

Fire-tower plans ready for review

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P-R FILE PHOTO Students at Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School have traditionally made the hike up Hurricane Mountain to see the landscape and the fire tower. The public can weigh in on whether the State Department of Environmental Conservation will rehab the structure and the one on St. Regis Mountain to open it to visitors.

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Press-Republican

The State Department of Environmental Conservation is looking to put a radio repeater on Hurricane Mountain's fire tower.

And newly released unit management plans propose resuming maintenance of that tower and the one on St. Regis Mountain in Santa Clara for interpretive and educational purposes.

The small parcels land beneath both towers were designated Historic Areas after a lengthy public review session that ended with Adirondack Park Agency classification in 2010.

The public has until Nov. 15 to weigh in with comments before the final version of each is complete.

"As Governor (Andrew) Cuomo continues his commitment to spur tourism, the release of these draft unit management plans is another step in ensuring these historically significant resources will be enjoyed for many generations to come," DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said in a news release.

"Throughout the 20th century, fire towers played a critical role in the protection of New York state's natural resources, and resuming maintenance of these structures for educational purposes will attract travelers and provide the public a better appreciation of that legacy."

OUTCRY SAVED TOWERS

The fire towers were once used by forest rangers who watched from the top of the slender steel platforms for any sign of smoke in the Adirondack forest landscape.

The Hurricane tower was built in 1919 and discontinued use in 1979. The St. Regis tower dates to 1918 and was used for fire observation until 1990.