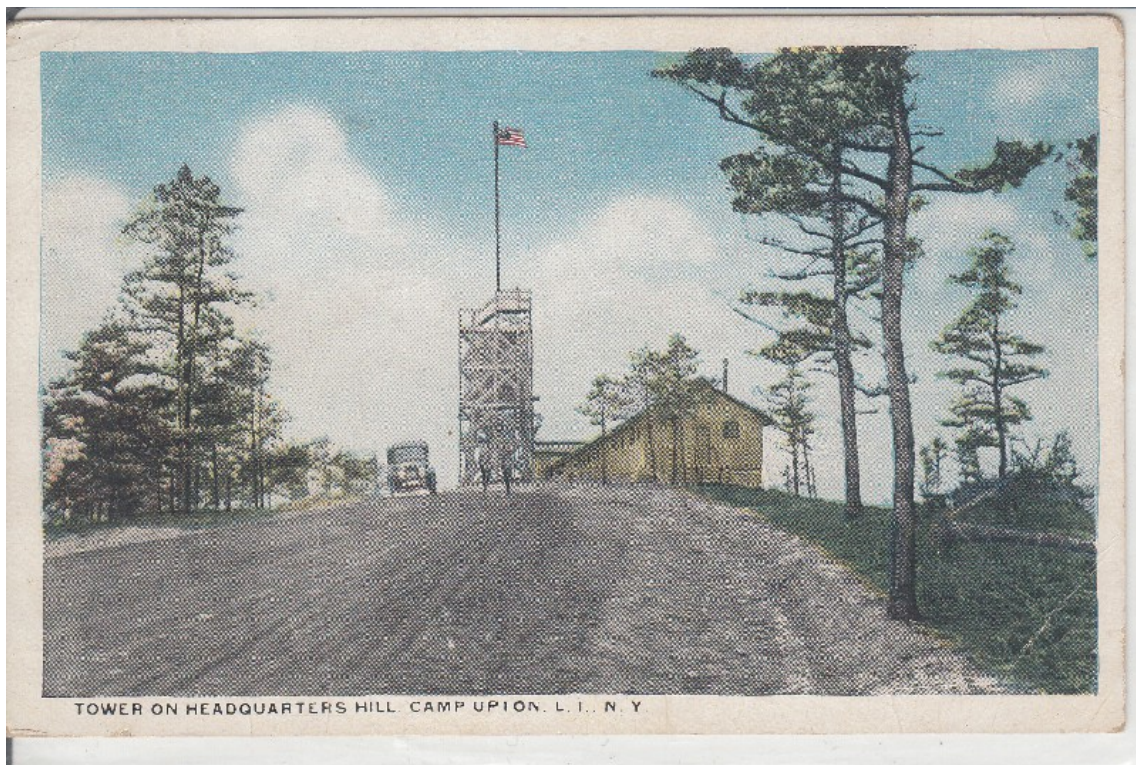




**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
March 2018**

Treasures Unearthed and Donated: Some of you may have an understanding of the governance of the FFLA, some may not and some may simply not care. But I think it is important for all to know the people behind the scenes of this organization. One such person is Mark Haughwout the Eastern Deputy Chairperson. Mark resides in Vermont but is from New York where as a boy he developed his love for fire towers. Recently Mark made a significant donation of materials, photos and postcards to our New York State Chapter. These treasures clearly show the effort it took for a young man to find out about fire towers several years ago. Prior to the internet, he had to write letters by hand to inquire about the location of a fire tower, when it was staffed, etc. But write letters he did. And he got responses from the Forest Rangers who oversaw the fire towers, often on Conservation Department stationary, but sometimes just a handwritten note on a plain piece of paper. These correspondence and the accompanying maps that were often sent are treasures we are very appreciative of. The materials include a significant post card collection that Mark acquired over time. We do hope to get all of these items scanned and have them available on our website soon. In addition to his full time job, Mark works with other FFLA Chapters throughout the northeast and every chance he gets, we go “hit the steel”. We did so at Ferncliff Fire Tower last week when Mark gave me the items noted here. We thank Mark for his generosity in sharing these treasures, for his continued commitment to the FFLA organization, and we look forward to seeing him again in June at the Conference. Come on down then and introduce yourself to Mark! Postcard dated 4-14-19



News from Around the State

Lyon Mt: The State Chapter holds the VSA for Lyon Mountain Fire Tower. Through that agreement, we are responsible for the maintenance of the trail and the fire tower. We are also able to engage in educational activities including the development of a brochure. We could not do any of this without the help of some great people. Fred lives near by and keeps close tabs on things and visits often. We also have had a dedicated group of volunteers from the Montreal area who have done thorough trail work at least twice a year for a number of years. With their help and the DEC Forester, Dan with whom we work, we developed an educational brochure in both French and English for the fire tower. The DEC paid for the design and printing, the State Chapter funded the French translation services. We are appreciative of all of the help in getting these brochures done and for all of the support of the trail and tower.



Mount Adams: On March 1st, Jack Coleman of the ADK High Peaks Foundation let us know they had renewed their VSA and will continue to care for the Mount Adams Fire tower and trail for the next 5 years! If you would like to assist that group, please let Jack or myself know and when work trips are planned we will be sure to give a shout out for helping hands. We greatly appreciate the continued support of the Foundation and particularly the hours that Jack has put in on this project!

The Conservantist: This magazine which has made many references over the years to Fire Towers, Observers, Forest Rangers, and fire prevention has now been made available to the public. Check out the archives through this link: http://nysl.cloudapp.net/awweb/main.jsp?flag=collection&smd=2&cl=library1_lib&nid=16/17/18/222/223&tm=1552078942766&itype=adv&menu=on

Burn Ban: From DEC Delivers March 13, 2019: “Residential brush burning is prohibited in New York from March 16th through May 14th. Even though much of the state is currently blanketed in snow, warming temperatures can quickly cause wildfire conditions to arise. DEC posts daily a [fire danger rating map](#) and forecast during fire season on its website. Historically, open burning of debris is the largest single cause of spring wildfires in New York State. When temperatures are warmer and the past fall's debris, dead grass, and leaves dry out, wildfires can start and spread easily and be further fueled by winds and a lack of green vegetation. Violators of the state's open burning regulation are subject to both criminal and civil enforcement actions, with a minimum fine of \$500 for a first offense.”

NYS Investing in Outdoor Recreation: This Video was released by NYS on their Adventure NY projects. Next year when they do this video, we are expecting to see the work at Berry Hill fire tower as part of this. Would you like to help us with that work? Let me know and I will keep you up to date on our plans. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Z9sG8_pKC8&feature=youtu.be

Fire Tower Weekend at Camp Sagamore: I saw this opportunity listed on the Great Camp Sagamore web page. The only fire tower activity listed for the weekend is a Saturday trip to Wakely fire tower and the possibility of meeting with a staff member to learn about other fire towers nearby. But meals and lodging are part of the chance to stay at this historic Great Camp and visit a fire tower. <https://sagamore.org/programlist/2019/fire-tower-weekend>

Grant Funding Available: The Matt Walters Fund. At our Annual Meeting in January, our Chairman, Keith Argow advised us that Mr. Walter had donated funds to the FFLA to be used for tower projects, preferably in the northeast. Those funds are now available using the following criteria:

- 1 - Requests should come from a group rather than an individual or an agency.
- 2 - The group should demonstrate good organizational structure.
- 3 - Requests should show a solid, workable restoration proposal, including time frames, how grant funds will be used, and other sources of funding.
- 4 - Preference will be given to New England and Northeastern US projects.
- 5 - There is a May 15th deadline. At that time, requests will be evaluated and awards determined, based on available funding (currently \$2000.00). Grant requests should be sent to the chapter director to forward to the Chairman and Treasurer who will consult with Mr. Walter as needed.

Apologies: To the two persons who did not get their newsletters – new labels are not sticking well and I had one returned in January and one in February with no address label and no way of knowing who missed theirs by postal mail. If it was you, let me know and I will re-send.

Book of the month: *Fire Storm* by Jean Craighead George. George has written several books for young readers including three that were set in the Catskills Mountains. *My Side of the Mountain* was an all time favorite of mine and made into a movie. In *Fire Storm*, “Axel and his family take a rafting trip down Salmon River. They aren't initially concerned about the smoke they see in the distance. Suddenly, they are caught in a blazing forest and must make careful choices to insure their safety. The rafters find refuge in a burned-over campsite until the storm passes, after which Axel's aunt lectures him on how fires help forests regenerate.” From a Kirkus review and listed as suitable for ages 6-8 years.

Who Am I? Unscramble the 8 words listed below, then unscramble the circled letters to form the final answer.

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February Trivia Question: A tree was installed in Smokey's enclosure. What did it dispense? Correct answer came from Mr. Paul Hartman - Smokey's Honey Tree provides honey and berries for the old boy who'll be 75 this year! Right you are Paul! What are you or your group planning on doing to commemorate his 75th birthday?

Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower History continued: I received several comments about the steel going to BLM in 1919, including the local vernacular that was used. The person who wrote the first hand account was born in 1908, so those were the reflections of a lad of 11 years. This photo was unearthed in some of those same files with the following captions: dated May 5, 1918. "This is holy mighty and family, Grace, Ort and us the day we went to Balsam on the picnic."



In addition from a local diary dated 10-21-1920 - "we are planning on all going to Balsam to the new tower. Suppose it's some sight and some walk." That was followed by an entry "The walk yesterday was terrible. Mother is so lame she can hardly walk." But I wonder if the walk was easier than the wagon ride? And finally from 6-13-1937 "Sunday - made sandwiches, put up lunch. Geo, Viv and children, Edna, Marion, Hilda and Larry went to the tower." Larry [my dad] was only 3 years old at the time, but later would become an Observer at Balsam Lake. Thanks for the diary quotes Mom.

In the intervening years many smokes were spotted, the fire prevention efforts grew, the tower was staffed by 13 different Observers, then the efforts changed and left out fire towers all together. Towers were left standing and abandoned and were no longer staffed. But visitors continued to picnic at their base and enjoy their views. Eventually efforts began to save the towers.

Move the calendar ahead to 1999 and you can read the following about transporting the steel to the summit to restore the tower: From Catskill Lookouts "DEC Operations staff transported 8 galvanized angle iron cross braces, bolts for the entire tower, as well as the windows in mid-October. Americorp and DEC staff hand carried the large, bulky and very heavy angle irons the last half mile up the mountain in gale force winds." The same hills that caused difficulties in 1919 were still present and still causing problems in 1999! We are grateful to all who persevered to get past those hills to put up the first steel tower and to restore it all those years later. Many were volunteers! We will celebrate their accomplishments and more during the first weekend in August.

Are you an active FFLA member? The Chapter could use your assistance. Is there a college professor among us? I have a couple of projects I would like to discuss. Is there an attorney who would do some pro bono work for us or a group from time to time? Is there a Website developer or a graphic designer among us? Is there a painter among us? How about a carpenter? Could you lend the Director a hand by organizing a group, helping with a conference, perhaps you are a writer and would love helping with this newsletter? Please think about what you can do to help! At times you will see very specific dates for work, at other times work is dependent on weather. Sometimes we have to keep our group size rather small on a fire tower for safety reasons, so we have to be thoughtful about how we advertise so we don't end up with people just showing up and nothing for them to do. This is some of what we need to paint over.



**Northeastern Conference of the FFLA
Friday, June 7 through Sunday, June 9
Mount Tremper Fire House in Mount Tremper**

Here is the speaker's line up, for Saturday, June 8th. Ed Engelman will discuss The NYS and National Register of Historic Places Why & How to apply plus historic resources for Fire Towers in New York. Doug Fitzgerald will be discussing the changing of cross braces on a fire tower. Ray Grimes from the NJ FFLA Chapter will discuss how they continue to use fire towers in spotting smoke. Ryan Trapani Executive Director of the Catskill Forest Association will discuss Defining Forestry in the 21st Century. George Profous NYSDEC Forester will discuss the beginning of the Catskill Fire Tower Project. PA FFLA Chapter Director Dan Bubnis will discuss why and how Pennsylvania is returning fire towers to active service. Barry Knight will discuss how to pick a fire tower out of a field and put it up on your own property. In addition we will serve breakfast and lunch and visit fire towers. Would you or your group like to have a table at the conference? If so, please let me know. There is no cost associated with this, but it must be fire tower related. A separate invitation will be coming soon.



Calendar

April 15-30: Hudson Valley – help needed to paint over graffiti on a fire tower. Likely to occur during the week, during the day when the weather is optimum. Please let me know if you can assist.

June 1-2, 2019: Volunteers needed for work on a fire tower in the Adirondacks. Interested? Please let me know.

Saturday, June 15, 2019 at 9:00 am the Friends of Mt Arab trail work day with the Adirondack Mountain Club will take place. This will be similar to last year – cleaning water bars and perhaps doing one of the short trail re-routes if time allows. Anyone interested should sign up at the ADK website: <https://www.adk.org/workshops-and-special-events/>

Tuesday, July 16, 2019 The Town of Horicon Historical Society in Brant Lake will be holding a Meet the Forest Rangers event.

Friday, August 2, 2019 – Sunday, August 4, 2019 will be the Centennial Celebration for Balsam Lake Mountain. Events will be held at Morgan Outdoors in Livingston Manor on August 2nd, at the summit on August 3rd and at the Dry Brook Community Hall on August 4th.

Thursday, August 8, 2019 will be a reception and program to celebrate Hurricane Fire tower's centennial at the Elizabethtown museum.

Saturday and Sunday, August 10th and 11th, 2019 Friends of Hurricane Mountain will host hikes to the fire tower and Observers cabin as part of their celebration.

Tuesday, August 13, 2019 the The Town of Horicon Historical Society in Brant Lake will be holding an Adirondack History talk by Historian, Mark Friden.

Saturday, August 24, 2019, The Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower will be holding their centennial celebration.

Do you have a memory or an announcement you would like listed here in our newsletter? If so, please let me know and I will be happy to include it as space allows.

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