

DEC sticks by tower decision

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The Hurricane Mountain fire tower. Photo by Phil Brown.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation is standing by its decision that the fire tower on Hurricane Mountain should be torn down to comply with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.

DEC's recommendation apparently is at odds with the wishes of the Adirondack Park Agency board, whose members indicated last month that they'd like the tower to stay. The APA commissioners directed the agency's staff to explore the legal and fiscal ramifications of keeping the fire towers on both Hurricane and St. Regis mountains.

The APA will discuss the towers again at next Thursday's meeting. In keeping with the board's request, the staff is seeking authorization to reclassify land or amend the State Land Master Plan to allow the structures to remain.

The towers are located in the Hurricane Mountain Primitive Area and the St. Regis Canoe Area. Both tracts are managed essentially as Wilderness, where fire towers are not allowed.

In its proposed final management plan for the Hurricane tract, posted on the APA website today, DEC proposes removing the Hurricane tower and reclassifying the land as Wilderness.

DEC acknowledges that most people who have voiced an opinion have supported keeping the tower, but the department insists that would violate the State Land Master Plan.

Late Friday afternoon, DEC spokeswoman Lori Severino said she didn't know if the department has finalized its stance on the St. Regis tower. However, the department initially made a similar argument against that tower as well.

One alternative proposed by the APA is to reclassify the land under both towers as Historic. Under another alternative, the State Land Master Plan would be amended to permit towers in Primitive and/or Canoe Areas.

You can read the Hurricane management plan and the APA alternatives on the APA's [website](#).

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