

# St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower





FRIENDS OF ST. REGIS MT. FIRE TOWER - MISSION

Our mission is to restore the St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower for safe public access while developing an educational and interpretive program that promotes the historic and cultural values of the St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower, the NYS Fire Tower Network and the Adirondack Preserve.

# Early hikers - Paul Smith's Hotel Guests



## Theodore Roosevelt

1871 - Climbed St. Regis Mt.  
12 years old

*"Paul Smith's August 12th/71  
We ascended Mount St. Regis today.  
From the top of this mountain we had  
a view of all or almost all the lake  
system of this part of the Adirondacks."*

# The Adirondack Survey - 1876

Surveyor Verplanck Colvin's first ascent of St. Regis Mt.



Photograph taken by Seneca Ray Stoddard in 1876

*Views from Signal Station St. Regis Mt \_ North.*

# The Adirondack Survey



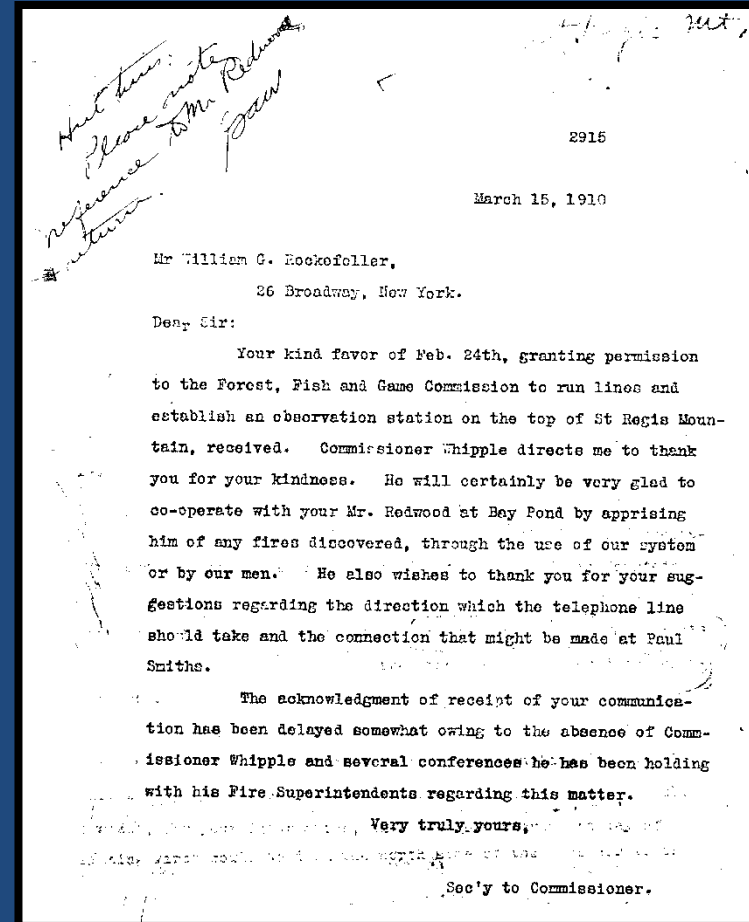
Wooden signal station on St. Regis Mountain – circa 1900

# 1910 – Fire Observation begins



William Avery Rockefeller, Jr.  
(1841-1922)  
Co-founder of  
Standard Oil Company.

← Aftermath of 1908  
fire on St. Regis Mt.

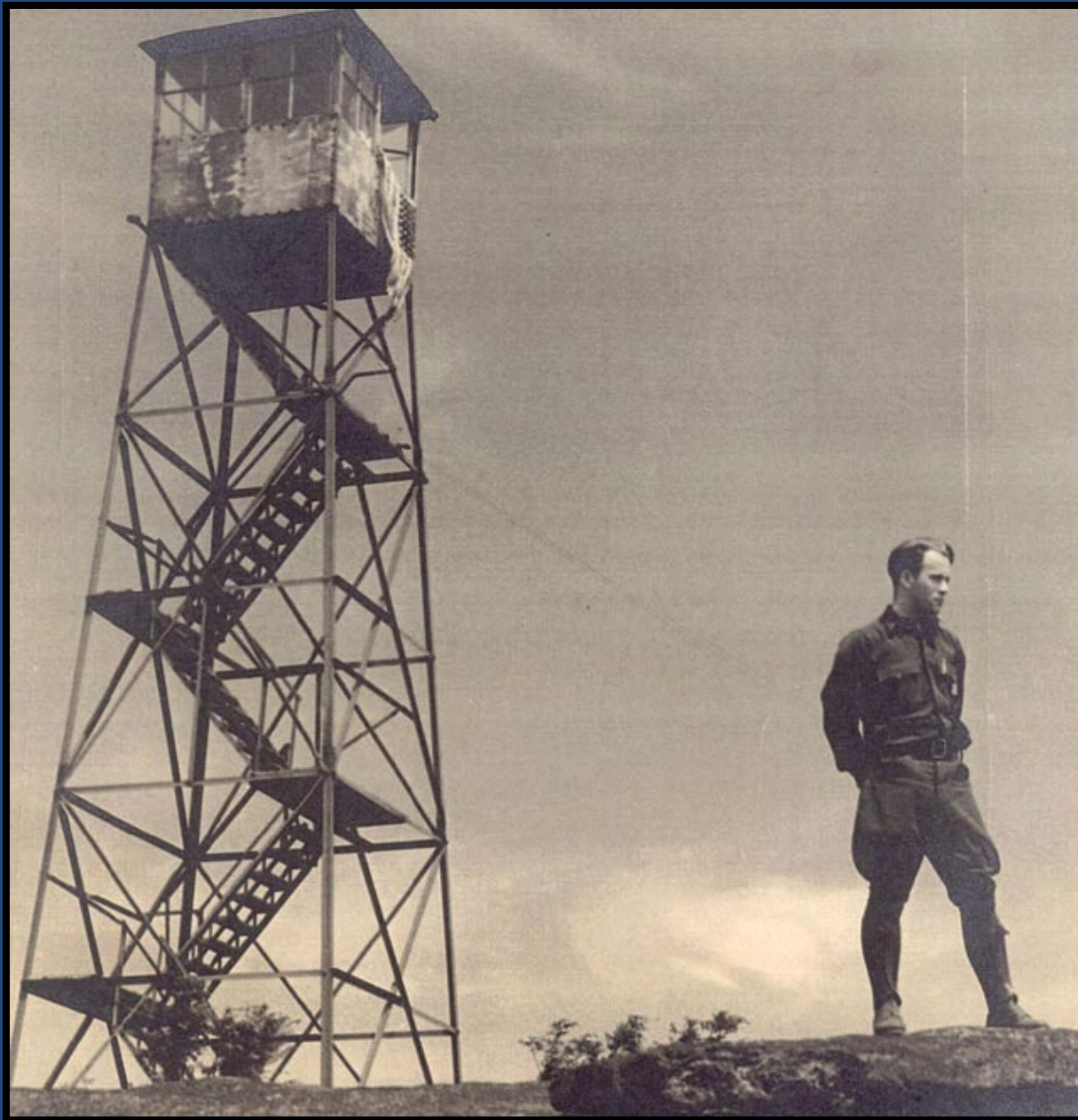


1910 letter to Wm. Rockefeller



## **St. Regis Mountain Fire Observation Station**

- Active 81 yrs. - 1910 through 1990
- **Current tower erected 1918 by the NYS Conservation Commission**
- 35 foot Aermotor model LS-40 fire tower
- Placed on the State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places - 2005



Leander Martin (Observer from 1939-42)

## Observers

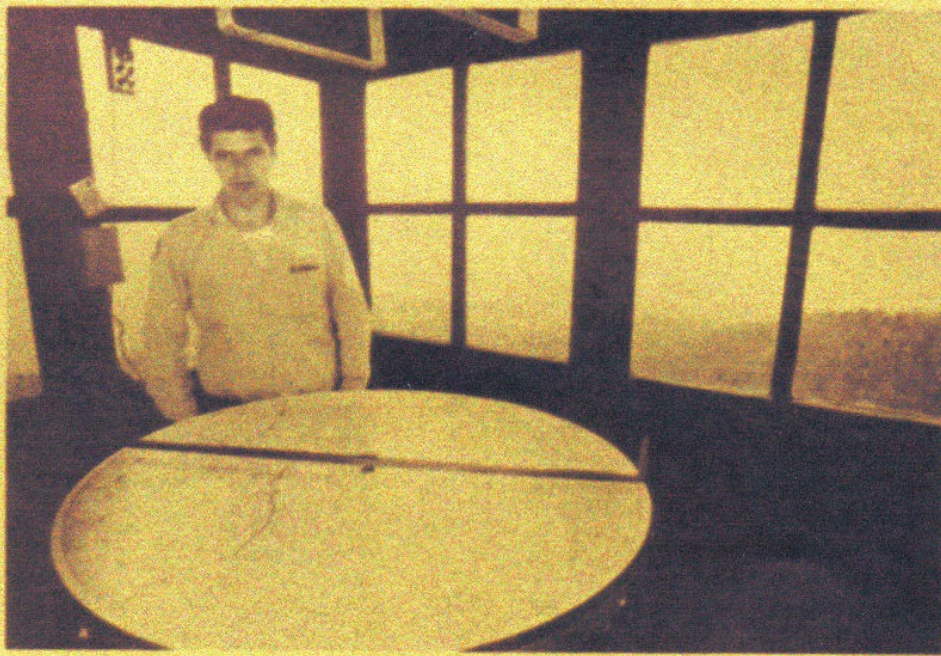
Stood vigil on  
St. Regis Mt. for  
81 years.

Protecting the  
Forests and  
educating the  
public.



# Observers

- 19 Men & 2 Women
- Longest service 14 seasons
- Shortest service 13 days



*Observer on the summit of St. Regis Mt. What will be his fate and the fate of all the towers in the Adirondacks?*

Ed Samburgh 1974

CAYDE H. SMITH PHOTO

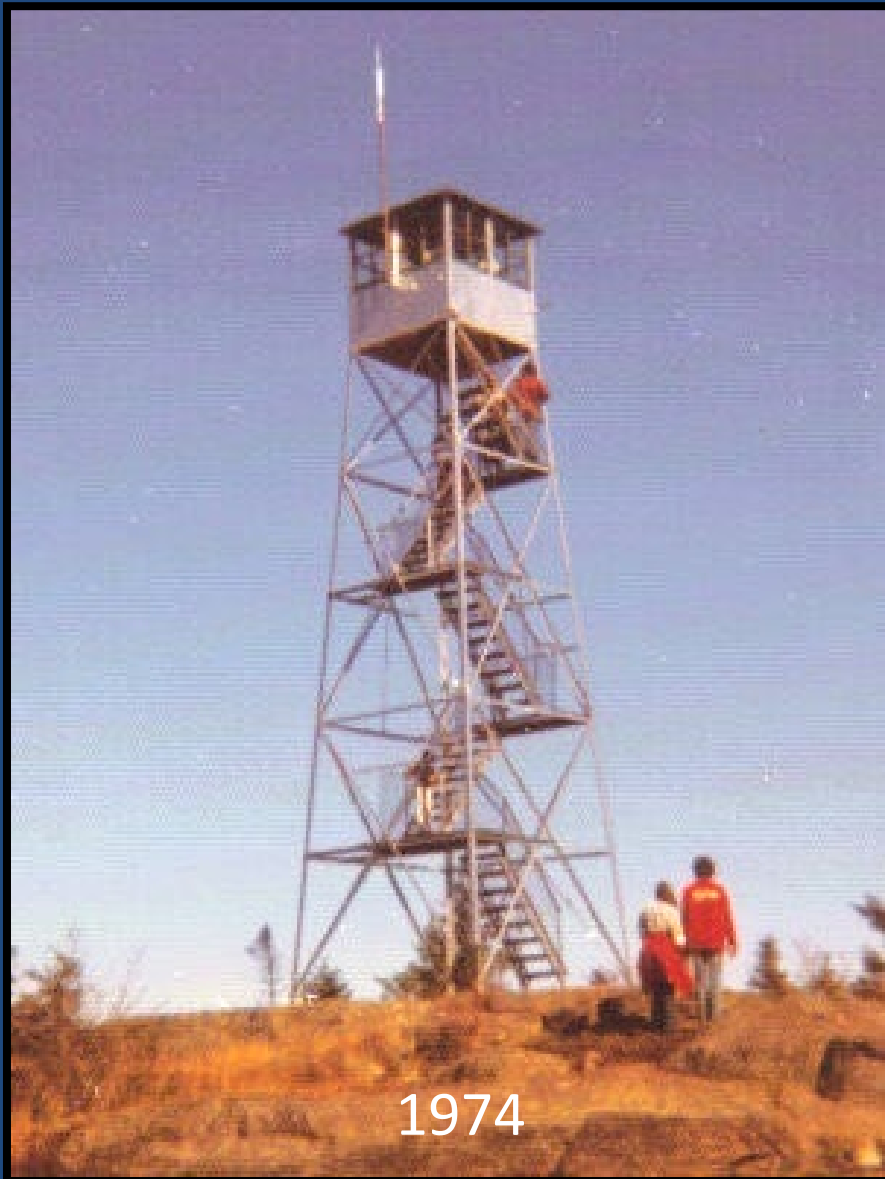
## Notables

- **Albert Otis** – from Otisville (Paul Smiths) 1 of 19 children. Died in the observer's cabin at age 73
- **Ed Samburgh** – Longest service. Known for his handlebar mustache.

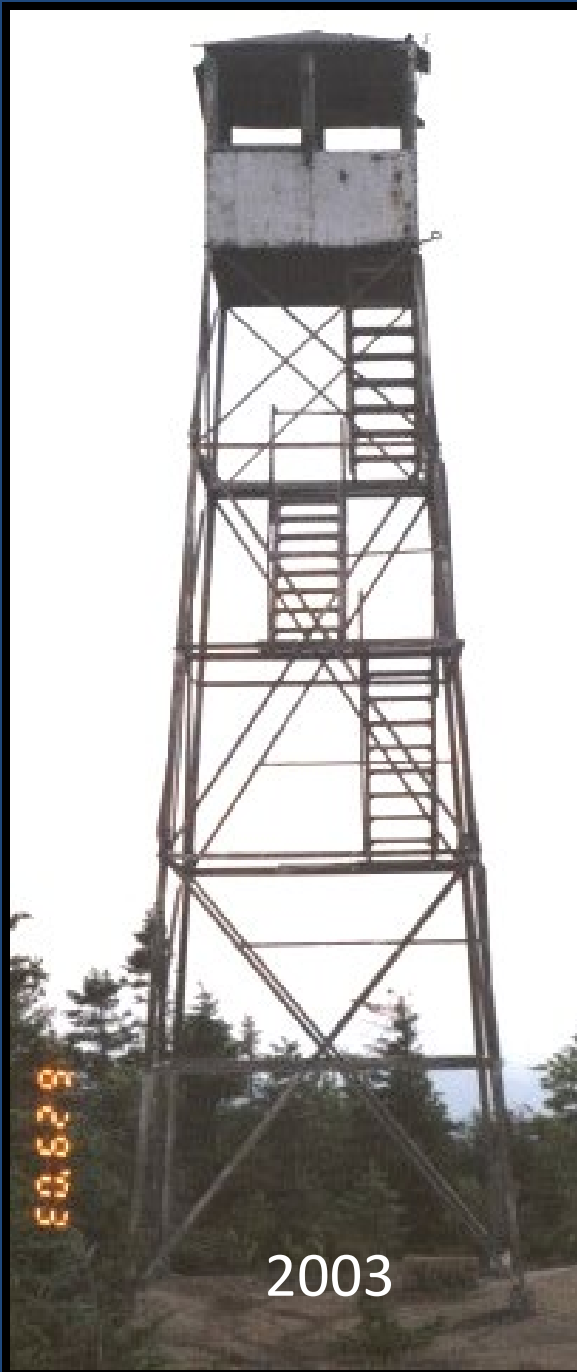


Leander Martin

# Active Service – 1910 to 1990



Cabin built 1939 – Removed 1995



# Advocacy

**2001 – DEC Public Information Meeting**

tower removal

**2002 – Advocacy group forms**

public meetings, petitions, letters, local resolutions

**2005 – Historic designation achieved**

**2006 – Unit Management Plan (UMP) for the Saint Regis Canoe Area**

fire tower highest profile issue

**2010 – (February) DEC Fire Tower Study**

called for tower removal

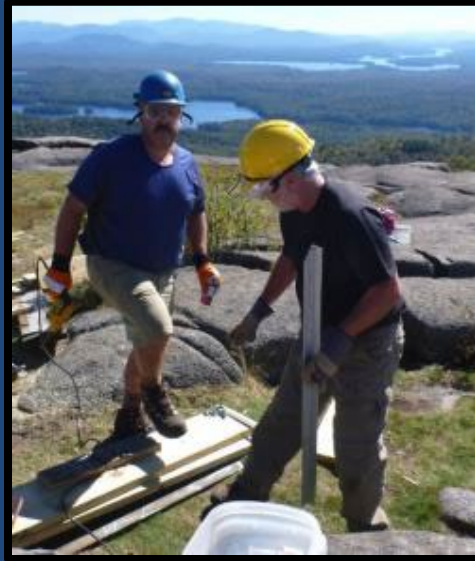
**2010 – (October) APA State Land Reclassification to Historic**

0.5 acres St. Regis and Hurricane mountains

**2014 – UMP approved for the Saint Regis Mountain Fire Tower Historic Area**

**2015 – Friends of St. Regis Mt. Fire Tower – Stewardship Agreement with DEC**

# Restoration 2015-2016

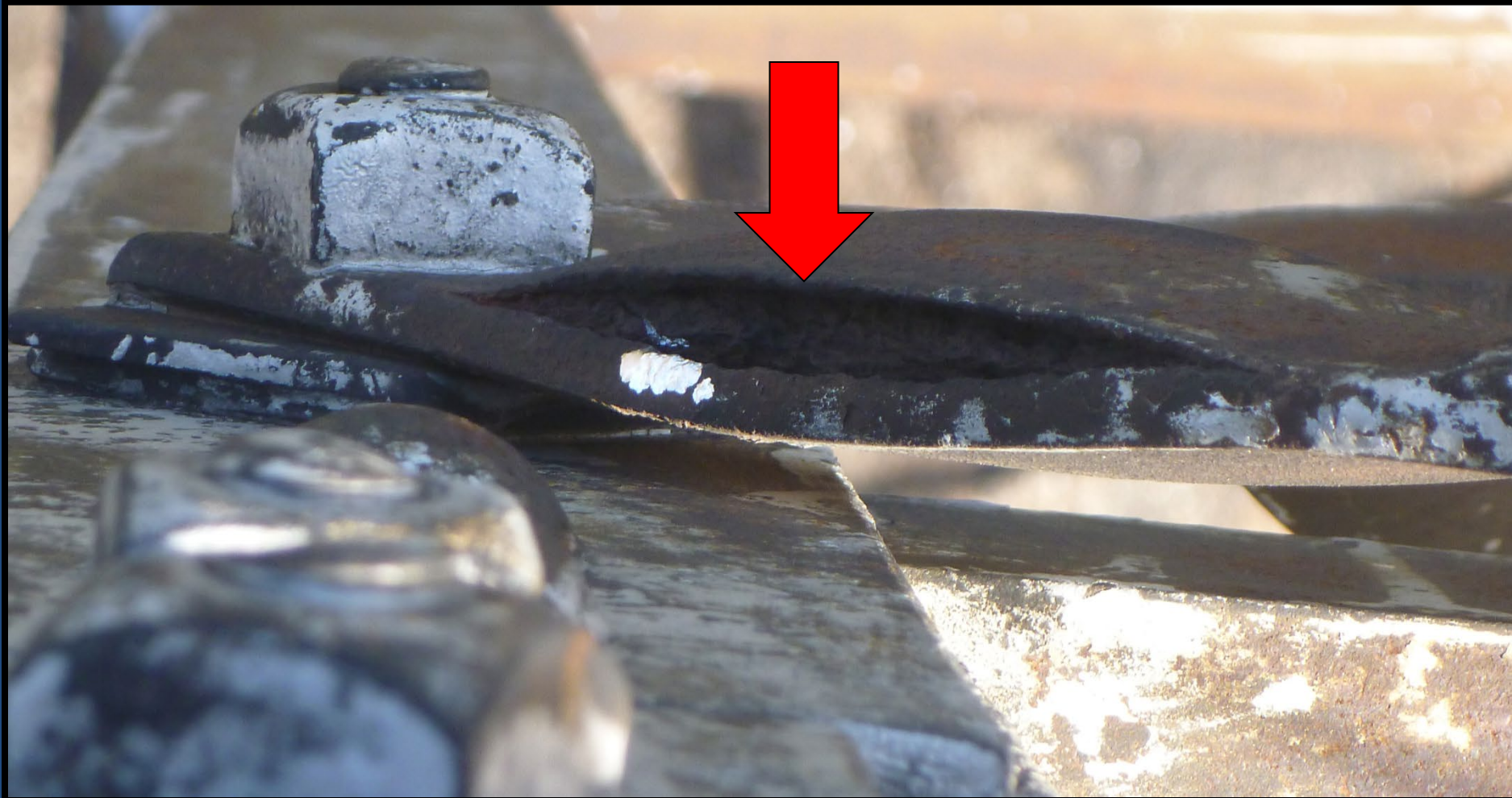


# Restoration 2015-2016



# Restoration 2018-2019

# Braces



24 braces = 48 ends  
46 ends in failure

# Restoration 2018-2019

# Braces

## Fabrication 2018



# Restoration 2018-2019

# Braces

## Transportation of Materials 2018





# Restoration 2018-2019

# Braces



**Completed**  
5/12/2019

**Installation**  
2019



# Restoration 2019

# Footings

## Repair



# Restoration 2019-2022

# Painting



Priming



Finishing

# Education

Partnership with  
**NYS Department of  
Environmental Conservation**  
and  
**Paul Smith's College**  
**Adirondack Watershed Institute**

# Summit Stewards

**2015-2022**



Environmental  
Conservation



Paul Smith's College  
Adirondack  
Watershed  
Institute



# Education

## Panoramic Panels

South & East Views – 2021

North & West Views - 2023



# Education

## Paul Smith's College – VIC Temporary and Permanent Displays



Original 1918 Tower Phone

# Support

- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
- NY State Police – Aviation
- Paul Smith's College
  - Adirondack Watershed Institute
  - VIC
- Fujitsu Frontech North America, Inc.
- A large anonymous three time donor
  - roof, braces, panoramic panels
- Cloudsplitter Foundation – braces
- Many large and small donations
- **Lake Clear Lodge – Centennial Celebration and the Annual Light the Tower Party**



# Executive Board



2022 – PSC VIC

- Doug Fitzgerald – Chair
- David Petrelli – Emeritus Chair
- Nancy LaBombard – Treasurer
- Rich LaBombard – Operations
- Bob Brand – Education
- Ed Hixson – Ambassador
- Scottie Adams
- Jack Burke
- Tom Hirshblond







# Future Projects

Replace Safety Fencing

Fabricate and Place  
Panoramic Panels

Develop a Permanent Display  
at the PSC VIC

Support Summit Steward  
Program



# You Can Help

Take a Leadership Role

Assist with Restoration and  
Maintenance

Be a Volunteer Steward

Make a Donation

- Friend us on Facebook
- Check out our website

[www.friendsofstregis.org](http://www.friendsofstregis.org)

A tall, weathered wooden fire tower stands on a rocky mountain peak. The tower has a lattice-like metal frame and a wooden observation deck at the top. A person in a red shirt is visible on a lower level of the tower. The foreground is filled with dense evergreen trees. In the background, a vast valley unfolds, featuring a large lake, rolling hills, and distant mountain ranges under a clear blue sky.

Enjoy the Lighting