

Fire tower hearings this week

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The state Adirondack Park Agency will host a series of three public hearings next week regarding the possible removal of fire towers on St. Regis and Hurricane mountains.

The hearings come several months after the state Department of Environmental Conservation held public hearings and a written comment period on the unit management plans in which the fire towers are located.

During that comment period, speakers and letter writers came out in overwhelming support of keeping the fire towers. The Local Government Review Board also requested that the state APA consider amending the State Land Master Plan to save the fire towers.

Both fire towers are on the National Register of Historic Places, but neither is currently in use. The St. Regis tower hasn't been used since 1990, and the Hurricane tower has been closed since 1973.

These public hearings are for the four alternatives the APA has come up with to amend the State Land Master Plan. The alternatives are the following:

-Reclassify an area around the base of the fire towers on St. Regis and Hurricane Mountains to a historic area classification, which would let them remain.

Fact Box

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

(Each will start with a 30-minute informational session)

-3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 9 at DEC Headquarters, Room 129 A&B, 625 Broadway, Albany

-7 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 10 at Keene Central School, 33 Market St., Keene Valley

-7 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 11 at Paul Smith's College, state routes 86 and 30, Paul Smiths

Written comments will be accepted through Aug. 25. Address them to James Connolly, Deputy Director of the Planning Division, NYS Adirondack Park Agency, PO Box 99, Ray Brook, NY 12977, or by e-mail at apa_slmp@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

-Revise the State Land Master Plan's canoe area guidelines to include the fire tower on St. Regis Mountain as a structure that would be allowed to remain.

-Revise the State Land Master Plan's classification guidelines to let fire towers remain in primitive areas under certain conditions, including that they cannot be rehabilitated. This alternative would include creating small primitive areas around the fire towers on St. Regis and Hurricane mountains.

-Take no action, which would result in the towers being removed or relocated from their current locations.

Description of the proposed action is available on the APA's website at www.apa.state.ny.us or on CD at agency's headquarters on state Route 86 in Ray Brook. For further information regarding the proposed actions, contact James Connolly at 891-4050.

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