



**MINUTES OF THE STATE LAND COMMITTEE MEETING
November 14, 2013**

Committee members in attendance included Agency Chairwoman Leilani Ulrich, William Thomas, William Valentino, Sherman Craig, Designee Robert Stegemann, Department of Environmental Conservation, and Committee Chair Richard Booth. Members Karen Feldman, Dan Wilt, Arthur Lussi, and Designees Dierdre Scozzafava, Department of State and Bradley Austin, Department of Economic Development joined the Committee. Also participating in the meeting was Executive Director Fred Monroe of the Local Government Review Board. Staff included Executive Director Terry Martino, Counsel James Townsend, Senior Natural Resource Planner Kathy Regan, and Associate Natural Resource Planner Walter Linck.

The Committee meeting convened at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Approval of Draft Committee Minutes for September 2013

A motion to approve the draft committee minutes was made by Member Thomas and was seconded by Designee Stegemann. All were in favor.

Hurricane Mountain and St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower Historic Areas (Josh Clague, DEC)

Josh Clague presented the Draft Unit Management Plans for the Hurricane Mountain and St. Regis Mountain Fire Tower Historic areas. He noted that both towers have been closed to the public for many years, however, the draft management plans propose to re-open the towers for public access and viewing. The Department is proposing to restore and maintain the towers for future public access. The Department did consider alternatives to this proposal, however, the goal of the Department is to maximize the towers' cultural and educational value and re-opening the towers for public access meets this objective.

The Department is also proposing a radio repeater on the tower located in the Hurricane Mountain historic area due to its unique location which can provide radio coverage in a region that is lacking appropriate radio transmission for search and rescue purposes.

Committee Chair Booth asked what the cost of restoration would be and if State funds would be involved. Josh Clague responded that State funds would be involved but did not have an immediate monetary figure. Mr. Clague noted that there is a fund left over from the Pataki administration that has a balance in it which was dedicated by the former administration to the restoration of fire towers in the State.

Member Thomas asked if there were still private organizations and groups still interested in assisting with the restoration efforts of the towers. Mr. Clague responded that there are still viable private sources which will be followed up with by the Department.

Committee Chair Booth noted that earlier discussions involving classification did not indicate that the State would bear the financial responsibility for restoration and stated he felt this was a very different conversation today than what he remembered occurring during the classification process several years ago. Member Lussi concurred with Chair Booth.

Tom Martin of Department staff noted that in the past restoration costs could reach upwards of \$15,000. He added that there is a fund set aside for restoration purposes. He expressed difficulty in asking private organizations to raise the money necessary, particularly when using helicopters to fly in materials at \$1,500 per hour, for facilities that are the Department's and are situated on State land. He said a legal and moral obligation exists in his opinion for the Department to commit some of their funding to meet the restoration goal and to ensure that the public is safe when visiting the structures.

Tom Martin noted that some private funds have been committed to the restoration of the towers although no private agreements have been solidified yet.

Local Government Review Board Executive Director Fred Monroe noted that the method of financing the restorative procedure is not part of the UMP approval process which involves compliance with the State Land Master Plan.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.