

Go a little higher with the Fire Tower Challenge

Inside this brochure is a list of seven Hamilton County fire towers. All but one of the fire towers are restored – the cab on the Pillsbury tower is closed.

Get Your Patch!

To complete the challenge and receive the full-color patch, you must hike to seven of the towers, visiting the eighth tower at Adirondack Experience, the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake (optional).

Be sure to document the date and fill out a comment for each. Climbing to the top of each tower is not required to receive a patch. All of the hikes are moderately difficult to difficult. The easiest trail is Owls Head Mountain and the most difficult is Snowy Mountain.



Challenge Complete: Register Online

When you've completed the challenge, register online by scanning this QR code. Any donation will go directly to local trail improvements in Hamilton County.



Scan to register!

Fire Tower Challenge Map



Visit ExperienceOurAdirondacks.com

Learn more about Hamilton County hikes, attractions, paddles, lodging, and travel!

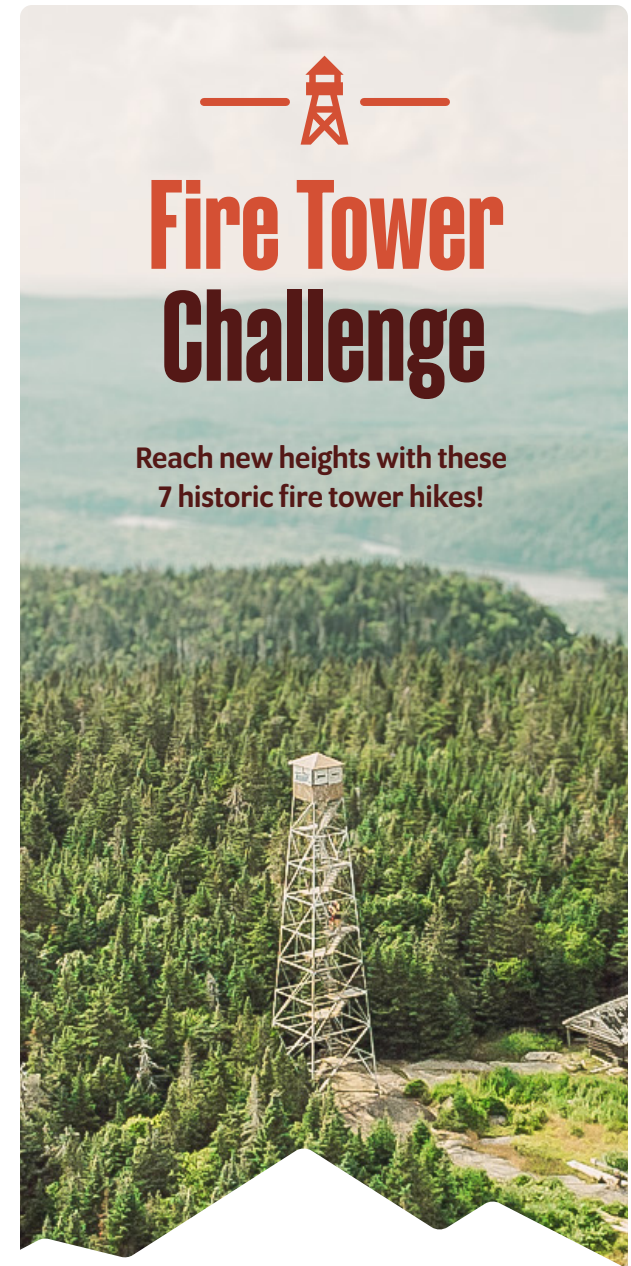
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Fire Tower Challenge

Reach new heights with these 7 historic fire tower hikes!



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7 Fire Towers



Blue Mountain Tower

Model: 35' Aermotor LS-40 | Elevation: 3,760'
Status: restored and open to the public

Blue Mountain's fire tower is one of the best known and most visited. Built from wood in 1911 and replaced with the current tower in 1917, it closed in 1990, and was one of the last operating towers in the state. Volunteers adopted and restored it.

Location: 1.8 mi. northeast of Blue Mountain Lake

The trailhead is 0.5 mi. north of Adirondack Experience, the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake on Route 30, on the right.

Trail Description: 2.2 mi. | +1,550'

The first part of the trail meanders and is easy, the second half is steep and rocky toward the summit, where there are spectacular views from both the ground and the tower.

Date Completed:

Buck Mountain Tower

Model: 60' Aermotor LS-40 | Elevation: 2,416'
Status: restored and open courtesy of a private land lease with Cedar Heights Timber LLC

The original tower was built out of wood, then replaced with a steel tower. The material was hauled up by a dog team which included St. Lunaire, a pup who was with Admiral Byrd on his first trip to the South Pole.

Location: 8.7 mi. northwest of Long Lake

Take Route 30 north from the village and go 6.4 mi. past the bridge to Sabattis Circle Road, Route 10. The trailhead is on the right around 2.3 mi. from Route 30.

Trail Description: 1.2 mi. | +500'

The upper section, beginning at 0.75 mi., is steep, but there are stone steps and hand-built stairs. Summit views include Little Tupper Lake, the Whitney Wilderness, Blue Mountain, Owls Head Mountain, and High Peaks in the distance.

Date Completed:

Makomis Tower

Model: 40' Aermotor LL-25 | Elevation: N/A
Status: restored and open to the public

Originally built in 1911 near the town of North Hudson, and resurrected in 2022 in Speculator, it was one of the first steel towers built in the Adirondacks. It is easily accessible as it does not require a hike.

Location:

Located in the heart of Speculator, near the entrance to the Sacandaga Pathway, on Route 30 just before entering Speculator from the south, opposite the shore of Lake Pleasant.

Date Completed:

Owls Head Mountain Tower

Model: 35' Aermotor LS-40 | Elevation: 2,748'
Status: restored and open to the public

The original wooden tower was erected in 1911. In 1919, it was replaced with a 35' steel tower. The tower was closed in 1970, but has reopened to hikers.

Location: 4 mi. southwest of Long Lake

Take Route 30 north from the village and go 0.3 mi. past the bridge. Make a left on Endion Rd. The trailhead is on the right on a curve in the road, 1.6 mi. from Route 30.

Trail Description: 3.1 mi. | +1,114'

Relatively difficult and steep in the last mile. Views of the Fishing Brook Range to the southeast and the High Peaks to the north, with remnants of the observer's cabin along the way.

Date Completed:

Pillsbury Mountain Tower

Model: 60' Aermotor LS-40 | Elevation: 3,597'
Status: open to climb, cab is closed to the public

The original wood tower was built in 1918. The landowner would provide an observer during dry weather. In 1924 it was changed to a steel tower. The tower was closed around 1985 and awaits restoration.

Location:

9 mi. northwest of Speculator. Take Route 30 north for 8.2 mi. Past Mason Lake, take a left and drive 3.2 mi. to Perkins Clearing. Turn right and park at Sled Harbor, 5.1 mi. from Route 30. The trailhead is a 1.2 mi. hike up the road.

Trail Description: 1.6 mi. | +1,480'

It requires a moderately difficult climb to reach the summit. Views of Lake Pleasant and Sacandaga Lake can be seen to the south, with Snowy Mountain fire tower and High Peaks to the north.

Date Completed:

Snowy Mountain Tower

Model: 42' Aermotor LS-40 | Elevation: 3,899'
Status: restored and open to the public

A wooden tower was erected in 1909, and replaced in 1917 with a steel tower. In 1933, the tower height was increased to make it taller than the trees. It was closed in 1971 until volunteers restored it in 2001.

Location: 13 mi. southwest of Indian Lake

Take Route 30 south for 7 mi. from Indian Lake. The trailhead is on the right, with parking on the left.

Trail Description: 3.4 mi. | +2,100'

The last 0.75 mi. to the summit are extremely steep. Snowy has a great view that includes the High Peaks to the north and Indian Lake to the east.

Date Completed:

Wakely Mountain Tower

Model: 70' Aermotor LL-25 | Elevation: 3,744'
Status: restored and open to the public

The original wooden tower was constructed in 1911. In 1916, it was replaced with a 70' steel tower, making it the tallest in the Adirondacks. It closed in 1988, then restored and reopened in 2018.

Location: 12 mi. southwest of Indian Lake

From Indian Lake, take Route 28/30 west for 2.2 mi., then make a left onto Cedar River Road and follow it for 11.5 mi.

Trail Description: 3 mi. | +1,600'

The gravel road leading to the mountain offers a 1.9 mi. warm-up before the trail steepens significantly.

Date Completed:

Bonus: Adirondack Experience Museum

Model: 22' Aermotor LS-40 | Elevation: N/A
Status: Restored, visitors must pay an entrance fee

Originally built on Whiteface Mountain in 1919, this was the second fire tower in the Adirondacks. It was dismantled in 1972, then given to the museum. Views include most of the museum's campus, Blue Mountain, and Blue Mountain Lake. This tower is optional.

Location:

Take Route 30 for about a mile from the intersection of Route 28 and 30 in Blue Mountain Lake, the parking lot is on the left.

Trail Description:

From the entrance to the museum, turn right and head towards the tower, which is outside the logging building.

Date Completed: