

Denton Publications
March 25, 2010

Citizens want fire towers retained

By Jonathan Alexander, Staff Writer, Adirondack Journal

RAY BROOK — In two public hearings last week, citizens voicing opposition to a the state's proposed removal of two fire towers substantially outnumbered those who want to see them gone.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation has penned proposals requiring the removal of the fire towers atop Hurricane and St. Regis mountains.

Over the course of the two public hearings March 10 and 11, thirty-nine Adirondack citizens ardently expressed their opinions to DEC and Adirondack Park Agency officials. Of the 39 citizens expressing their views, 33 said they were opposed to removing the towers.

Four of the six comments in favor of the proposals came from the region's three primary environmental groups – the Adirondack Council, the Adirondack Mountain Club and Protect the Adirondacks.

The final decision is up to the APA Board of Commissioners.

DEC foresters argue their hands are tied by the state Land Master Plan, which requires the removal of "non-conforming" structures on state lands designated as a Wilderness, Canoe or Primitive area.

The Hurricane Mountain tower is located in the nearly 14,000-acre Hurricane Mountain Primitive Area and the St. Regis tower is in the St. Regis Canoe Area.

Proponents of the DEC plan argue the towers' removal avoids yet another inconsistency with the SLMP, while opponents counter the towers are a vital part of the region's cultural history.

Many of those offering their views stated they believe the public comment period is simply a legal formality and carries no real weight over the final decision.

DEC officials have said that each comment will be taken into consideration.

Written comments received so far have yet to be tallied.