



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

September is always an exciting time for the NYS Chapter of the FFLA as we hold our Annual Lighting of the Fire Tower Event. This year it was our Tenth event and we had 37 towers participating. We also asked each tower to please be certain to read the names of the Observers who served in the towers and to include those names in their local press releases. After all, the purpose of this event is to remember those who served. We have several examples to share of how that occurred.

Stillwater fire tower Illuminator Harry Peck, with his strong voice that could be heard over the wind, read each of the Observer's names who served in the tower and then rang a bell before going on to the next one. His voice projected well out from behind the light in the cab into the darkness below as he honored all those who served.

<https://www.facebook.com/1449582570/videos/pcb.3522348234675916/300848995862882>

Woodhull tower was lit by retired Forest Ranger Gary Lee. The article he wrote about his experience in the Adirondack Almanack is below. He captures what we hope many thought about in his closing paragraph - *"I took down the lights at 9:30 and started down the mountain. A barred owl called a few times as I passed where he was hunting just off the trail. Thinking as I hiked the trail how many times the observers who worked on these mountains climbed up and down from the towers. The observations they made over the years and how many times they ducked thunderstorms in their cabins as the lightning lit up their towers."* [Weathering a storm during Woodhull Mountain tower lighting - - The Adirondack Almanack.](#)

Lou Curth's comments on Gary's article really captured the essence of this important event. Lou wrote *"Thanks for that great nighttime fire tower photo Gary, and for acknowledging the services of Woodhull Tower's Observers. Just imagine that there are lists like that for over 100 fire towers all over New York State. Men and women who were essential in protecting us from fire, but also, they were very much a part of the fabric of our rural communities. They deserve to be recognized and appreciated for their conservation work in protecting and educating us, and also for their part as valued members of our communities. May this tradition of tower lighting continue in coming years and help us all to remember."*

Here we share some of the local press articles or sections of them. [Hamilton Express](#) and [WSKG](#) and [Adirondack Almanack](#)

We also want to share some of the additional events that some groups do. The Friends of St. Regis, "While our lighting team was busy on the summit rigging up the lights and preparing for the big event, others were gathering at the Lake Clear Lodge to celebrate the night and the tower. The Hohmeyer family and the Lodge team put together a wonderful celebration full of activities that culminated with a walk to the beach to see the lights come on. The event was well attended and the food was very good. At Raquette Lake, the lighting was viewed by member Ed Engelman; "Wakely Fire Tower lighting on September 2, 2023 as viewed from the W. W. Durant on Raquette Lake. Thank you Fred Knauf for lighting the tower!"

We received some amazing photographs from the Lighting Event and have too many to share in one newsletter so we will divide them up over the course of a few months. As we receive photographs we try to get them posted in the album on the website, so take a look today and again in the future. <http://nysffla.org/lightp.html>



St Regis by Mark Boyce



Wakely from WW Durant



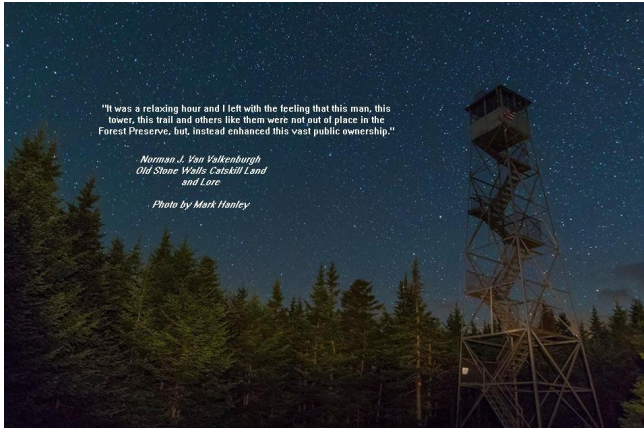
Stillwater by Harry Peck



Woodhull by Gary Lee

Due to all of the great photos of the Lighting Event, we have chosen to skip the month of September's facebook photo contest. Instead we have a great new cover photo with a quote from Norm Van Valkenburgh "It was a relaxing hour and I left with the feeling that this man, this tower, this trail and others like them were not out of place in the Forest Preserve, but instead enhanced this vast public ownership." Photo of Balsam Lake Fire Tower by Mark Hanley.

We also wanted to share an incredible photo that was shared on our Facebook page taken by Paige Dana of Mt Beacon Fire Tower as the full moon rose behind it.



AROUND THE STATE

Buck Mt Fire Tower: It is official! The Buck Mt Fire Tower opened to the public on the afternoon of September 2nd. This fire tower, a 60 foot Aeromotor LS 40 tower was built in 1933. It was erected by the Whitney family on their property in Whitney Park. We have limited historical information about this private tower, but we do understand that the tower parts were taken up the mountain by sled dogs in the winter. Our hats are off to the Town of Long Lake and Hamilton County for all that they did to reopen this historic tower! The Town had never taken on such a responsibility in the past and we were happy to work with them providing some technical assistance and some hands on assistance to see the tower opened. <https://www.mylonglake.com/2023/09/02/buck-mountain-fire-tower-open-september-2-2023/>

Swede: Please remember that Swede Mt Fire Tower is now closed through December 15th.

Fire Tower Business for Sale: Davana LLC is still for sale: <https://www.loopnet.com/biz/Business-Opportunity/construction-company-specializing-in-fire-tower-sales-and-installation/1896805/>

Bald Mt: Past FFLA Director Fred Knauf wrote about his work at this historic tower this past month. We are so very appreciative of this labor of love and hope that all will treasure and respect the new map. "I do this volunteering for the Friends of Bald Mountain, which is in need of some new members. Last Sunday's work was the replacement of the observer's map table. As I was beginning the project around 5:05 pm, Assistant Forest Ranger Jacob Bolton arrived after seeing that I signed in, and provided wonderful assistance to the work of getting the old map table apart, getting the new one together, and then aligning the map to ensure accuracy. We triangulated using quarters on the center point and on three mountains on the map - West Mtn, Seventh Lake Mtn, and Woodhull Mtn., aligning the sight of the quarters to the actual mountains. Once in alignment, the new map was screwed in with three different styles of screws to reduce the likelihood of a "yahoo" removing it and stealing it.

The old map, placed onto 1 inch thick lexan and covered by a 1/4 inch piece of lexan, was not UV coated and the sun bleached the map away in five years. The new map has three coatings of UV protection so hopefully it will last a little longer. The new map and my pack of tools weighed in around 60 pounds going up but the lexan added another five to ten pounds coming down. Quite a workout for "old Fred".

Let's hope the "yahoo's" treat this one nicely and don't ruin it for the enjoyment of all. If you do not have a BOLT power supply for your car, google it and get one. A great battery power pack that starts cars too. This time, it powered my Dremel tool, which was so needed for the work up there. A great Christmas gift!" Many, many thanks Fred and Jacob!!!



Speaking of Bald Mt, from the 8-22 Ranger report is the following rescue: **Town of Webb, Herkimer County, Wilderness Rescue:** On Aug. 17 at 1:14 p.m., Ray Brook Dispatch requested Forest Ranger assistance for an injured hiker on Bald Mountain. Lieutenant Hoag, Ranger Stone, and Assistant Forest Ranger (AFR) Bolton responded along with Eagle Bay and Old Forge fire departments, and Old Forge Ambulance. AFR Bolton reached the 74-year-old from Rome and provided first aid for the leg injury. Rescuers carried the subject off the mountain using a wheeled litter. At 4:25 p.m., Old Forge ambulance transported the subject to the hospital.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

Also from the August 29th and September 12th Ranger Reports we hear about the good work of our NYS Forest Rangers as they were deployed to other areas of the country. The videos are not lengthy and help to illustrate the work that they did. As I type this, other NYS Forest Rangers are being deployed to other areas of the country.

Lake County, State of Montana, Wildfire Response: On Aug. 4, Forest Ranger Kabrehl departed for a two-week assignment at the Big Knife fire in Montana. Ranger Kabrehl, based in Warren County, served as a Task Force Leader supervising a crew of wildland firefighters from across the country. The fire has burned approximately 7,300 acres and is currently 13 percent contained. Ranger Kabrehl [discusses his experience in a video available for download](#).

Kootenai County, State of Idaho, Wildfire Response: On Aug. 5, Forest Rangers Gallagher and Mecus departed for a two-week assignment at the Ridge Creek fire in the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Forest Ranger Gallagher, based on Long Island, first served as Deputy Logistics Chief to help build up a camp with 23 tents, power, and cell service. Once that task was completed, Ranger Gallagher moved to his assigned duty of Supply Unit Leader. Based in Essex and Franklin counties, Ranger Mecus served as Planning Section Chief, supporting more than 200 wildland firefighters. On Aug. 13, Ranger Carpenter, based in Steuben County, was assigned to the same fire as Safety Officer. The fire has burned approximately 4,359 acres and is 32 percent contained. Rangers [Gallagher](#) and [Mecus](#) discuss their experiences in videos available to download.

Siskiyou County, State of California, Wildfire Response: On Aug. 22, Forest Ranger Oldroyd departed for a two-week assignment at the Happy Camp Complex fire in the Klamath National Forest. Ranger Oldroyd, based in Broome and Chenango counties, served as task force leader for a group of wildland firefighters from across the country. The Happy Camp Complex Fire includes 13 different fires. Ranger Oldroyd was assigned to the largest in the complex, which burned approximately 30,000 acres and is currently 57 percent contained. [Ranger Oldroyd discusses his experiences in a video available to download](#) (928 MB).

Birds: Birds and fire, an interesting perspective. This is a lengthy article so it is perfect for a chilly fall evening. What do you think? https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/after-the-fire-how-a-sustainable-ranch-survived-a-natural-wildfire/?utm_source=Cornell+Lab+eNews&utm_campaign=513beef531-Cornell-Lab-eNews-August-2023&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-513beef531-373785637

We still find value in Observer's work: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/climate/wildfire-lookouts-fire-towers.html>



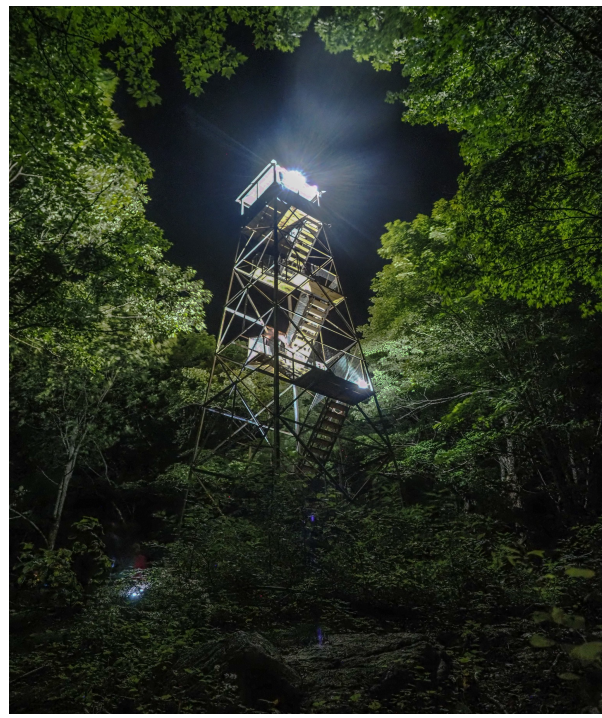
Makomis/Speculator by J Barrett



Red Hill by John Gunther



Berry Hill, by Warren Johnsen



Swede by Melanie Houck

In the later days of September we are wrapping up several fire tower projects and will report on those in the October newsletter. We will also have more Lighting Event follow up and photos for you!

Have any suggestions for the newsletter? Please let me know

Laurie