisher.

That led me to buy a number of No. 90 solid brass tank **INDIAN FIRE PUMPS** and place them on all our equipment. Our men are most enthusiastic about **INDIANS** and prefer them to any other hand extinguisher for all Class A and small oil fires.

George P. Lasher, Fire Chief



"In No Time At All Had The Fire Out"

Today, I glanced out on the street and saw smoke coming from the hood of an automobile parked in front of my building. I rushed out and a man and a woman had gotten out of the car and raised the hood. A nice flame of fire had developed.

I rushed back in my store and got one of your **INDIAN FIRE PUMPS** and in no time at all had the fire out. Someone called the fire department, but I had the fire out before they arrived.

I bought these **INDIAN FIRE PUMPS** from you three years ago. They had been standing filled with water but never used until today—they worked perfectly.

A. G. Preston, President
 Utica Office Supply Co., Inc.

Agents Wanted

FOR DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ON THESE FAMOUS FIRE EXTINGUISHERS WRITE TO

D. B. SMITH & CO. UTICA 2, N. Y.

PACIFIC COAST BRANCHES:

Berkeley Equipment & Rubber Co., Inc.
 435 Broadway Street
 San Francisco 1, California

Fred E. Barrett Company
 2005 E. 1st Ave.
 Portland, Oregon

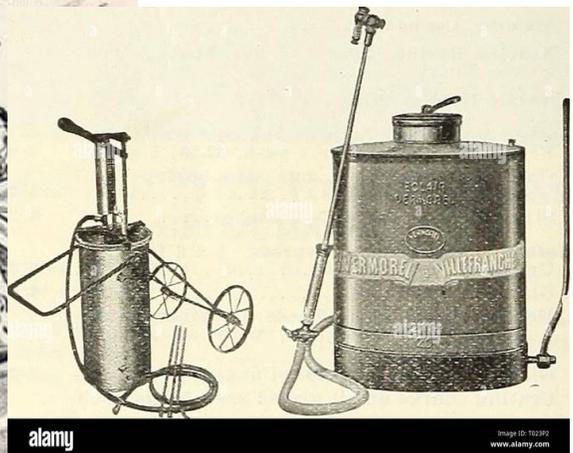
Thos. (Doc) Goss, Inc.
 2109 Fourth Avenue South
 Seattle, Washington

S. M. Curtis & Sons
 476 West Third Street South
 Seattle, Washington

CANADIAN AGENTS:

Flesh Bros. Limited
 111 Alexander Street
 Vancouver, B. C., Canada

Duke Equipment Company, Limited
 257 Duke Street
 Toronto, Ontario



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Image ID: 102392
 www.alamy.com

There were more changes in 1923 which we will discuss in upcoming newsletters: the formation of fire districts, and the addition of the Double Forester pump equipment.

Around the State

NYSDEC Survey: Kiosk Surveys are being requested by the NYSDEC. This is a great opportunity for you to voice your opinion. Kiosks around the state seem to vary greatly in their messaging and in their state of repair or disrepair as the case may be. Whether you think they are perfect or if you would like to encourage improvements, or perhaps clarity and consistency in messaging, simply complete the survey. You can do so as many times as you would like, one survey per kiosk. I have completed these already and will continue to do so throughout 2023. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/126881.html>

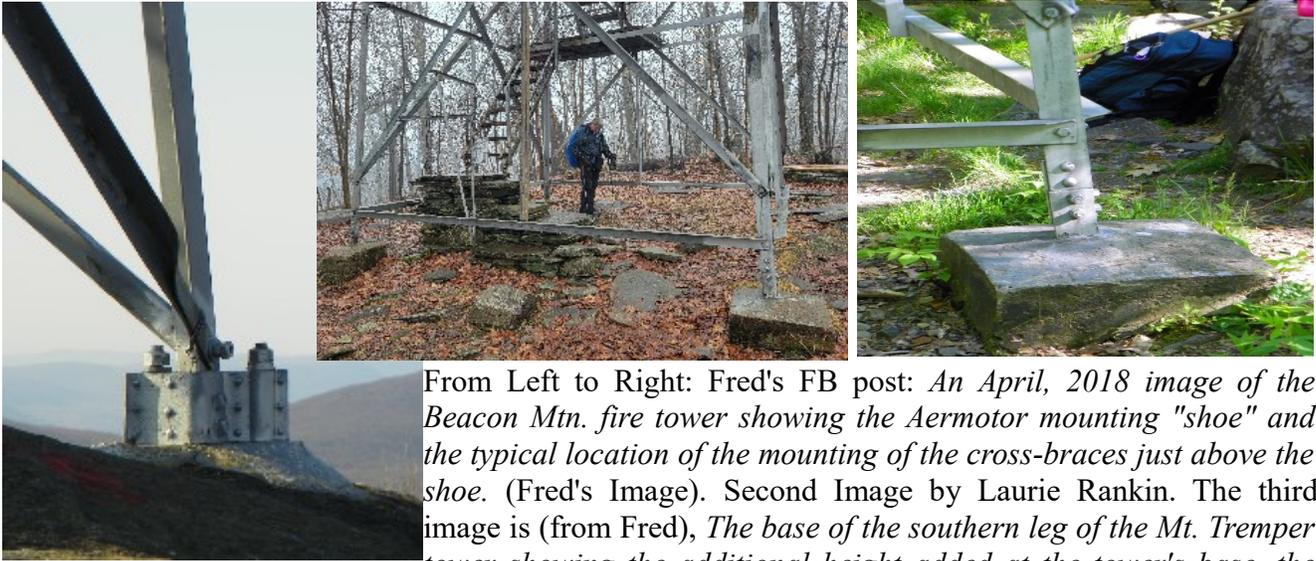
Mount Tremper: On a recent visit to Mount Tremper, I took note of a number of items. One in particular that I wanted to look at was brought to my attention by Past NYS FFLA Chapter Director Fred Knauf about an unusual feature at the fire tower, the steel and stairs on the fire tower. Fred noted this during a visit there as part of our 2019 conference. I had visited several times and noted this, but Fred raised some interesting questions in his weekly Throwback Tower Thursday Facebook post 11-18-21:

“As I wrote about in an earlier TTT on June 20, 2019, I noticed something very different with the Tremper Mountain fire tower when I first hiked to it a few weeks before I wrote that column. I noticed the difference when I was a good 50-feet or more from the tower, and that difference is that the initial steel cross braces, and the tower itself, seem raised up a few feet vs. other fire towers of the LS-40 model, whose cross braces are mounted just above the tower’s footing “shoe”. Then, when I climbed the tower, I noticed the very short last set of stairs and shorter distance between the last landing and the observer cab floor. Anyone who climbs this tower when the cab is not open will notice it’s a few feet shorter. Why?

I believe that when the crew was setting the drill holes for the tower, they somehow made an error and had the hole distances expanded. It could have been as simple as drilling one hole for each corner that should have been the outside hole, but instead it was made the inside hole and the second set was drilled further apart, or it could have been that they were drilling holes based on the 1916 LL-25 tower height of 54 feet, such as is on Hadley Mtn. today. In order to get the tower to fit, an on-the-site fix had to be made and some of the steel from the last corner pieces that would be used at the top of the tower were cut and used to mount onto the expanded footers, or additional short steel angle pieces were fabricated and rushed to the scene. Small gusset plates would be required to link the additional pieces together, which I’m sure the Conservation Commission had spares from Aermotor, so that fix was made, and the actual fire tower rose up after the first foot or two were “created” with the fix.

When the stairs were to be added, a series of stone steps were placed in line to give the observer and the visitor a safe walkway up to the steel & wood stair steps. When it came time to place the last corner pieces onto the tower, which were now shorter, they were angled in a little more, the cross braces to support them bent a little so they “fit”, and the cab was attached. The “skunk-works” project of those laborers worked, much like was done to fit the error made atop Mt. Adams the same year, though that error was a little different. As the tower went on-line in early April, I would have to believe that the initial drilling work occurred in the fall of 1916, and that is why it could be they drilled with the incorrect template for the LL-25 rather than the LS-40 tower which was delivered.”

I stood there and looked at all these things that Fred brought up and thought, hmmm. Then I looked at another item, the extra steel around the base. Fred noted this in his post too and attributed it to the restoration done in the late 1990's: "As a part of that work, additional structural horizontals were added a few feet off the ground to provide additional support / strength to the base where those gusseted joints were located." With the tall trees now on the summit of Mt Tremper, the only view is from the top landing or the cab. Maybe they knew how much those trees were going to grow?



From Left to Right: Fred's FB post: An April, 2018 image of the Beacon Mtn. fire tower showing the Aermotor mounting "shoe" and the typical location of the mounting of the cross-braces just above the shoe. (Fred's Image). Second Image by Laurie Rankin. The third image is (from Fred), The base of the southern leg of the Mt. Tremper tower showing the additional height added at the tower's base, the gusseted bracket and bolts, the buried in concrete mounting "shoe", and the added horizontal members added in the tower's rehabilitation around 2000 (note the incorrect bolt style used in the mounting - hexagonal headed bolts rather than square headed bolts) from June 8, 2019. Take a look the next time you visit and let us know what you think.

FFLA Plus Membership: From our friends at Northern Woodlands, (remember you can become a plus member of FFLA and receive their magazine too), comes this fascinating article that is studying the affects of beavers on global warming: <https://news.yahoo.com/photos-space-show-11-000-221546256.html> Because we have so many beavers in New York State, this seems to be something we may study here too.

Smokey Bear: Did you know that the longest running public service ad campaign in the United States is the Smokey Bear wildfire prevention campaign? <https://smokeybear.com/en/smokeys-history/about-the-campaign>. I have seen that Smokey has a new modernized ad campaign on television where we are hearing Smokey providing a message through a smart phone. It is great to see these campaigns continue to help keep us safe. Each year, we purchase and provide our steward programs with Smokey Bear items for free distribution at fire towers. There are numerous options available. If you need some help finding them, please let me know.

Closings

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

Beebe Hill - Tower is closed pending repairs.

Goodnow: The Goodnow Mountain Trailhead, Trail and Firetower are CLOSED until 3/15 to accommodate an active timber harvest. The Goodnow Mountain Trail leading to the fire tower is part of the Archer and Anna Huntington Wildlife Forest , managed by SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and forms the Newcomb Campus. The mission for the Campus is to lead research, education and demonstration, advancing our understanding of forest and wildlife management.

The project is *Adaptive Capacity Through Silviculture (ACTS)*, an experiment to determine how different forest treatment methods and resulting changed light levels affect the regeneration and growth of future forests as impacted by a changing climate. As a key carbon sink, forests are increasingly important to accumulate and sequester atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations and help mitigate climate change. ACTS is a new network of experimental cutting designs that tests alternative strategies for managing hardwood forests across the northeastern US from New York to Michigan.

The project is designed to include several different timber harvest scenarios covering approximately 104 acres. Permanent research plots have been established to document forest conditions before and after the harvesting, and to evaluate the long-term effects of the different treatment strategies and also climate change mitigation and adaptation. You can learn more about the project at www.esf.edu/forestproperties/about/news.htm. Please direct questions to Mike Federice, Assistant Forest Property Manager, 518-582-4551

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.

We are planning a few new things in 2023. One of them is simple, just noting fire tower visits I do here in this newsletter, though I may not always write about them. Visits done in January of 2023: Mount Tremper and the Upper Esopus Fire Tower.

Winter has been a bit lazy here in the Eastern US, we have had bare ground for several weeks and fairly mild temperatures aside from a few days around Christmas. Some wildfires are actually popping up around the state which is very unusual for January. Pardon my absence, I am going snow dancing!

Laurie
Laurie Rankin, Director
New York State Chapter
Forest Fire Lookout Association
www.nysffla.org