



**Forest Fire Lookout Association
New York State Chapter
July 2021**

While we seem to be in the midst of monsoon season here in the New York, our western U.S. friends are experiencing record breaking temperatures and numerous wildfires have sprung up due to the severe dryness and heat. Temperatures over 100 degrees have been happening in many locations in the western U.S. Can you imagine the horrific conditions wildland firefighters are dealing with between the temperatures and the fires? Stay safe my friends. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bootleg-fire-oregon-update/>

One of our own New York State Forest Rangers has been deployed to help in the west. From the NYSDEC 7-12-21: “A DEC Forest Ranger and expert wildland firefighter is being deployed today to assist with efforts to contain the Bootleg Fire in the Fremont-Winema region of Oregon. Nearly every year, New York State deploys its highly trained wildland firefighters to help battle fires in western states. The DEC Forest Ranger will join a crew of federal, state, and local fire agencies battling the [Bootleg Fire in Oregon](#). In 1979, New York sent its first firefighting crew to assist western states with large wildfires. On average, one or two crews have been sent as needed to assist with wildfires every year since. In addition to helping contain wildfires and minimize damage, these crews gain valuable experience that can be utilized fighting wildfires and managing all-risk incidents in New York.”

Speaking of wild fires, I had the real pleasure of speaking at length with a visitor to Balsam Lake Fire Tower while stewarding on the July Fourth weekend. Shawn, a Forester from the State of Pennsylvania, and I spoke at length about the history of fire towers in both states. Shawn shared a great deal about the policy that the state adopted to return fire towers to the state a few years ago and his work as a wildland firefighter. At the time of our visit, his wife, who is also a wildland firefighter, was in Colorado working for 2 weeks. When she returned, he was heading out for two weeks. Stay safe!

The Overlook Mountain Fire Tower was part of our New York State Fire Spotting System for many years. Today, it is a draw to thousands of visitors each year. Volunteer Coordinator, Charlie, tells me this year is much, much quieter than last year! Thanks for all of your work Charlie, and to all of the volunteers at Overlook!

Our July photo contest winner on our Facebook page was this photo of Overlook submitted by Deb Stone! It is a beautifully framed photo and one that surprisingly does not have too many visitors in it! Congratulations to Deb. This photo is the cover photo on our Facebook page.



Speaking of the Facebook page cover photo – I do apologize to both Jessica and her brother CT Ware for not identifying the fire tower in last month's photo correctly. I wrote that it was taken of the Hadley Mt Fire Tower and that was incorrect. It was the Hurricane Fire Tower. My apologies to both of you!

New York State Forest Fires

I was very pleased to see ticketing occurred in the one instance. From the NYSDEC Ranger Reports: 6-29-21 Ranger Report: Town of Keene Essex County State Land Violations: On June 23 at 12 p.m., DEC's Ray Brook Dispatch was notified of a ground fire at an illegal campsite near the Wash Bowl in the Giant Mountain Wilderness Area. Forest Ranger Evans and Assistant Ranger Raudonis responded to the scene and put out the small ground fire. Later that evening, Forest Ranger Mecus identified two subjects from Otego as the subjects responsible for the illegal campsite, and the Ranger issued six tickets for multiple State Land violations.

7-7-21 Ranger Report: Town of Schroon Essex County Wildland Fire: On July 3 at 3:50 p.m., Assistant Forest Ranger Cleinman advised DEC's Ray Brook Dispatch that he located a fire while on routine patrol near a lean-to at Pharaoh Lake in the Pharaoh Lake Wilderness Area. The Assistant Forest Ranger reported that the fire, later determined to have been started by a campfire, was approximately 100 ft. by 100 ft. in size and smoldering with no active flames. Forest Rangers Arnold and Kabrehl responded by ATV with a pump and hoses. The half-acre fire was safely contained due to rain.

Around the State

Hadley: I recently received a note from Steve Mackey of the Hadley Fire Tower group. They had discovered some bolts were missing under the stair treads. As they were replacing them, they realized that several bolts were actually loose. Steve thought this may be happening on some other towers as well. So do take a few minutes to check your bolts and be certain they are all in place and they are all secure. Thanks for letting us know Steve!

Sterling: Susan reports Susan announced that the Sterling Fire Tower is now open from 11 AM – 3 PM on weekends. Although there are now 13 volunteers, more are needed to fill some dates. Thanks to all who have volunteered thus far. Contact sterlingfiretower01@gmail.com to help out.

Poke O Moonshine: The trails have been closed 3 different days recently for supplies to be air lifted for some upcoming projects. There is work planned Thursday, August 5th, with Friends of Poke O Moonshine, or Saturday July 31st and Sunday August 1st, with the Adirondack 46ers. Check out our calendar here and on the web page and plan on lending a hand! <http://nysffla.org/calendar.html>

High Point Fire Tower: High Point fire tower was closed in 1971 and later removed. It was a very important tower in the area due to numerous fires, some of which were reported to be caused by the Berry Pickers. This wonderful Utube video is great to listen to and contains photos and mentions of the fires. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OGlepJuJwY> Warning - it is nearly 30 minutes long.

Bramley Mountain Fire Tower: FOBM is continuing their work and efforts at returning the fire tower to the summit. I was honored to be asked to participate in this work by doing a podcast that could be utilized in their educational and fund raising efforts. Brett Barry of Silver Hollow Audio who does Kaatscast, and his sound man, were excellent to work with. I thought the finished product turned out great and I sincerely hope the Bramley Mt Fire Tower will benefit! <https://anchor.fm/kaatscast>

Goodnow: Here is great news and an update from the Goodnow project. “With the help of many neighbors, friends and supporters, SUNY ESF will begin renovations on the Goodnow Mountain Fire Tower in 2022. Located in Newcomb, in the Huntington Wild Forest, next year marks the 100th anniversary of the firetower's establishment. To meet state agency requirements, and with the current limited availability of fire tower repair specialists and materials, repairs are planned to commence in the spring. The team is assessing repair needs to the tower base, structure, stairs, cab, tower site, observer's cabin, access, and supporting information (e.g., signage). Funds raised to date: \$22,600 from individual donors plus support from the Town of Newcomb. Funds will still be accepted via the donation web site:www.esf.edu/newcomb/firetower/.

Plan: ESF will utilize the SUNY Construction Fund (CF) for engineering, materials purchase and repair. Donor funds will be used to augment CF funds for materials/equipment transport and for items such as rehabilitation of educational and research aspects of the tower (cabin, signage and trail, interpretive materials, scientific equipment, development of programming for students and visitors). This will enable a new generation of hikers and students to experience the history, research and scenic view from the Goodnow tower. Thank you to everyone who expressed interest and supported the renovation project. With your help, we will give the fire tower new life and celebrate a Century of Science and Discovery on Goodnow Mountain.

For more information: contact Stacy McNulty, smcnulty@esf.edu, 518-582-4551

Project website:<https://www.esf.edu/newcomb/firetower/> with stunning tower and fall foliage footage.

Mount Beacon: Last month we reported on the recent work done at Mount Beacon fire tower by the Mount Beacon Fire Tower Restoration Committee. Thanks to all who participated in that work! This month marks the 90th anniversary of the fire tower. A great article was done by the Beacon Free Press dated July 14, 2021. As of this morning their web page was not yet updated, but do check back and check out the full article. <https://www.sdutchessnews.com/BFP/bfp.htm>. Here are a few snippets.

“The fact that the Mt Beacon Fire Tower is still standing after the majority of the fire towers in NY State and for that matter, the United States were removed, should be celebrated and embraced by the people who hike up to the tower, but also by the local residents. Since the major restoration structural work (cross bracing, wall and roof panels) was done on the Fire Tower ten years ago, the most recent work on the fire tower has dealt with some needed concrete work, but more importantly, dealing with a major graffiti problem. We also repaired the flag pole which allowed us to raise Old Glory again which can be seen from down on Route 9D to the west and Route 9 from the east”.

NYS FFLA Web page: I was doing some research in the last couple of weeks about a fire tower and I used the google search feature and was pleased, amazed, ecstatic to see the NYSFFLA web page came up as the 4th item on the search page!!! Thank you to all of you for using the web page! A big round of applause to our web master Tom, for keeping it updated. One of the things he just completed was loading all of Paul Hartmann's photo collection to the page. In case you do not recall, Paul donated the base web page and all of the photos to get our page started. We continue to be grateful to Paul for his generous donations. Others have continued to supply us with information, photos, memories and postcards. We add them as time allows.

Provocative Discussion: A complicated situation that not one single item will cure. <https://www.hcn.org/articles/books-the-ecological-hate-speech-developed-around-wildfire> The discussion continues – what do you think? I think there are a number of factors in play when we discuss wildfire, including the weather, the fuel load, the percentage of forest burned, the people living within the forest, climate change, and more.

Fire Weather Science: Thanks to Brian F who let us know about this great opportunity, we watched an amazing and informative presentation last evening. The Science of Fire Weather presented by the Mount Washington Observatory was an hour long program done by Dr. Neil Lareau, Assistant Professor, University of Nevada, Reno. The recording of that presentation can be found here and is well worth your time. <https://www.mountwashington.org/educational-programs/science-in-the-mountains.aspx>

Berry Hill: It was a real pleasure to visit Berry Hill Fire Tower on July 2nd. There we met NYS DEC Forester Andy Goeller who has been working on a project there since 1999. Andy tells me this was the first year that he wrote into the UMP to have the antennas removed from the fire tower and reopen it again to visitors. There is a group of great people locally (Warren, Rich, and Tom) who support this fire tower. They contacted me just over 5 years ago and asked if the FFLA would be willing to sign a VSA with NYS to maintain and care for the Observer's cabin and surrounding area. The fire tower would remain off limits due to the antenna that it supported. I began to work with Andy and the FFLA's VSA was ultimately approved. Shortly after that, Andy contacted me and the other local supporters and let us know that a significant grant had been approved to remove all of the antennas, restore the fire tower and once again open it to visitors! When we visited on the 2nd, we found the majority of the work has been done. There are still a few odds and ends to tend to and the grand opening will not likely occur until around Sept 1st. We are considering it a “soft opening” as it is possible a visitor may go and find that the tower or grounds are off limits due to some final work that is being done. Meanwhile, we are getting together displays for the tower and Observer's cabin and stewards who are willing to be there on weekends and do interpretation. Please consider participating! Just send me a note if interested. Andy – we so greatly appreciate all you have done to make this happen!



Photo credits – L, FFLA collection – R, -Warren Johnsen

Just to keep You Smiling
Thanks much Gary and Cory

Gary Lee (viewarts.org weekly column - “The heat this weekend should hatch out all the black fly's species and get them out of the way, so the mosquitoes and deer flies can take over. They have been pretty bad in many areas already, sometimes they were climbing on the backs of the black flies, trying to find a spot to bite.”

Cory Telarico “This is likely the newest fire lookout in New York State. It officially opened July 2nd, 2021, is under private ownership, but is accessible to the public most days. If you would like to see it in person, visit Foolish Farms in Mount Vision.”



FFLA Affiliate Status: Back in 2018 the FFLA Board voted to allow an Affiliate Status Designation. This designation was created for several reasons which would benefit both the local groups, the state chapter, and the national organization. The designation offers the local group the opportunity to acknowledge their participation in a National organization that specializes in fire towers. It offers those groups the use of the FFLA name and logo on their web page. By doing this we hope to offer each local group greater visibility, which could possibly lead to more financial support and volunteer recruitment. This partnership will help groups share ideas and information about New York's wonderful heritage of Historic Fire Towers. There is no cost to become an affiliate. The FFLA benefits by having your group sharing our name. You can reach out to me if interested, and keep an eye on the mail for more about this great opportunity.

Pillsbury Work: July 24th and 25th we will be working at Pillsbury Fire Tower. We hope to have 2 good weather days and some great volunteers who are willing to pitch in to finish our work there. The long range goal is to move the radio relay equipment and reopen the cab of the fire tower to the public. We could use a couple more hands. Please let me know if you are interested.

Light Up the Night: Get signed up, make plans, reach out to the press – all these things should be happening in the next month as you prepare for this fun, annual event. It is less than 8 weeks away! For the details, please visit our web page: <http://nysffla.org/light.html>

Calendar

Thursday, August 5: Poke O Moonshine Trail Work Days on the Observer's Trail. Clean water bars, brush-in herd paths, do minor rock work. 9:30 AM at the Route 9 parking area 1 mile south of the campground. Call or email Mark Robinson, Trails Coordinator, at 518-578-1480 or email peteron12996@yahoo.com

Saturday, July 24 and Sunday, July 25: Pillsbury Fire Tower work Contact lauriejrankin@gmail.com

Saturday, July 31 and Sunday, August 8-1: Poke-O-Moonshine Trail Work with Adirondack 46ers: <http://www.adk46er.org/trail-crew.html>

Saturday, August 14 and Sunday, August 15: Pillsbury Fire Tower Work Contact
lauriejrankin@gmail.com

Saturday, September 4: Lighting of the Fire Tower Event Statewide – check our web page for the guidelines to participate in this event. It is not too early to begin your planning. Contact
lauriejrankin@gmail.com

Saturday, September 18 or Sunday, September 19: Lyon trail work – best weather day Contact
lauriejrankin@gmail.com

September 18 through September 23: Blue Mountain Observer's Cabin. Contact
lauriejrankin@gmail.com

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