

**Forest Fire Lookout Association**  
**New York Chapter**  
**July 2017**

*Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another. Erma Bombeck*

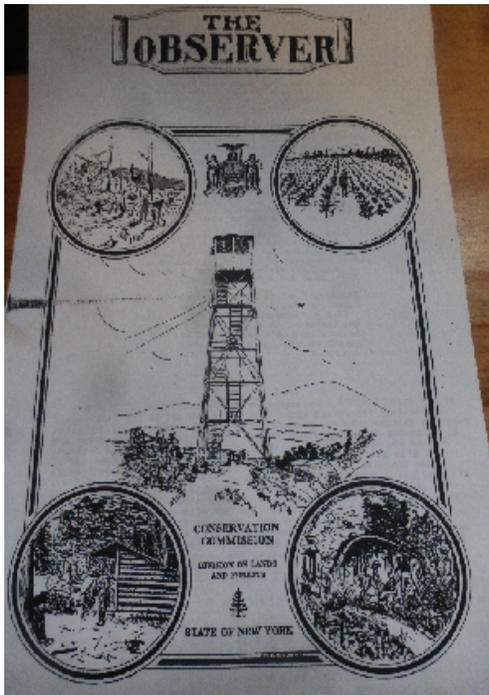
Every year NYS Fire Towers depend on thousands of volunteers to keep the towers open, to greet the visiting public, to maintain the structures and the trails leading to them. It makes the visitor's experience so much better when one sees a tower in a state of good repair and one can interact with a person on duty there in terms of questions, historical knowledge, hiker etiquette, nearby trails, and more. That is a big part of what FFLA membership is all about, taking an active role in volunteering. Have you joined the FFLA? I don't mean the State Chapter facebook page, I mean joined the FFLA organization? It is very easy and inexpensive, only \$15.00 per year. <http://ffla.org/volunteer.html> This month's newsletter is full of the work of volunteers and for all of your work, I am extremely grateful.

Some of the work that volunteers do is painting fire towers. This is done when one is part of a group that has permission from the owner of the tower to do so. Hauling paint and painting supplies to many towers is a daunting task. The cost of paint is not cheap either and many groups rely on donations or must fund raise to purchase same. Unfortunately, many visitors to fire towers think of painting in different terms.

Webster's definition of graffiti is 'writing or drawings scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place'. "the walls were covered with graffiti." Definition of illicit: 'forbidden by law, rules, or custom'. **Placing graffiti of any kind on a historical structure is illegal, forbidden by law, rules and custom. Visitors who are placing graffiti on our fire towers and fire tower cabins are criminals who are breaking the law and can be held accountable.** While I realize I am preaching to the choir here, if you see something, say something. Please do NOT be confrontational, but do be proactive and remind that individual(s) that graffiti is illegal. If you see someone in the act of placing graffiti on a fire tower or fire tower cabin, please notify the local forest ranger immediately.

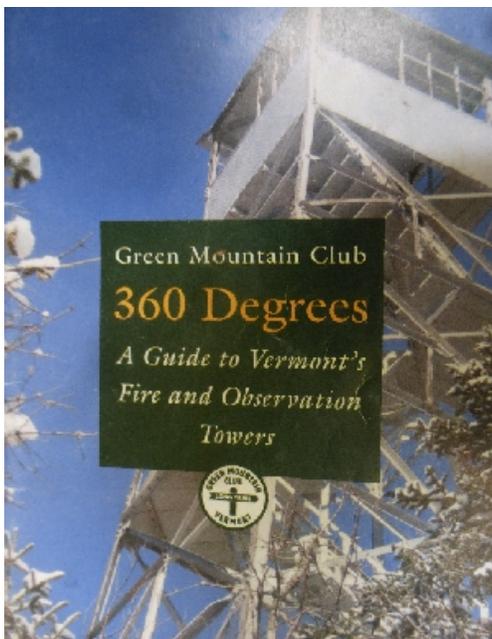
The Forest Ranger History got a nice bit of press earlier this month from North Country Public Radio. Everyone should take time to listen/read this great write up: <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/34223/20170704/how-the-forest-rangers-got-their-start>

While we continue to see rain and high humidity in the east, our neighbors to the west are suffering. Volunteers with the FFLA are helping: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RscI0bctwc> Wildfires in the western part of the country and in Canada are raging. Efforts to fight the fires require working in extreme heat. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/07/10/us/california-wildfires/index.html> Let us pray that all involved, particularly the fire fighters, stay safe. One of the problems these fire fighters see is fatigue. This is an interesting article regarding same. <http://wildfiretoday.com/2017/06/26/the-brain-needs-sleep-to-perform-nightly-maintenance-for-firefighters-and-everyone-else/> One organization that will likely be involved is Team Rubicon, more about this amazing group later in the newsletter: <https://teamrubiconusa.org/>



**Trivia Question for June:** A two part question was “What was The Observer and what was pictured on the center of the cover?” Very few people responded and only one had the correct answer; Retired Forest Ranger Paul Hartmann. The Observer was an in-house newsletter of the Division of Lands and Forests. It featured the Black Mountain Fire Tower on the center of the front cover.

**Trivia Question for July:** This one is going to be even more obscure, but ties in well with the beginning of this newsletter about FFLA membership. The FFLA was formed in 1990. In August of 1991 as this fledgling group was still organizing, the FFLA conference was held in Old Forge. Fred Knauf was the State Director at the time. The trivia question is: 'How many NYS members were reported at that conference?' No Fred, you cannot answer this question.



**Book of the Month:** Let's go out of state to neighboring Vermont this month. The book '360 Degrees' by the Green Mountain Club could use some updating, but is a great source for those who may wonder about fire towers in other states. My husband and I had a lot of fun visiting the towers in this book, many of which were refurbished a bit differently than the NY towers. You will not find any safety netting on these towers. While we enjoyed each and every trip, the most memorable was likely Glastenbury. Glastenbury was over a 20 mile day hike on a hot and humid June day. But what a view! We feared we would not return based on stories about hikers gone missing in this area never to be seen again. Then we feared we would die of thirst and the dark brown tannin water at Hell Hollow Brook came to the rescue. Remember that fire towers can be seen all across the United States. If you are visiting another state, look one up! The FFLA web page has a lot of information: [www.ffla.org](http://www.ffla.org)

## Updates

**Blue Mt Wild Forest** Amendment Plans approved by the APA There is a lot to wade through here, but the last line seems to indicate the APA has approved the amendment to Blue Mt – great news for the fire tower! If you took time to write in, thank you!

<http://www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/news/local-news/2017/07/apa-approves-campground-wild-forest-changes/?platform=hootsuite>

**Wakely:** This tower is still a priority for the NYSDEC, but this month's work may not take place due to flight difficulties. Be patient and stay tuned.

**Hunter Fire Tower:** Public access to the Hunter Mountain fire tower in Greene County will be restricted beginning July 10 as DEC rehabilitates the tower in preparation for its 100th birthday this year. The fire tower will be **closed to public access on weekdays** during the construction period, but will remain open on weekends. The trails to the summit of Hunter Mountain will remain open during the construction period. Construction is expected to last about a month and DEC will make another announcement when construction is complete. The tower is being painted and a new roof is being installed as part of the rehabilitation. For additional information about the project, contact the DEC Forestry office in Stamford at 607-652-7365. Many thanks to DEC Region 4 for their support of this 100 year old structure!

**St. Regis:** An informational meeting was held on July 10<sup>th</sup> in Saranac Lake to gather local support for the tower and continued restoration efforts. While the turn out was not as great as they were hoping for, the group said it was a good use of time and a very productive meeting. It included a local news article. <http://www.adirondackdailyenterprise.com/news/local-news/2017/07/st-regis-mountain-fire-tower-open-but-work-still-needs-to-be-done/>

**Hadley and Black made this list:** <http://www.adirondack.net/hiking/beginners/>

**Sterling Forest Fire Tower Project:** An amazing weekend of work at Sterling Forest Fire Tower on July 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Thank you does not suffice for the amount of time and effort that was put forth by 34 people, including volunteers from Team Rubicon, Friends of Sterling Forest, Share with a Teen, FFLA members from NJ, the Park staff, and individual volunteers. This incredibly generous group of people gave of their time, energies, and talents all day on Sat and Sun, including hiking to the tower and back each day. Learning more about the Team Rubicon group, a disaster response team that unites the skills and experiences of military veterans with first responders to rapidly deploy teams. In between disasters, they work with community groups to keep their skills sharp and to support one another. 'Share with a Teen' is a group of teens that volunteers in the local community with not for profits to teach teens what is available in the community about all the positive things teens can do. A special thank you to Mike, the Park Manager at Sterling Forest and Todd, the Engagement Manager at Team Rubicon, for all their work in helping to organize this very successful event. The tower, cabin and grounds are looking better than ever! Once the Park assessment of the work is done, I can let everyone know what the next steps will be. **THANK YOU EVERYONE!!**





**Outreach at REI:** Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower Volunteer Jessica and CCCD Administrative Assistant Jonathan spent the day at REI in NJ doing some outreach for the Catskill Fire Tower Project.

Do you have a local retailer you could work with?

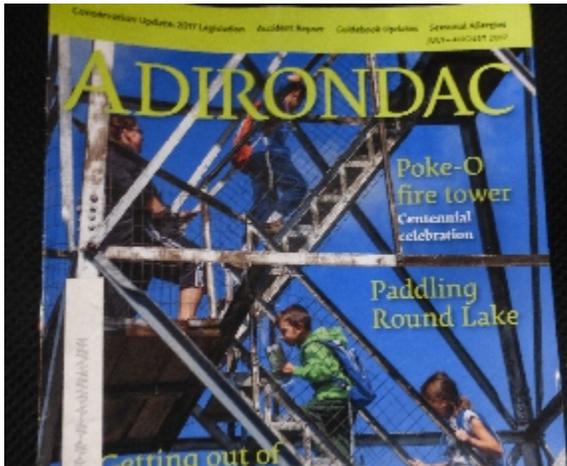
### Upcoming Events

**Hadley:** The weekend of July 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> the Hadley Mountain Centennial celebration will take place. On Saturday, July 15<sup>th</sup> the first day's events will be held at the trailhead, and on the summit from 9 to 3. On Sunday, the 16<sup>th</sup>, the festivities will be at the Hadley Town Hall from Noon to 4. Check their website for additional details: <http://hadleymtfiretower.org>.

**Marty Podskoch:** Author, Marty Podskoch will speak on [The Restoration & History of the Adirondack Fire Towers](#) on July 23, 2017 from 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm at Paul Smith's College VIC. A \$5 donation to the Friends of St. Regis Fire Tower Group is suggested.

**Hunter:** Plans are being finalized for events to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Hunter Mountain Fire Tower on Saturday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. For details contact contact Fire Tower Coordinator Gordon Hoekstra at 518-565-0150.

**Slide Show:** Fire Towers from a Historical Perspective will be presented at the Pine Hill Community Center in Pine Hill at 7:00 pm on Thursday, July 27th. Everyone enjoys the views from the cab of a fire tower, but why are they there in the first place? Please join me for an in depth look at why fire towers were placed on so many of the mountaintops in New York State. After you see and hear all of the details, you will be looking at things a bit differently on your next hike to one. Perhaps you will even want to get involved in restoring one. This one and one half hour slide show presentation and discussion is free of charge. Refreshments will be served.



**Poke O Moonshine:** The weekend of July 28-30, 2017 will see the celebration of the Centennial of the Poke-O-Moonshine fire tower and the 20th Anniversary of The Friends of Poke-O-Moonshine. Friday, July 28 at 5 PM, the juried Poke-O-Moonshine Art Exhibit will open at 1719 Block Gallery, Keeseville. On Sunday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, there will be a hike to Poke-O-Moonshine summit and fire tower. Meet at the summit at 1 PM to tour the tower, eat lunch, and enjoy singing by the Essex-based singers, The Wannabees. Between 3 and 4 PM, gather at the Campground at the base of Poke-O-Moonshine for cake and speeches by some who have been closely involved in the history and restoration of the fire tower at Poke-O and

fire towers on other mountains. Cap off the events with a party at Ausable Brewing Company in Keeseville. <http://www.pokeomoonshine.org>. David Thomas-Train has a great article here: <http://www.adirondackalmanack.com/2017/07/poke-o-moonshine-fire-tower-marking-100-years.html> David Thomas-Train also secured the front cover of the July-Aug Adirondac!

**FFLA Picnic September 23rd:** I have reserved a tent at the Grafton Lakes State Park for our gathering. The FFLA will provide hot dogs and hamburgers. Please plan to bring a dish to pass and your favorite beverage. I would ask that anyone who would like to attend please send me an rsvp so that I can plan accordingly. Families are welcome as well. We can plan to gather at noon and some people may wish to make a visit to the Dickinson Hill Fire Tower while there.

Here's something new: [http://www.catskillmountainkeeper.org/fire\\_tower\\_hike\\_series?utm\\_campaign=fire\\_tower\\_hike&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=catskillmountainkeeper](http://www.catskillmountainkeeper.org/fire_tower_hike_series?utm_campaign=fire_tower_hike&utm_medium=email&utm_source=catskillmountainkeeper)

**The Patch is Back:** I have had several people ask me about the NYS Centennial Fire Tower patch. I ordered a new supply. Currently these patches are the only fund raiser the state chapter is doing. You can obtain the patch on the FFLA website (you can purchase them there with Paypal or a credit card) or by contacting me (check or money order only). <http://www.firelookout.org/lookout-store---patches.html>

**Volunteers Needed:** We are still looking for a few more people who would be interested in helping out at Bald, Pillsbury, Leonard Hill, and Jackie Jones. Please let me know if you can help. You need not make a big commitment to any of these, just one day of assistance on the tower, or fresh ideas, is greatly appreciated!

## Centennial Tower of the Month

Lyon Mountain Fire Tower – This summit was used by Verplank Colvin in the late 1800's as his summer headquarters. The summit area was cleared to afford the necessary views and was a beehive of activity according to historical records. The early nineteen hundreds saw a significant number of devastating fires. In 1910 the State of NY reached an agreement with the Chateaugay Ore and Iron Company to build a phone line to the top of Lyon Mountain. In 1917 a 35' steel tower was built on the summit under the supervision of Ranger Albert Tebeau. There were a number of Observers who served at Lyon Mountain. In Marty Podskoch's book. '*Adirondack Fire Towers: Their History and Lore – Northern Section*' you will find a great compilation of stories by these men who had a steep commute to work. The tower was last open in 1988. Photos from 1923, 1973, and 2002.

After 1989 when it was officially closed and abandoned, the tower quickly fell into a state of disrepair. A rather complicated land purchase in 2005 gave NYS the opportunity to refurbish the fire tower and the trail to it. The Student Conservation Association crew worked on the fire tower, starting with very necessary repairs to the footings. The Town of Saranac now hires a steward to be at the tower in the summers. Kyle has been greeting visitors the last two summers. The FFLA has signed a five year agreement to maintain the tower structure and the trail.



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[www.ffla.org](http://www.ffla.org) – join now