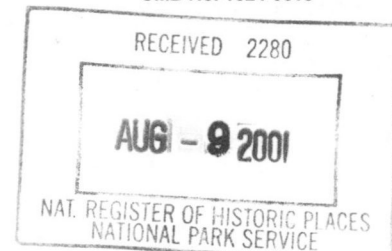


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Mount Tremper ☐ not for publication
city or town Shandaken ☐ vicinity
state New York code NY county Ulster code 111 zip code 12480

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Theresa Carter
Signature of certifying official/Title

7/26/01
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Date of Action

9/23/01

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☒ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☒ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
2		structures
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Fire Observation Stations of the NYS Forest Preserve

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/fire observation station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

NOT IN USE

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE/Utilitarian (fire tower)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

Metal/steel (tower)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station
Ulster County, New York

Section number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The **Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station** is located at the 2,740' summit of Mt. Tremper in the town of Shandaken, Ulster County, in the Catskill Forest Preserve. The fire observation station includes a 47-foot tall, steel frame lookout tower erected in 1917, and a jeep/hiking trail, which extends from the base of the mountain to a point below its summit. The boundary for the nominated property is drawn to include a 500-foot square area surrounding the tower and the full length of the 2.5-mile trail leading up to the tower from the base of the mountain and related features (e.g., culverts, swales, support and retaining walls).

Contributing resources: 2 (tower, jeep/hiking trail)

Non-contributing resources: 0

The tower stands in a clearing on the summit. The 47-foot tower was prefabricated by the Aermotor Corporation and erected in 1917 and is typical of the "heavier type" structures with integral staircases built by the Conservation Commission. The structure consists of a square steel "cab" enclosure for observation erected atop a riveted and bolted frame of angular steel. Steel stairs divided into nine flights and eight landings provided access from the ground to the cab. The legs of the structure are anchored by four standard connection plates, which are bolted into the exposed bedrock on the summit.

The summit is descended by two trails. The older trail descends in a westerly direction into the Esopus Valley along numerous switchbacks to the trailhead along Route 40. This runs largely along the route of the original hotel trail, which was subsequently used to convey, quarried stone from the mountain and enlarged for use by a jeep. The other trail, not included in this nomination, leads in an easterly direction to the hamlet of Willow.

The trails are maintained by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and remain in active recreational use. The tower roof is rusted and wind-damaged and wood treads and landings are missing, but the structure is otherwise intact and awaiting restoration.

Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station

Name of Property

Ulster County, New York

County and State

8 Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Recreation

Conservation

Architecture

Period of Significance

1917 -1950

Significant Dates

1917

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Aermotor Corporation (tower manufacturer)

Primary location of additional data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☒ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

NYSDEC, 50 Wolf Rd., Albany, NY

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station
Ulster County, New York

Section number 8 Page 1

The **Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station** is a component in the multiple property submission, **Fire Observation Stations of the NYS Forest Preserve**. It was identified as a historic resource in an unpublished inventory prepared by NYSDEC in 1991. Subsequently, with assistance from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Field Services Bureau, the Mt. Tremper Fire Observation Station was identified as meeting the criteria for listing on the State/National Register of Historic Places. Additional contextual information for the Mt. Tremper Fire Observation Station can be found in Sections **E: 1A *Recreation and Conservation in the Adirondacks and Catskills before the Forest Preserve, 1830-1885***; **E:1F *Conservation as a Social Service: Managing Recreation and Resource Protection with Fire Observation Stations, 1915-1930***; **E:2C *Standardized Fire Observation Stations, 1916-1932***; **E:2D *Impacts of the CCC and World War II, 1933-1950***; **E:2E *Decommissioning and Abandonment of the Fire Observation System 1951-1991***; and **E:2F *Adoption and Preservation of the Fire Observation Stations, 1992-2000*** of the Multiple Property Documentation Form. Additional associated property type information can be found in **Section F:1 *Steel Towers***; **F:2 *Observer Cabins and Outbuildings***; **F:3 *Trail and Road Features*** of the Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Statement of Significance

The **Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station** is significant under criteria A and C for its association with the New York State Forest Preserve and as a representative example of an early twentieth century fire observation station with a tower with associated hiking/jeep trail.

The mountain was named by the Tremper House, the first substantial railroad hotel in the area, which had opened in 1879 for anglers. The hotel developed the first trail to the summit for its guests.

The New York State Conservation Commission chose Mount Tremper (2,740 feet) as the site of its eighth tower in the Catskill region. The site was chosen because it overlooked large portions of the Forest Preserve that had not been visible from the Belleayre or Hunter Mountain towers.¹ The Commission's report from 1917 stated: "There is a large visibility from this mountain, much of the land being owned by the state, which was not previously visible from any of the stations previously operated in the Catskills."²

¹ Martin Podskoch. *Fire Towers of the Catskills*. Flesichmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2000, p. 59.

² NYS Conservation Commission. *Report for the Year 1917*. Albany: J.B. Lyon, 1918, pp. 68-69.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station
Ulster County, New York

Section number 8 Page 2

The new station on Mount Tremper included the existing 47-foot steel tower and a cabin for the observer. It was one of two new stations established that year, the other being Hadley Mountain (also included in this multiple property submission). The tower was one of 13 new steel towers that year and one of the first 12 described as a heavier type equipped with steel stairs.

William Smith was the station's first observer. During his first year (1917), he reported six fires and 17 the following year. During his last year at the station (1930) he reported 30 fires. Many hikers visited Smith. In 1921, 930 visitors signed his register and; in 1928, there were 1016.³

There have been two observer's cabins at the Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station. The first was contemporary with the tower. It was one of seven, the others built at Hadley, Hurricane, Blue, Kempshall, Rondaxe, and Twaddell. In 1929, a new standard type observer's cabin, measuring 16' by 27', was built at the station. It was one of five built that year, the others being Owls Head, Boreas, Beaver Lake, and Dickinson Hill. "All replaced obsolete and inadequate facilities."⁴ In 1975, NYSDEC declared the cabin at Mount Tremper to be surplus and sold it to a private individual for salvage.⁵

In July 1966, a lightning strike damaged the Mount Tremper tower, which required repair. In 1968, the southerly section of the trail was relocated off of private lands onto an old quarry road. And in 1971, the station was closed when the state shifted to airplane surveillance to spot forest fires.

Following the removal of towers from Spruce, Slide and Belleayre in the early 1990s, the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development began to work toward the preservation of the remaining five towers at Mount Tremper, Balsam Lake, Red Hill (all included in this multiple property submission), Hunter (already listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and Overlook.

In 1996, NYSDEC received an ISTEIA commitment to restore and reopen the tower at Mt. Tremper, but work was delayed by SEQRA review of other projects tied to the grant.⁶ In early 1997, a volunteer steering committee was established to explore connecting the hamlet of Phonecia to the summit by a hiking trail.⁷

³ Podskoch, Ibid

⁴ NYS Conservation Commission. *Report for the Year 1929*. Albany: J.B. Lyon, 1930, p. 108.

⁵ NYSOGS.

⁶ Budrock.

⁷ The Catskill Center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Mt. Tremper Fire Observation Station
Ulster County, New York

Section number 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References

"Adirondack Firetowers get new lease on life," *Adirondack Explorer*, Aug, 1998, 14-15.

Briggs, James. "Interest in Adirondack Fire Towers Growing." *Hamilton County News*, April 13, 1993, 10.

Budrock, Helen to William Hamilton, letter, Oct 21, 1996 [ADK].

The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, *Catskill Lookouts: A Newsletter of the Catskill Fire Tower Restoration Project*, No. 1, Spring Summer, 1997, p. 5.

Galusha, Diane. "Push on to save last fire beacons," *The Oneonta [NY] Daily Star*, March 19, 1997, 1.

Marrone, Robert H. "Going, Going, Gone," *Katterskill Life*, Spring, 1993, 77-80.

NYS OGS, "Observer's Cabin - Tremper Mountain: Declaration of Surplus Building and/or Improvements," Jan 13, 1975.

Podskoch, Marty. "The Historic Fire Towers of the Catskills: Tall Tales and Hikes," *Catskill Country*, Fall/Winter 1998, pp. 13-30.

_____. "The serpentine path: Mt. Tremper tower observers had more to watch out for than forest fires," *Woodstock Times*, August 12, 1998, p. 12.

_____. *Fire Towers of the Catskills: Their History and Lore*, Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2000.

Podskoch, Marty, Robert M. Marrone, and George Profous. "The Catskill Fire Tower Restoration Project: Draft," typescript, April 16, 1999 [NYSDEC Region 3 Office, New Paltz, NY].

"Tremper Mountain Tower Update," *Catskill Lookouts* [Newsletter of the Catskill Fire Tower Restoration Project], No. 3, Winter, 1998/99, p. 4.

Mount Tremper Fire Observation Station

Name of Property

01001032
Ulster County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of property** 9.10 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	559697	4658072
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	557793	4658075

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

☐ See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

See attached map

Boundary Justification

Boundaries were drawn to include the extant resources historically associated with the observation station; i.e., tower, base camp area, hiking trail and related features such as culverts, swales, support and retaining walls. Boundary includes a 500/sf area surrounding the tower and a 15-foot buffer from the center line on either side of the 2.5 mile trail leading from the base of the mountain to the station's site.

11. Form Prepared ByName/title Wes Haynes, consultant (edited by: L. Garofalini, NYSOPRHP, Box 189, Waterford, NY 12188-0189)organization Adirondack Architectural Heritage date 5/19/00 (ed. 3/01)street & number 1790 Main St., Civic Center, Rm. 312 telephone 518-834-9328city or town Keeseville state NY zip code 12944**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name New York State (Department of Environmental Conservation)street & number 50 Wolf Rd. telephone 518-457-7433city or town Albany state NY zip code 12233

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**The Mt. Tremper Fire Observation Station
Shandaken, Ulster County, New York**

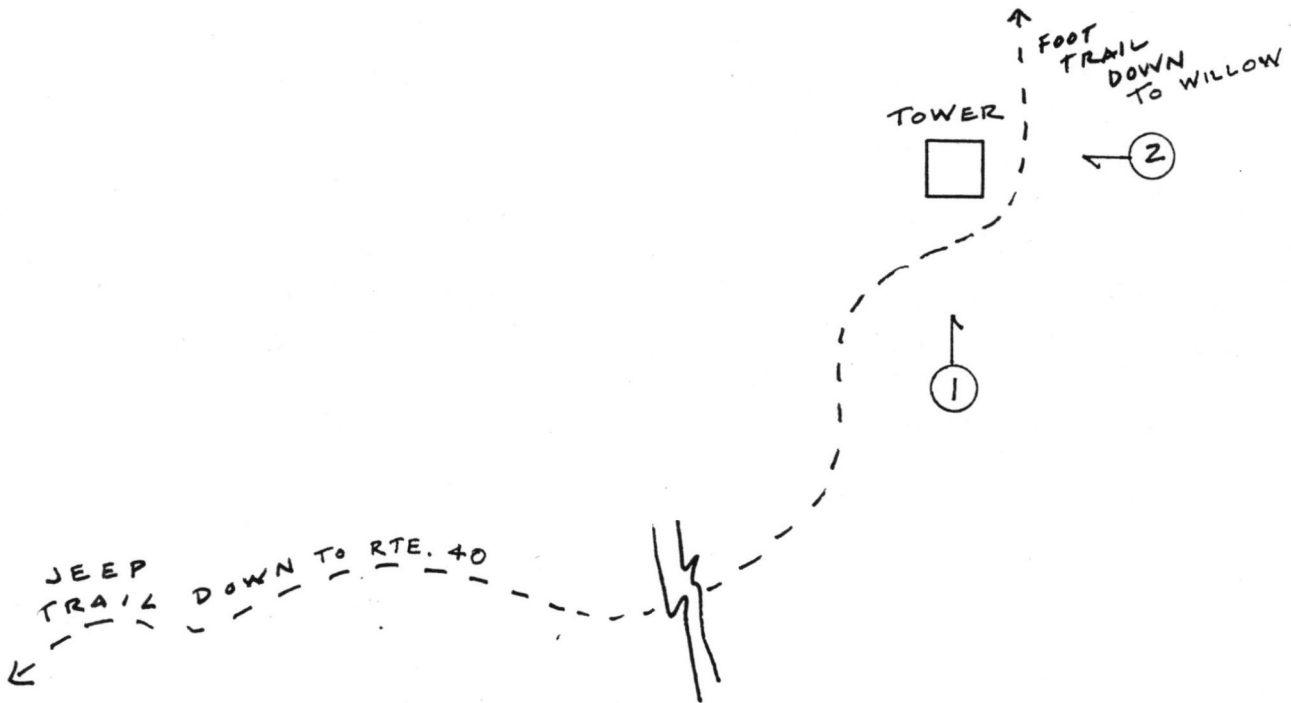


Photo Key 



SKETCH MAP (not to scale), 1999
W. Haynes, del.





Mt. Tremper Fire Observation Station
Town of Shandaken
Ulster County, NY

Photo #1 Fire tower

Wes Haynes, photo



Mt. Tremper Fire Observation Station
Town of Shandaken
Ulster County, NY

006 058 NNNC --- 10.04.04 ELITE PHOTO

Photo #2 Fire tower detail

Wes Haynes, photo



420742 DP

NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PHOENICIA QUADRANGLE
NEW YORK
7.5 MINUTE SERIES PLANIMETRIC
SE 4 PHOENICIA 15 QUADRANGLE



MOUNT TREMPER FIRE
OBSERVATION STATION
SHANDAKEN, Ulster County,
NY

Phoenicia Quad
Zone 18
① E/559697 N/4658072
② E/557793 N/4658075

Prepared and published in 1973 by the New York State Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

Map base from 1960 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle.

Map revisions made using 1972 aerial photography, construction plans, official records and other sources. Features revised include: highways and other transportation facilities; civil boundaries; recreation sites; hydrography; and buildings. Grey tint indicates intensively developed areas in which only landmark buildings are shown.

Revisions may not comply with National Map Accuracy Standards.

Correspondence concerning this and other maps of the Department of Transportation should be directed to: Map Information Unit, New York State Department of Transportation, State Campus, Albany, New York 12226.



QUADRANGLE LOCATION



Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum.

1000-meter ticks based on the New York Transverse Mercator grid.
Between 72° and 78° West Longitude, this grid is identical to Zone 18 of the Universal Transverse Mercator grid. Areas east of 72° and west of 78° are direct mathematical extensions of Zone 18.

10,000-foot ticks based on the New York Plane Coordinate grid, East Zone.

SPECIAL TOPOGRAPHIC EDITION
Contours, at 20-foot intervals, shown unrevised from 1960 U.S. Geological Survey map. Datum is mean sea level.

BOUNDARIES:

State.....

County.....

Town or City.....

Incorporated Village.....

Federal-Aid Urban Area.....

ROADS:

Touring Route markers.....

Interstate.....

U. S.

State.....

State Highway number and limit.....

County road.....

Interchange number.....

Divided highways and streets:

Wide mall.....

Narrow mall or barrier.....

Undivided highways and streets:

4 or more lanes.....

Less than 4 lanes.....

Vehicle track; trail.....