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## Leonard Hill Fire Tower

*Linda Nowerla*

Oh, the view from the top is fabulous. Can anyone remember it? I remember a long climb up the stairs and arriving at the top out of breath. The last forest ranger to man it was always pleasant (he passed away recently) and would explain how he could calculate distances on the map and could call in any suspicious smoke on the telephone.

Unfortunately, the Leonard Hill Fire Tower has been closed to the public for many years now and was rumored at one time to be dismantled. It currently sits as a lonely sentinel on top of the mountain. But there are many people near and far that are interested in restoring a piece of history. It is the tallest tower in New York State. There are also several people in the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) that would like to see it restored. Other towers in the state have been restored, the one in Stamford and on Hunter Mountain being the closest. Volunteers are ready to work on doing necessary repairs and site clean up. So why is nothing happening?

Progress has been at a standstill for the last few years. The first step in the restoration is to ensure that the steel frame is still sound and capable of carrying the weight of people safely. (I've heard of people climbing on it now!) If it is, then the stairs would need to be replaced. The site would have to be cleaned up with trash removed. The steel would have to be painted. However, it seems that that first step is insurmountable. Since the tower is owned by the state and is situated on state land, the state must first certify the condition of the steel. And it seems that the right people just can't get around to doing it. So time passes on. The tower just waits and slowly deteriorates.

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For information or to volunteer your services, you can write Linda at [Linda.Nowerle@gilboahome.com](mailto:Linda.Nowerle@gilboahome.com)

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