

Maine Chapter Report 2007

Overall, we had a very active year between events, research, field trips, and visits with members and state officials. Although skeptical that we would have time to do it, we completed another statewide survey of tower sites in 2007. As we found when we did our 2006 survey, there were changes, new discoveries and updates. The findings are below -

Tower Survey

Data as of 11/22/2007

Summary:

Total Known Tower Sites - 143

Total Towers Still Standing - 65

Total Towers Gone or Removed - 78

Of the 65 Standing Towers:

Standing Steel Only, No Cab - 22

Standing Steel Converted to Observation Deck - 6

Standing Steel and Cab - 37

Average Condition of the 39 Standing Towers with Cabs:

Good Condition - 14

Fair Condition - 10

Poor Condition - 8

Bad Condition - 5

The full tower summary list can be found on the FFLA Web Site on the Towers page under the Maine section. We will continue to update these lists as new information is found.

Tower Losses - We lost Haskell Hill in Jefferson as a private party purchased it, hired Rockport Steel to remove it, and barged it to Lasell Island where he is re-erecting it. Washington Bald in T42 MD was cut down and dropped by the new landowners this past summer. The new owners, Sustainable Forest Technologies of Milford did not want to deal with the tower.

Membership

Current membership in ME is at 22 members. We saw some attrition and a few new members, so membership remains flat. Membership continues to be an issue with the Maine Chapter. Locating interested parties to become members has been challenging.

NHLR

10 Total Entries

We have one tower scheduled for nomination in the Spring timeframe and have 2 others that will be under consideration for 2008.

Earlier in the year, I contacted all caretakers of the ME NHLR towers and distributed NHLR Steel Signs to them, except for Ross Mountain, which does not have any caretaker at this time.

Research / Archives

This past year, we performed significant research on tower sites with the goal of working toward a more robust archive. We still have long list of lookouts that need researching, but progress is being made.

Activities

Allagash Mountain Lookout

Over the weekend of November 9th, 10th, and 11th, a team lead by Roger Morneault packed equipment, tools, and a generator up to the summit of Allagash Mountain in an effort to do some repairs to the Allagash Mountain Fire Tower. The tower was in questionable shape and needed some shoring up to ensure it would survive the winter. Roger and company replaced all guy lines, hardware, and anchors, replaced the roof, removed the old antennas on the cab, and some other misc. repairs. The tower, which has one loose footing, is now rock solid with the new guy lines and hardware. More work may be planned for this tower in 2008.

Harris Mountain Lookout

Although Harris Mountain was removed back in 2006, it has not been forgotten. This past year, FFLA worked with the Dixmont Historical Society to include a section on Harris in a new History book that they published for their centennial this year. This section documents what known history we know about Harris Lookout and the mountain itself. FFLA joined the Historical society at some of the centennial activities in town during the last week of August. In addition, shirts and mugs that were produced for the centennial feature Harris Lookout on them.

Squaw Mountain Project

During early 2007, we lost the support of the Greenville High School Industrial department due to staff turnovers. This group was going to build the tower cab and assist in assembly. We were unable to locate an alternative group to build the tower cab in time. We are working with another group for a possible 2008 restoration.

Stockholm Mountain Project

This tower is in good shape, but still needs some upgrades. We did not make much progress with this one in 2007 due to limited resources, but we will continue to work with this group to move this project forward in the spring.

Other Projects

Rocky Mountain Tower - We did not have much luck locating a work crew to assist with repairs in 2007. We have had some discussions about a repair mission for this tower in 2008 using the same group that assisted with the Allagash repair to assist the stewards with some maintenance.

Indian Hill - A local group in Grand Lake Stream continues to work on an effort to take on ownership of the wooden tower on Indian Hill. FFLA has been in assisting with this effort, but there will not likely be any movement until the Spring/Summer timeframe.

Southern Maine Activities and Status

All 3 volunteer towers in York County (Aggie, Ossipee, and Hope) have continued to operate during 2007. The towers were most active during the dry spring and the summer and fall were fairly inactive other than some sporadic dry periods.

Mount Agamenticus - Some minor winter damage was repaired with the help of York Fire Chief Chris Balentine and his members. Mount A has been manned every day this spring on class 3 days & above. We have reported a total of 20 fires in this period. The largest fire being 18.2 acres in the town of Acton on the Lebanon town line. The fire was in a very remote area with access by 4X4's only. There are currently 4 volunteers that do their best to keep the tower manned when needed.

Ossipee Hill - Little winter damage this year, but the road suffered greatly. Ossipee Tower has been manned every day this spring on class 3 and 4 days. Many confirmed spottings as fire danger is a bit higher this year and we have seen an increase of visitors as well.

Mount Hope - The tower opened the season April 23, 2007. There was no damage to the tower from the winter or spring storms. Watchmen have been up regularly, but there has not been excessive fire activity in the area even though every day we have been staffed has been Class 3 or higher. Mount Hope currently has 3 regular volunteers.

York Fire Muster

The York Village Fire Dept. held its 91st Annual Fireman's Field Day Parade & Muster on Saturday August 18th 2007. FFLA had a display at this event. Although overall turnout was lower than expected, we spoke to a lot of Maine tower enthusiasts as well as a group from Michiga

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Cobb, Maine Director