



**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Table of Contents

Year in Review and Looking to the Future _____	1
Stewardship Report _____	2
Outreach _____	3
Financial Statements _____	6
Board of Directors _____	7
Contact Information _____	8



# YEAR IN REVIEW AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

## Year in Review and Looking to the Future

### 2023 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Friends continue to receive a steady stream of donations from supporters. Every dollar goes towards furthering our mission. A highlight of 2023 was a generous donation from the Lake Clear Lodge. Thank you all for the support.

### 2023 OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

2023 was a year of mostly planning for future projects and the beginning of others. The major project will be replacing the safety fencing. During 2023 the team made a few trips to the tower to take measurements and brainstorm the best approach. During the course of the summer ideas came together and the plan started to take shape. Most materials were purchased. The team made a final trip up in the fall to make templates for brackets that will hold the fencing.



On a smaller scale but still valuable was the installation of a flag bracket. When on duty, the summit steward will fly the flag for all to see! It is visible – with binoculars – from many places around our region.



## YEAR IN REVIEW AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As our mission statement says, The Friends of St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower is intent on restoring the tower as well as developing an educational and interpretive program. To that end the Friends and the [Paul Smith's College VIC](#) have partnered to produce a display about the fire tower. We have put together what items we have, and are acquiring more historical items for this display.



### LOOKING AHEAD

2024 projects will most likely focus on fence replacement and the display area at the Paul Smith's VIC.

**Fence Project:** With most materials purchased, measurements made and some prefabricating accomplished (or ready), installation of the new fence next season should occur. The NYS police helicopter will take the fence to the summit in the spring. The team will then carry needed tools and other supplies in hopes of accomplishing this task next summer.

**Panels:** The North and Panels will be installed in the cab. There is still hope that through the historic officer of the DEC we will be able to get these two (and maybe all 4) panels imprinted on Tyvek and imbedded in plexiglass. This would insure a longer life span than the two panels currently there. That said, the South and East view panels are holding up very satisfactorily.

**Paul Smith's VIC display:** We will continue to work with the VIC in developing the display. There are plans to get a display case to hold the more valuable items. The VIC has hopes to update their entire display area.

# STEWARDSHIP REPORT

## Stewardship Report

2023 was another tremendous year for stewardship on St. Regis Mountain. In partnership with the DEC, Adirondack Watershed Institute (AWI) and Paul Smith's College Visitor Interpretive Center (VIC), the Friends of St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower were able to provide 52 days of coverage and interact with more than 2000 visitors. Our summit steward for 2023 was veteran steward, Ethan Johnson. He was an excellent and enthusiastic ambassador for the mountain and the tower.

Summit stewarding is an important way to educate visitors about history, the environment, and the importance of conservation. Throughout the summer, the stewards interacted with hundreds of visitors and helped spread the word about conservation and preservation in the Adirondacks. Since the fire tower is no longer used as a tool in the forest fire prevention efforts, it is now a platform for out-of-doors education. The tower itself served as a museum and the stewards offered information regarding how the tower and observers played a part in the protection of the natural resources of the Adirondacks.

Below is a table summary of our stewardship numbers for 2023:

Month	Days Present	Number of Visitors Reached
June 2023	10	540
July 2023	15	582
August 2023	13	530
September 2023	15	300 est
October 2023	4	65 est
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2017</b>

In 2023, summit stewards continued to hand out summit cards, which are signed and dated by the stewards and allow hikers to keep an official record of their climb. The cards are especially popular with younger hikers, who are thrilled to be able to return with the certification.

Year	Days	Number of Visitors Reached	Visitors Reached/Day
2016	7	170	24
2017	11	684	62
2018	29	1129	39
2019	15	866	58
2020*	0	0	0
2021	34	1642	47
2022	41	1894	46
2023	52	2017	39

- Closed due to Covid-19

## OUTREACH

### Outreach

Trail reports: Summit stewards and work crews continue to give periodic reports on trail conditions which are posted on our Facebook page and on the website.

## EVENTS

### **Annual Lighting of the Tower: September 2, 2023**

The Friends of St Regis Mt Fire Tower participated in the statewide Lighting of the Fire Towers event on Sept 2nd sponsored by the NYS chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association. This was the 7th time the St Regis tower joined in and the 10th year FFLA held the lighting. The lighting of the towers event started in the Catskills and has spread to other towers around New York. In their heyday, fire towers and their observers kept watchful eyes over the land, spotting fires in early detection efforts. The lights from this event serve as a reminder for those who looked up and saw a glowing tower, and of the people and towers who looked over communities for the better part of the 1900s.



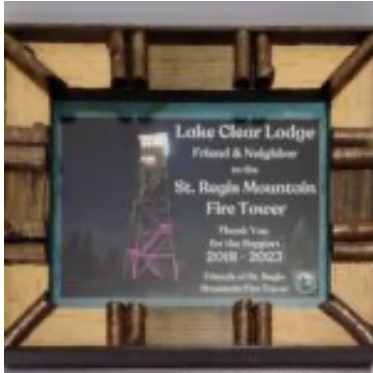
The 2023 lighting of the St Regis Fire Tower was done in memory of our beloved friend, board member Ed Hixson. This year board members Rich, Bob and Tom along with friend/photographer Mark made their way up the mountain equipped with all necessary lighting and photography equipment. The hike up was fun and uneventful. We encountered many folks hiking down – some who were aware of the lighting and were going to a viewing point down below. The summit, and especially on top of the tower, was quite windy. This did not affect the lighting but proved to be a challenge for Mark taking long exposure pictures. Also on the summit, there was a group of 4 climbers from Rainbow Lake who had friends that were paddling out onto Lake Clear to see the lighting, a couple of guys on their way to completing the ultra-SL 6ers and a couple of ladies from PSC – one who writes for the student newspaper.

Meanwhile, the Lake Clear Lodge, with its wonderful facilities on the shore of Lake Clear and exceptional view of the tower, again held a tower lighting extravaganza. Board members Doug and Jack, friends Jan, Phyllis, and Mary were present to participate in the activities and enjoy the splendid meal. Doug spoke about the history of the tower while showing the slideshow Lighting LCL 2023. Doug presented a framed (made by him!) certificate of appreciation to Ernest for all the Lodge

## OUTREACH

does for the fire tower. Jack managed the raffle and spoke with many participants. Mary and Jan greeted visitors and enjoyed wonderful comradery among the tower enthusiast. And as usual, Cathy, Ernest and Yurgen of the Lodge were exceptional hosts. This year's event saw more guests than ever before!

After a very successful lighting event and the celebration of the tower at the [Lake Clear Lodge](#), Ernest and Cathy Hohmeyer of the Lodge presented The Friends group with yet another very generous donation. This relationship between The Lodge and the Friends of St Regis Mountain Fire Tower is a very unique arrangement amongst fire towers - one we all are very proud of



# OUTREACH

## NEWS ARTICLES

Copies of newspaper articles and pictures can be found on our website under the “News” tab.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



Board members continued to update the FOSRMFT website and Facebook page in 2023.

The website provides continually updated restoration progress, as well as daily steward reports, photos of hikers, news articles featuring the tower and a multitude of educational resources.

The Facebook page publishes much of the same information as the website as well as providing a platform to reach more people on a regular basis. Our social media presence makes it easy for hikers to send in photos to be featured on the page. The page gained 153 followers in 2023, with a total of 1826 by the end of the year.

In September 2017, FOSRMFT launched an Instagram page to share pictures of St. Regis Mountain and the surrounding landscape. The page has 130 posts has gathered 950 followers to date.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Financial Statements

### 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

<b>REVENUE</b>	
Grants	0
Membership Dues	0
Donations	4892
Events	0
Interest	0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>4892</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Legal and Accounting Fees	520
Program Expense	668
Equipment	0
Supplies	215
Printing & Copying	66
IT	35
Postage & Delivery	101
Fundraising	964
Construction Costs	995
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3564</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>1328</b>

### BALANCE SHEET AS OF 12/31/2023

#### *Assets*

##### Checking/Saving:

Adirondack Bank \$5987

**Total assets** **\$5987**

#### *Liabilities and Equity*

##### Equity:

Retained Earnings \$10,101

Unrestricted Net Assets -\$5442

Net Income \$1328

**Total Equity** **\$5987**

**Total Liabilities & Equities** **\$5987**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Board of Directors

Doug Fitzgerald – Chair

Bob Brand – Vice Chair

Nancy LaBombard - Treasurer

Richard LaBombard- Operations

Jack Drury - Education

Scottie Adams

Jack Burke

Tom Hirshblond

Dr. Ed Hixson – deceased 2/23

David Petrelli

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Contact Information

Friends of St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower

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<http://www.friendsofstregis.org>