

DEC: Open 2 Adirondack fire towers for NY tourism

Thursday, October 24, 2013

The Associated Press

ALBANY — Two historic fire towers closed for more than 20 years could be reopened under a plan to boost tourism in the Adirondacks.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation said this week that restoring the Hurricane Mountain and St. Regis Mountain fire towers would allow full public access. The plans also call for interpretive materials related to the towers' history.

If the projects go ahead, the restorations are expected to result in increased tourism in Essex and Franklin counties.

Both towers have been closed to the public since they were discontinued for use as fire observation stations. The Hurricane Mountain tower closed in 1979, and the St. Regis Mountain tower was shut down in 1990.

The towers are listed on the state and national registers of historic places, which allows government officials to look at alternatives that would allow for their preservation.

The towers had been slated for removal because Hurricane Mountain is classified as a primitive area and St. Regis Mountain is in a canoe area. Both land classifications called for the fire towers to eventually be removed, but in October 2010 the Adirondack Park Agency board voted to classify the land beneath the two towers as historic, a move that allowed them to remain and be restored.

The restoration plans are available online and for public review at DEC headquarters in Albany and the Region 5 headquarters in Ray Brook, located just outside Lake Placid. CDs of the plan also will be available at the same locations, as well as the offices of the Town of Keene and Town of Santa Clara.

The DEC is accepting public comment through Nov. 15.