

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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Year in Review and Looking to the Future

2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

The Friends continue to receive a steady stream of small donations from supporters. Every dollar goes towards furthering our mission. Thank you all for the support.

2024 OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS



2024 was a year spent working on many ongoing projects that required such detailed planning in 2023. Replacing the safety fencing on the narrow steps and landings full of angle, twists and turns was a huge project. The fencing had been flown up to the top of the mountain the previous fall by the NYS DEC, but all else had to backpacked 3+ miles up the mountain by volunteers. We were able to replace the fencing on one flight of stairs in June.



Another major project which has been a work in progress is the installation of panoramic panels which detail the various features in view at each of the four windows. The South and East panels were installed in 2023. Since that time the North and West were professionally crafted with an expected life span of more than 10 years in the harsh summit climate. Both panels were installed over the summer. Installing the panels which requires one person to work outside the cab in a safety harness while two persons work inside, is demanding, but rewarding.



On a smaller scale the flag bracket was moved to make it more accessible. When on duty, the summit steward flies the flag for all to see! It is visible – with binoculars – from many places around our region.

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. A museum quality display was obtained from the Adirondack Experience (ADKX) to be used in augmenting and expanding the current display in the coming years.

YEAR IN REVIEW AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Looking Ahead

2025 projects will focus on completing the fence replacement, installation of replacement panels and the display area at the Paul Smith's VIC.

Fence Project: With the experience gained installing the fencing, around the first stairs, it should be easier and quicker to install he remaining fencing. Our goal would be to make substantial progress or finish this task next summer.

Panoramic Panels: The South and East panels have been refabricated by the same company as the North and West panels. This should insure a longer life span then the two panels currently there.

Paul Smith's VIC display: A museum quality display was obtained from the Adirondack Experience (ADKX). It will be modified for our display at the VIC.

Stewardship Report

2024 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 42 days of coverage and interact with more than 1100 visitors. Our summit steward for 2024 was, Sam Lapo. He was an excellent and enthusiastic ambassador for the mountain and the tower and provided useful suggestions for the future.

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 summery of our stewardship numbers for 2024:

Month	Days Present	Number of Visitors Reached
June 2024 (May 31 included)	13	132
July 2024	13	500
August 2024	8	256
September 2024	6	201
October 2024	2	100
Total	**42**	**1189**

In 2024, 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
2024	42	1189	28

- 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: August 31, September 1, 2024

The Friends of St Regis Mt Fire Tower participated in the statewide Lighting of the Fire Towers event on Sept 1st sponsored by the NYS chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association. This was the 8th time the St Regis tower joined in and the 11th 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 2024 lighting of the St Regis Fire Tower was a little different this year. The weather was uncooperative. Traditionally, the Lake Clear Lodge, with its wonderful facilities on the shore of Lake Clear and exceptional view of the tower, holds a tower lighting extravaganza. However, the weather made it totally impractical to have the tower lighting on the same night as the planned dinner. The annual statewide lighting was postponed until September 1st. However, the dinner was all set, so the fire tower lighting crew were able to enjoy the tower lighting dinner for the first time. The chair of the executive committee made his usual informative presentation about the history of the tower and a good time was had by all in spite of there being no tower lighting that night



The actual lighting of the tower took place the next night and started with a very wet hike up and muddy and sloppy trail conditions. There was no rain by the time the summit was reached but there was lots of wind blowing the clouds in and out resulting in fascinating views. The sun was a glowing orange ball in the western sky. By the time the lights were set and the tower was lit up, there was almost total cloud cover. Spouses on the shores of Lake Clear reported by phone that they could not see the lights, but then they could and then they couldn't. By 9:20 (the lighting is from 9:00 PM

to 9:30 PM) the clouds had cleared enough for the tower lights to be visible. By the time the lighting was over and the trip down was started, the clouds had dissipated and the stars came out. This lighting was one of the most challenging, but was an interesting adventure. Three other hardy souls were also present on the summit.

Discover St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower



On November 13, 2024 at the Historic Saranac Lake Museum, in conjunction with the celebration of Smoky Bear's 80th birthday, Doug Fitzgerald, chairman of the Friends of St Regis Mountain Fire Tower, presented on the history of our tower.

Doug shared images and stories about the tower, from its time before there was a tower to today when the tower has been restored and is once again open to the public.

The large audience heard about a notable guest from Paul Smith's Hotel who climbed the mountain fifteen years before the Adirondack Surveyor, Verplanck Colvin put it on the map in 1876. Doug discussed about how the tower came to be and the roles it and the observers played during the active fire years in the Adirondacks; how the tower was taken out of service and almost lost forever; and about some of the people that helped bring the tower back to life and how they are preserving its history.

OUTREACH

NEWS ARTICLES

Copies of newspaper articles and pictures can be found on our website under the "News" tab. The most recent article was from the Adirondack Almanac about the statewide fire tower lighting published on August 23, 2024.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Board members continued to update the FOSRMFT website and Facebook page in 2024.

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 107 followers in 2024, with a total of 1933 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

2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

REVENUE	
Grants	0
Membership Dues	0
Donations	1778
Events	0
Interest	0
Total Revenue	**1778**
EXPENSES	
Legal and Accounting Fees	96
Program Expense	0
Equipment	0
Supplies	265
Printing & Copying	111
IT	35
Postage & Delivery	93
Fundraising	541
Construction Costs	1201
Total Expenses	**2342**
NET INCOME	**-564**

BALANCE SHEET AS OF 12/31/2024

Assets	
Checking/Saving:	$5243.00
Total assets	**$5423.00**
Liabilities and Equity	
Equity:	
Retained Earnings	$10,100.86
Unrestricted Net Assets	-$4113.58
Net Income	-$564.28
Total Equity	**$5423.00**
Total Labilities & Equities	**$5423.00**

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

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