



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: MP100001624

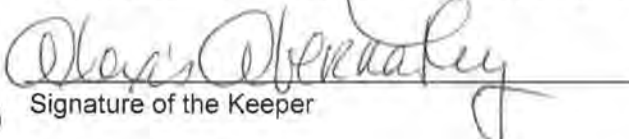
Date Listed: 09/18/2017

Property Name: Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
(Fire Observation Stations of New York State Forest Preserve MPS)

County: Herkimer

State: NY

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation

for 
Signature of the Keeper


Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

In Section 5 of the National Register nomination form, the eyebolts and drilled hole change from contributing to non-contributing objects. Total non-contributing objects 3.

In Section 8 of the National Register form:

- exploration has been removed as an area of significance
- the period of significance has been changed to 1919-1967
- 1882 has been removed as a significant date,

Close examination of the Multiple document **Fire Observation Stations of New York Forest Preserve MPS** there is no property types for the remnants of the original tower during Verplank Colvin's Survey. Similar to the National Geodetic Survey Marker that is non-contributing, the eyebolts and hole are important but are not part of there are not property types associated with them.

After a discussion with the Keeper, Paul Loether, and National Register Archeologist, Julie Ernstein, it was felt the nomination did not have sufficient information, at this time, to start the period of significance in 1882, with an area of significance related to the survey work of Verplank Colvin.

The NEW YORK SHPO was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

MP 1624



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
other names/site number N/A
related multiple property listing Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve

2. Location

street & number 1 mile off Big Moose Road N/A not for publication
city or town Webb N/A vicinity
state NY code 36 county Herkimer code 043 zip code 13420

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide X local

Michael P. Lynch Deputy SAPO 7/26/17
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Alexis A. Hendley 9/18/17
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
2	0	sites
1	0	structures
1	2	objects
7	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Fire Observation Stations of the New York State
 Forest Preserve

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: Fire Observation Station

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____
 walls: _____
 roof: _____
 other: METAL: Steel

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Narrative Description

The Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station is located at the 2264-foot summit of Stillwater Mountain in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County, in the Adirondack Mountains of New York State. The mountain was used as a signal site during Verplanck Colvin's 1882 Adirondack Survey; four eyebolts from a small tower and the drilled hole for Colvin's copper survey marker (lost, but recovered and now in the Wanakena Ranger's Museum) remain from that period. The fire observation site was established in 1912, and a steel tower erected in 1919. From the tower, observers had commanding 360-degree views of the Stillwater Reservoir (initially created 1885-87), Tug Hill Plateau (within the St. Lawrence River watershed), and some of the Adirondack High Peaks (within the Hudson River watershed.)

The station currently consists of the original fifty-six foot tall, steel-frame lookout tower placed upon granite bedrock atop the mountain; a 1966 observer's cabin built upon the site of the original 1932 observer's cabin on Big Moose Road; the wood shed and privy servicing the 1966 observer's cabin; and the original trail through mixed deciduous forest connecting the tower and the cabin. The nomination boundary encompasses an almost circular parcel of exposed bedrock (which includes the bolts and drilled hole from the Adirondack Survey) with a 50-foot radius centered on the tower; a square parcel with a 500-foot side around the observer's cabin complex; and a 1-mile long, 30-foot wide corridor centered on the foot trail.

Contributing resources: 7 (Eyebolts and drilled hole from 1882 Adirondack Survey [object]; 1919 tower [structure]; site of 1932 observer's cabin; 1966 observer's cabin, wood shed, and privy [three buildings]; trail [site])

Non-contributing resources: 2 (1942 National Geodetic Survey marker [object]; reproduction Adirondack Survey marker, installed 2016 [object])

Site: Stillwater Mountain is one of the higher points of land in the west-central Adirondacks and provided fire coverage of forested lands in Herkimer, Lewis, St. Lawrence, and Hamilton counties. Other nearby towers were 2303-foot Mt. Electra in private Nehasane Park (1920, since removed, Herkimer County), 2913-foot West Mountain (1920, removed, Hamilton County), 2349-foot Rondaxe Mountain (1917, restored, Herkimer County), 2205-foot Moose River Mountain (1919, removed, Herkimer County), and 1540-foot Number Four Mountain (1928, relocated, Lewis County); the overlap allowed observers to triangulate fires and provide coverage for one another.¹ (See Figure 13 in *Additional Information* to view the relationship of these mountains to one another.)

The mountain summit is in the Big Moose Tract on private land, with part of the Independence River Wild Forest (New York State Forest Preserve) to the immediate north and west. The tower is located in a small clearing on a granite outcropping, which holds the remains of the four eyebolts and a drilled hole associated with the 1882 Adirondack Survey.² The 1966 cabin, wood shed, and privy are at the bottom of the mountain on forested public land, where the Independence River Wild Forest wraps around the south shore of the Stillwater Reservoir. The trail between the tower and cabin is split between public and private lands, with

¹ Bill Starr, *Listing of the Fire Towers Operated by the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Bureau of Forest Fire Control* [Unpublished report] (2010), 2-6. Available at:

[http://www.firetowerstories.com/pdfs/NYS_Fire_Towers_List_Notes_by_Bill_Starr_\(2-10-09\).pdf](http://www.firetowerstories.com/pdfs/NYS_Fire_Towers_List_Notes_by_Bill_Starr_(2-10-09).pdf)

² A US Geodetic Survey marker is also cemented into the bedrock of the summit. (See text for further description.)

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public access to the private land permitted through a conservation easement.³ In 2016, the lower part of the trail was rerouted slightly to the west to a new parking area on the Big Moose Road.

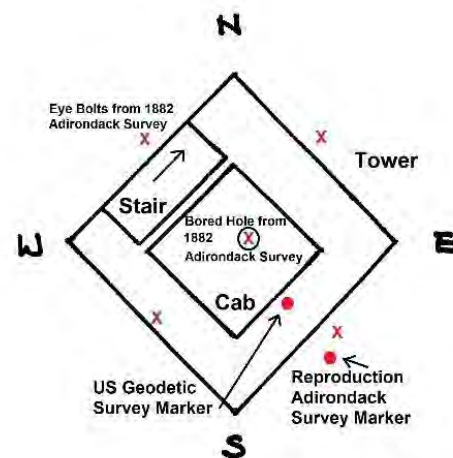
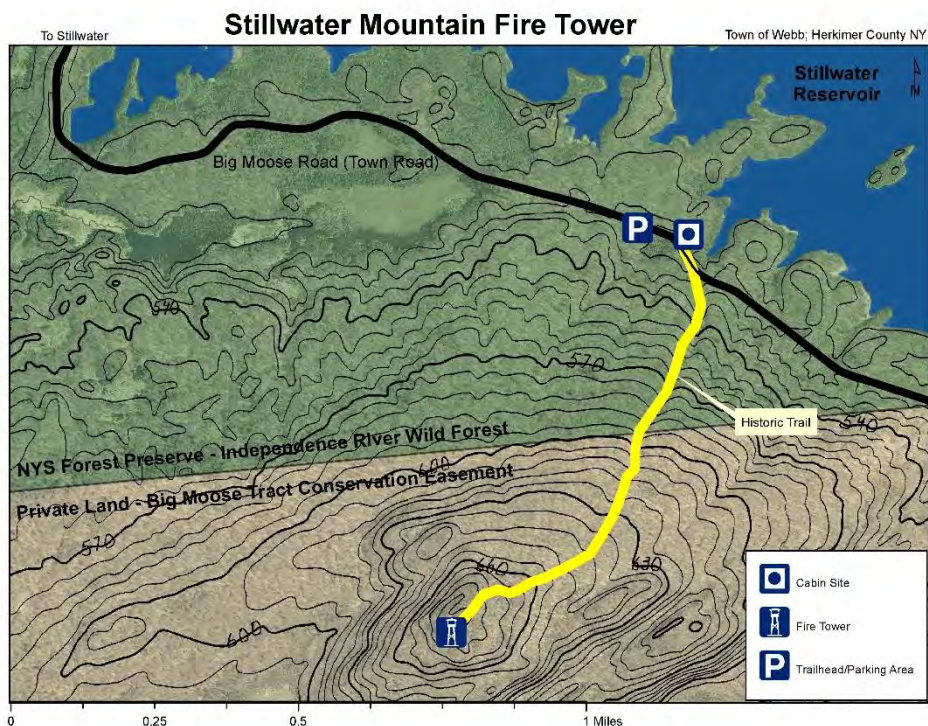


Figure 1. Map of Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station (NYS DEC, 2017), with a map of the summit.

Artifacts of the 1882 Adirondack Survey: When Verplanck Colvin conducted his Adirondack Survey, he erected signal towers on summits. Stillwater Mountain still holds the remains of four eyebolts used to secure one of these towers and a central drilled hole that held a copper marker. The opposite eyebolts are 20 feet apart, creating a 14+ foot square. The footprint of the current tower overlaps these artifacts.



Figure 2. Remains of eyebolt (secured with metal plug) used to steady a short signal tower for the Adirondack Survey of 1882.

Figure 3. Drilled hole that held a copper marker identifying Stillwater Mountain as "Station 77" of the Adirondack Survey.

A reproduction (non-contributing) Adirondack Survey marker for "Station 77" was placed on the summit in September 2016.

³ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), *Fire Tower Study for the Adirondack Park* [Report] (February 2010), 354-356, 403. Available at: www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/ftowerstudy.pdf

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Tower: The Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station tower consists of two parts – a forty-seven-foot tower and a nine-foot cab. Both were fabricated by the Aermotor Company in Chicago, IL. This Model LS-40 tower is typical of the “Heavier Type” tower, with an integral staircase, built for the New York State (NYS) Conservation Commission between 1917 and 1950.⁴



Figure 4. Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower, 2016 (Jim Fox).

The square steel and glass “cab,” with hip roof, encloses a wood observation platform, which tops a riveted and bolted frame of angular steel. Steel stair stringers and risers within the tower support wood stair treads; seven flights of stairs and six wood landings provide access to the cab from the ground. The four tower legs are anchored by standard coupling plates atop concrete footings placed on the exposed bedrock and secured by 2 ¾ inch steel threaded rods passing through the footings into the rock. Guy wires further secure the tower in place.

The tower is intact and retains most of its original integrity, despite being closed by New York State in 1988. All rotted wood in the stair and cab has been replaced with treated lumber by volunteers associated with the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower. In addition, they installed shatter-proof glass windows for the cab, fabricated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). The map table is a reproduction, built to original specifications.

Stencils were found on parts of the structure before the tower was repainted. These stencils seem to form a shipping address for the tower when it was sent from Chicago in 1919. The Friends group has reproduced the stencils on the tower struts as found.

Some safety equipment has been added to the tower by NYS DEC. An emergency radio repeater is installed on supporting beams outside the first fenced-in landing, and an antenna and solar panels for power are mounted outside the cab. The siting of the equipment is unobtrusive and does not affect foot traffic or sightlines.

A summit storage building was built in 1964 and noted in a 1990 questionnaire, but no longer exists.

Observer’s Cabin: The current observer’s cabin was built in 1966 on (or very near) the site of the original cabin built in 1932. It is located across the Big Moose Road from the original trailhead to the mountain on public land. NYS DEC describes it as a “Model 1941,” 16 x 20 foot, gable-end, wood frame building with enclosed 16

⁴ In 1926, the Conservation Commission became the Conservation Department; in 1970, it was reorganized as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), which it remains.

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x 7 foot screen porch.⁵ The plan is the March 1941 revision of a design developed earlier by the Fire Control Bureau in the State of New York Conservation Department.

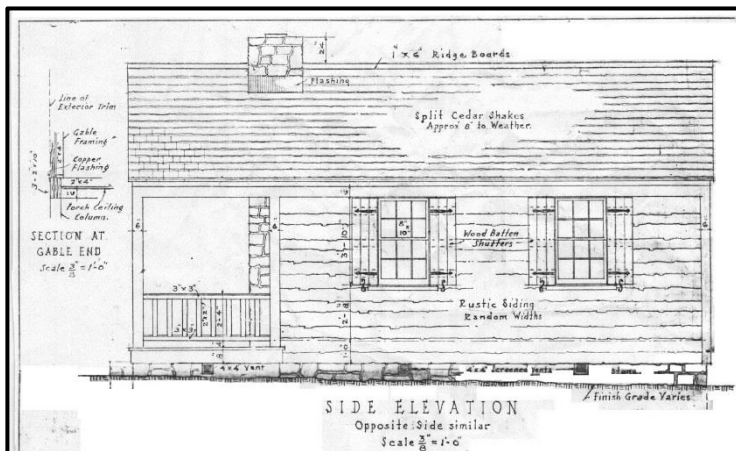


Figure 5. Side Elevation, Observer's Cabin, State of New York Conservation Department (Detail from Sheet 1 of 4) (NYS DEC)

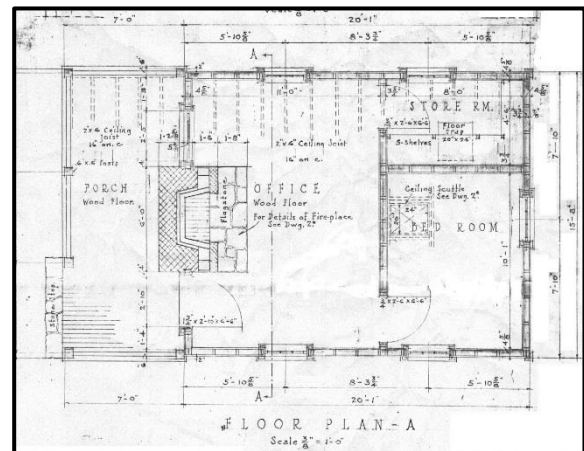


Figure 6. Floor Plan, Observer's Cabin, State of New York Conservation Department (Detail from Sheet 1 of 4) (NYS DEC)

According to the 2010 NYS DEC Fire Tower Study:

Of all the fire towers within the Adirondack Park, 15 towers (including Cathead, Mt. Morris and Swede mountains) still have their associated observer cabins. Many of the observer cabins have been replaced, sometimes more than once. While most cabins were located near the fire tower on the summit, in a few cases, such as Mt. Adams, Loon Lake, Stillwater, and Vanderwacker mountains, the cabins are closer to the trailhead.⁶



Figure 7. Stillwater Mountain Observer's Cabin, 2017.

The building at the foot of Stillwater Mountain is rectangular, with brown waney-edged siding retaining the natural profile of the tree along its outer edge. It sits on a concrete-block foundation and has an asphalt shingle roof. The screen porch is enclosed under the front gable. The façade has two bays (one door, one window); the sides have three bays (screened porch and two windows); the rear has one window. The windows are six-over-six with simple wood trim.

The interior is divided into three rooms – a large sitting room at the front and a galley kitchen and bedroom at back. Model 1941 observer's cabins did not include bathrooms, and the Stillwater cabin still lacks plumbing and electricity. Even after NYS DEC

abandoned the tower, it maintained the Stillwater cabin for summer use by assistant forest rangers patrolling the area.

⁵ Wesley Haynes, *Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve* [Theme Study] (Albany, NY: New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 2001), Section F, 8-10.

⁶ NYS DEC, *Fire Tower Study*, 88-89.

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The observer's cabin is serviced by two smaller structures – a wood shed and a privy. Both of these buildings are sided with waney-edged wood and appear to have been constructed at the same time as the cabin. Because of the spread between the three buildings, the boundary for the observer's cabin is a square with 500-foot sides.

Foot Trail: The original foot trail to the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower ran about one mile from the observer's cabin to the summit, with a vertical ascent of 560 feet. In 2016, NYS DEC constructed a new trailhead parking area on Big Moose Road and rerouted the lower half of the foot trail; the current trail now begins .1 mile north of the cabin and is .96 miles long. However, it is the original trail that is included in this nomination. (See boundary maps in Section 10: Geographical Data).

The slopes of Stillwater Mountain are covered with mixed deciduous forest, with trout lilies and trillium in the understory. Under a Conservation Easement with the private owner, public non-motorized access is permitted on the second half of the trail to the summit, the fire tower, and the immediate area. However, access to the fire tower is not permitted during hunting season – October through December. In addition, the private land is actively managed for logging so the trail may be closed occasionally for operations.

National Geodetic Survey Marker (non-contributing): One other object is located on the summit of Stillwater Mountain – a 1942 US Coast & Geodetic Survey marker. This federal survey project provided a national grid for topographical maps and for locating physical features of the landscape. The marker was first placed on the summit by a local surveyor in 1942 as “a lead plug set in a drill hole in the bedrock.” In 1976, it was “recovered” and presumably reset after a check of the elevation by survey staff.⁷ While historically interesting in its own right, the National Geodetic Survey is not associated with the Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Fire Preserve and is therefore non-contributing.

Rehabilitation: In 2010, the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station was surveyed as part of NYS DEC's *Fire Tower Study for the Adirondack Park*. Given the abandonment of the station in 1988, its maintenance needs were remarkably few:

Fire Tower - Tower closed. The bottom two sections of stair tread were removed and are hanging from the tower. The tower is in disrepair but is structurally intact. The map table is in the cab. The footers appear to be in good shape. All wood materials need to be replaced. Guy lines need replacement. A few sections of cross-bracing have cracks in the steel where the angle iron was compressed to be bolted. These braces should probably be replaced.

Cabin - Partial restoration.

Trail - Trail needs brush clearing and remarking when tower rehabilitation is complete.

Summit - No other facilities. Some recent blowdown around tower site.⁸

In 2016, this restoration work was completed by the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower under the direction of Jim Fox and Harry Peck, working in partnership with NYS DEC.

⁷ “Stillwater (PID OE1843),” National Geodetic Survey Data Explorer [database]. Available at: https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/ds_mark.prl?PidBox=OE1843

⁸ NYS DEC, *Fire Tower Study*, 355.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CONSERVATION

RECREATION

EXPLORATION

ARCHITECTURE

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Period of Significance

1882-1967

Architect/Builder

Aermotor Corporation

Significant Dates

1882; 1919; 1966

Period of Significance (justification): From 1882 (use of summit by Verplanck Colvin as a signal station for his survey of the Adirondacks) through 1967. Four eyebolts and a drilled hole remain in the granite bedrock from the 1882 Adirondack Survey; the steel fire tower was built in 1919 and stayed in service with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) until 1988; the current observer's cabin was built in 1966 and continues to house NYS DEC personnel.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station (Town of Webb, Herkimer County, NY) is a component of the multiple property submission, *Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve*. Contextual information for Stillwater as a fire observation station can be found in **Sections E:1A Recreation and Conservation in the Adirondacks and Catskills before the Forest Preserve, 1830-1885; E:1D Rethinking Forest Fire Protection, 1909-1919; E:1F Conservation as a Social Service: Managing Recreation and Resource Protection with Fire Observation Stations, 1915-1930; E2A Prototypical Observation Towers, 1879-c1917; E:2B Temporary Fire Observation Stations, 1909-1916; E:2C Standardized Fire Observation Stations, 1916-1932; E:2E Decommissioning and Abandonment of the Fire Observation System 1951-1991; and E:2F Adoption and Preservation of the Fire Observation Stations, 1992-2000**. Additional information on the property types can be found in **Sections F:1 Steel Towers; F:2 Observer Cabins and Outbuildings; and F:3 Trail and Road Features**.

The Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station meets the registration requirements of the multiple property submission and is significant at the state level under **Criterion A: Conservation** and **Recreation** and **Criterion**

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C: Architecture for the establishment of the existing fire observation station as an integral part of New York State's early twentieth century efforts to protect and improve its forests. In addition, it is significant at the local level under **Criterion A: Exploration** for the use of the summit by Verplanck Colvin in his 1882 survey of the Adirondack Mountains. Colvin built a wood tower on the summit in 1882 to use as a Primary Triangulation Station during his Survey of the Adirondacks; the mountain established a major baseline in his survey. Almost three decades later, after the disastrous forest fires of 1903 and 1908, a second wood observation tower was built on the summit by local people to serve visitors at local hotels. After a few more years, this tower was absorbed into the new state-run fire observation system and rebuilt to a greater height. The current steel tower was erected in 1919 to provide more coverage and better shelter for the observer. Over time, the fire observation station became equally important as a recreational destination for hikers and campers, who were educated by its observers about fire prevention. The state closed the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station in 1988. In 2016, with the support of Lyme Adirondack Timberlands (the landowner) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower restored the tower and reopened it for public access. The nomination includes the tower, observer's cabin, and trail, as required by the multiple property submission. In addition, it includes the remains of four eyebolts and a drilled hole from the Adirondack Survey, the site of the first observer's cabin, and a wood shed and privy servicing the 1966 observer's cabin. A reproduction Adirondack Survey marker (installed 2016) and a US Geodetic Survey marker are non-contributing.

Developmental history/additional historic context information

Stillwater Mountain is located in Township 6 ("Sobriety") of the historic John's Brown Tract in the Town of Webb in northern Herkimer County; the Beaver River Flow (now the Stillwater Reservoir) runs just north of the mountain.⁹ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Charles Frederick Herreshoff, son-in-law of Rhode Island speculator John Brown, attempted to develop the area around Old Forge on the Moose River but, in 1819 after a series of business failures, he committed suicide.¹⁰ The 1850 Census recorded only eleven people in northern Herkimer County – three bachelor trappers and eight members of the Otis Arnold family. In 1875, the population of the entire Town of Wilmurt (subdivided in 1896 to create the town of Webb) was 175 residents.¹¹

The area around Stillwater Mountain remained almost totally unsettled because most of the land was owned by private speculators. In 1850, Lyman Rasselas Lyon of Lyons Falls had bought the Big Moose Tract (and other lands) from the heirs of John Brown and set up logging operations in the area. By the 1880s, his land was owned by his daughter Mary Lyon Fisher and, later, by the Fisher Forestry and Realty Company.¹² Before 1892, the Beaver River was the main access route into the area.

⁹ John Brown subdivided his tract and created eight "virtuous townships."

¹⁰ Rhode Island Historical Society, "From Prussia with Love" [Blog post]. Available at: rihs.wordpress.com/2017/01/20/from-prussia-with-love/

¹¹ *History of Herkimer County, N.Y.* (New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1879), 237.

¹² The "Pines," Mary Lyon Fisher's summer home in Lyons Falls was listed on the National Register (07NR05710) in 2007; the nomination by Raymond Smith mentions her active management of her forest holdings in Herkimer County.

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Development of the Stillwater Reservoir

In 1851, a state commission reported that the Beaver River should be dammed to maintain the water level of the Black River Canal, then under construction. Thirty years later, the state legislature passed a law authorizing a dam. Four years after that, beginning in July 1885, a permanent wood and earth dam was constructed at Stillwater. In 1892, the legislature authorized construction of a higher dam, raising the reservoir to 14.5 feet in height. This was the same year that Dr. William Seward Webb opened his Mohawk and Malone and Adirondack and St. Lawrence Railroads. Old Forge and the Fulton Chain could now be accessed by trains – as many as ten a day – directly from New York City, and passengers could arrive in the “Adirondack wilderness” in comfort. The railroad brought prosperity. Five years later, northern Herkimer County broke off from the Town of Wilmurt to become the Town of Webb.¹³

From Old Forge, the railroad ran north toward Tupper Lake and passed east of Stillwater Mountain; Twitchell Creek Bridge was the site where the “last spike” was driven in the fall of 1892 connecting the Mohawk and Malone (from the south) with the Adirondack and St. Lawrence (from the north). The track then crossed the Beaver River Flow at what is now the hamlet of Beaver River.

Dr. Webb owned a large parcel of land for timber on the east end of the flow. The new reservoir flooded some of his timber lands and made the rest harder to access. As a result, Dr. Webb sued the state, claiming that the heightened reservoir had isolated 60,000 acres of his timber land. In 1894 the state bought 75,000 acres from Dr. Webb and another 1,600 acres from Mary Lyons Fisher (whose lands were also impacted by the dam) and added the properties to the New York State Forest Preserve. The site of the two observer’s cabins and the lower section of the trail to Stillwater Mountain were acquired in a later purchase from the Fisher family when the reservoir was further expanded in the early twentieth century.

Verplanck Colvin’s Survey of the Adirondacks and the First Signal Tower

In the midst of these developments, in 1868, Verplanck Colvin made a speech at Lake Pleasant, Hamilton County, advocating preservation of the Adirondacks. In later writings, he noted that the mountains fed the rivers and canals of the central and eastern portions of the state and that logging endangered both. In the early 1870s, both Yosemite and Yellowstone were protected as parks, and conservationists like Colvin and recreational hunters and fishers in New York began to press for similar action in the Adirondacks.¹⁴ However, one problem was that much of the region had never been properly surveyed. In 1872, after applying to the state legislature, Colvin was appointed superintendent of the Adirondack Survey and began his epic survey of the mountains.¹⁵

¹³ “Early History of the Town of Webb,” *Town of Webb Comprehensive Plan* (June 2002). Available at: townofwebb.org/content/History/Home/:field=documents;/content/Documents/File/5.pdf

¹⁴ Philip G. Terrie, *Contested Terrain* [Second edition] (Syracuse, NY: Adirondack Museum, 1977), 89-94.

¹⁵ See **E2A Prototypical Observation Towers, 1879-c1917** of the multiple property submission, **Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve**, for additional context on the relationship of the Adirondack Survey to the development of fire towers in New York State – and to the creation of the Forest Preserve.

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The survey took twenty-eight years and identified the major summits and features of the Adirondacks. Colvin has been described as:

... a man obsessed. He repeatedly drove his crews to near rebellion with midnight descents down trailless peaks, on which he had lingered too long with his compass and sextant. That first year [1872] he and his assistants traced the Hudson to its highest source, a tiny pond on the side of Mount Marcy that Colvin described as 'a tear of the clouds,' and the name stuck.

Over and over again in his semiannual reports, Colvin urged the Legislature to create a park in the Adirondacks...¹⁶

Colvin's work was essential to the creation of the New York State Forest Preserve, which celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2017.

Stillwater Mountain became one of Verplanck Colvin's Primary Triangulation Stations in 1882. These stations were used to establish baselines to which outlying stations were connected. Interestingly, a Primary Triangulation Station need not be the tallest point in its region – the issue was one of visibility from other points. For a long time, Stillwater was unrecognized as a station due to its moderate height. However, in 2013, the discovery of a copper survey marker in a field in New Jersey led to the realization that "Station 77" served a vital purpose in Colvin's 1882 work in the central Adirondacks.¹⁷ James Fox notes that:

In his 1883 report, Colvin details that West Mountain near Raquette Lake, and Woodhull Mountain near Woodhull Lake were established Primary Triangulation Stations. To the north and west, Colvin's survey crews had difficulty locating mountains high enough to easily pinpoint. Finally, he writes, "a mere blue, hazy particle, barely visible through a notch in the forest-covered hills ... proved to be our old acquaintance – Stillwater mountain on the Beaver river."¹⁸

Colvin's Primary Triangulation Stations served critical roles in his overall survey of the Adirondacks. Each held a tower centered over a survey marker cemented into the rock. (Hanging a plumb bob from the tower allowed the surveyors to accurately set the markers.) As shown in Figure 8, Colvin's men then drew a network of lines between summits, using theodolites to calculate distances and establish a grid to which additional geographical features could be connected. Stillwater Mountain was linked to Woodhull, West, Lewey (then Mt. Cloud-Cap), Morris, Gomer Hill, and a small peak near Croghan.

¹⁶ Paul Schneider, *The Adirondacks: A History of America's First Wilderness* (NY: Henry Holt and Co, 1997), 222-223.

¹⁷ When Kyle Kristiansen found the object with his metal detector, no one was aware that Stillwater Mountain had been part of the Colvin's Survey of the Adirondacks. See James Fox, "The Rising Elevation of Stillwater Mountain," *Adirondack Almanack* (August 8, 2016). Available from <http://www.adirondackalmanack.com/>

¹⁸ Fox.

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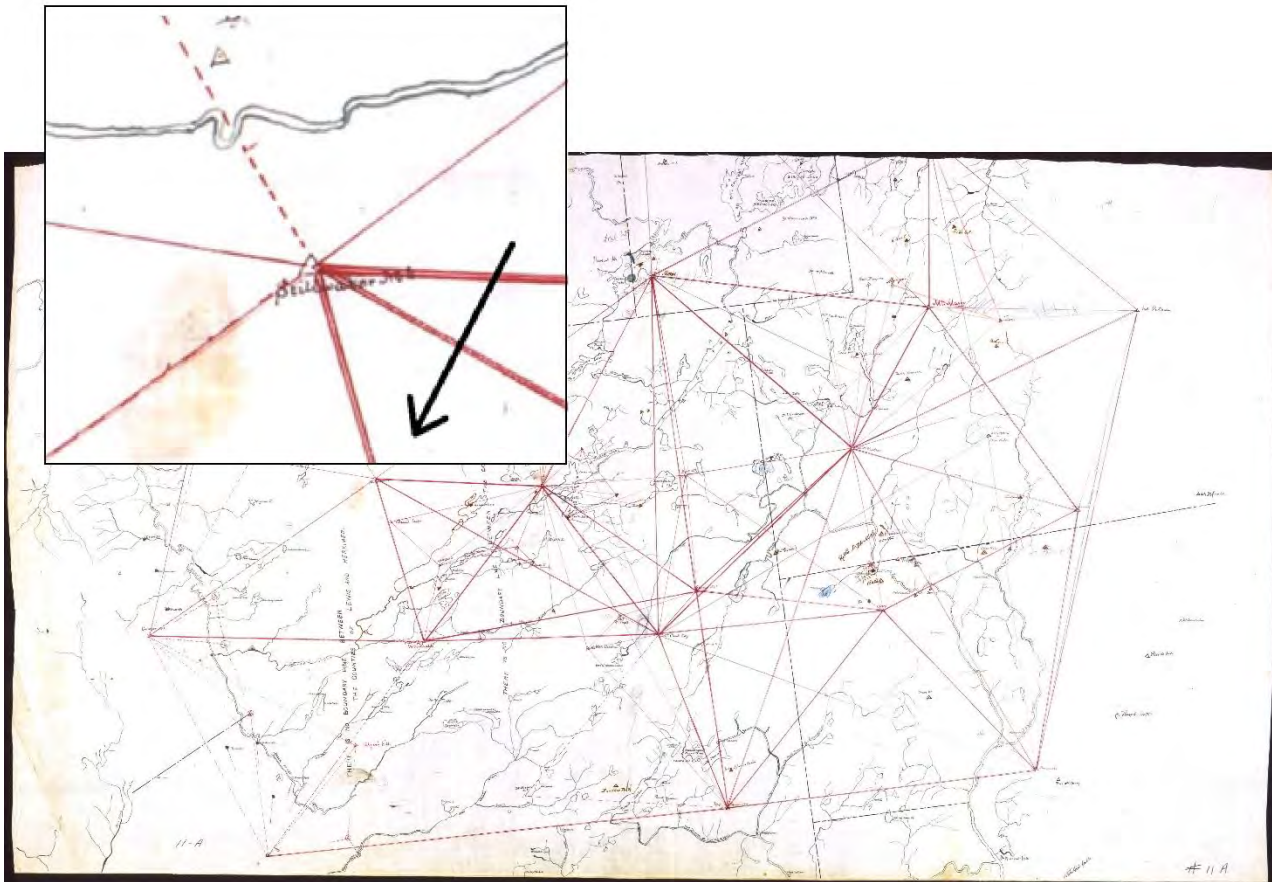


Figure 8: *Central Adirondack Triangulation Network Diagram with Primary Triangulation Station Names*, with inset showing Stillwater Mountain, c. 1882 (New York State Archives).¹⁹



The rediscovered copper survey marker has the following identifying information – N.Y.S. ADIRONDACK SURVEY, VERPLANCK COLVIN SUPT. 1882 Sta. No 77 – thus firmly linking the mountain to the survey. (See Figures 14 and 15 in *Additional Information* for an image of the historic marker and an entry listing it as a “Colvin bolt.”)

Figure 9. Sketch of Adirondack Survey tower on Stillwater Mountain, drawn by surveyor S. S. Snell, 1882 (S. S. Snell, Surveyor’s Notebook, NYS Conservation Department Archives, NYS Archives).

¹⁹ “Central Adirondack Triangulation Network Diagram with Primary Triangulation Station Names,” New York State Archives, Dept. of Environmental Conservation, *Verplanck Colvin maps of the Adirondack wilderness*, B1405-96, SARA No. 46.

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A notebook sketch by surveyor S. S. Snell (Figure 9) documents the actual tower built on Stillwater Mountain in 1882.²⁰ This tower resembled others that Colvin described in his reports – a peaked structure with shiny, revolving metal disks that reflected the sun. The signaling device was called a Stan Helio and could be seen from thirty miles away by eye during the day.²¹

The Colvin survey crew left the tower behind when it moved on with its work. A 1908 article in the *Lowville Journal and Republican* notes that a tower, which had been built “by State engineers,” had fallen down some years earlier.²² Today, all that remains from the Adirondack Survey are the stubs of four steel eyebolts that held the tower anchor cables, surrounding an empty borehole that held the survey marker.

Second Signal Tower

The 1908 *Journal and Republican* article goes on to discuss the construction of a new 25’ tower by local residents:

... from which can be seen a splendid panorama of the Adirondack mountains for many miles distant. On a clear day, Whiteface mountain, Albany mountain and other peaks can be viewed, as well as Beaver and Hitchcock lakes and the Beaver river flow. The hills on the Black river watershed beyond Lowville, 30 miles distant, are also visible.

*Several parties from the Fenton house at Number Four and other points have taken advantage of the new tower by visiting Stillwater and taking the attractive climb up the mountain covered with virgin forest and see [sic] the splendid view from the summit.*²³

As in other parts of the Adirondacks, tourism had finally reached the Beaver River Flow, and the reservoir made access to Stillwater Mountain more scenic and engaging than in the past. In addition, private clubs like the Beaver River Club (owned by “Syracuse society people”) and the Rap-Shaw Fishing Club developed around the turn of the century and brought even more people to the area.²⁴ A scrapbook at the Adirondack Museum from around 1910 shows the second signal tower (See Figure 16 in Additional Documentation) but, more importantly, notes “where they watch for fires.”

First Fire Tower

Between 1903 and 1908, thousands of fires burned in the Adirondack forest.²⁵ Careless humans were a major cause; railroads were another and a corridor for devastation – including Webb’s line through the western

²⁰ S. (Squire) H. Snell, who drew the image in his surveyor’s notebook, was listed as a signalman for Colvin and would have been 73 in 1882. He had a son S. (Sidney) S. Snell, who was forty-one years younger and is listed in a later document as setting the survey marker in place that year (See Figure 15.) They may have worked as a team, with the father (S. H.) doing the surveying and signaling and the son (S. S.) helping to build the tower and set the survey marker in place. Later, the son worked around the Adirondacks for Colvin as a surveyor. Both Snells are buried in New Bremen, Lewis County.

²¹ Tom Thatcher, “The Triangulation of Verplanck Colvin,” *Adirondack Peeks* LIII:2 (Fall 2016), 20.

²² “Adirondack Signal Tower,” *Lowville Journal and Republican* (September 3, 1908), 6.

²³ “Adirondack Signal Tower.”

²⁴ “Beaver River Club House Burned,” *Lowville Journal and Republican* (April 23, 1908), 4.

²⁵ See Wesley Haynes’ multiple property documentation form, **Section E-1:C Devastating Fires in the Forest Preserve, 1903-1908**, for more detail.

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Adirondacks. East of the Stillwater Reservoir, two thousand acres of the Brandreth Preserve and twelve thousand acres of Nehasane (Webb's private preserve on Smith's Lake/Lake Lila) burned in 1903. Stillwater Mountain suffered one or more fires. Overall, more than 800,000 acres of the region were burned over in just six years.²⁶

As a result of these fires, the philosophy of fighting forest fires in the New York State changed. Prevention ceased to be a local responsibility and became the responsibility of the state. Following the lead of Maine – which had established a network of fire observation sites in 1905 and thus escaped devastation in 1908 – the New York State Forest, Fish, and Game Commission was charged with developing a similar network in 1909.

In January 1912, the (now renamed) Conservation Commission authorized erection of five observation stations, and the existing tower on top of Stillwater Mountain became the basis for the first official fire tower on the mountain.²⁷ As can be seen below, a taller log tower was constructed around it, creating a “double-decker” structure. The tower was located in the midst of second-growth timber – apparently the result of the 1903-1908 fires.



Figure 10. Second Signal Tower, 1910, Churchill-Shaver Photo Album (James Fox).



Figure 11. First Fire Tower, Stillwater Mountain, after 1912 (Maridee Rutledge).

The first observer was Eugene “Gene” Barrett, who was paid \$5 per month by Clarence Fisher (Mary Lyon Fisher's son). International Paper Company gave him an additional \$7 per month for five and one-half months' duty on the mountain. Barrett was in his mid-40s when he started to work as an observer and served for eleven years. He also worked as a guide in the area and at the Brandreth Preserve. The same year, Albert Darrow was appointed the forest ranger for Beaver River; however, he resigned within the year and was

²⁶ Haynes, 9-10.

²⁷ “Protecting the Forest,” *Lowville Journal and Republican* (January 1912).

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replaced by David L. Conkey.²⁸ Conkey too was a guide along the Beaver River Flow; when he died in 1961, his obituary noted that he had maintained a “guest camp” for more than fifty years and was the last living member of the John Brown’s Tract Guides’ Association.²⁹

A 1913 newspaper article in the *Syracuse Herald* shows that the fire observation post was almost immediately effective:

*The worst of the Adirondack fires thus far reported are raging in township No. 3, south of Beaver river. They are believed to have started through the carelessness of fishermen. Eugene Barrett, the fire warden, on Stillwater mountain, and William Bush, the warden at Beaver river, discovered the fires and began the fight against them. A force of men from Lowville and Number Four has taken up the work.*³⁰

Second (and Existing) Fire Tower

In 1916, the Conservation Commission began a five-year program to replace log fire observation towers (and a few open summit stations) with steel structures – better both for sheltering observers and for welcoming visitors. In 1918, the state bought the current 56’ steel observation tower from Aermotor (Model LS-40) to replace the 1912 log tower on Stillwater Mountain.



Figure 12. Repainted tower stencil, 2017.

Stenciling indicates that Aermotor shipped the package on the NY Central Railroad to Regional Forest Ranger E.W. Blue at Woods Lake Station. From there, it was most likely switched to the small Woods Lake logging shortline, offloaded at Twitchell Creek, and hauled by horses to the summit.³¹ The following year, a team of rangers erected the structure.³²

The Model LS-40 tower is the most common type of tower erected by New York State for its fire program. It integrates a self-supported staircase within the legs of the tower, with large landings making the structure safer (and easier) for visitor traffic. The Stillwater tower has 7 flights of stairs.

In 1920, over the course of the season, the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower welcomed 196

²⁸ “Forest Rangers and Observers,” *Utica Herald Dispatch* (May 7, 1912); “Expert to Treat Tree Diseases,” *Brooklyn Daily Standard Union* (September 1, 1912).

²⁹ “David L. Conkey Dies at 92; Ran Beaver River Flow Camp,” *Utica Daily Press* (May 14, 1961).

³⁰ “Several Forest Fires Threaten the Adirondacks,” *Syracuse Herald* (August 20, 1913).

³¹ William Gove, *Logging Railroads of the Adirondacks* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

³² There is a discrepancy between the date of 1918 identified by Wes Haynes in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve* and the date of 1919 identified by Martin Podskoch in *Adirondack Fire Towers: Their History and Lore – The Southern Districts* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2003.), 191, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, *Fire Tower Study for the Adirondack Park* (February 2010), 354. The tower appears to have been bought one year and erected the next.

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people.³³ In 1921, the number was just 84, but 27 fires were sighted, tied for fourth of the 23 observation sites.³⁴ Most observers enjoyed visitors and entertained them with information on spotting and triangulating fires. At Stillwater, at least one observer – George Clair – was a noted teller of tall tales.

The list of observers for the Stillwater Fire Observation Station includes Eugene Barrett (1912-1923); Harry I. Russell (1924); Charles N. Ward (1924-1925); A. D. Petrie (1926-1927); Clarence Rennie (1928-1939); Theodore Jarvis (1940); George Clair (1941-1964); Ken Hite (1964-1974); Larry Combs (1975); Gary Kincade (1976); Jim Tracy (1977); Mike Strife (1978); David Gates (1979); Larry Strife (1980-1981); and Les Mahar (1982-1988).

Observers were supervised by the resident forest ranger. At Stillwater, the rangers were Albert Darrow (1912); David Conkey (1909-12 as patrolman, 1912-1930 as ranger); Ray Burke (1931); Moses Leonard (1932-1935); Austin B. Proper (1936-1938); Alex "Mac" Edwards (1938-1948); Randy Kerr (1947-1957); William "Bill" Marteau (1949-1950); Emmett Hill (1951-1965); William Richardson Jr. (1966); and Terry Perkins (1967-1998).³⁵

Twentieth-century Changes

In 1919, the same year the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower was erected, the Black River Regulating District was created. It soon developed a new plan to enlarge the Stillwater Reservoir, flooding an additional 3,000 acres. Between 1922 and 1932, the state purchased all the private land affected, clearing the trees and moving or demolishing all buildings. The new concrete dam raised the water level 19 feet, bringing the extent of the reservoir to 6,700 acres and drowning most of the lands of the Beaver River Club. At the same time, however, the reservoir rose to the base of Stillwater Mountain and made the fire tower more accessible.

In 1932, the first observer's cabin was built at the bottom of the trail on land newly acquired from the Fisher family. (Despite the mountain's isolation, there is no record of an earlier building.) By this time, cabins were becoming standardized, generally 12 X 16' with asphalt strip-shingles on the roof and sides. The long-term observer who lived in the cabin from 1941 to 1964 was something of a hermit and lived in the building year-round doing trapping and hunting in the winter. Apparently, when he retired, the first building needed to be torn down.³⁶ The Stillwater cabin was replaced in 1966 with a "Model 1941" wood-frame building measuring 16' X 18' with porch and waney-edged siding. The porch has since been screened in. The wood shed and privy have similar siding and are thought to have been built at the same time.

In 1955, the Big Moose Road to Stillwater was completed.³⁷ Until then, the only access to the mountain was by boat or foot trail from Stillwater or Beaver River, and supplies for the observer were brought in by boat or floatplane. However, the new road meant that many of the later observers chose to live at home in Lowville

³³ NYS DEC, *Fire Tower Study*, 356.

³⁴ Podskoch, 21.

³⁵ Podskoch, 197-198.

³⁶ Podskoch, 192-194.

³⁷ The route was approved in 1934 but took more than 20 years to complete. "County Highway Bill is Passed," *Black River Democrat* (April 12, 1934).

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or Stillwater and “commute” to the tower daily. The observer’s cabin eventually became the summer residence of the assistant ranger for the district.

In the postwar period, fire protection began shifting from towers to airplane surveillance, so recreational use of the tower became more important. Visitation numbers were collected from the observers during the period 1959-1969. Despite the new road, annual numbers at Stillwater were always low and varied widely, from 145 to 618 visitors per year.³⁸ In addition, once the first and second generations of long-term observers retired, the state had trouble finding reliable labor. After the retirement of Ken Hite in 1974, five people worked at Stillwater Mountain in the next five years. In 1971, the Bureau of Fire Control shut more than half its fire observation stations. In 1988, the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower closed. Its last observer was Les Maher (who had served six years), and its last supervising ranger was Terry Perkins.

In the 1980s, the development of NYS DEC Unit Management Plans with different classifications of “wildness” – wilderness, primitive, wild forest – endangered many of the remaining fire towers and observer cabins in the Forest Preserve. Except on those parts of state land designated as wild forest, intrusive buildings were to be removed. However, the demolition of the first group of towers elicited an outcry from local residents and many hikers, causing NYS DEC to amend its plans. Beginning in 1992, NYS DEC began to work with local community and heritage organizations to save most of the remaining towers. Despite being on private land, the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower was identified as a strong possibility for restoration and listing on the National Register. In 2007, NYS DEC purchased conservation easements on lands owned by Lyme Adirondack Timberlands. One of the public recreation rights acquired for the Big Moose Tract allowed NYS DEC to maintain a foot trail to the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower.³⁹ The mountain is now one of twenty-three Adirondack fire tower summits included in the Adirondack Mountain Club’s Fire Tower Challenge.

In 2009, restoration work began on the tower with the newly formed Friends of the Stillwater Fire Tower, with permission from owner Lyme Adirondack Timberlands. The tower officially reopened July 2, 1916.

³⁸ NYS DEC, *Fire Tower Study*, 356.

³⁹ The conservation easement is a perpetual encumbrance, guaranteeing that NYS DEC can ensure foot access to the tower for years to come.

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Name of Property

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Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, NY (Angela Snye and Ivy Gocker)

Friends of Stillwater Tower, Lowville, NY (Jim Fox)

New York State (NYS) Conservation Department Archives, New York State (NYS) Archives, Albany, NY

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Albany, NY (Matthew Nowak, Keith Rivers, and Charles Vandrei)

Town of Webb Historian, Old Forge, NY (Peg Masters)

Newspapers (Database Sources)

Fultonhistory.com

New York State Historic Newspapers (nyshistoricnewspapers.org)

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Name of Property

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 8.37 acres

UTM References

1	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>497965E</u> Easting	<u>4857637N</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>497305E</u> Easting	<u>4856525N</u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the attached map with scale.

Boundary Justification

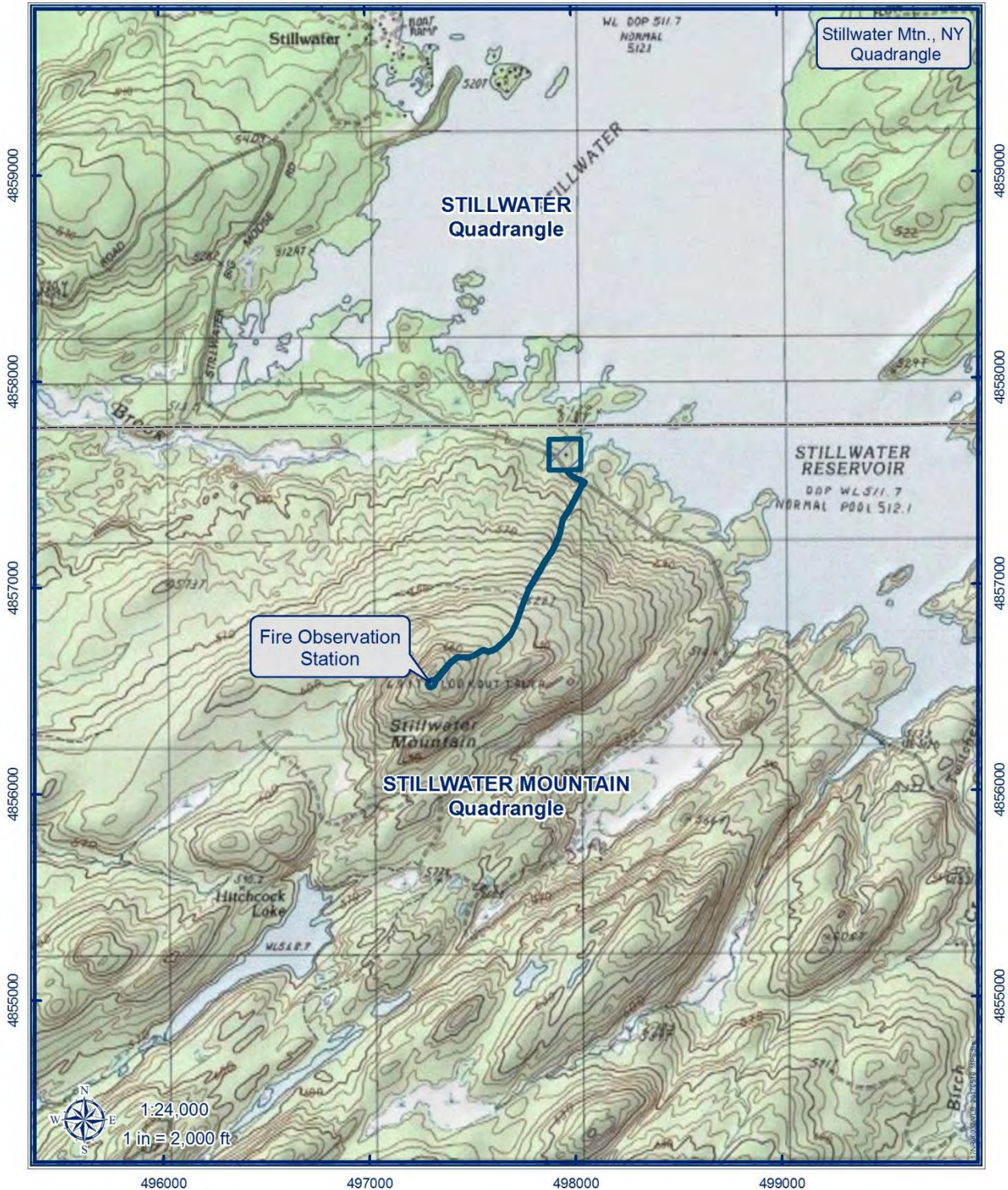
The boundary encompasses the historical components of the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station as defined in the Multiple Property Listing *Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve*. On the summit, the boundary consists of an almost circular parcel of exposed bedrock with a 50-foot radius centered on the fire observation tower; along Big Moose Road, the boundary consists of a square parcel with a 500-foot side that takes in the current 1966 observer's cabin, wood shed, and privy, as well as the site of the first observer's cabin (built 1932 and demolished in the mid-1960s); in between, the boundary is centered on the original trail and one mile long and 30 feet wide.

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Name of Property

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Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Town of Webb, Herkimer Co., NY

Big Moose Rd.
Webb, NY 13331



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY
Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Name of Property

Herkimer County, NY
County and State

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Town of Webb, Herkimer Co., NY

Big Moose Rd.
Webb, NY 13331

Stillwater Mtn., NY
Quadrangle



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter



Fire Observation Station



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

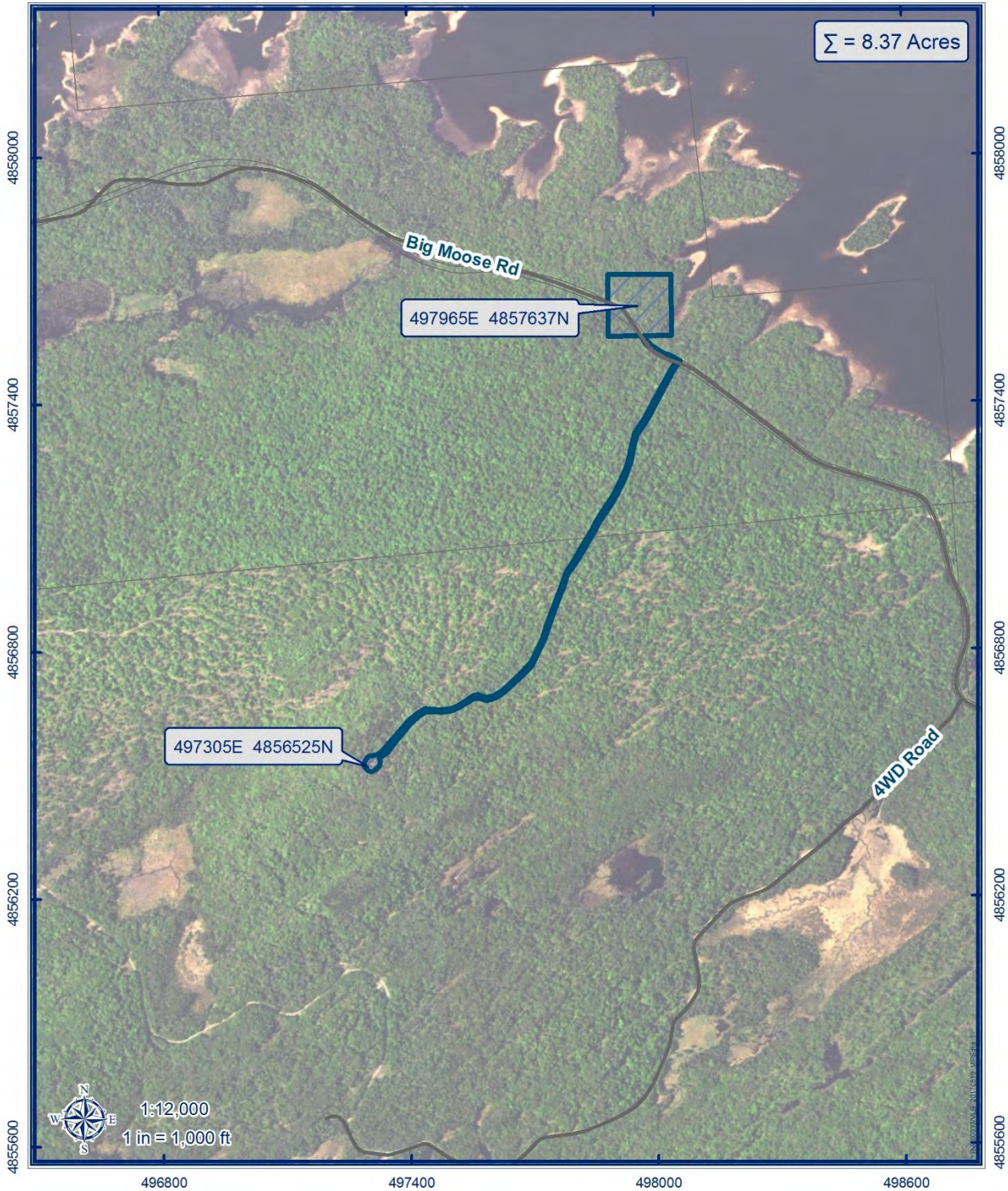
Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Name of Property

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Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Town of Webb, Herkimer Co., NY

Big Moose Rd.
Webb, NY 13331

$\Sigma = 8.37$ Acres



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
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Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
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Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation

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Name of Property

Herkimer County, NY
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Emilie W. Gould (Historic Preservation Program Analyst)

organization NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation date April 18, 2017

street & number PO Box 189 telephone 518-268-2213

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

e-mail Emilie.Gould@parks.ny.gov

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Additional Documentation

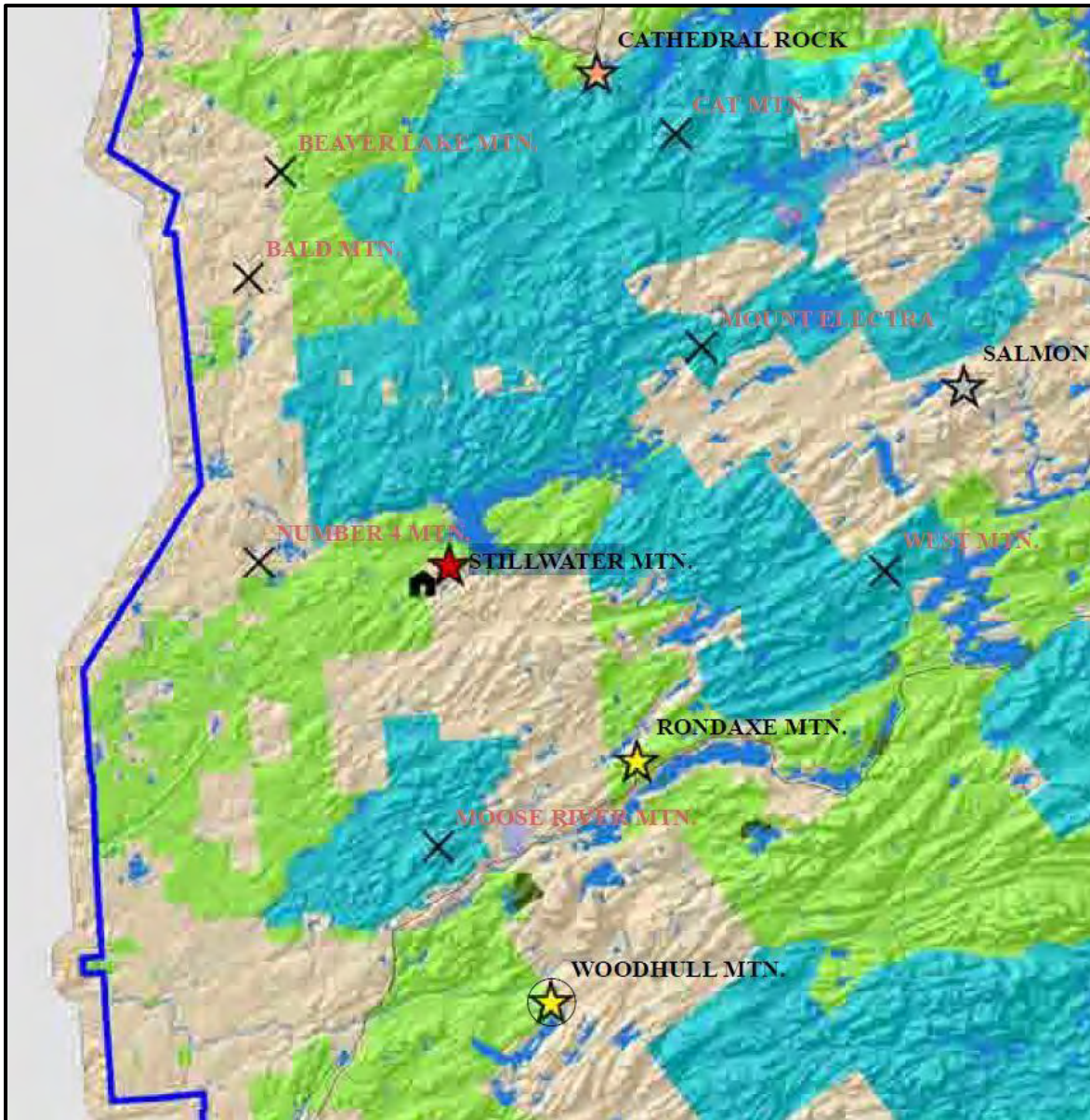


Figure 13: Detail from "Adirondack Park Fire Towers, Observer Cabins and Radio Facilities, Past and Present," 2010 (NYS DEC, *Fire Tower Study*, 405). The red dot is the Stillwater Fire Observation Station; the yellow dots are surviving state-owned towers in the New York State Forest Preserve; the white dot is a private fire tower on private land; and the Xs are the sites of removed fire towers.

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Figure 14. Copper survey marker from Verplanck Colvin's Adirondack Survey, 1882. (*Adirondack Almanack*, 2016). NOTE: The marker was discovered in a field in New Jersey and is now at the NYS Ranger School in Wanakena, NY.

Bolt No	Name of Station	
N ^o 70	West M ^{ts} , of Raquette Lake. (Measured & recorded.)	⊕
" 71	Gore M ^{ts} . (First zig measured & recorded.)	⊕
" 72	Mt Morris, Tupper's Lake. (Measured & recorded.)	⊕
" 73	Blue Hill, or Mt. Azure. (Measured & recorded.)	⊕
" 74	Grain's Mountain. (Set by Hill in 1883.) (Measured & recorded.)	⊕
" 75	Mt Scarron.	△
" 76	Bend Mountain. (Set by S. S. Snell in 1882)	⊕
" 77	Stillwater M ^{ts} . Set by S. S. Snell in 1882.	⊕
" 78	Round-top M ^{ts} . Chain lakes of Newcomb.	△

Figure 15. List of copper survey markers ("Colvin bolts") set during the Adirondack Survey. (NYS Conservation Department Archives, NYS Archives). NOTE: Number 77 was set on Stillwater Mountain by S. S. Snell in 1882. The symbol in the third column refers to a "Type 2" bolt (marker), with an inscribed cross "+" as in Figure 14. "Type 1" bolts had recessed triangles in the center. Both types of survey markers were used to center a plumb bob.

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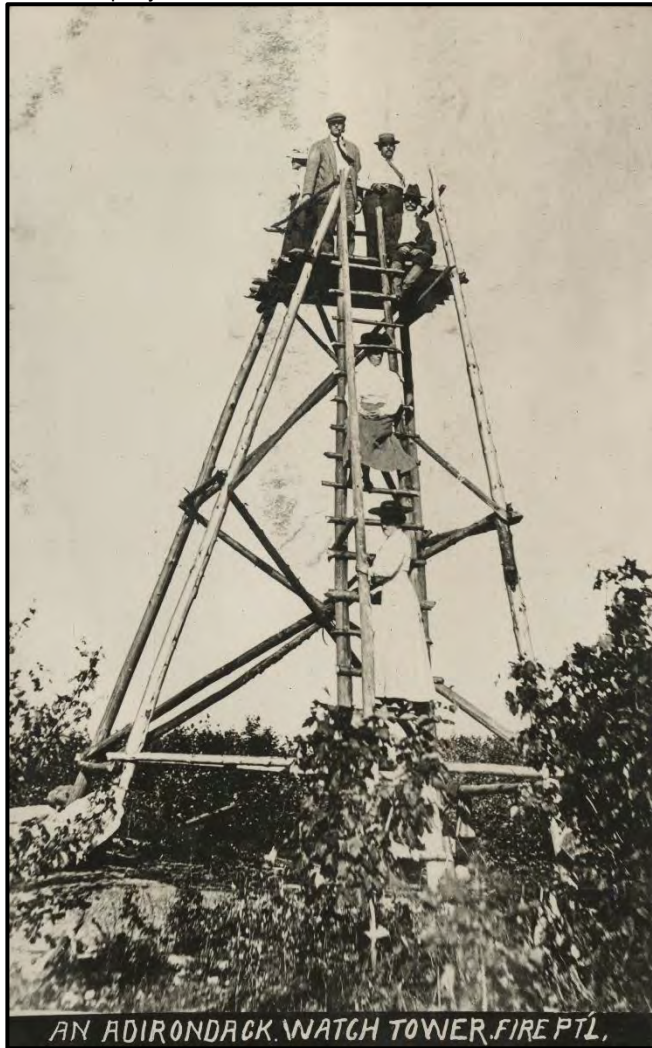


Figure 16. Further captioned, "Where They Watch For Fires." Photo of the second signal tower on Stillwater Mountain, between 1909 and 1912, from a photo album owned by Robert Gillespie. He and Harvey Dunham owned Camp Segoolie, and the album is a record of their camping and hunting trips in the Stillwater area with photos and text. (Courtesy of the Adirondack Museum).

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Name of Property

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Photographs:

Name of Property: Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station

City or Vicinity: Town of Webb

County: Herkimer

State: New York

Photographer: Emilie W. Gould

Date Photographed: May 4, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001: Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower on summit rock, looking south as approached from the trail.

0002: Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower, looking north.

0003: Nine-foot cab on top of forty-seven foot Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower, from the west.

0004: Foot supports, Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower.

0005: Close-up of foot support, Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower.

0006: Enclosed stair, Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower.

0007: View to the northeast, Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower.

0008: 1966 "Model 1941" Observer's Cabin. Note: It is thought to have been placed on the footprint of the first (1933) observer's cabin.

0009: Wood shed associated with 1966 Observer's Cabin.

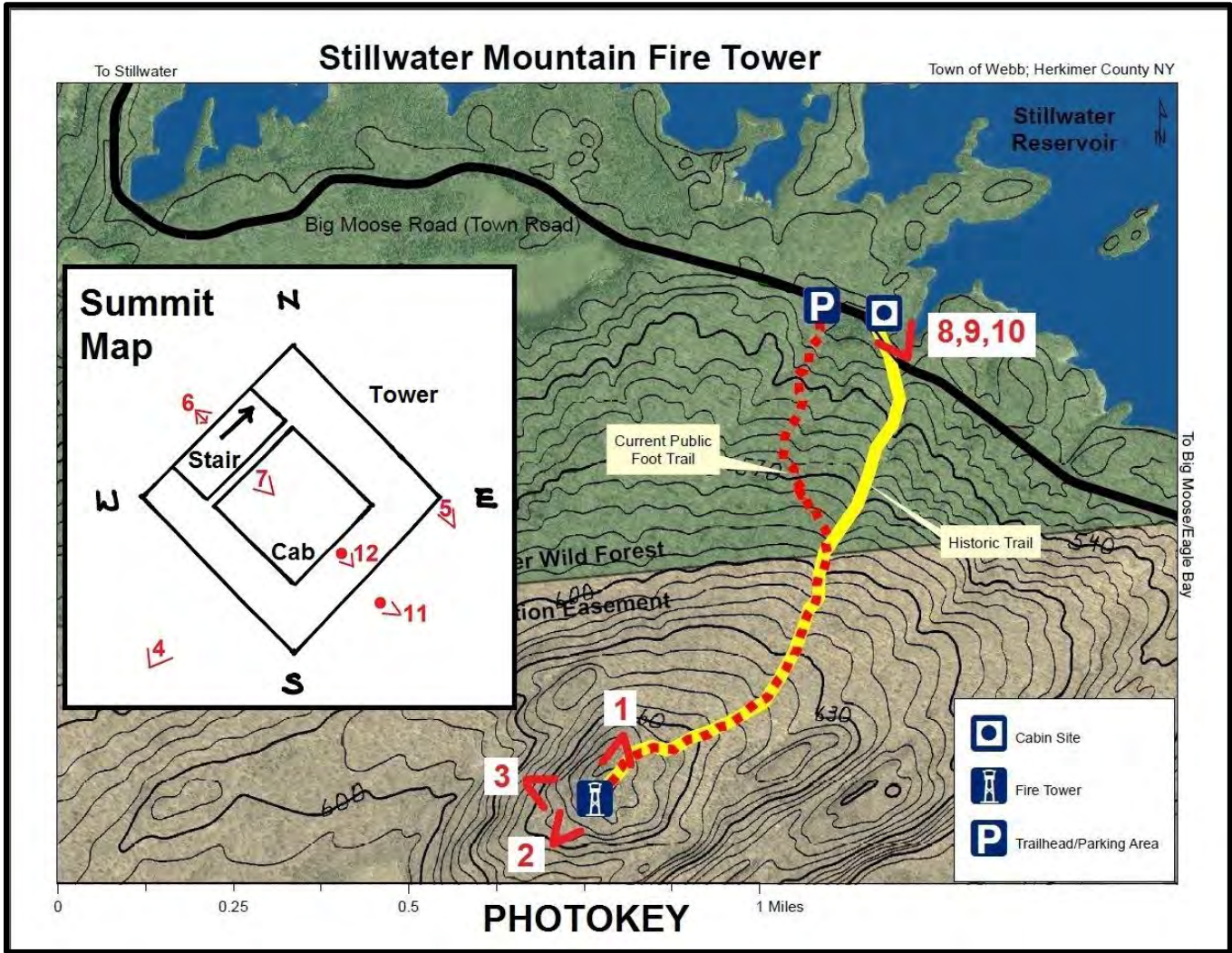
0010: Privy associated with 1966 Observer's Cabin.

0011: Reproduction Adirondack Survey marker, placed on summit, 2016.

0012: US Geodetic Survey marker, first placed on summit 1942, replaced 1976.

Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station
Name of Property

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County and State



Property Owner:
(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state NY zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.







Please do not deface this
hard work.
Enjoy the view!



















National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station

Multiple Name: Fire Observation Stations of New York State Forest Preserve MPS

State & County: NEW YORK, Herkimer

Date Received: 8/3/2017 Date of Pending List: 9/1/2017 Date of 16th Day: 9/18/2017 Date of 45th Day: 9/18/2017 Date of Weekly List: 9/28/2017

Reference number: MP100001624

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 9/18/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236

Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : **Yes**

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



23 S. Main Street, 3rd Fl
Hanover, NH 03755
603.643.3300

April 13, 2017

Keith Rivers
Supervising Forester
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation
7327 State Route 812
Lowville, NY 13367

RE: Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower

Dear Mr. Rivers,

As the authorized landowner representative for Lyme Adirondack Timberlands I, LLC, owner of the Big Moose Tract, I am writing to provide support and permission for NY DEC to pursue registration of the Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower and associated Access Trail to the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Best of luck,



Sean Ross

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Lands and Forests, Region 6

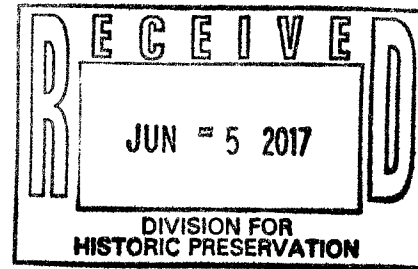
Dulles State Office Building, 317 Washington Street, Watertown, NY 13601-3787

P: (315) 785-2263 | F: (315) 785-2242

www.dec.ny.gov

May 30, 2017

Division for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188



To the New York State Board for Historic Preservation,

This letter is written in support of listing the Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower Observation Station on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) owns a conservation easement on the Big Moose Tract where the Stillwater Mountain fire tower observation station is located. NYSDEC also maintains a foot trail for the public to access the restored tower, and the observer's cabin and historic access trail to the tower are located on New York State forest preserve lands in the adjacent Independence River Wild Forest.

Fire towers in the Adirondack Park have transitioned from their original purpose of fire detection to recreation, historic preservation, education, and communications use. NYSDEC acknowledges the rich history associated with Stillwater Mountain, including its use as a primary triangulation station during Verplanck Colvin's survey of the Adirondacks, being the location of a previous tower used to view scenery and two fire detection towers (including the one currently located on Stillwater Mountain). This history is of significant interest to many of the thousands of hikers who visit the fire tower each year.

It is without reservation that the Region 6 Division of Lands and Forests supports listing the Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower Observation Station on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Smith".

David Smith
Region 6 Forester
Division of Lands and Forests
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

June 2, 2017

SHPO – Division for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
PO Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188

Att: Director Michael F. Lyon

I am pleased to support the nomination of the Stillwater Fire Tower Observation Station to the NYS and National Register of Historic Places. The historic steel tower, erected in the Town of Webb, Herkimer County in 1919, has been lovingly restored over the past 7 years by a dedicated group of Friends of Stillwater Mountain volunteers in partnership with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in conjunction with an easement agreement with a private landowner.

Stillwater Mountain has historic significance as it was selected as a primary triangulation station in the remote West-Central Adirondacks in 1882 by Verplanck Colvin, superintendent of the Adirondack Survey and one of New York State's most revered conservationists. Colvin's survey reports in the 1870s-1880s to the State Legislature detailed his concern that over-lumbering in the Adirondacks led to forest fires, flooding, and the depletion of the State's water sources. Stillwater's fire tower reminds us that history has not nor should not forget Verplanck Colvin whose voice and words pioneered the establishment of the NYS Forest Preserve in 1885 and the Adirondack Park in 1892.

In a 1920 edition of The Conservationist, it was noted "*Most of the towers have now been completed and are fulfilling their object in the Conservation Commission's campaign to stamp out the devastation by forest fires in New York State. Located as the towers are on specially chosen vantage points whence the observers may guard the broadest possible area the views from them are unsurpassed.*"¹ Aggressive logging and catastrophic fires plagued this remote corner of the Adirondacks during the early 20th Century. Visitors to the summit today have an opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate the noble work of Stillwater's dedicated fire tower observers and forest rangers that saved thousands of acres of the State's Forest Preserve.

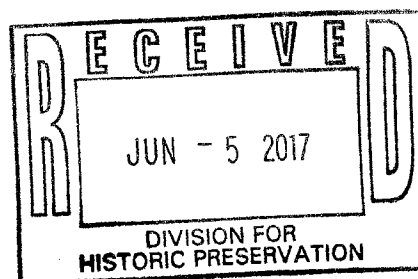
Stillwater Mountain was and is today an extraordinary vantage point for recreationist with views as far north as the High Peaks in the Adirondacks and the entire Beaver River region that extends westward to the Tug Hill area in Lewis County. The 1920 article in The Conservationist magazine went on to say – "*The visitor is welcome at all these towers and it is fitting that he should know and appreciate the grit and perseverance shown by the mountain top builders who made it possible for him to enjoy such views and such comfort on the summit of a wilderness mountain peak.*"

The view from the Stillwater Fire Tower conjures up a sentiment expressed by Thomas Morris Longstreth in his 1917 book, The Adirondacks, ". . . the quiet lakes and haunting vistas that are unutterably satisfying to a man's soul."² Registering this historic site will pay tribute to New York State's great contribution to the Nation's conservation movement and to the preservation of wilderness regions throughout our country for future generations to enjoy.

Sincerely,



Peg Masters, Town of Webb Historian
PO Box 914, Old Forge, NY 13420
PH: 315 369-3281; email: masters914@gmail.com



¹ The Conservationist, Volumes 3-4, New York State Conservation Commission., 1920

² Lonstreth, Thomas Morris, "The Adirondacks," Century Company, 1922 google edition online, p. 4.



**Parks, Recreation
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner



28 July 2017

Alexis Abernathy
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Gumaer Cemetery, Orange County
Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station (Fire Observation Stations of the New York State Forest Preserve), Herkimer County
Sagamore Apartment House, Onondaga County
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Chemung County
Crandell Theatre, Columbia County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office



10/6/17

National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Paul Loether, Keeper of the National Register
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington , DC 20240

Re: NEW YORK, HERKIMER COUNTY,
Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station,
1 mi. off Big Moose Rd.,
Webb, MP100001624,
LISTED, 9/18/2017

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am organizer and chair of Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower in the Adirondack State Park. This tower has received untold recognition because of it's authentic renovation of the 1919 fire tower, as well as recently discovered nineteenth century historical significance in the Adirondack Survey.

First, thank you for reviewing and listing Stillwater on the National Register.

The NYS Historic Preservation office forwarded me the revised registration documents that excludes objects preceding 1919 that were deemed "non-contributing". The 1919 tower would not exist if a 1912 log tower had not been built on that site by NYS for forest fire observation. That first fire observation tower from 1912 was built atop a platformed signal tower rebuilt in 1908. The rebuilt signal tower was very likely constructed in 1882 or before for the Adirondack Survey, when Stillwater Mountain was designated as a Primary Triangulation Station by Verplanck Colvin.

To evaluate the documented history of the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station without consideration that it's history goes back to Colvin's prototype survey towers over thirty years earlier than 1919, is specious.

Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower
PO Box 753
Lowville, NY 13367

fsft@frontier.com
www.friendsofstillwaterfiretower.com
Facebook: Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower

This letter is an appeal for reconsideration of the history of the tower prior to 1919. Stillwater Fire Tower's history is unique, authenticated, and documented even though it's registration is under the umbrella of a multiple property listing that states no evidence of Colvin survey towers exist.

Stillwater is set apart from many other Adirondack fire towers in the MPL, primarily because it is a documented nineteenth century Adirondack Survey Primary Triangulation Station.

While the thematic nomination of the original multiple property listing may specify only the historical authenticity of Fire Observation Stations, this appeal is to underscore Stillwater's historical significance as an Adirondack Survey Station as well.

Soon after I assumed the job as volunteer organizer to restore the 1919 Stillwater Fire Tower I became aware that it's history prior to 1919 was buried. Everything I read about the tower stated that the first Stillwater Fire Tower was constructed in 1912. My wife's family had a family photo album with her grandparents, and great-grandfather, pictured on the a tower whose page was entitled "*Stillwater Mt. 1910*".

The Town of Webb historian soon cleared up the discrepancy with a 1908 Utica Observer Dispatch article entitled "Mountain Town". It reported that Stillwater residents had rebuilt a "*signal tower*" constructed by "*state engineers*", that offered "*a splendid panorama of the Adirondack Mountains. (Signaling what to whom, I wondered? Professional engineers are surveyors)*".

My research online and search for photographs led me to Verplanck Colvin and the Adirondack Survey. Colvin was appointed to head a survey of the Adirondack Mountains in 1872. He was required to report annually to the NYS Legislature. In his 1883 report, he described the previous year's accomplishments, including the establishment of Stillwater Mountain as a Primary Triangulation Station. The signal tower atop Stillwater was probably a carbon copy of Colvin's lithograph. (see attached photo RCCO* IV).

The remains of four steel eye bolts, (see attached photos RRCO* I), positioned in a square, with the survey marker drill hole (see RCCO* II) exactly in the center, stabilized a signal tower of Colvin's design, (see RCCO* IV). They are visible evidence for even the hiker with no appreciation of history - that here, where he

stands on the bedrock of a heretofore insignificant mountain top, was an important place back in the eighteen hundreds, decades before the 1919 tower. They are "contributing" pieces of the history of towers on Stillwater Mountain, even if they had been unnoticed for a century. Because the key object - the Station 77 Bolt - was missing for 133 years should not be reason to deny it's history. It was returned, and should be recognized and celebrated in Washington, just as it has been in Albany and atop a forgotten summit in the wilderness of the Adirondack Park.

While the Multiple Property Documentation Form completed in 2001 states that evidence of temporary towers are extant, Stillwater Mountain's bedrock holds identifiable objects in it that have not decayed like the towers that they stabilized and drill hole that held the pilfered Station 77 survey bolt. Stillwater Mountain's summit refutes that evidence of Colvin's signal towers are extant.

Further evidence that Stillwater Mountain was the site of a Colvin Signal Tower, is contained in Squire H. Snell's 1882 surveyor's notebook (see attached photos RCCO* V)), found in the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Archives in Albany. Snell's labeled drawing of the signal tower (Registration form Fig. 9), closely matches Colvin's lithograph of the signal towers (see RCCO* IV) he designed, with the windblown revolving tin signal atop (see RCCO* V). Snell's notebook cover verifies the 1882 date of the surveyor's signal tower and survey marker placement.

All this cannot be cemented together without one of the most difficult aspects of Stillwater's history - where did Kyle Kristiansen's copper Station 77 Adirondack Survey marker come from? There was master list, no database. Colvin had a hundreds of surveyors and signalmen across the Adirondacks setting survey markers without knowing whether their work would result in a primary triangulation or not. The marker did not give the location - only Station 77. The registration's Fig. 15, a list of Colvin markers by number and their stations, found in the winter of 2015 in the NYS DEC Archives by Colvin Crew Superintendent Jim Vianna, PLS verifies that Station 77 was on Stillwater Mountain.

In the submitted Registration form, there is indeed, credible evidence that a Colvin Survey signal tower was located on Stillwater Mountain. Colvin's 1883 Report to the NYS Legislature describes the establishment of Stillwater as a Primary Triangulation Site, and is quoted in the Registration. I refer you to the 1910 photograph pictured in Fig. 10 that copy's Colvin's signal tower structure, but with ladder and platform added. The Western Adirondack Map (Fig. 8)

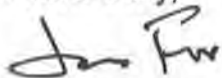
pinpoints Stillwater Mountain as a Primary Triangulation Station. Figures 14 and 15 are photos of the 1882 copper bolt and it's listing from the NYS DEC Archives that Stillwater Mountain was Station 77, and it's type 2 bolt was set by Sidney S. Snell, son of Squire H. Snell. As explained in the registration, the marker was stolen at an unknown time, found in 2013, and returned to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. (A replacement marker was set in 2016).

Volunteer Summit Stewards at Stillwater Fire Tower who greet the public on summer and holiday weekends will continue to point out our sixty mile views of familiar mountain tops, the wind turbines generating electricity from Lake Ontario's westerlies, and compare distant views with the 1920 panoramic map of horizon summits on the map table. They will continue to tell about the first, second and third towers and point out the remains of eye bolts and the empty drill hole that stabilized and marked the Colvin Signal Tower and Stillwater Mountain becoming a Primary Triangulation Station. They will tell the incredulous story of the recovery and return of the stolen 1882 Station 77 survey marker by a teenager metal detecting in a lawn in New Jersey. They will show off the 2016 replacement marker with the same inscription as the purloined 1882 marker, but with "Stillwater Reset 2016" added.

We know Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station is an important historic site, and commit the National Park Service to recognize the significance of this 1882 Primary Triangulation Station in the Adirondack Survey and include this evidence in the National Registry of Historic Places.

Thank you for accepting this appeal. Additional articles are enclosed that may help round out your understanding and appreciation for Stillwater Fire Tower's background. We welcome any curious NPS hikers who can tolerate eight miles of dirt roads to find us, and hope we can share some of our passion for great views and a history lesson.

Yours truly,



James Fox, Organizer, Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower

*RCCO: Resources for Reconsideration as Contributing Objects
attached: 2 pgs. photos (there is no RCCO III)
cc: Emilie Gould, NYS Historic Preservation Analyst

RESOURCES FOR RECONSIDERATION AS CONTRIBUTING OBJECTS
(Stillwater Mt. Fire Observation Station, Webb, Herkimer Cnty, NY)

RRCO I

Visible remnants of steel eye bolts under the present (1919) Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Tower, imbedded in the bedrock for stabilization of the first tower on the summit for the Adirondack Survey Signal Station 1882.



RRCO II



Empty survey drill hole, visible under today's tower.

(there is no RRCO III)

**RCCO IV
ADIRONDACK SURVEY
SIGNAL TOWER. REVOLVING
REFLECTIVE SIGNAL ATOP**



**RCCO V
REVOLVING REFLECTIVE
SIGNAL. SPINS IN WIND
ATOP COLVIN SIGNAL
TOWER**



**RCCO VI
SURVEYOR S.H.SNELL'S 1882
NOTEBOOK DRAWING OF
STILLWATER SIGNAL TOWER WITH
COLVIN REVOLVING REFLECTIVE
SIGNAL ATOP**





Crowds hiked to the summit of Stillwater Mountain to celebrate the restoration and reopening of the fire tower.

FINDING STATION 77

—A piece of history is restored at Stillwater Mountain fire tower

By **Andrea C. Pedrick**

Photos provided by author



The first Saturday in July, Jim Fox stood in the sunshine at the base of Stillwater Fire Tower on top of Stillwater Mountain in Herkimer County, greeting people as they left the one-mile trail behind them and joined him on the summit. The mood of people in the long line making its way out from under the canopy of trees was jovial. Smiles were wide. Fox was the greeter, but the Stillwater Fire Tower was the center of attention.

Slowly, the crowd moved toward the fire tower. They paused to admire its magnitude—a structure that stands 47 feet tall. They put a hand on the railing and began to climb its eight staircases to the cab on top. Once in the cab they witnessed the spectacular views of the High Peaks—first seen from the tower more than 130 years ago—and the entire Maple Ridge Wind Farm. Most people in attendance volunteered their time to rehabilitate the

tower. Perhaps silently they applauded themselves for the work they did or acknowledged to themselves that this was their legacy for generations to enjoy.

Located within the Independence River Wild Forest at the western boundary of the Adirondack Park, Stillwater Fire Tower was originally built out of wood in 1882 for the New York State Adirondack Survey. Conducted by Verplanck Colvin, the survey mapped the lakes, ponds, peaks and mountaintops of the wilderness region. Today's metal structure was built in 1919. For nearly 70 years, the tower was staffed with fire observers until it closed in 1988.

Throughout the years, the structure deteriorated to the point where it was not safe for public use. In August 2015, Jim Fox and the members of the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower (FSFT)



complete his surveys, but he literally placed the Adirondack Park on the map. The work surveyors do today is credited to Colvin. We are following in his footsteps. His work is our Adirondack heritage.”

Unfortunately, at some point the brass bolt for triangulation #77 was pried out of its granite holster and taken from Stillwater Mountain. However, in 2013, a man using a metal detector in the small town of Allamuchy, New Jersey found it.

“When I brought it home, I realized it was nothing I’d seen before,” said Kyle Kristiansen. “1882 was visible on the bolt, but the rest was covered by a thick layer of corrosion. I’d decided to keep the bolt in its current condition, but a couple of months later I got this itch that I had to clean it off. I was glad I made that decision because I could read the words on it.”

Kristiansen turned to Google for more information and eventually made contact with the editor of the Adirondack Almanack to confirm its real home and discuss returning it to New York. Kristiansen eventually traveled to Stillwater and climbed the mountain to see the stone where Colvin and his team had set the bolt.

“It was an amazing moment in itself,” said Kristiansen. “But when I actually stepped back in time and visualized the effort it took Colvin’s men to painstakingly survey the uncharted and unforgiving, yet beautiful land of the Adirondacks, it honestly filled me with a joy and happiness I’ve never felt before. To climb Stillwater and see the hole where the bolt was set, realizing

entered into a stewardship agreement with DEC to restore the tower. DEC provided and transported most of the materials, and in conjunction with the landowner, Lyme Adirondack Timberlands, coordinated access. FSFT did the yeoman’s work on the tower. Over the course of a year, they replaced all the steps and landings, installed safety fencing on all eight staircases, replaced the cab’s floor and windows, and scraped, wire brushed and painted the entire tower.

The gathering at Stillwater Mountain that Saturday morning was to recognize the completed restoration work and mark the official opening of the tower to the public. Fox estimates 250 people visited Stillwater Fire Tower that day, including residents of Herkimer and Lewis counties, Stillwater seasonal residents, DEC staff, and admirers of Verplanck Colvin. Known as the “Colvin Crew,” this group, formed in 1997, consists of about 140 professional surveyors who conduct recoveries of Colvin’s survey sites.

Colvin established survey markers on the summits of many of the Adirondack High Peaks which he used to survey the wilderness via triangulation (measuring angles to a location from existing points to calculate distances). The triangulation station on Stillwater Mountain is station number 77; it reads, “S.N.Y. Adirondack Survey: Verplanck Colvin Supt. 1882.”



After being found in NJ, the long-lost brass triangulation bolt was brought home to the site for the reopening of the fire tower. The bolt is now housed for safekeeping at the Ranger School in Cranberry Lake.



Jim Fox is congratulated by Harry Peck, as the two men reflect on the historical significance of the Station #77 triangulation bolt being returned to the Adirondacks.

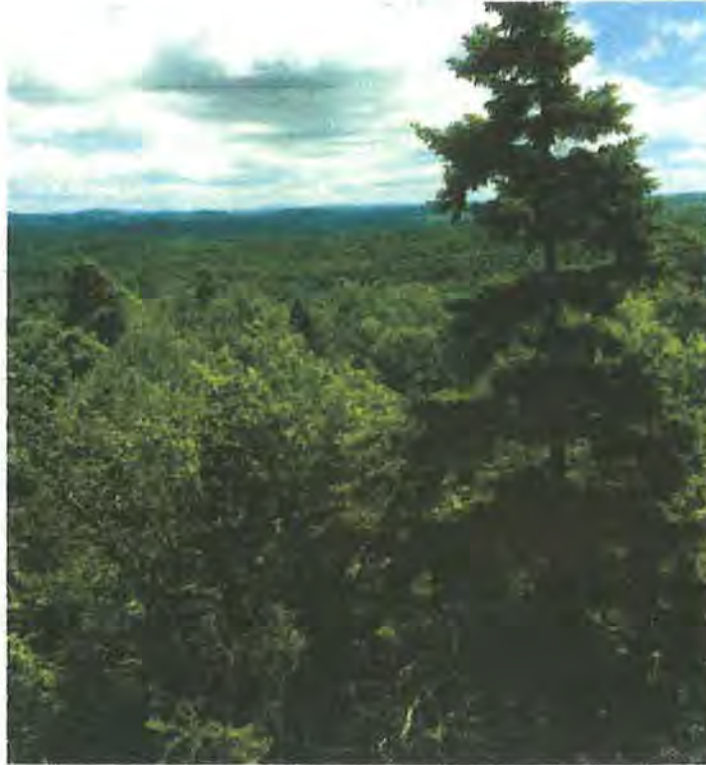
that I had found and returned it to its rightful home, was simply the best feeling of my life.”

The bolt was held in safekeeping until that Saturday in July. During his congratulatory remarks, Fox mentioned the importance of Stillwater Mountain to Colvin’s work and to the surprise of the assembled group presented the Colvin #77 brass bolt.

“It was pretty amazing,” said James M. Vianna, of Stillwater, the assistant superintendent to the Colvin Crew. “I had the opportunity to actually place it back in the hole. It fit like a glove. It’s the first time I have ever heard of an original bolt being found and placed back. As a land surveyor, I love history.”

Seeing the bolt brought tears of joy to many people at the event, including Fox’s right hand man, Harry Peck of Stillwater. “This is amazing, Jim! Simply amazing,” said Peck who repeatedly congratulated Fox with a slap on the back. To mark the historical significance, Fox and Peck posed for a photo with the bolt at the summit (see above).

The Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower did more than just rehabilitate the historic structure; they solved a puzzle and helped facilitate the return of an important piece of Adirondack history to the area.



The view from the cab of the Stillwater Mountain fire tower.

“This spring, I heard from three different sources at different times, that ‘Oh yeah, I heard that Station 77 was on Stillwater Mountain. And they put a replacement marker in its place.’ But nobody seemed to give me any verification that it was true,” said Fox. “I was looking for documentation. Enter Peter Nelson and Colvin Crew surveyors Mike Webb and Jim Vianna, who revealed that an unknown list of Primary Triangulation Stations was found in Colvin archives currently stored in the DEC central office in Albany. DEC surveyors Doug Hazelden and Rick Palmer scrutinized the list, verifying that Stillwater Mountain was the original location of Station 77.”

After the July ceremony, the original Stillwater Mountain Adirondack survey maker was brought back down and is now housed at the Colvin Crew museum at the Ranger School in Cranberry Lake. A replica of the brass bolt was recently reset on the mountain.

DEC plans to place a kiosk at the location to highlight the significance of the work of so many people over the years in the region. The beauty of the area speaks for itself, and the restored fire tower is the perfect place to see that beauty and an important piece of Adirondack history.

Andrea C. Pedrick is a citizen participation specialist in DEC’s Watertown office.

STILLWATER

A “New” Old Fire Tower Mountain

By William J. O’Hern

The trail sign said it all: “.9 miles to the summit.”

“Stillwater Fire Tower boasts views of the Adirondack High Peaks 60 miles to the east, and Tug Hill Plateau’s 195 wind turbines to the west,” the tri-fold color brochure announced at the kiosk/sign-in register just beyond the convenient parking lot along Big Moose Road.



Nancie Battaglia

Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower (FSFT) are rightly proud of their newly refurbished trail and tower. (For information on FSFT visit www.friendsofstillwaterfiretower.com). It’s a historic landmark. The 1919 tower was closed in 1988 and reopened in 2016.

“Finding Station 77,” by Andrea C. Pedick in the October 2016 *New York State Conservationist* tells about the restored eyes-in-the-sky tower. “In August 2015, Jim Fox and the members of the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower entered into a stewardship agreement with DEC [Department of Environmental Conservation] to restore the tower. DEC provided and transported most of the materials, and in conjunction with the landowner, Lyme Timber Company, coordinated access. FSFT did the yeoman’s work on the tower. Over the course of a year, they replaced all the steps and landings, installed safety fencing on all eight staircases, replaced the cab’s floor and windows, and scraped, wire-brushed and painted the entire tower.”

I had been looking for a short, easy hike with an exceptional view for a physically challenged but mobile friend. The pretty forest hike that passes through private property turned out to be perfect. It’s a fine foliage season hike, but go early: The trail and tower are closed yearly during hunting season, from the second Tuesday in October to December 20.

It is very much in the romantic tradition to picture a solitary uniformed forest fire observer ready to greet climbers at the summit, where the restored forty-seven-foot steel tower rises from the granite bedrock, but those days are gone.

My parents introduced me to hiking Adirondack peaks topped with towers when I was four years old. I imagined the observers lived somewhat like hermits, picking up a few crumbs of news from the outside world by radio and from the occasional visitors, but for the most part communing primarily with chipmunks. I knew their sole job was to spot forest fires, but I didn’t comprehend at the time how

lonely and boring the job must have been.

I remember that one time George Clair, the legendary Stillwater observer (1941 to 1964), commented, "more people visit fire towers every year," but he didn't know why. Perhaps it was the draw created when the Conservation Department (predecessor of today's DEC) hung out a sign, "Forest Fire Observatory; Public Welcome." They kept it visible long enough so that the public responded. Perhaps people became sportier than they used to be. Or, maybe they were just plain interested in fire towers.

I was. When Martin Podskoch published the two-volume *Adirondack Fire Towers: Their History and Lore, Northern Districts* (2001) and *Southern Districts* (2003), I couldn't wait to read about the histories of all the towers I had climbed over the decades and the lives of the observers who lived in tiny cabins at the bases of "their" mountain, or sometimes near the summit tower. In her September-October 2016 *Adirondack Life* article, "High Profile," Annie Stoltie summarizes the towers' significance: "Thirty-two of these steel structures remain on summits within the Blue Line. Though they're no longer used to spot fires..., they tell the story of our landscape and its keepers; they deliver us even closer to the clouds and, for some Adirondackers, trigger a passionate connection to a place worth caring about."

Visiting a fire tower doesn't take any particular training. All that is needed is a knowledge of where the trail starts, a willingness to put one foot ahead of the other for an hour or two, and a determination to keep going even after the trail gets steep. See the excerpt from ADK's new fire towers book on page 18 for directions to the Stillwater tower trailhead and a technical description of the trail.

Depending on your interests, the trail can get you on top inside a half hour if your lungs and legs hold out. My friend and I chose a more leisurely pace. Each time more energetic climbers approached, we moved to the side, allowing them to pass. The grade is gradual. There are exposed tree roots and some minor rocks to be watchful of at the beginning. A short distance beyond a stream that is bridged, the trail becomes well-maintained and eventually intersects with the original jeep road that goes all the way to the summit.

The trail is well-marked and easy to follow. "It's not difficult," my friend reported. It is not a stiff climb. There are no peeks at scenery until you get to the top. Once there, the lake-and-mountain-studded panorama from the top is thoroughly compensating. We felt the view is one of the best in the Old Forge-Inlet-Big Moose section for those willing to do a little driving.

The peak itself is rocky and spectacular, with cliffs that drop down from the tower. There is a picnic table off to the side and a metal sign to remind visitors of their responsibility. It says: "The Stillwater Fire Tower has been restored by volunteers for your enjoyment. Please do not deface their hard work. Enjoy the view."

With this summit tower visited, the Central Adirondack fire tower fancier must also climb to visit Rondaxe (Bald), Woodhull, and Blue Mountains. David Beetle, one of my favorite Adirondack writers, said this after visiting dozens of fire towers in the 1940s: "Of course, if you want to be cynical about it, you can say that if you've seen one tower you've seen them all. The view: trees and lakes; the tower: steel girders with a wooden staircase and a metal cabin atop, an American flag.... But if you want to you can become something of a connoisseur of fire towers and a collector of experiences...."

So that's it. Stillwater Mountain fire tower will be an annual experience I'll continue to share with my friend each fall before he returns to his Florida home. It's that worthy, and embarrassingly easy to climb.

Now, go visit a fire tower.



ADK member "Jay" O'Hern of Cleveland, New York, is the author of numerous books about the Adirondacks, with subject matter ranging from the history of logging to lumber camp recipes to the hermit Noah John Rondeau.



Take the Challenge!

Created and administered by ADK's Glens Falls-Saratoga Chapter, the Adirondack Mountain Club Fire Tower Challenge encourages you to visit twenty-three of thirty fire towers in the Adirondacks and Catskills, many restored and some staffed, as described in ADK's book *Views from on High: Fire Tower Trails in the Adirondacks and Catskills* (2nd edition, 2017). It's a great way to combine hiking with history and some guaranteed great views. Earn a patch, then add a rocker by completing the Winter Fire Tower Challenge. For details, guidelines, a list of the towers, and other information, visit / www.adk.org/play/earn-a-patch/fire-tower-challenge.

PLEASE NOTE

As of August 1, 2017, the following restrictions to Challenge towers and trails apply:

Loon Lake Mt.: Tower closed.

Wakely Mt.: Tower and trail closed; repairs planned for summer 2017.

Woodhull Mt.: Cab closed.
For updates, visit www.dec.ny.gov.

Establishing History: The Stillwater Firetower

By Jim Fox

Recently-restored, the Stillwater Fire Tower has been open to the public since July 2016. It was erected in 1919 after being hauled by horses up Stillwater Mountain from the Woods Lake Railroad about 2 miles away, a spur of the New York Central.

Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower, at an elevation of 2,264 feet, overlooks Stillwater Reservoir. It boasts unobstructed, 65 mile, panoramic views. On a clear day, Mount Marcy, Algonquin, and Whiteface can be seen to the east in the High Peaks region; Santanoni and Blue Mountain in the southeast loom in the distance; and 195 wind generators perched on the lip of the Tug Hill Plateau to the west produce power from Lake Ontario's westerly gusts.

In the Fire Tower cab, the restored map table with its hand drawn, 1920 panoramic map, is as authentic as it gets! The table was designed to be higher than the bottom of the windows so the observer could sight a forest fire's smoke using an alidade, a device that allows you to sight a distant object and straightedge with a telescopic sight. The tabletop slides so windows can be opened or closed.

Stillwater Mountain does not have written or oral history of any importance ... that is until very recently. It not only has fabulous views but now is on the map as a historic site.

Stillwater Mountain had at least three towers before the present steel one: a log fire tower from 1912, a signal tower with an observation platform rebuilt in 1908, and, in the 1880s, an unmanned tower with a revolving sunlight reflector atop.

Research found that Stillwater Mountain was a "Primary Triangulation Station" in Verplanck Colvin's Report on a Topographical Survey of the Adirondack Wilderness of New York. A copper benchmark was embedded in the summit's bedrock in 1882. It was pried out and carried off as a souvenir long ago. Today, only the two-inch diameter borehole can be seen underneath the tower. Stolen history. In 2013, Army veteran Kyle Kristiansen, with his metal detector, unearthed that marker in a field ... In New Jersey! Its imprint: "N.Y.S. Adirondack Survey, Verplanck Colvin Supt. 1882. Sta. 77", with an arrow pointing north. Numerous searches in the state archives in Albany finally found that Station 77 was on Stillwater Mountain! On September 12, 2016 drilling and resetting of a new marker took place thus re-establishing Stillwater Mountain as Verplanck Colvin's Station 77. This was made possible by the efforts of the Department of Conservation, Real Property Division surveyors from Region Six and Herkimer, the Colvin Crew headquarters at the NYS Ranger School at Wanakena and Friends

of Stillwater Fire Tower.

Kristiansen gave the marker to the Colvin Crew, an avid group of surveyors who ensure its safekeeping at the SUNY - ESF Ranger School in Wanakena, New York.

Stillwater's ignoble claim to fame had been the lowest recorded temperature in New York State: -52 degrees - yes, minus 52 degrees fahrenheit - in 1934, (Old Forge disputably tied the record in 1979). Now Stillwater stands alongside Poke-O-Moonshine, Whiteface and Azure, to name a few, as a historical destination with views to match! And if you're into renewable energy, Stillwater Reservoir beneath the tower feeds fifteen hydroelectric plants on the Beaver and Black Rivers going west, and over your shoulder, the Maple Ridge Wind Farm catches Lake Ontario's breezes coming east.

The tower is on private land owned by Lyme Timber, and is leased to a hunting club. The DEC has an easement allowing public access to the trail and tower. It is closed during big game season from the second Tuesday in October until December 20.

The tower can be reached via the Big Moose Road in the Town of Webb, or the Stillwater Road out of Lowville. There is a state boat launch 2.5 miles away that offers access to the Stillwater Reservoir with 46 first-come-first-served campsites. It is also the home of the Stillwater Hotel with restaurant and lodging, Stillwater Shop with store, gas, and boat rentals, and a riverboat and car ferry to Beaver River, all run by The Norridgewock.

Other towers that have recently undergone some restoration including St. Regis and Hurricane Mountains. St. Regis Mountain had a new roof installed in late July with the help of Department of Environmental Conservation and volunteers from the Friends of St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower. The trail to the summit of St. Regis is 3.3 miles and rewards you with a view of over 30 lakes as well as the High Peaks.

Hurricane Mountain has recently had the wooden stairs and landings replaced along with protective fencing and added supports.

We thank the public funding in DEC Region Six along with the Fire Tower Friends groups who have a passion for keeping the history of the towers alive and for helping to make them safe and accessible again. The countless volunteer hours are appreciated. Our Keep It LOCAL campaign supports fire tower restoration and will be making a donation to help with future support.

Please consider a donation to one of the following:

www.friendsofstillwaterfiretower.com

www.friendsofstregis.org

www.hurricanefiretower.org



The Rising Elevation of Stillwater Mountain

 adirondackalmanack.com 2016/08/08/photography-essay-stillwater-mountains-1882-survey-benchmarks-1882-photos-by-lyle/

August 8, 2016

At an elevation of 2,264 feet, Stillwater Fire Tower in northern Herkimer County has never been a beacon for tourists. It's not even modestly high compared to the 46 Adirondack peaks over 4,000 feet.

Since 1912, Fire Observers on Stillwater Mountain needed a high tolerance for isolation and resistance to boredom. Until the fire tower closed in 1988, the annual number visitors ranged from 145 to its record of 618. Before the mid-'50s, when the Big Moose Road was completed, the only access to the tower trail was by boat from the Stillwater Reservoir. Even then, only hard-core hikers who would tolerate eight or twelve miles of dirt road from Number Four or Big Moose Station, enjoyed the tower's views.

Nonetheless, views from Stillwater Fire tower have far surpassed more popular towers. Stillwater offers clear views of Mount Morris (Big Tupper), Whiteface (66 miles distant), Santanoni, and Mount Marcy. And unlike other Adirondack mountains, Stillwater can see 195 wind turbines on the edge of the Tug Hill Plateau that captures Lake Ontario's westerlies.



A volunteer group, Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower, (FSFT), partnered with the DEC in 2009 to restore the tower, but without financial backing, plans and enthusiasm faded. Then in 2015, financial support for the purchase of all materials and their transport to the tower was assumed by DEC Region 6.

With renewed energy, volunteers worked four days in the fall of 2015, spearheaded by Stillwater locals. In spring 2016, five work days saw the restoration completed, and a "Grand ReOpening" took place Independence Day weekend. Over 250 people attended, eager to take in views of the High Peaks and Maple Ridge Wind Farm from the tower and also to hear why Stillwater now calls itself a historic site.

In December 2014, two articles by Pete Nelson about the discovery of an 1882 copper survey marker from Station 77 of Verplanck Colvin's Adirondack Survey, were published in the *Adirondack Almanack*. Kyle Kristiansen found the marker with his metal detector in 2013 in a lawn – in New Jersey! The location of Station 77, however, remained a mystery.

In February 2015, Jim Vianna, a surveyor and head of the "Colvin Crew" found a previously undiscovered list of Colvin's Primary Triangulation Stations in the DEC archives. On that list was Station 77, Stillwater Mountain.

No one seems to have known the history dating back to the 1880s. No one noticed the hole bored into the bedrock beneath the tower that once held the 1882 survey marker. Visitors only recall seeing the two National Geodetic Survey benchmarks installed in the 1942. No oral history today explains that borehole once held a survey marker imprinted: N.Y.S. ADIRONDACK SURVEY. VERPLANCK COLVIN SUPT. 1882 Sta. No 77. The original Station 77 marker found by Kyle Kristiansen in New Jersey is now in safe keeping at the Wanakena Ranger School.



Unrecognized by recent generations, Stillwater Mountain was a Primary Triangulation Station. Verplanck Colvin made periodic Reports of the Adirondack Survey to the New York State Legislature from the 1870s through the 1890s. In his 1883 report, Colvin details that West Mountain near Raquette Lake, and Woodhull Mountain near Woodhull Lake were established Primary Triangulation Stations. To the north and west, Colvin's survey crews had difficulty locating mountains high enough to easily pinpoint. Finally, he writes, "a mere blue, hazy particle, barely visible through a notch in the forest-covered hills ... proved to be our old acquaintance — Stillwater mountain on the Beaver river".

The New York State Digital Archives in Albany contain an image with an obtuse title: "Central Adirondack Triangulation Network Diagram with Primary Triangulation Station Names." This "network diagram" is actually a map. Strong magnification reveals a gem of historical importance. It is a beautifully detailed, hand drawn map of the Adirondacks: from Lower Saranac Lake and the Great Corner in the north, down to Speculator and Forestport in the south, and from Tug Hill in the west, to Fort William Henry and Schroon Lake in the east.

There, in red ink, are ruler straight lines connecting Woodhull Mt., West Mt., and in tiny delicate script, "Stillwater Mt.", just as described in Colvin's 1883 Report. Stillwater Mt. is also triangulated with Mt. Cloud-Cap (now Lewey Mt.), Mt. Morris (Big Tupper). Gomer Hill on the edge of the Tug Hill Plateau and a hill north of Croghan, (both outside the Adirondack Park which was not created until 1895), were also triangulated with Stillwater.

This map has no date or identified cartographer, and the Primary Triangulation Stations are not identified by number. It is speculated that this map dates to 1882, Colvin's most productive year in his survey of the Adirondacks.

Stillwater Mountain has been the site of two fire towers, and at least two signal towers. The newest fire tower is the recently restored steel tower from 1919. The first fire tower was a log observation tower from 1912 that was constructed over an earlier signal tower, thus, resembling a "double decker".

That earlier signal tower was a 25 foot tower constructed in 1908, according to the *Utica Observer Dispatch*. Built by Stillwater residents with observation platform and flag atop, it replaces a tower erected "by State engineers" that had fallen down "several years" before.



The earliest tower of at least four towers on Stillwater Mt. was likely an unmanned signal tower. Under the present-day steel tower, is the bore hole that once held the Station 77 copper survey marker, or bolt. No tell tale "feet" or drill holes for a surveyor's transit were found on the summit's bedrock. We can see four holes holding steel in lead, in the shape of a square with the empty marker hole in the middle. These are what remain of steel eyes for anchoring cables to hold a signal tower steady against the elements. Atop a peaked tower, anchored into the bedrock, and similar to ones that Colvin drew in his Reports, spun a revolving pinwheel type signal that reflected the sun as it spun in the breeze. A surveyor looking through a transit or theodolite from Woodhull Mt., West Mt., Cloud-Cap Mt., or Mount Morris, could see the Stillwater Mt. signal flashing in the sunlight atop Signal Station 77.

So, multiple towers for both surveying and forest fire observation have stood on Stillwater Mountain since 1882, when Verplanck Colvin, Superintendent of the Adirondack Survey, established Primary Triangulation Station 77 on Stillwater Mountain.

Stillwater Mountain is now elevated in status among mightier peaks as a historic site, and now we can brag about our views and our history.

Stillwater Fire Tower in 2016 has already broken the annual visitors record. On opening day, over 250 people

visited, and two weeks later there was another 500+. How's that for raising our elevation!!!

Photos from above: 1912-18 First fire tower on Stillwater Mt. Built atop an Adirondack Survey signal tower, courtesy Maridee Rutledge; Original 1882 Station 77 copper bolt stolen from Stillwater Mt. found in NJ in 2013, and returned to NYS DEC in 2015, courtesy FSFT; and Stillwater Signal tower rebuilt in 1908, with Carol Fox's grandparents, Clarence and Louise Churchill Shaver, and great-grandfather Henry Churchill in 1910, courtesy Shaver-Churchill album.

Rebirth of a fire tower

■ Thanks to volunteers, Stillwater Mountain's 47-foot edifice is open to the public again.

By JOHN PITARRESI

Cathy Percy stands in the cabin of the Stillwater Mountain Fire Tower. She and her visitors are forty-seven feet above the footings set into the bedrock at the top of the mountain.

The peak itself is a modest 2,264 feet above sea level, but from the cabin, you can see forever in every direction.

Outrageous. Jaw-dropping. Stunning. It is difficult to find just the right words to describe the vistas available from the forty-seven-foot tower, built in 1919 but out of commission since 1988.

Stillwater's tower was climbable for the adventurous the last three decades, but now it truly

is in proper shape to welcome visitors, thanks to the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower.

The volunteer group and the state Department of Environmental Conservation joined forces a few years back to refurbish the structure and improve the mile-long trail from Big Moose Road. Marked by blue disks, the trail climbs 525 feet. The trail starts on Forest Preserve, but the summit is owned by Lyme Timber. The state holds an easement for the portion of the trail that crosses private land.

A spirited dedication ceremony was held on the mountain July 2, with nearly three hundred volunteers, well-wishers, sightseers, and DEC officials attending.

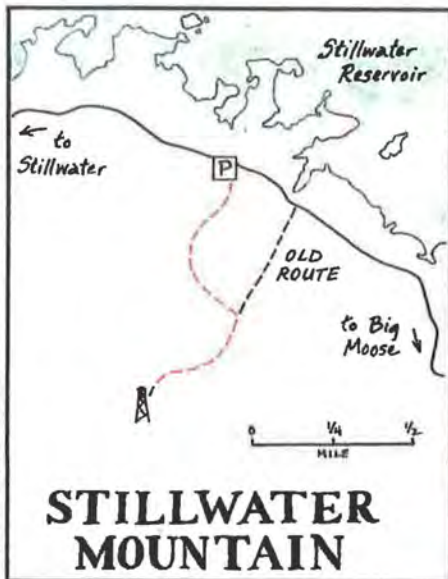
RIGHT: Hikers make their way up the Stillwater Mountain fire tower.

BELOW: Retired Forest Ranger Terry Perkins, right; Bob Hough, center; and Bob Lehman take in the view from the cab during the grand reopening of the tower.



PHOTOS BY NANCY L. FORD





STILLWATER MOUNTAIN

DIRECTIONS: The trailhead for the tower is on Big Moose Road, 8.5 miles northwest of Big Moose Station and 2.0 miles southeast of the intersection with Stillwater Road. The trail, marked with blue disks, is about a mile through dense woods and climbs 525 feet. The summit is owned by Lyme Timber, but the DEC owns an easement for the trail, which starts on public land.

Percy was one of those celebrating. She grew up in the area, and her grandfather, Ken Hite, was one of fifteen fire observers who staffed the tower during its eight decades of service. She was one of the many volunteers who helped make the project a reality, partly in hope of giving the community of Stillwater something to crow about, partly to make it a tourist destination.

As she spoke with visitors, Percy could point



Crowds gather for the grand reopening celebration.

to Whiteface Mountain, sixty miles to the east. The 190 windmills on Tug Hill, past Lowville, were easily visible twenty-five miles or so to the west. Hundreds of thousands of acres of forest, rivers, ponds, and lakes could be seen in every direction. On a clear day, Algonquin Peak and Mount Marcy, the state's two highest peaks, also are in view.

A circular table map, a faithful copy of the 1920 original, helps line up landmarks along the entire horizon. The whole world, or a big hunk of it, seems within your grasp from the cabin.

Outrageous, jaw-dropping, stunning, indeed. "I've spent my whole life up here," Percy said, meaning in the area and occasionally in the tower. "We used to drop [toy] parachutes down from the cabin. It's a nice spot to bring visitors. ... This is a great day."

Percy and scores of volunteers helped make it so.

She painted the cabin, including the roof, which she did with the aid of a harness. Harry

STILLWATER, continued on **Page 55**



Jim Fox holds the original 1882 survey bolt, recently discovered in a field in New Jersey.

Unearthing history

Kyle Kristiansen was using a metal-detector in a field in the town of Allamuchy, New Jersey, in the fall of 2013 when he dug up a heavy chunk of copper. It was a disk about two inches across and had a stem.

The piece had engraving on it: "S.N.Y. ADIRONDACK SURVEY: VERPLANCK COLVIN SUPT. 1882" and "NO. 77." Kristiansen thought it might be historically significant. Eventually, he reached John Warren of the *Adirondack Almanack* and Adirondack researcher Pete Nelson of Keene.

Nelson, with the help of Jim Vianna of the Colvin Crew, a group of land surveyors with an interest in Verplanck Colvin,

identified the piece as a triangulation bolt that had been placed at the summit of Stillwater Mountain by "S. Snell," one of Colvin's assistants, during the historic survey of the Adirondacks in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The bolt had been missing for many years. Thanks to Kristiansen, it is now in the possession of the Colvin Crew in Wanaakena, but Jim Fox was able to display it at the dedication ceremony for the restored Stillwater Mountain fire tower.

Fox said the bolt will remain with the Colvin Crew, but the Friends of the Stillwater Fire Tower hope to have a replica made and installed on the mountain.

—John Pitarresi

STILLWATER, continued from **Page 37**

Peck, who works in the welding business, was able to secure much of the gear needed for the improvements, including replacements of out-of-date, century-old nuts and bolts.

Jim Fox, a retired school psychologist and Stillwater resident, headed the group, and in a very passionate way.

Fox's interest was piqued by a 1910 photo of his wife's ancestors—her great-grandfather Henry Churchill and grandparents Clarence and Louise Churchill Shaver—on an earlier, wooden tower. Stillwater Mountain had been used as a triangulation point by Verplanck Colvin during his survey of the Adirondacks nearly thirty years before, and it is believed there were at least a couple of signal towers before the first wooden fire-observer tower was constructed in 1912.

The photo was a taking-off point for the effort by the Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower group to rehabilitate the steel tower, honor its history, and bring some renown—and additional visitors—to Stillwater.

"We're the northernmost community in Herkimer County," Fox said. "We're the ugly step-cousin to Old Forge. Our claim to fame is that we had the record for the lowest temperature in New York State. That was minus fifty-two in 1934. Then Old Forge tied it in 1979."

Apparently, a few people in Stillwater—you can't say a lot because even with summer residents the population is sparse, to say the least—weren't happy about that.

Now, with a solid, safe platform that allows people a panoramic view of much of northern New York, they have another reason to be happy.

"It's the families that have been going up there for a hundred years," Fox said. "As a kid, you don't realize what a great experience it was. ... To make that experience come alive for family and friends, that's what it's all about."

Everyone certainly seemed to love it on dedication day. Remsen's Erin Hamlin, the Olympic Bronze Medal winner in the luge, was there with her parents and brother. Art Van Vechten of Westmoreland, who belongs to a hunting



PHOTOS BY NANCY L. FORD

ABOVE: A display shows the history of various fire towers that once stood atop Stillwater Mountain.

BELOW: The newly restored cab affords a stunning view of Stillwater Reservoir.

club down the road, climbed up with his adult daughter, Maureen. He has hiked to the tower occasionally over the last thirty years. Maureen said it was a "bit of a pain" to walk up to the tower but well worth it.

"There are great views," she said. "You can see Blue Mountain, the windmills over in Lowville."

Annie Kellogg, a Lowville native who lives in Los Angeles, still spends time in the region, and she and her friend Mo Marcovicci were thrilled about the tower. "I first came here when I was three years old," Kellogg said. "I was really excited when I saw it."

Terry Perkins was the forest ranger at Still-

water for many years and knew many of the observers, including the colorful George Clair, who was known to have a drink now and then. Perkins spent a good deal of opening day in the cabin pointing out the sights and regaling visitors with stories.

Henry Baxter and his wife, Laurie, of Lyonsdale, were there, too. Baxter is the great-nephew of George Clair. They wanted to see the tower, of course, but they also wanted to meet Perkins.

"He's one of the few people left who knew my great-uncle," Baxter said. "I remember coming here years ago and seeing George's mountain of beer cans."

DEC Region 6 Director Judy Drabicki said she was gratified that the volunteers and DEC worked together so well and hoped it would be something of a model for similar efforts in the future.

"It's not just about the tower," she said. "It's about cooperation. This is so far beyond my wildest dreams." ■





Oct. 26, 2017

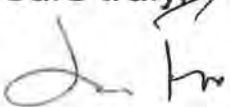
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Paul Loether, Keeper of National Register
1849 C St, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Re: Stillwater Mt. Fire Observ. Sta. Webb, NY
NRIS Ref#MP100001624, Appeal letter 9/6/17

Dear Mr. Loether:

I enclose additional information in support of accepting steel eye bolt anchors (photo RCCO I in appeal letter), as "contributing objects" to the Colvin Survey Tower Primary Triangulation Station, as evidence that the historic recognition of this tower dates from 1882 and thereafter.

Please refer to the enclosed photo of the **Mt. Cloud Cap Triangulation Station** drawing from State Land Survey State of New York - 1898, Verplanck Colvin, edited by N. VanValkenburgh. Note the description is dated 1882, of the Adirondack summit that was a primary triangulation with the West Mt. and Woodhull Mt. Stations. In the center left of the drawing is the notation: "*Feet secured by Iron ringbolts in the rock*", just as pictured under the 1919 Stillwater Fire Observation Tower. From the same reference is a photo of the Woodhull Mt. Station, 1885, triangulated with Stillwater.

Yours truly,


James Fox, Organizer, Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower

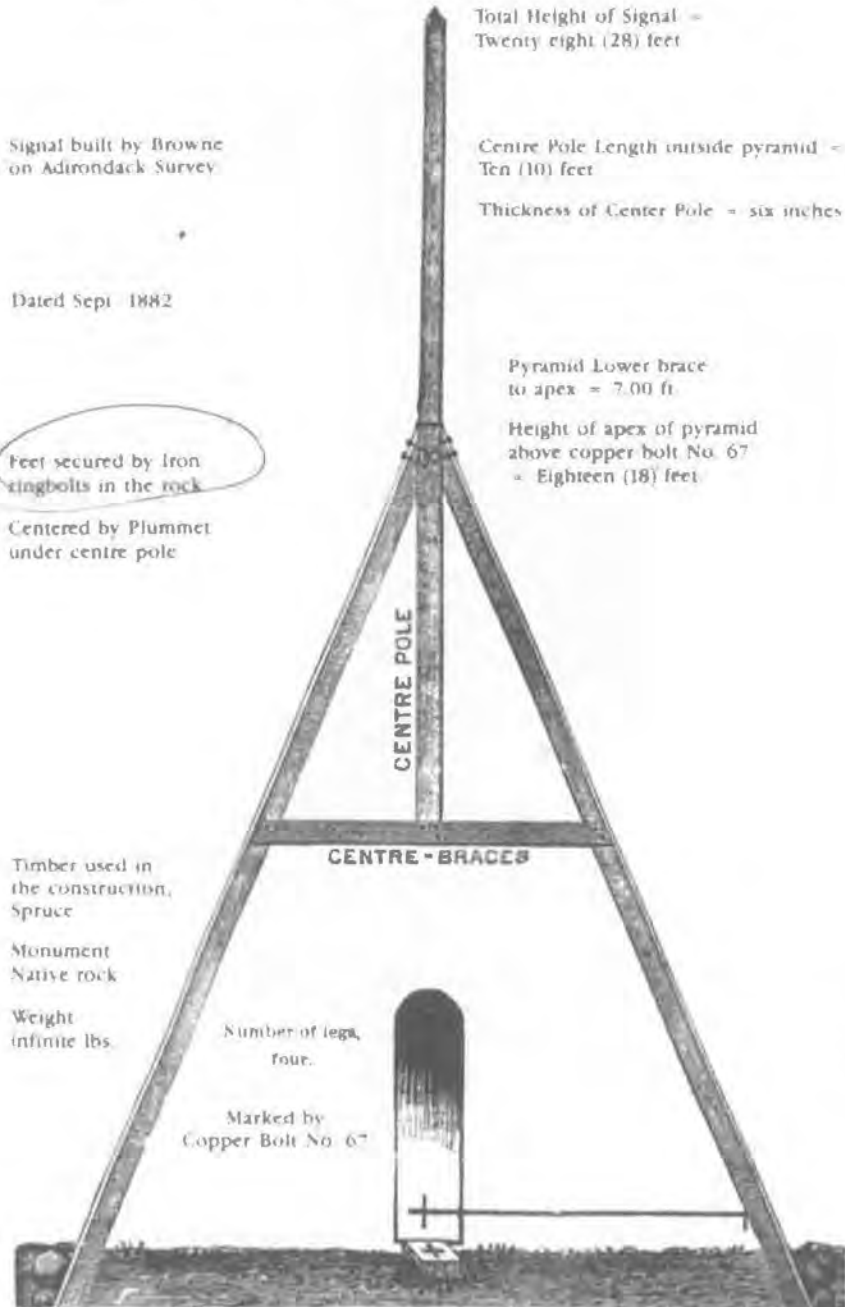
Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower
PO Box 753
Lowville, NY 13367

fsft@frontier.com
www.friendsofstillwaterfiretower.com
Facebook: Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower

NRIS #MP100001624: Stillwater Mt. Fire Obsv. Sta., Webb NY. 10/26/17
 Addendum to appeal letter 10/6/17

STATE OF NEW YORK,
 DEPARTMENT OF LAND SURVEYS,
 VERPLANCK COLVIN, SUPERINTENDENT.

Signal called Mt. Cloud Cap Triangulation Station (called also Mt. Colvin)



Signal & Field Observatory on the Summit of Woodhull Mt., Oct. 1885.

Woodhull Mt. Signal Station 1885, triangulated with Stillwater Mt. Station in 1882.

Mt. Cloud Cap Triangulation Station 1882: "Feet secured by iron ringbolts in the rock".



FRIENDS OF STILLWATER
FIRE TOWER
150 MALLARD COVE RD.
LOWVILLE, NY 13367
PO BOX 753

SYRACUSE NY 130

27 OCT 2017 PM 3:1

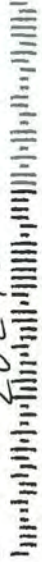


National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Attn Paul Loether, Keeper of Nat'l Register
1849 C St., NW, Mail Stop 7228
WASHINGTON DC 20240

DC

20240

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MP 10-1624

NOV - 1 2017

11-1-17

H32(7228)

Mr. James Fox
Organizer, Friends of Stillwater Fire Tower
P.O. Box 753
Lowville, NY 13367

Dear Mr. Fox:

Thank you for your letter concerning the Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on 9/18/2017. Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station was listed as part of the Fire Observation Stations of New York State Forest Preserve MPS.

In my Supplementary Listing Record (SLR) for the Observation Station I stated the information provided in the document concerning Verplank Colvin Survey was not part of the Fire Observation Stations of New York State Forest Preserve MPS (Multiple property) which the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO) nominated the Observation Station under.

In the Multiple property there are three associated property types:

F. Associated Property Types

Introduction F-1

1. Steel Towers F-1-7
2. Observer Cabins and Outbuildings F-8-11
3. Trail and Road Features F-12

For the eyebolts and drilled hole (remnants of an earlier tower) to be contributing objects, the information provided needs to meet National Register registration requirements of one of those property types or the in individual nomination have sufficient information to be contributing to the National Register. Neither the Stillwater Fire Observation Station National Register nomination nor the Fire Observation Stations of New York State Forest Preserve MPS had sufficient information to document the objects as contributing.

The objects may be contributing if sufficient documentation is submitted to the NYSHPO and they submit the additional documentation to the Stillwater Fire Observation Station National Register nomination to the National Park Service. I suggest you contact the New York State Historic Preservation office (NYSHPO) at:

Daniel Mackay,
Deputy Commissioner
New York State Division for Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, NY 12188-0189

Thank you for your interest in the National Register of Historic Places and the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

Alexis Abernathy

Alexis Abernathy, Historian
National Register of Historic Places

cc: NY/SHPO

bcc: 7228

Basic File Retained In 7228

FNP:AAbernathy:OP:10/27/2017:S:NR/Alexis/letters/Stillwater_Fire_Tower_Letter_NY