Catskill Fire Towers

BALSAM LAKE
HUNTER
OVERLOOK
RED HILL
TREMMER

A climb back in time

In another era, observers scanned the mountains from these fire towers, looking for signs of forest fires. Today, New York state uses more modern methods, but the towers now offer unparalleled 360-degree views of the Catskill Mountains and beyond for hikers.

Hardworking volunteer groups, together with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and nonprofit organizations including the Catskill Center, completed restoration of the towers in 2001, making them ready for a new role and new visitors.


Each summer, thousands of people from all over the world visit the towers to enjoy the awesome beauty and splendor of their surroundings. Volunteer interpreters welcome them, sharing the history and lore of the towers and mountains.

Catskill Fire Tower Passport Program

Earn a Catskill Fire Towers Badge! Hike one (or more) of the Catskill fire towers this summer, then log your hike on a Morgan Outdoors Fire Tower Passport, available at Morgan Outdoors in Livingston Manor at 46 Main Street or online at www.nynjtc.org/catskillfiretowers. Turn in your completed passport at Morgan Outdoors by October 13, 2014 and collect your badge. You'll also be entered in a drawing to win prizes, including a handy pair of Nikon Travelite Binoculars. The Catskill Fire Tower Passport is a joint program of Morgan Outdoors, the Watershed Post and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

Volunteers in the Catskills

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference volunteers and member organizations maintain hundreds of miles of trails and over two dozen lean-to shelters in the Catskill Forest Preserve and along the Long Path north of the park boundary.

Learn about trail and lean-to maintenance, trail crew work, trainings and workshops, conservation and advocacy efforts, events, and other Catskills-related news by visiting www.nynjtc.org/catskills.

Catskill Fire Tower Information

For more information about the Catskill Fire Tower Project, including the history of the towers, directions and photos, and ways that you can volunteer or donate to support the project, visit www.catskillfiretowers.org.

Emergency Phone Number

In case of emergency, call the Department of Environmental Conservation Dispatch Center at 877.457.5680.

Balsam Lake Mountain Fire Tower
Town of Hardemburgh – Elevation 3,723 feet

The first fire tower on the top of a mountain in New York State was placed at the summit of Balsam Lake Mountain in 1887 to protect and watch over the lands of the privately owned Balsam Lake Club. The existing 47-foot steel tower was erected in 1919, was closed by the State in 1988, and fell into a state of disrepair until 1999. Thanks to the hard work of State employees and volunteers, the tower officially re-opened on June 3, 2000, and it is staffed on weekends throughout the summer.

Directions:

Take the blue marked Dry Brook Ridge Trail from the Balsam Lake Trailhead Parking Area to the intersection with the red marked Balsam Lake Mountain Trail, follow this red marked trail to the tower, then back down to the Dry Brook Ridge Trail and back down to the trailhead for a 4.15 mile moderately-difficult round trip hike. Visit hikes.nynjtc.org for more detailed trail and driving directions.

Love Trails?

Text ‘HIKE’ to 20222 to Donate $5

Donations support trail work by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

Visit www.nynjtc.org/catskills for information about the full-featured Catskill Trails map set and additional resources including suggested hikes, campgrounds and public transportation.