



Forest Fire Lookout Association – New York Division

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State Director Bill Starr a former New York State fire tower observer

Press Release

At 6:00 pm on Tuesday February 7, 2006 at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y. the New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) held a hearing for the Unit Management Plan (UMP) of the Blue Ridge Wilderness Area and Wakely Mountain Primitive Area. This hearing was open to the public providing a detailed explanation of the UMP. Upon completing the presentation the floor was open for public comments. The purpose of this press release is to clear up misinformation being released to the news media related to the Wakely Mountain fire tower and the planned solar powered two-way radio repeater installation.

As it appears in the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan on page 81;

WAKELY MOUNTAIN

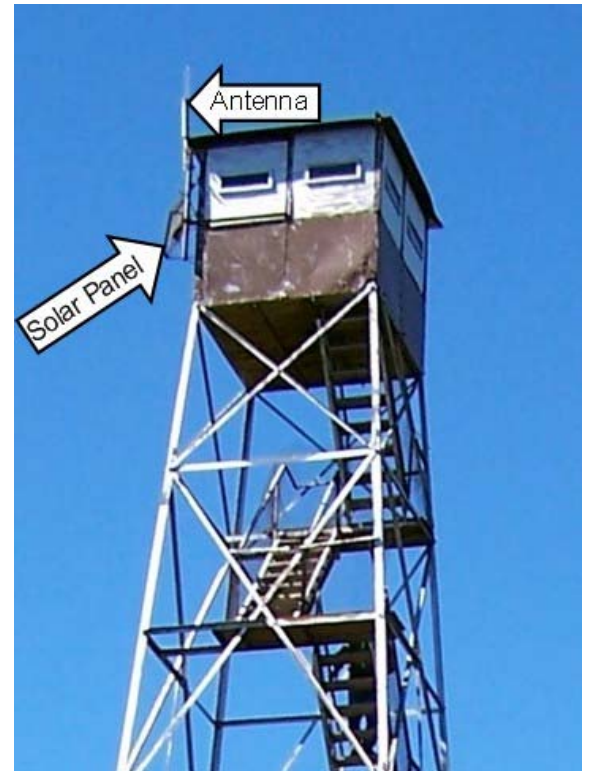
This area is in the town of Lake Pleasant, Hamilton County. It consists of the state land south of the Wakely Mountain Trail. Once the fire tower on Wakely Mountain is no longer needed, this area should be made part of the Blue Ridge Wilderness.

The plan calls for retaining the fire tower which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to allow a volunteer group of citizens to restore the fire tower and associated forest fire observer cabin for public viewing and provide a historic interpretive program. It is further proposed to place a solar powered two-way radio repeater within the fire tower for exclusive use of the DEC, state forest rangers and state environmental conservation officers.

South of Wakely Mountain a large area in the Moose River Plains Wild Forest is a dead spot for radio communications within the existing DEC radio network. In the past this dead area has hampered wild fire operations and search & rescue operations of the state forest rangers. As it was presented at the hearing the radio repeater equipment will not be an intrusion upon the fire tower or natural environment of the mountain top.

The two-way radio equipment will consist of two 41" X 21" solar panels mounted on the super structure of the fire tower just below the fire tower cab. A 40" X 23" X 17.5" high steel enclosure to house the radio equipment and batteries. One whip antenna attached to one outside corner of the fire tower cab. Hardly the "Frankenpine" which has recently been reported about on several television stations.

To illustrate this solar powered radio equipment the Pillsbury Mountain fire tower was used as a visual example.



These pictures of the Pillsbury Mountain fire tower were taken in September of 2005 and were used to demonstrate how a solar powered radio repeater is installed on a fire tower. The associated radio equipment is housed inside the fire tower cab.

Presently the Pillsbury Mountain fire tower cab is not open to the public due to the radio equipment being unsecured. The UMP for the Pillsbury Mountain area calls for new secured interior equipment so that the fire tower cab may be re-opened for public access.

Contained within the Wakely Mountain Primitive Area UMP are the results of an extensive radio mapping study which the DEC conducted to determine the need for a radio repeater to be placed on the Wakely Mountain fire tower.

It is the opinion of the Forest Fire Lookout Association that the need for such a radio repeater has been demonstrated and the issues of public concern and safety has been addressed to demonstrate the need to retain the Wakely Mountain fire tower to serve as a platform for this vital public safety instrument. The added appeal of restoring a national historic site for public use and enjoyment is a bonus.



The Wakely Mountain fire tower and cabin.

