



Friends of Mount Arab 2020 Newsletter

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Adirondack Fire Tower
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Transitions

The FOMA board remained unchanged in 2020.

As always, anyone wishing to join our board and contribute to the FOMA effort should live close enough to be able and willing to attend monthly meetings May – October, or be regular summer visitors who can also meet the obligation to attend most meetings although this past spring, summer, and fall our meetings have taken the form of emails and phone calls. Hopefully, with a vaccine things will get back in order.

On the Web

We are on the internet and our facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMtArab> continues to be very popular. You may also like to visit our website, maintained by Jeff Debes, at <http://www.friendsofmountarab.org>. Jeff also monitors both sites, and those visiting our facebook page likely recall facebook exchanges with him. For those of you who find it convenient to make a donation via the web, you will find a PayPal donation button on our website.

Tupper Lake TRIAD

Earn an Adirondack hiking challenge patch by climbing the following three mountains, each of which is within a short drive of Tupper Lake:

The 3 mountains are Coney, Goodman, and of course, Mount Arab. The TRIAD is managed by ROOST. To apply for a patch, go to: <https://www.tupperlake.com/tupper-lake-hiking-triad>.

For a real challenge, do all 3 in one day.

Acknowledgements

Friends of Mount Arab would like to sincerely thank our major donors in 2020:

\$1000 - ROOST (TRIAD Challenge Support)
\$ 250 - Alan & Sally Silliman*
\$ 250 - Peter Galloway
\$ 200 - Jonathan Magruder
\$ 200 - Lori & Brett Larson*
\$ 150 - Catherine & David Fant
\$ 120 - Janne Debes

\$ 100 - David Mandelbaum
\$ 100 - M.P. & J.H. Blatchford
\$ 100 - Phillip Reynolds
\$ 100 - Vera & Howard Ennis*
\$ 100 - Linda & John Sheeran*
\$ 100 - Helene & Chris Hoople
\$ 100 - Jennifer Moss
\$ 100 - Walter & Sarah Smith
\$ 71 - J.L. & B.J. Tucker
\$ 70 - Peter Collinge & Carol Thiel
\$ 50 - Haile North & Audrey Gravelle*
\$ 50 - Lewis & Terry Kinter
\$ 50 - Thomas Tinney
\$ 50 - June Fait & Herbert Coles
\$ 50 - P. Paschall & M.E. Cox
\$ 50 - Lisa & Jeff Bolduc*
\$ 50 - Janet & Loren Bailey
\$ 50 - Keith & Donna Waltz
\$ 50 - Greg Dickson & Sue Hearn
\$ 50 - June Dewhirst*
\$ 50 - Lenora Doane
\$ 50 - Terry & Janet Silvester
\$ 50 - Peter Debes
\$ 50 - Carolyn & Brian Parrotte*
\$ 50 - David Sargent
\$ 50 - Maura & Todd Dumoulin
\$ 50 - Fred Jubitz
\$ 50 - Betty & Edward Allison
\$ 50 - Ken & Ruthann Reed*
\$ 50 - Mary & Michael Kniley
\$ 50 - Peter Klank & Rhonda Young
\$ 50 - Hester & Andrew McCarthy
\$ 50 - William Kingston
\$ 50 - Brenda Kinnear
\$ 45 - Thomas Bahr
\$ 40 - William Rockefeller
\$ 35 - Gary Koch
\$ 25 - Joan & Thomas Dalton
\$ 25 - Sharon & Edward Lindo
\$ 25 - C. Adler & Doug Fishman
\$ 25 - Katherine O'Brien
\$ 25 - Edwin & Anne Gordon
\$ 25 - Pamela Kennedy*
\$ 25 - JoAnn & Toby Zenger
\$ 25 - Jocelyn & Rhys Prall
\$ 25 - Edward & Shirley Lynch
\$ 25 - Paul Overby
\$ 25 - Diane & Robert Freer
\$ 25 - Peter O'Shea
\$ 25 - Carol Murray
\$ 25 - Richard & Carol Parsons
\$ 25 - Kristin & Danny Scott
\$ 25 - Mary & Randall Dexter**
\$ 25 - Richard & Wendy Greguski
\$ 25 - Maegen & Samuel Hess
\$ 10 - Patsy Bove
\$ 10 - Mitchell Emerson
\$ 10 - Tammy Wetzel
\$ 10 - Lynn Fredericks

*in memory: Loron Silliman **in memory: Arlene Peets

Everyone who climbs Mount Arab thanks you!



NEWS FROM THE BOTTOM

By Thomas P. Cullen,
Summit Steward



What a tumultuous and unforgettable year this has been! Arab Mountain, the tower and Summit Museum

bore silent witness to the COVID pandemic that even impacted our northern NY wilderness areas. In their unending quest to stay healthy many folks continued journeying north to the Adirondacks for exercise, serenity, and an escape from the crowds and turmoil associated with congested city life.

The foresight of our FOMA Board of Directors correctly anticipated large crowds recreating on Arab Mountain and surrounding environs and we made the decision to not staff the mountain top and trail due to greatly increased day to day virus transmission risks. Crowds were large and many climbers avoided touching things such as trailhead sign-in registers so we have no accurate count of the numbers of visitors except to guess that it was very large judging by the overflowing numbers of cars observed daily in the parking lot. Personal observations by Board Members and patrons described large crowds congregating at the summit, many ignoring NYSDEC rules to not crowd into the cab. If I had been assigned to the summit I would have been exposed to potential infection by someone among the hundreds of visitors daily throughout the summer by people visiting from those downstate centers of infection, hence our decision to eliminate staffing was a sound one.

In light of the outbreak NYSDEC initially closed all fire towers in our State but had no personnel to enforce the decision, hence many people routinely violated the prohibition. As we moved into summer NYSDEC relaxed the rules and allowed access to the tower cab with the stipulation that occupancy be limited to one climbing party at a time. FOMA workers did manage to dramatically improve sections of the trail, refresh the exterior of the tower with a gleaming new paint job, and install the long awaited tower cab windows so our mountain has shown dramatic improvement despite the pandemic.

Repeated observation by climbers and Board Members have shown minimal vandalism and litter on the trail, tower, outhouse, and summit areas, and that our patrons generally behaved in an environmentally sound manner. Kudos to all.

In summary I plan on getting an early vaccine in 2021 and resuming my duties right around Mother's Day. I hope to see many of you folks again.

Pandemic Closing and Reopening

In consideration of the COVID pandemic, DEC closed the tower and observer's cabin on 27 March. As of 26 June the DEC reopened the tower subject to conditions – only one party of limited size at a time followed by hand sanitizing. Aaron Graves, DEC Forester, went up the mountain on 2 July and posted those tower use conditions. In no case was climbing the mountain ever restricted. FOMA made the decision early in 2020 to not employ a summit steward this year.

Trail Reroute and Improvements

Sheila Young reported via Aaron Graves that in June 2020 'Tahawas Trails' had done an excellent job rerouting a small portion of the trail as well as making additional trail improvements. I am fully impressed. Attached, in Word format, is my commentary and some photos. The Tahawas Trail crew didn't just construct a new trail - although that would have been enough - they also made 48 existing water bars deeper and longer, and added 8 new runoff trenches without rock down slope walls.



DEC arranged for the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Adirondack Corp crew to paint the Mount Arab fire tower. DEC did not have money for supplies and equipment so FOMA purchased the special 'Rust Grip' paint required (\$1263.30) and painting supplies (\$164). The SCA crew began on Monday 31 August, and working 10 hour days completed the job on 3 September.



Larry Lee, FOMA Treasurer, accepting ROOST donation from Katie Stuart

Tower Windows – Completed

FOMA began work on installing the new aluminum tower windows in early September (while the paint crew was still working). This volunteer work was performed by Dick Bentley, Larry Lee, and Herman Vandenburg, all on the FOMA board. Dick Bentley and Larry Lee finally completed the job on 4 October.

Plans for 2021

The tower needs a bit of work on the roof which will include a metal patch and then the entire roof needs a paint job. Following this FOMA will install the refurbished map table back into the tower cab. Hopefully we shall also be able to address a re-furbishing of the 4 horizon displays above the windows in the tower.

The TRIAD Challenge (separate from Tupper Lake TRIAD)

The 'Tupper TRIAD Challenge' is a race to complete the 3 mountains of the TRIAD in the fastest time. It is conducted by the Tupper Lake Rotary Club. This year it was held on 10 October. Information on the TRIAD Challenge may be found here: <https://www.tupperlake.com/events/annual-triad-challenge>. The next Challenge will take place on 9 October 2021. Anyone wishing to participate should sign up early because DEC limits the number of competitors to 50 people. .



HISTORY of the FRIENDS of MOUNT ARAB (FOMA)

On Earth Day 1997 a small group of citizens and DEC officials gathered at the summit of Mount Arab. With the common desire to save and to share this historical facility and its magnificent views with future generations, they resolved to restore and maintain the sadly decaying fire tower and fire observer's cabin located there. Beginning with incorporation as a non-profit in partnership with DEC, FOMA has progressed steadily towards its goal. While there has been continuing outstanding trail work performed by the ADK trail crew, staffing and ongoing restoration of summit facilities proceeds with the essential support of YOU, our donors. Thank you.

Yes! I want to become a friend of Mount Arab, to help save and maintain the tower and ranger cabin, improve the trail, and interpret the natural and cultural history of Mount Arab.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution for: _____ \$10 _____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ Other.

Patches may be purchased by sending \$6 for each patch ordered (this includes shipping) to the address below.

Caps, T-shirts, denim shirts and patches are available at Fortunes True Value Hardware, Tupper Lake, NY. You must visit the store directly. Fortunes Hardware does not do mail order.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to: **FRIENDS OF MOUNT ARAB**
Mail to: Friends of Mount Arab, PO Box 185, Piercefield, NY 12973

SCA Tower Painting Crew

This photo was taken 4 September 2020 upon completion of the tower paint job by the Student Conservation Association paint crew.



The New Tower Windows

The frames and Plexiglas had been on the summit for more than a year. Serious work began on the final completion of this job while the painting was still in progress in September, and the windows were completed on 5 October 2020.



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