

## FFLA Newsletter - New York Chapter

March 2016

The official start of Spring is not until the 20<sup>th</sup>, but the official start of fire season is already here. With our lack of snow cover and some unusually warm weather; brush, grass and forest fires have already been reported. The State's burn ban is now in effect until May 15<sup>th</sup>. While observers generally were not hired to begin their seasonal work until April 1<sup>st</sup>, a year such as this may have meant they would have started their work a bit early. A quick perusal of Bill Starr's 'Roster of Observers' does show that some of the states southern fire towers had observers on duty in March some years. This would make sense with less snow cover and earlier spring weather coming to those areas first. I saw this article about a fire in a neighboring area, The Delaware Water Gap. I thought it did a good job of educating the public a bit about the difficulties involved in a fire both on the ground and behind the scenes: <http://www.poconorecord.com/news/20160307/nps-firefighters-douse-fire-at-remote-delaware-water-gap-overlook>.

**Trivia Question from February:** What was the required size of the first standardized cabins? I didn't receive any answers. They were to be a building 12' x 16' roofed and sided with asphalt shingles.

**Trivia Question for March:** What fire tower went out of service in 1916? You can utilize the 2 photos attached that were taken from that tower to help you with its location. It was removed in 1969. An FFLA sticker goes to the person with the first correct answer! Thanks goes to Paul Hartmann for the information in last month's and this month's questions.

**Organizing a Friends Group:** Creativity is required. Who is the most creative person that is interested in preserving that historic structure? It may be you, but it may be someone else. To that end, check out the St. Regis and Stillwater project updates. St. Regis is looking for a creative person for one important item. Stillwater has a creative way to encourage participation in the restoration project and it encourages local, community involvement.

**Updates/Help Needed:** In March we spring forward with the clocks and with restoration work. Several different group projects are listed below. Please consider putting one of these projects on your calendar and lending a hand if you can.

**Friends of Stillwater:** Jim Fox sends the following notices out. Some great incentives to go help out! Work days will be Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. Email [fsft@frontier.com](mailto:fsft@frontier.com) if you can help. Other work dates to be announced.

Every volunteer will receive discounts from the Norridgewock in Beaver River, the Stillwater Shop & Northern Lights B&B and Stillwater Hotel.

Lots of work to be done on the tower so we can have our grand opening over 4th of July weekend. The hike to the tower is easy, the 45+ mile views from the cab are incredible, and all the volunteers are fun people to work with!

**St. Regis Restoration Update:** David Petrelli says that a series of anonymous donations has allowed the Friends to contract with David Vana of Davana, LLC in Bloomingdale, NY to remove the old roof, fabricate new parts and assemble them on the tower. This is a huge project which involves working 40 feet up on top of the tower. The project is scheduled to take place early to mid June, weather dependent, of course. DEC has put a work order in for the helicopter air time to remove scraps from the restoration work already done. They are hoping they will have the panel available right before the air time is available so they can get the panels and repair supplies ferried at the same time that the refuse is taken down.

In addition to that, the group is looking for some creative help in developing the art work for their merchandise. I have attached the details to this newsletter. Please take a look and see if you or someone you know would like to participate in this fun contest!

**Hurricane update:** Peter Slocum from Hurricane says they do not have any dates firmed up yet, but plans are underway to complete painting the cab and structural steel supports, and replace the bolts holding the supports to the tower legs. Help will also be needed with trail work and installation of interpretive signs. So plan on checking in with Peter so you can lend a hand!

**Catskill Interpretive Center Update** – Michael Drillinger of the Catskill Interpretive Center in Mount Tremper says “we do not have anything definite at this time regarding our fire tower. We are working on it and hope to make multiple improvements to the CIC site this year.”

**Lyon Update:** Last month I talked about the development of a Friends Group as a process that simply starts with someone who cares. That someone then speaks to friends, family and acquaintances about their concerns regarding a particular tower. Before you know it, the original someone who cares is surrounded by a Friends Group. That is exactly what has happened with concerns about the Lyon Mountain fire tower. Many thanks to Fred Reed for talking it up. I am pleased to say that the paperwork is now under consideration with the NYSDEC for a group to do ongoing work at Lyon Mountain Fire Tower as well as to maintain the trail. Look for more information in the weeks to come. Would you like to get involved? Just let me know.

**Sterling Update:** The Friends of Sterling Forest meets monthly and is the group that has the agreement with the Park to restore the fire tower. There is a separate fire tower committee within that group. Wes Griffin will be taking the lead on that project. To spark local interest, the members of the Friends of Sterling Forest Group are hosting me for a slide show presentation on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00pm at the park. We will follow that up on Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> with a hike to the fire tower.

**Azure Mountain Update:** Look at what the Friends of Azure Mountain do within their community regarding education: <http://azuremountain.org/scholarship.htm>. Purpose: The Azure Mountain Friends Scholarships have been created to encourage the involvement of area teens in helping us fulfill our educational mission. In learning about Azure Mountain’s human and natural history and the story of the fire tower’s restoration, the students will gain a new awareness of and appreciation for environmental and historic preservation. We anticipate that scholarship recipients will serve as role models for their peers.

**Updating the updates:** I am so proud to say that New York State is so busy that I feel we need some additional methods to get updates to everyone. To that end, I have plans to get a State Chapter Facebook page up and running very soon – with thanks in advance to my husband Tom. I do realize that many of the individual groups have their own pages and the national group does too. The benefit will be to drive your friends to my friends and my friends to yours and so on. We will be getting the word out about our NY work to many, many more with one simple share. I will also send an occasional e-mail in between newsletters to you with time sensitive updates from time to time. I will try to keep these to a minimum, but the reality is that sometimes just a once-a-month notification would miss important work requests.

## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **Northeastern Conference of the FFLA**

The weekend of September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 2016 the NYS Chapter of the FFLA will be hosting the Northeastern Conference at the Keene Fire Department in Keene, NY. Final details will need to be worked out as we get closer, but here is a teaser of many of the events.

We will have speakers on Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> that will include:

- Keith Argow, National Chair
- David Vana of Davana, LLC
- The Stillwater restoration group with Jim Fox
- The St. Regis restoration group with David Petrelli
- The Hurricane restoration group with Peter Slocum
- Larry Gordon from the Cornell Hill project
- David Thomas-Train, educator from Adirondack History Museum and Poke O Moonshine Fire Tower
- Tate Connor, NYSDEC Forester who worked with both the Hurricane and St. Regis projects.

We will also plan on a group meal. There will be lots of options for fire tower visits. Those visits might include: Palmer Hill, Poke O Moonshine, Belfry, Hurricane, St. Regis, Adirondack History Museum tower, Stillwater, Spruce, and Cornell Hill.

Your feedback is always encouraged and welcomed. This is your newsletter. If there is something that you would like to see included, please let me know.

Remember keeping it local means being certain your NYS FFLA Annual membership dues are paid. Not a member? Please consider joining. You can do so on line at <http://www.firelookout.org>.

Laurie Rankin, Director NYS FFLA