



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

Since our last newsletter, NYS has been very, very busy with fire towers officially open for the season, staffed with both paid and volunteer interpreters, new museum displays opened, celebrations planned, plus a fire tower reopened following a major restoration project! Sit back in a cool bug-free breeze, kick off those hot hiking boots and enjoy all the news!

Jackie Jones Fire Tower in Harriman State Park is now reopened! With a huge thanks to Matt, Director of Development and Special Projects at the Palisades Park Commission, Todd, the Membership Engagement Manager for Region II of Team Rubicon, and FFLA Members, we completed the restoration work on Sunday, June 3rd after only 4 work days. The public can once again climb to the uppermost landing on the fire tower. The public will be able to be in the cab only when the tower is staffed. Thanks to Matt, the Park has already secured a grant to fund a steward at the tower. The FFLA is working with The Park and the NYNJTC to develop that program and we hope to have it up and running soon. In the meantime, enjoy all of the hours of work that were put in to restore this tower by paying it a visit. Bob Spear, FFLA Historian says, “The view from Jackie Jones's windows looking Southward was always breath-taking looking down the Hudson River valley into the New York City environs and beyond toward the Atlantic Ocean. To the North is Bear Mountain, and East is Fort Smith Military Reservation, knowing that the Appalachian Trail passed over that summit on its way to Maine. I can see it yet today just as clearly as if I were there!”

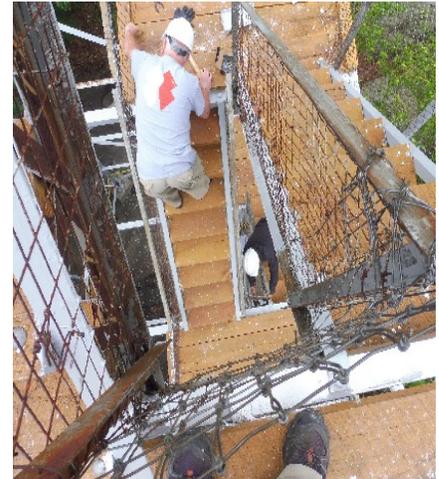


Todd and Matt hard at work

Matt was extremely helpful not only behind the scenes, but on site too. Matt saw to it this was a thoughtfully done restoration with attention to detail. Locally milled materials were used on the fire tower. In this case locust that was obtained from M.L. Condon Company (coincidentally, this mill has been in business since the early 1900's. The Park has a bill from 1908-1910 where this mill provided them with trees). Matt also researched the window clips that are very unique to Jackie Jones so they were able to be replaced. It has small sets of windows on all four sides above the main window frames and one small pane on each side that hinges outward. According to Bob Spear, only two other tower cabs have been found with windows like this. One is the Jamesburg tower in New Jersey, and the other is a sixty foot tower at Mormon Lake, Arizona.

Todd and his Team Rubicon Members are always wonderful to work with, providing the majority of the man power, tools, expertise and lunch over the course of the 4 days. Team Rubicon's mission to unite the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy emergency

response teams is well founded in their Wildland Firefighting Teams. Fire Towers were once an integral part of this system and the restoration of same so that they can be used once again fits well with their mission. They're constantly running service projects across the country to assist local communities in meaningful and impactful ways. Having the Jackie Jones fire tower open once again for both fire spotting and for visitors to learn the history of the area and how to care for the surrounding lands clearly meets those objectives. We could not have done it without their support!



Ranger RJ Bambino knew where to find the map table stand. We had secured the map table itself back in April during our initial work weekend and now both have been returned to the cab. FFLA Members who joined in are always helpful, particularly Ron and Tom. And we had lots of fun doing the work too! THANK YOU ALL!!

Colorado Wildfire: Thoughts and prayers are being sent to the fire fighters and residents of this devastating fire: <http://www.newsweek.com/416-fire-update-durango-colorado-wildfire-burning-acres-981154>

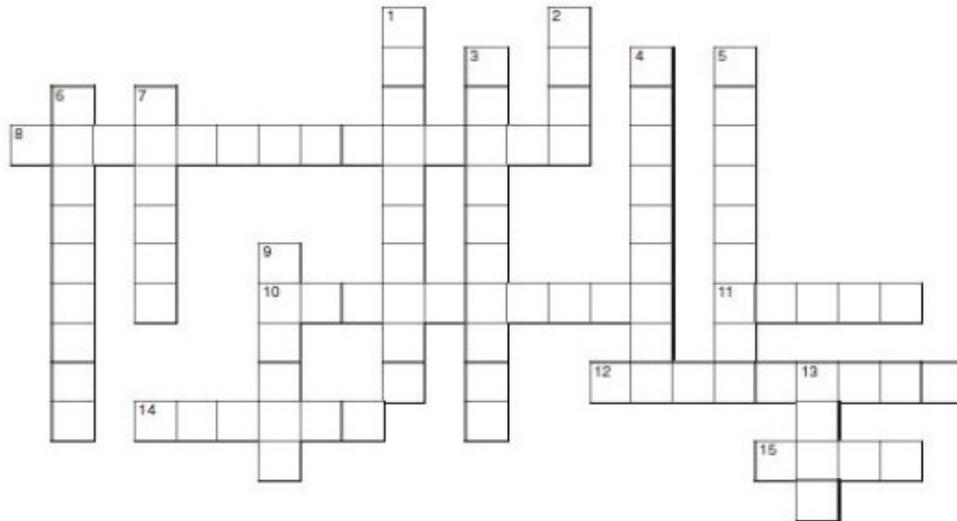
Third public hearing scheduled: DEC officials announced that a third hearing has been scheduled for June 21st at 6 pm in the Lussi Ballroom of the Olympic Conference Center, 2364 Main Street, Lake Placid, regarding the Draft UMP Amendments to the High Peaks Wilderness and Vanderwhacker Mountain Wild Forests. The public comment deadline is June 27. Written comments may be emailed to r5.ump@dec.ny.gov. Please let your voice be heard!

How about some more funding for NYSDEC Forest Rangers instead of parking lots? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZOHw4tkS94>

Trivia Answer from May: What is this tool? (see last month) Several people correctly answered the question; Paul, Dave V, and Ed, who had this to say, “A wire tie twister. This is a fun tool to use for the first 5 minutes. Then it works on your wrist, elbow, shoulder, and back. Perhaps Ben-Gay should be packaged with the tool. Alternative use - tooth extraction”. And Fred knew the answer and suggested it be used for a marketing tool as well - “If I am the winner, hand out the decal to the next new NYS member. You can even mention that on a FB post when trying to get more membership”. Thanks so much for this suggestion Fred. I will post it on facebook this week, but it is an offer that is available to any reader here too. We will see who will get that FFLA sticker by being the next NYS Member!

This month is puzzle month, not trivia month. Try your fire tower skills with this crossword. Creator Tom Rankin.

Fire Towers of New York State

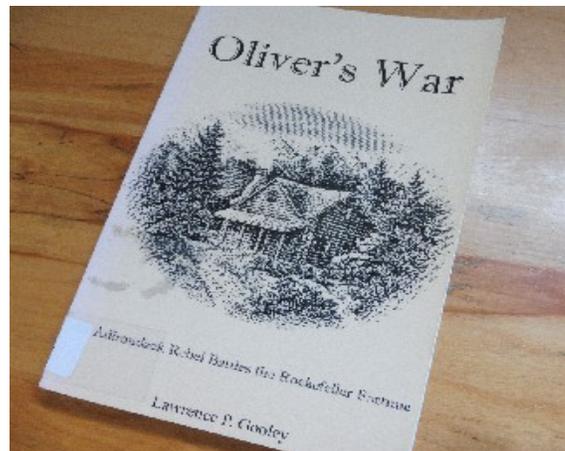


ACROSS

- 8 lunar association
- 10 indian princess
- 11 lots of frozen precip here?
- 12 moved from down south
- 14 currently being renovated
- 15 you can ski there

DOWN

- 1 oldest site in ny
- 2 short hike and short name
- 3 found the colvin bolt!
- 4 windy there?
- 5 closest to uncle mario
- 6 moved to big apple
- 7 shining light
- 9 highest standing elevation
- 13 furthest north



Book of the Month: Oliver's War by Lawrence Gooley is a great read. While not specifically about fire towers, it certainly does a wonderful job of placing the reader in the Adirondacks of NYS during the early 1900's. It describes well what was happening in the forest, modes of transportation and the mood of the people, all contributing factors to the development of our state wide fire tower system.

Membership: Does anyone need FFLA brochures, patches? Are you interested in an FFLA Affiliate status? Would you like to consider adding your group to our FFLA Chapter webpage that is under development? If so, please let me know.

News and Announcements From Around the State

Hadley: On May 19th the group had 4 hearty souls show up for the spring trail work day. Rain be damned. They repaired and cleaned all the water bars, opened up the observer's cabin (took the shutters off and the extra door), cut lots of branches off that were hanging over the trail, and moved the outhouse. The outhouse use to be down the hill from the observer's cabin and they moved it a little to the south of the intersection where you head to the firetower. It should get a lot more use, and keep the area near the summit free of toilet paper blooms. The hole from the old location was reasonably clean, but some idiots threw water bottles, beer cans, and Gatorade bottles in there. Thanks to Joe Babcock, Matt Evans, and Jim Zwynenburg, for their expertise and hard work. This year we are excited to have another Potsdam student, Garin Leclair, who will serve as steward from Memorial Day weekend till August 10th. For more information: http://hadleymtfiretower.org/summit_steward.php

St. Regis: The Friends are excited to announce that for the 2018 summer season they will have tower stewards on the summit! Through partnerships with the [Adirondack Watershed Institute](#) and [NYS Department of Environmental Conservation](#), a steward will be on duty four days a week. That means three days each week are open for volunteers! If you'd like to be a volunteer tower steward, please visit their steward calendar and sign up: <http://www.friendsofstregis.org/calendar/>. The St. Regis group is gearing up for their centennial celebrations. Check the calendar below for events and their web page to sign up, buy a centennial patch, raffle tickets and plan to attend!

The Friends also received a grant of \$2000.000 from the Cloudsplitter Foundation to apply toward their current project of replacing the cross braces. Interpretive panels showing the landmarks visible from the southern and eastern exposures are done and awaiting final approval before being installed.

Hurricane: Photos taken May 23rd show the winter has not been kind to the Hurricane Tower roof. Volunteers were able to tear off a couple of the scariest pieces. Friends of Hurricane is hopeful that DEC can put this project on its To-Do list for this year. On the flip side, the trails are in great shape.

Thanks to Mary Jean Bland for this excellent photo. Ethan Raines began work this week as the Summit Steward on Hurricane Mountain. He'll be up there greeting hikers, telling them about the history of the fire tower and its role in protecting the Adirondack wilderness.



Sterling: Sterling Fire Tower Volunteer Interpreter program began the Saturday of Memorial Day. The program will run through Labor Day. The tower was nicely decorated for opening day. Courtesy of Mario Medici

Lyon: Lyon trail work was completed on June 2nd under a cloud of bugs and raindrops. Many thanks to MJ, Freddie, Suzie, Bruno, and Julie.

Azure: Azure Mountain Friends announced this year's Scholarship Winners. Three area college-bound high school students are winners of its 2018 scholarships, worth \$750 each. They are Thomas Shafer from Malone, Al'lainya Dumas from Massena, and Brianna Larrabee, from Canton. Scholarship winners are chosen on the basis of personality, fitness, and familiarity with the Azure Mountain area. They are required to serve as volunteer summit stewards at the restored fire tower on the mountain, near St. Regis Falls, on five separate weekend days during the summer. Larrabee will attend St. Lawrence University in the fall. Both Shafer and Dumas will enroll in the University of Vermont. In honor of the fire tower's centennial this year, the AMF Board of Directors created the third scholarship, and board members have pledged to fund it through personal donations. Centennial observances, open to the public, are planned for July 29, at the tower and at the St. Regis Falls Adult Center. Details can be found at azuremountain.org.

Catskill Fire Tower Project: All 5 towers; Balsam Lake, Red Hill, Overlook, Tremper, and Hunter reported a record number of visitors on Memorial Day, their opening weekend for the 2018 season. All 5 towers will be open as volunteers and weather permit each Saturday, Sunday and holiday from 10am to 4pm through Columbus Day.

Stillwater: New since last year thanks to the DEC, is a beautiful new interpretive sign at the tower and a privy at the trailhead. <http://www.watertowndailytimes.com/news04/new-nod-to-history-at-stillwater-fire-tower-20180601> Stillwater needs only 9 more people to volunteer to be Summit Stewards this summer. 19 days have already been filled, so if you can help, get back to us right away! The steward's job is to greet the hikers, point out the views, and give brief information about the tower's history. You'll give all visitors small stickers and kids get "I Hiked Stillwater Mt." cards. It's easy, you'll meet great people, and have a fun outing. Stillwater is not a really high altitude mountain, but the view of the Adirondack high peaks 40-60 miles away is a lot better than many of the towers on prestige summits that get more foot traffic, and we can see the Tug Hill and its wind turbines to boot! You'll want to come back!

Ninham: Bill Volekman kindly sent me an update following the storms last month. "The tornado was not over Ninham mountain, but the mountain did experience serious wind damage from localized microburst wind action out of the tornado resulting in many large trees down all up the mountain and at top. One large oak tree did fall and demolished the HAM radio antenna platform, which is owned by Putnam County on this NYS DEC Multiple Use forest land. The same tree also struck the Ninham fire tower and did slightly bend one of the cross rails. There does not appear to be any significant damage to the fire tower, all rails are intact and the footings are unaffected, the tower remains open and accessible to the public". What a close call for the Fire Tower! Thanks Bill!



***Go Climb a Fire Tower
by David Beetle
conclusion***

Article Courtesy of Observer, Rick Miller

Caroga Lakes clientele pretty well concentrates on Kane Mountain – and likes it, or should. The tower can be reached gently from Pine Lake and steeply from Canada Lake, and gives you as fine a view for the effort expended as any we know of. About 4,000 people go up in a normal year.

Of course, if you want to be cynical about it, you can say that if you've seen one tower you've seen them all. The view: trees and lakes; the tower: steel girders with a wooden staircase and a metal cabin atop; the equipment: field glasses, maps, an American flag, a rickety chair; and couple of back numbers of Western Story; the register: a book in which you scrawl your name; the spring: only a couple of hundred feet down if you're lucky; the telephone: an old-fashioned instrument that you crank up; the trail: narrow, wooded, and pretty much straight up and down in spots.

But if you want to you can become something of a connoisseur of fire towers and a collector of experiences. You can recall that is was 102 degrees in the city the day you set out for Pillsbury; that you were the only visitor in five years to climb Mt. Adams in October; that after climbing Kane Mountain to see the sunrise and after tip-toeing around so as not to wake the observer, you saw with the dawn that his cabin was locked on the outside, that when you went up West Mountain you got caught up by darkness and had to walk the last three miles back to Big Moose with a flashlight that.....well you get the idea.

David Beetle

CALENDAR

Saturday, June 23rd, 2018, a reunion of Civilian Conservation Corps alumni, family, & friends will meet at 10 am at Camp Sacandaga near Speculator. Marty Podskoch will give a Power Point Presentation. For further information and luncheon reservations contact: Jim Tavares, Director of Camp Sacandaga, at 518-548-4742 or campdirectorjim@gmail.com

Saturday, July 7th, is Trail work day on the ranger trail to Poke-O-Moonshine. Call David Thomas-Train at 518-576-4592 with questions or to sign up.

Saturday, July 28, 2018 at 2:00 pm I will be doing a family friendly presentation at the Thompson Park Zoo, located in Watertown.

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

Sunday, July 29, 2018 will be the Azure Mountain Anniversary Celebration with event happening all day either on the summit or at the St. Regis Falls Adult Center. <http://azuremountain.org/>

Sunday, August 5, 2018: The Friends of St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower are excited to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the fire tower. Lake Clear Lodge is a co-sponsor of the event. Join us at their beautiful facility on Sunday, August 5th at 1:30 PM. There will be a ceremony featuring a number of the partners responsible for the preservation and restoration of the tower. There will also be food, beverages and entertainment with live music by the local band “Barn Cats”. The event is free. In addition, picnic lunches can be purchased and enjoyed down by the lake. Dinner reservations are also available by contacting the Lodge for reservations at 518-891-1489.

Tuesday, August 7, 2018 Marty Podskoch and I will be presenting a program on Swede Mt. Fire Tower at 7pm at the Horicon Town Hall in Brant Lake. Marty Podskoch is doing a book signing of his *Adirondack Fire Tower* Book and they are having a presentation for the 100th anniversary of the Swede Mt. Fire Tower. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the Horicon Historical Society.

Wednesday, August 8th is another trail work day on the Observers trail to Poke-O-Moonshine. Call David Thomas-Train at 518-576-4592 or Tom Hayhurst at 518-562-9989 with questions or to sign up.

Saturday, September 1st from 9-9:30 p.m. will be the Annual Lighting of the Fire Towers. Thus far I know Balsam Lake, Hunter, Red Hill, Tremper, Overlook, and St. Regis are participating. St. Regis is throwing an entire party! Check their website for more details. How about your group? Rain date will be Sunday the 2nd.

September 2018 – The Annual Hudson Valley River Ramble <http://www.hudsonrivervalleyramble.com>

October 21st- The 26th 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 now open! <http://www.ridgewalk.com>.

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

Laurie Rankin, Director

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Forest Fire Lookout Association

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