

## New Hampshire Chapter report for 2023

The New Hampshire Chapter of the Forest Fire Lookout Association began and ended the year with 31 members. At the end of 2022 I listed 32 members but a second member passed away in 2022 and I did not learn of it until well into 2023. During the year one member transferred to the Maine Chapter while another chose not to renew. Two new members joined during the year, both NH Lookout Watchmen so we now have seven of the 12 lookout personnel as members. The year started with 18 Plus members and 13 Regular and ended the year with 16 Plus and 15 Regular members. During the year FFLA NH Chapter member Patrick Jeffery did some hiking in northern New Hampshire on the Cohos Trail then contacted The Cohos Trail Association in regard to news we heard that the TCTA was looking into rehabilitating the Deer Mountain Fire tower in Pittsburg. Several years ago they reopened one of the former trails to the tower. Patrick confirmed they are interested in rehabilitating the tower and he offered help from the FFLA. First, TCTA must receive permission from the State and present landowner to move forward with the project, then have an engineering assessment done. The tower was operated into the mid-1970's then closed. Equipment was removed in the early 1980's and the cab burned by the State around 1985. At the same time the stairs and landings were burned and the stair tread supports smashed making ascent of the tower quite hazardous. It is likely that TCTA will construct an open observation viewing deck on the top of the tower rather than an enclosed cab.

While the State had a normal spring season the weather turned wet in June resulting in a year with above average precipitation and times of flooding. Most fire activity was during April and May.

49 fires burned 58.4 acres during the year, all human caused. The White Mountain National Forest had 3 human caused fires which burned an insignificant amount of acreage. These statistics were very favorable compared to 2022. Both the State and WMNF sent personnel to Canadian Provinces to help suppress fires there as well as to other States experiencing fire activity.

The wet weather delayed tower rehabilitation work, painting and cab replacement at Mt. Belknap and Mt. Cardigan. Work at Belknap cost \$712,000 and Cardigan \$436,000 not including contingencies. Materials and equipment were airlifted to each site and construction debris airlifted out. Cab walls were airlifted to each site, then airlifted into place on the towers followed by prefabricated roofs set in place on the walls. Final costs are not yet available. Both towers are expected to be operating in 2024.

The State is soliciting bids for tower work and cab replacements at Federal Hill and Pitcher Mountain and hope to have this work done during 2024.

Happy Trails,

Chris Haartz