



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

The Civilian Conservation Corps: Last month I included 2 books of the month; *Another Day, Another Dollar* by Diane Galusha and *Adirondack CCC Camps* by Marty Podskoch. These two books provide the reader with wonderful recollections of the amazing work that the CCC did in NYS. The men were involved in building towers, fire tower cabins, fire ponds, actual fire fighting, reforestation of burned over areas, stringing of telephone lines and more. While many of the men came to the CCC without any particular skills, they learned many and took great pride in their work. Others came with great expertise and found the CCC a good place to use those skills. This photo of the Azure Mt. Observer's cabin in 1936 illustrates exceptional masonry work very well and like the very similar DeBar photo, includes well done chimneys too.

The Paul Smith's camp built the Observer's cabin on DeBar and a new phone line to the summit. I love the photograph of the wooden stairs to the fire tower on Ampersand that the CCC built that is on page 273 of Marty's book. The Rock Rift, Page Pond and Gilbert Lake fire towers were built by the men from the Laurens and Davenport camps. The Breakabeen camp built the Utsayantha fire tower. Kelly Hollow in the Catskills is described well in Diane's book on page 142 with the fire ponds still remaining intact to this day. I strongly recommend reading both of these books to discover more of the CCC connections to fire towers.

Marty has a new website: <https://martinpodskoch.com/>

Next month we will visit trains and their connections to our fire towers.

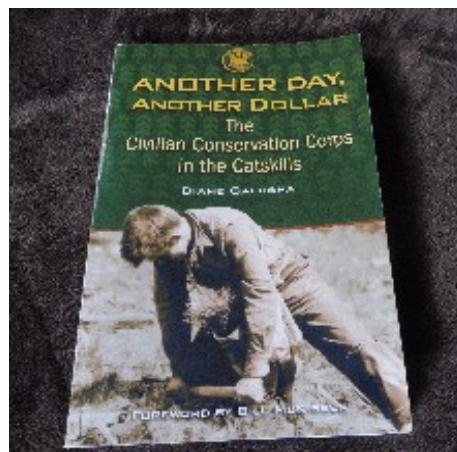
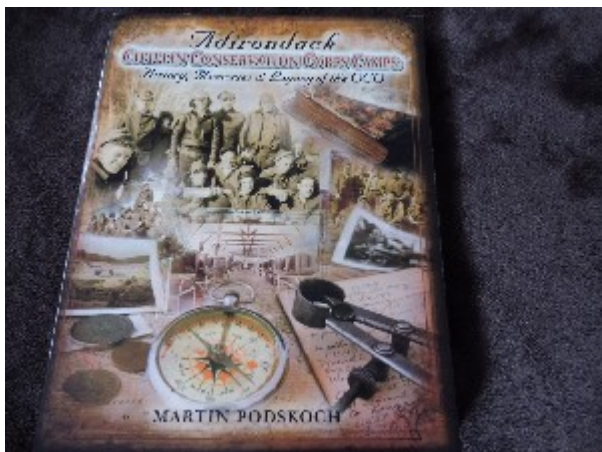


OBSERVER'S CABIN

Newest type of cabin being erected on mountain tops for use of Observers. This is located at Azure Mt. Erected by Barnum Ford CCC enrollees and Forest Rangers



Books of the month repeated:



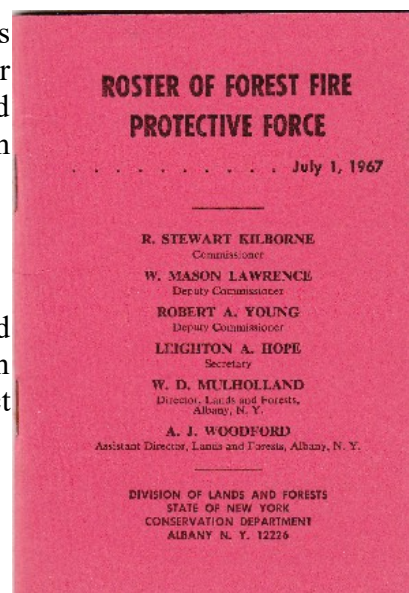
Great news from Pennsylvania: They are hard at work on their 4.6 million dollar fire tower renovations project. Let's keep an eye on the work our neighbors to the south are doing. Perhaps some of you who are close to the border can help out in some way?
http://www.pennlive.com/wildaboutpa/2018/03/best_views_of_pennsylvania_get.html

Educational items to distribute at your fire tower: I picked up some Smokey Bear merchandise to distribute <https://www.symbols.gov/> You may also consider some of the Leave No Trace information too: <https://lnt.org/teach/teaching-resources>

Trivia: The February Trivia Question was How many fire districts were there in NYS in 1967? Steve Canfield sent in the winning number of 14 and in turn, he was sent the coveted FFLA sticker! If you would prefer to purchase one rather than play a game, they can be found on the website where they are called decals:

<http://ffla.org/lookout-store.html>

How many of you carried around one of these Rosters? My Mom said that she and Dad always kept the most up to date copy with them when they traveled. Much like today's social media, this roster would connect them with anyone they once knew.



News and Announcements from Around the State

Azure Mountain Friends: Congratulations to this group for receiving a grant for \$7,225 to initiate a publicity campaign and fund necessary repairs. The publicity campaign will improve communications to the public about the work of the Azure Mountain Friends, the history of the tower, expand interest, and ultimately increase the number of volunteers and supporters. Most importantly, the increased exposure and publicity will help to insure the continuation of educational programs.

Stillwater Fire Tower: Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower are actively seeking people to be volunteer stewards at the fire tower. If you are interested, please send a note along to fsft@frontier.com. They will get back to you with more information.

Fire Towers of St. Lawrence County: Unfortunately I was not able to attend this presentation by Bill Hill on February 27th. Two dozen people did find it a great way to spend a winter evening. 'Hiking the Trail to Yesterday' is Bill's look back at history. <http://hikingthetrailtoyesterday.wordpress.com>

Friends of Mt Beacon: The chair of this group, David Rocco, found another passion following the restoration of the fire tower. You can here about that in this podcast. David is also seeking some people to help out at the tower with some maintenance projects. <http://newyorkhistoryblog.org/2018/03/09/dixie-kiefer-the-indestructible-man/>

Statewide Burn Ban: Remember residential brush burning is prohibited through May 14th. NYS reports the incidence of spring wildfires has decreased by 37 percent since 2009 when the ban began.

Logic Puzzle – Fire Towers of the Catskills

Math lovers and hikers will like this puzzle, which will teach you about the locations and elevations of the six fire towers that have been re-opened in our region. HOW TO SOLVE: Use the grid to cross out what you've eliminated, and eventually you'll have only one open box that will give you a fact. Remember to cross out that possibility for everything else. You can also fill in your "findings" in the list below. A step-by-step solution will be posted on our website next week. Sharpen those pencils!

	ELEVATIONS						TOWNS/VILLAGES					
	2740'	2990'	3140'	3209'	3723'	4040'	Claryville	Hardenburgh	Hunter	Shandaken	Stamford	Woodstock
Balsam Lake Mtn												
Hunter Mtn												
Mt. Utsayantha												
Overlook Mtn												
Red Hill												
Tremper Mtn.												
Claryville							Tower	Town	Height			
Hardenburgh												
Hunter												
Shandaken												
Stamford												
Woodstock												

- ① Only one tower has the same name as its township.
- ② Of the two towers closest in elevation, Stamford's is the higher of the two.
- ③ Overlook Mtn. Tower is exactly 400 feet higher in elevation than Shandaken's tower.
- ④ Hardenburgh's tower is higher than Mt. Utsayantha, which is higher than Claryville's tower, which is higher than Tremper Mountain tower.
- ⑤ The towers in Woodstock and Hardenburgh and Utsayantha tower are all higher than 3000 feet, but none of them is over 4000 feet.
- ⑥ Balsam Lake tower is not in Claryville or Woodstock; Overlook Mtn is not in Hardenburgh
- ⑦ Red Hill tower is 150 feet lower than the Overlook Mtn tower.

Corrections Department: Last month we featured Black and Gore as our centennial towers. Included in that feature was a postcard of a wooden tower on Black Mountain dated 1911. After posting that same photograph on our Facebook page, it was brought to my attention that the same photograph has also been identified as Black Mountain Fire Tower in New Hampshire. I asked our research sleuths what they thought. This included Retired Forest Ranger Paul Hartmann, Author Marty Podskoch and NH bookstore owner Steve Smith. It appears that it is very possible it was the NH tower, not NY, but without actually seeing the postcard, we may never know for certain. Do any of you happen to have that postcard? If so, please let me know.

Calendar Notes

Sunday, April 22nd is Earth Day – Do you have any events planned?

Saturday, April 21st and Sunday, April 22nd, the Cornell Hill fire tower will be open to the public. It is the Town of Wilton Bicentennial celebration. <http://www.wiltonbicentennial.com/events/bicentennial-historic-celebration-weekend/>

Saturday and Sunday, April 28th and 29th – The Hadley Fire Tower Committee will participate in Hadley's "Maple in April Festival". They will have a table with exhibits, patches for sale, etc. They will also be signing up anyone interested in joining a hike led by committee members Steve Mackey and Sue Howard on Sunday, at 10:00 and 12:00.

Saturday, May 5th – Love My Park Day. Would you like to participate? <https://www.ptny.org/events/i-love-my-park-day/about>

Saturday, May 12th – The Hadley Fire Tower Committee will be holding a wildflower walk.

Saturday, May 19th – The Hadley Fire Tower Committee will be doing trail work starting at 8:30. Check out their Facebook page for more details.

Saturday, May 26th - Save the Date: Grafton Lakes State Park's new visitor center, natural play ground and fire tower will be holding a grand opening! Stay tuned for details.

Saturday, June 2nd is National Trails Day. Decide within your group or by working with the DEC or your municipality if you would like to participate. It is a great way to showcase your fire tower and to get some assistance in sprucing up or repairing the trail to your tower.

Sunday, July 29, 2018 will be the Azure Mountain Anniversary Celebration. <http://azuremountain.org/>

Tuesday, August 7, 2018 Marty Podskoch and myself will be presenting a program on Swede Mt. Fire Tower at 7pm at the Horicon Town Hall in Brant Lake. Marty Podskoch is doing a book signing of his Adirondack Fire Tower Book and they are having a presentation for the 100th anniversary Swede Mt Fire Tower. Refreshments will be served. Sponsored by the Horicon Historical Society.

Saturday, September 1st from 9-9:30 pm will be the Annual Lighting of the Fire Towers. Can your group participate? Rain date will be Sunday the 2nd.

September 2018 – The 19th Annual Hudson Valley River Ramble – registration is not open yet, but start thinking about this one. Check the website for information.

Sunday, November 11th – Ravens Rock Run to bring back the [Cross River Mountain Fire Tower at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation](http://ravenrocksrn.org/) at its former site in the park. <http://ravenrocksrn.org/>

October – Unless something changes, the 16th 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!

A Point of Agreement by Clyde H Smith

From the side bar in the article '*Fire Towers Forever*', which appeared in
Adirondack Life Summer 1974 edition
Courtesy of Rick Miller, Observer at Kane Mt. Fire Tower

When I was a youngster I had the privilege of growing up on top of a mountain where my father was a fire lookout. We lived on the mountain for nine seasons, and my unique experience gave me a special insight into the complexities of many of Nature's secrets.

One of the things I remember most (and looked forward to as a growing boy) was the hundreds of hikers that visited the mountaintop each summer. People of all ages would venture up the trail, sometimes in swarms, sometimes in tiny family groups, and often solo climbers. Focal point for everyone was the lookout tower where they could register their names, visit with my father, and ask questions. Included among the hikers were many boys' and girls' camps – kids from the cities, many climbing their very first mountain, and you can imagine the questions they had on their mind. And here was my father, first priority, guardian of the forest, but second and probably more significant, public relations expert and sole representative of the conservation institution.

The people who went away from that mountain went with a greater understanding of the system and a genuine respect for our forests and parks. And the young campers took back a unique gift – a deep appreciation for the values nature has provided – all because a single man was there to answer their inquisitive questions.

Membership: Are you an FFLA member? Do you need to renew your membership? If so, it can be done very easily on our web page. Visit www.ffla.org for options. In addition to this newsletter you will receive the full color Lookout Network national magazine. We also have this monthly newsletter as a benefit and we have new FFLA brochures in stock. For groups we also offer the option of becoming an FFLA affiliate. If you would like any of those, please let me know.

I leave you with a quote from Erma Bombeck; “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.” Thank you to all of you who volunteer so much to keep fire towers standing tall and proud and to honor the memories of those who once stood in them.

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