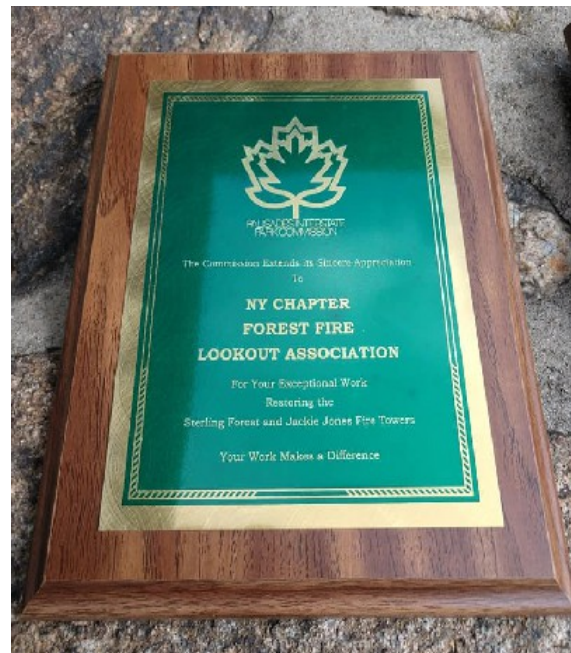




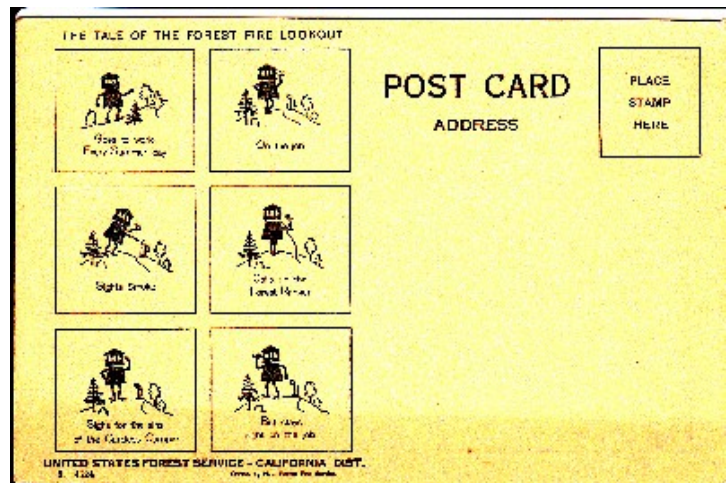
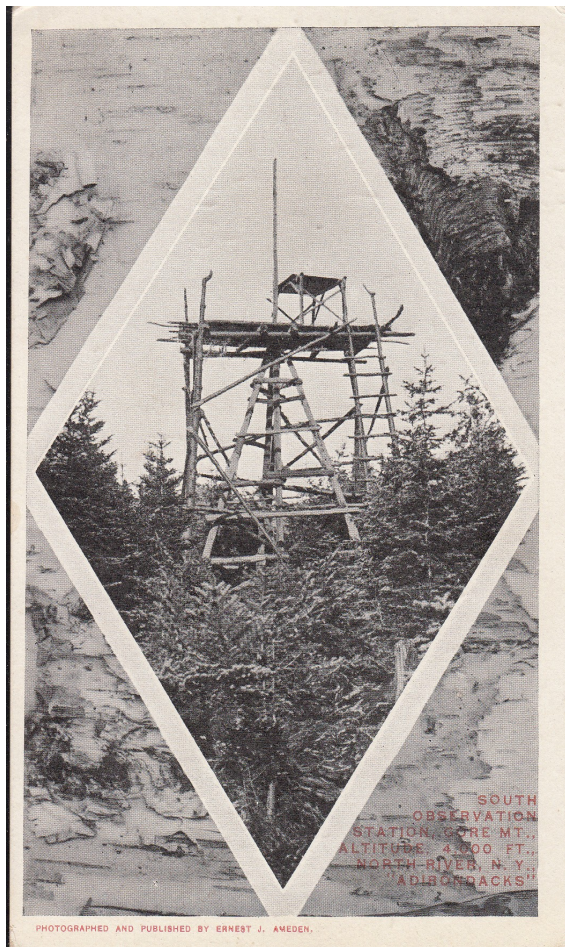
**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
October 2018**

Every month as I put the newsletter together I am amazed at all that has occurred in a short 30 day period. Since news was last shared on September 15th it has been an incredibly busy time for the NYS FFLA!

On September 17th, the Forest Fire Lookout Association was awarded recognition by the Pallasades Interstate Park Commission for our work on 2 fire towers within the Park. Accepting on our behalf was FFLA Member Ron Hart Jr. who worked on both projects. In Ron's words *"I had the honor of representing the FFLA today at the Pallasades Park Annual Commissioners Conference. It was to receive a plaque in response to the the rebuilding and repair of Sterling and Jackie Jones Fire towers. It was with great pleasure that I accepted this plaque in the honor of all FFLA members both involved with the project and also behind the scenes."* In addition, the PIPC also recognized all of the efforts of Team Rubicon who worked in partnership with us on those projects. In Ron's words *"Thank you Team Rubicon. A great organization that I am also proud to be a member of. We supplied countless man hours of dedicated men and woman, rebuilding both towers in a safe and timely manner without incident."* Pictured from l-r Deb, Shaggy, and Ron. You will read more about this partnership in an upcoming issue of the Lookout Network. Photo credits to Ron.



We were a 'Lark in the Park' sponsor and despite some very, very wet conditions, I did lead a history hike to Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower for the event again this year. If you are in the Catskill Region, please consider leading a hike in 2019. <http://catskillslark.org/corporate-sponsors/>



In September, the family of Gretna Longware very generously donated her postcard collection and other documents to the NYS FFLA Chapter. Gretna was a very civic minded person who spent countless hours working on behalf of numerous community causes; with many, many hours being spent on her passion, the Friends of Hurricane Fire Tower group. Here is a small taste of the postcards; look for more in future newsletters. A big thank you to the family, particularly AJ Longware!

October 1st the State Chapter was notified that the VSA we had submitted for all 6 fire towers in Region 5 Northville office was approved and signed! We want to thank Nick Addison and Jon DeSantis for all of their efforts in making this happen. This agreement covers Owl's Head, Blue, Pillsbury, Wakely, Kane, and Snowy fire towers and is in addition to the others we currently hold for Lyon and Berry Hill Fire Towers. I want to thank all of the members in advance who are going to work with the FFLA as needed to make these projects happen. Please consider volunteering if you have not already done so. Please let friends know that we could use a hand too. Then simply notify me and as we get plans in place with the NYSDEC, we will let you know the specifics. We greatly appreciate all of your assistance in maintaining and restoring these historic fire towers and cabins!

Over on the electronic side of things, we are now up to 312 members! Did you know we have a Facebook page – FFLA New York State Chapter? The National FFLA group does too, as well as several other individual groups. The National group gave us a heads up on what to do with the latest Facebook changes to be sure we show up in your newsfeed: *“Here are a few quick steps that you can take to ensure that we stay connected and that you see all of our posts. First, please visit our page and click on the down arrow beside the 'Following' tab. Secondly, select 'see first' from the drop down menu.”* If you participate in social media, we encourage you to join the page.

As you can see, we have been a bit busy and the new release of the Chapter Website has been moved to the back burner until the quiet of winter settles in. We apologize for the delay but it was for good causes. Thank you for your patience! We would like to hear from all of you with suggestions for that website. Don't be shy, let us know what you would like to see!

News From Around The State

On September 17th, the former **White's Hill observer's cabin** narrowly escaped fire when the nearby DEC garage was destroyed. <http://www.wwnytv.com/story/39104910/dec-garage-destroyed-by-fire>

September 27th and 28th was the anniversary of the **Long Lake West Fire**, a historic and horrific event that took place in the Adirondacks in 1908. Three great articles about that event; <https://imgur.com/mXBwFog> and <https://imgur.com/C2DqeH4> and <https://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2018/09/adirondack-wildfire-the-destruction-of-long-lake-west.html>.

The Annual NYS Ranger Report included the following regarding wildfires in 2017:

Although local professional and volunteer firefighters are the primary responders to fires, rangers last year worked on 55 wildfires around the state. Just 191 acres burned, the lowest total in ranger history.

According to the report, over the last 25 years, rangers have responded to more than 200 fires each year with an average of 2,001 acres burned per year. When wildfires that were handled solely by fire departments are included, then 2017 saw 1,401 fires that burned 474 acres.

Rangers also taught a number of wildland firefighting courses, including 14 basic firefighting courses taught to 295 volunteers. Rangers also taught a more advanced federal firefighting course three times to 54 people. In addition, rangers taught a 4-hour course to 139 inmates and 13 training sessions “to 212 firefighters, emergency service personnel and volunteers in advanced firefighting or incident command management.”

Three crews of 20 rangers were also sent out west to help with fires in Montana, Oregon and California, typically for a 14-day stint.

“In total, 41 Rangers spent 698 work days assigned to eight different wildfires that burned a total of 469,000 acres in three states,” the report says. “This was the largest mobilization of New York’s Forest Rangers to national wildfires in history.”

Rangers also participated in 29 prescribed fires on public land, which burned a total of 654 acres. The prescribed burns resulted in more total acres burned than wildfires last year.

More Forest Ranger News: An interesting video here where a plea for more Forest Rangers begins at 13:20 with some interesting discussion. <http://nynow.wmht.org/blogs/environment/a-push-for-more-forst-rangers/>.

Jackie Jones Fire Tower: The tornado that occurred on October 2nd had me concerned for the tower. Thankfully, the storm's path missed it. <http://westchester.news12.com/story/39221783/tornado-touches-down-in-rockland-county> However, vandals did not – there was an unfortunate break in at the tower recently with some damage occurring as well. This did lead to an interesting discussion on our Facebook page about how to remove graffiti from Plexiglas. Once we have our website up and running we will be putting suggestions such as were discussed on the Facebook page under a resource button for all to reference. I thank everyone who took the time to contribute their ideas.

NY Photo Challenge: Want to enter the contest? <http://www.nyphotochallenge.com/> Entries will be accepted through November 30th. Do you have a favorite fire tower photo that you will consider entering? Perhaps more than one?

The Saranac 6er and the Tupper Triad Challenge: So what do these 2 races have to do with fire towers? Quite a lot actually in terms of wear and tear on the trails to the fire towers, the parking areas to the fire towers, perhaps the privies and the towers too if participants decided to use them during the race. While we are happy to see visitors, large events such as these can certainly have a large impact. Should we perhaps approach organizers to see how they plan on supporting the fire towers since they include them as a race destination? What do you think? Here are a few words from social media about these events “Busy weekend here in the Tri-Lakes. In addition to the late "leaf peepers," we had a couple of interesting races. The [Saranac Lake 6er](#) had their relay on Saturday. This is where teams of six complete all six mountains. Likewise we had the Tupper Triad Challenge here in [Tupper Lake, New York](#) as well.” “You get a patch...and a tee shirt...and a pint.”

First Day hikes: It is not too early to plan though NYS does not have any links out there to register yet: <https://parks.ny.gov/events/first-day-hikes.aspx> Perhaps you should contact your DEC liaison and get some planning started. (Note – we do not recommend a group as large as the one pictured on the website. Winter hiking leaves little room for error and group size regulations should be taken into consideration. If you plan to participate please consider limiting your group size).

A new tower? Could we have yet another fire tower in NYS:
<http://www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/news/local-news/2018/10/fire-tower-proposed-in-saranac-lake/>

Holiday Shopping – It is just around the corner, perhaps your group should consider reduced rates on merchandise for a few weeks, some extra publicity and perhaps an increase in sales just in time for the holidays?

Visitor Feedback: A spontaneous social media conversation from a visitor interacting with the volunteers he had encountered at the tower – “*Visited the fire tower on Balsam Lake Mountain today. The hike was a lot of fun and weather/conditions were perfect. But I wanna post on here to say “thank you” to Jeremy and Brandon for their volunteer work at the tower. They showed us around, talked to us about some history of the tower, and just generally made our day great!*” Response from Jeremy - “*Thank you for your kind words. Giving people experiences like this and sharing our love for the wilderness, mountains, fire towers, and especially BLM is a big part of why we do this. Glad we could be a part of your great day out.*” Then the original person said, “*Pleasure was all ours. The kids loved the backpack fire extinguisher. And Sarah and I enjoyed the view from the tower, and especially your pointing out which mountains we were looking at. Thanks again!! PS we found the link on the web page to send in a little something to show our appreciation.*” Not only do fire tower staff (volunteer or paid) help make memories, they also inspire people to donate. Thanks to Jeremy and Brandon for representing so well!

SAVE THE DATE: June 8th and 9, 2018: Northeastern Conference of the FFLA. If you are interested in speaking at the conference, please let me know. While these dates seem many months away, the planning is already underway.

A great bit of audio from our friends in Colorado: <https://www.cpr.org/news/story/what-does-it-take-to-man-a-fire-lookout-tower-a-16-wildfire-season-veteran-tells-us>. This link includes author Philip Conors, a book for sale on our FFLA web page along with many others. [Www.ffla.org](http://www.ffla.org).

Book of the Month: This month, a review by member Ed Engelman – thank you Ed!

The Ranger, The Cook, and the Hole in the Sky

If you have seen the movie or read the book *A River Runs Through It* by Norman Maclean (1902 – 1990) then you know that his prose is lyrical and poetic. His writing is a joy to read if for no other reason than to see how writing can be art. (If you have only seen the movie, think of the words of the narrator.)

But, I am not reviewing his popular *A River Runs Through It*. This review is for Norman Maclean’s “USFS 1919 The Ranger, The Cook and the Hole in the Sky”. It is a short story of 93 pages that is included in editions of 'A River Runs Through It and Other Stories' but not included in versions that do not have “and Other Stories” in the title. The story covers Maclean’s experiences during three summers of work for the US Forest Service compressed into a story that takes place in one season. When he was first hired, he was only 14 years old. This was during World War I when most able bodied young men were in the armed forces. Seasonal hires were mostly boys, and older men too young or too old to join the fighting.

In my opinion the story does not spend enough time on his experiences as a forest fire lookout (from a peak without a tower), or discussing his time fighting fires. But what is there is compact, memorable, and its value is enhanced within the context of the story. Even though the second half of the story takes place away from the Bitterroot backcountry, it is an interesting visit to the camaraderie and social culture of US Forest Service crews in the early 20th century.

When asked in an interview conducted during the production of the movie 'A River Runs Through It' and printed on line in 2009 “So in what sense are your stories true? Do you tell them exactly the way they happened?”, Norman Maclean answered with this paragraph, from the link below:

http://www.thewritersworkshopreview.net/article.cgi?article_id=14

No, I always allow myself a literary latitude. Often things don’t happen fast enough in life. Literature can condense them. I wrote the story on the Forest Service as if it happened all in one summer. But it happened in two or three summers. I didn’t consider that a violation at all.

Everything in the story happened to me in the Bitterroots. In the story I have a big fight. The fight was actually in a Chinese restaurant, but in the story I had it in the Oxford, a restaurant and gambling joint in Missoula. It’s been there for sixty or seventy years and a lot of us Missoula guys were brought up in there. And they said, “God, how could you put the Oxford up there in Hamilton?” I don’t think it made much difference in terms of the story. I felt at home in the Oxford, and I didn’t feel at home in Chinese restaurants. Little things like that, mostly for the sake of hastening the story on, of sharpening it.



For the entire interview, visit Haunted by Waters: A Talk with Norman Maclean;

And one more thing, there is also a made for TV movie of “The Ranger, The Cook, and the Hole in the Sky” that is available on DVD. (I much prefer the short story over the video.)

Calendar

Saturday, October 20, 2018 8:30 am The Hadley Mountain Fire Tower Committee will be doing their twice yearly trail work and other chores. The main task is to clean and repair the water bars. There are about 50 of them. They will also clear any blowdown and trim back any vegetation that is crowding the trail. At the top, they will put the extra shutters on the observers cabin and close it for the winter. Anyone new is welcome, they will teach you as we go. Bring along a shovel and/or any loppers or pruning shears you own.

Saturday, October 20th and 27th, 2018 The Jackie Jones fire tower cab will be open from 10:00am to 4pm. <https://www.nynjtc.org/civicrm/event/info%3Fid%3D9952%26amp%3Breset%3D1>

Sunday, October 21, 2018 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! <http://www.ridgewalk.com>.

Thursday, November 8, 2018 Friends of Grafton Lakes State Park Member, Dick Gibbs will be presenting a Lecture to the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (RPA) as part of their monthly lecture series. The lecture will be about the Dickinson Hill Fire Tower Restoration. <https://www.rensselaerplateau.org/rpa-lecture-series>

Sunday, November 11, 2018 The Ravens Rock Run will be held to bring back the Cross River Mountain Fire Tower to its former site. To register visit: <http://ravenrocksrn.org/>

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