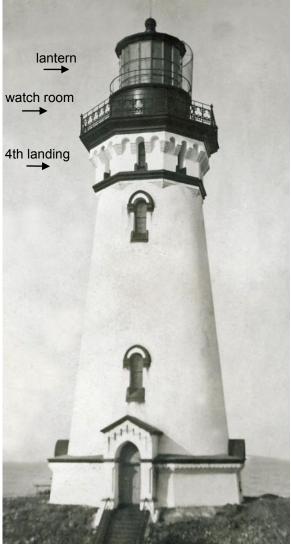


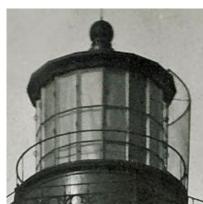
Vol. 8 Issue 4 October-December 2015



PROTECTING THE LANTERN: **CURTAINS**

The uppermost level of the lighthouse is called the lantern. The lantern housed the part of the lens that produced the light. Piedras Blancas had a first order lens, which helped mariners safely navigate along the treacherous central coast.

In the 1915 image at right, we are not able to see into the lantern because a linen curtain is drawn around the inside of the lantern glass.



According to an article by Jack T. Graham, in a 2012 issue of The Lightkeeper's Log, (United States Lighthouse Society), there were several reasons for shielding the lens during daylight hours.

Along with a ventilation system, the curtains helped keep the temperature from getting excessive, which made the work less oppressive for the keepers and benefited the equipment.

During the day, sunlight could be focused inward and concentrated by the prisms, resulting in fire or explosion of the lamp full of oil located in the center of the lens. On a recent tour of PBLS, a lady pointed out a scar on her calf, which was the result of a burn she received from standing too long in one place while cleaning the inside of a lantern. Light had leaked through a shade and she was pretty seriously burned!

Heat buildup could have a had a deleterious effect on the lead-based putty that held the lens prisms in place. In addition, over time, sunlight could cause a slight color change in the prisms.

The curtains were also to be drawn at night if the keepers had to trim the wicks. Instructions regarding the nighttime read, "It is important that the light should be out the shortest time possible and if it is put out, hang the curtains in the lens."

PROTECTING THE LANTERN: SCREEN

Look carefully and you will see another feature that protected the lens. There is a screen on the right side of the image. The screen deflected birds from crashing into the glass. The predominant wind is from the northwest, which is probably why the screen is only on that side. In a report dated August 7, 1897, it is stated: "A wire screen should be used to prevent the wild fowl from breaking the plate glass and chipping the lens."



Where was the lamp oil stored?

The first fuel oil used at Piedras Blancas Light Station was lard oil. A year's supply was stored in 100-gallon cans that were stored on a shelf around the weight well in the rotunda of the lighthouse.

In 1887, the switch to mineral oil took place. Because of the flammable nature of mineral oil it was supposed to be kept in a storage building at least 50 feet away from the lighthouse. However, it was not until 1908 that an isolated lamp oil house was constructed. Until that time, large quantities of lamp oil were stored in the rotunda, which was dangerous and undoubtedly resulted in the keeper's regularly exposed to breathing kerosene fumes while working in the lighthouse.



Left: A replica of a 100 gallon oil butt, on display in the rotunda. There were 8 of these lard oil storage containers surrounding the weight well. They held one year's supply of lard oil.



Above right: Replica mineral oil shipping boxes, on display in the rotunda. Each box held two 5 gallon cans of kerosene.

Non-native plant removal on the ONA

Friends of the Elephant Seal (FES) docents, Piedras Blancas Light Station volunteers, and members of the local community are working together to remove invasive non-native species from the Piedras Blancas elephant seal viewing area, which is visited by hundreds of thousands of people every year from all over the world. Native plant restoration has been slowly progressing over the last few years at the viewing area and it is hoped, that with community involvement, progress will continue. If you would like to help with this effort please call the Piedras Blancas Light Station volunteer office at 805-924-1807 and leave your name and contact information (either phone number or email address).



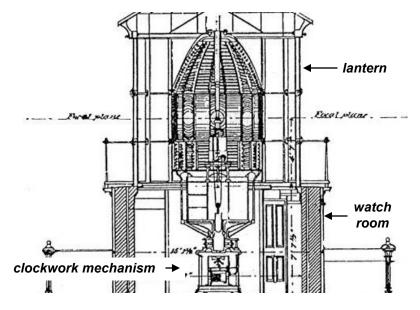
Above: Buckeye butterflies on buckwheat at the elephant seal viewing area.



Above: Left to right, Phil Adams, Dawn Barnes, and Fernando Aquino standing behind a pile of pulled mustard.

Was the lens stopped while the weight was wound?

The rotation of the lens was the result of a weight that dropped from the clockwork mechanism, located at the base of the lens. The weight was wound by hand every 2-3 hours. As explained by local historian Jerry Praver: "When the weight was driving the lens around, a ratchet wheel was locked by a pawl (curved bar or lever) but, when the drum was wound up, the ratchet wheel turned freely in the opposite direction so turning of the drum was not transmitted to the lens. The lens continued to turn by inertia."



National Lighthouse Day celebration

On Saturday, August 8th, Piedras Blancas Light Station celebrated National Lighthouse Day with a living history tour. It was a beautiful day and we welcomed nearly 100 visitors. Enactors portrayed life in the 1890s. Visitors also enjoyed delicious homemade cookies made by volunteers. This is always a fun event; mark your calendar and we'll see you next August.

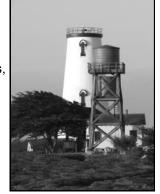




BLM UpdateRyan Cooper, Piedras Blancas Light Station Park Manager

Hello All! I am sure there is a reason behind it, but I don't understand why the federal Government ends their fiscal year in September. And why does everyone have their end-of-the-year at different times; some end in June, some end in December, and we end in September? Maybe someone will tell me the significance of the September 30th date after reading this, but what I do know is that we are in the throws of end-of-the-year procedures, end-of-the year reports, spending freezes, and planning for the next year.

The 2015 fiscal year was an eventful one for the Piedras Blancas Light Station. We may not have accomplished as many on-the-ground projects as we had hoped, but are charging into FY2016 like a locomotive. BLM Staff and Association Board Members met recently to set goals for the future of the light station. Some of the things you can expect to see happen in FY2016 are painting and sprucing up of some of the buildings including the gift shop, tank house, and unit D. We also expect to see the completion of the water tower conversion into a communication site which will also mean the old tower and building will be removed. We are also adding a special



tour this fall. The Golden Hour Photo Tour is scheduled for November 14 in the late afternoon. Details to come.

We all have lots of great ideas on how to share this beautiful spot with the public. Lets continue to collaborate and find new ways to enhance the light station and the visitor experience. As we gain recognition, the public is going to increasingly want to come to the Light Station and it's our job help the them do it responsibly with minimal impact on the light station. Let's all gear up and work together for a great 2016!

Spotlight on Interns:

College students spend the summer helping at the light station

Every summer, we are lucky to have talented and hard working interns join us for a few months. They work full-time and assist BLM staff with tours and maintenance of the light station. This summer we were glad to have help from Jake and Fernando. Thank you for all your hard work!

Fernando Aquino is a UCLA Geography student with extensive knowledge of Geology and Film. Fernando worked in the Herbarium at UCLA and has worked on land rehabilitation efforts in Louisiana. He will return to UCLA this fall to continue his studies. Fernando enjoys waking up in the morning and setting up tours. Fernando hopes to incorporate his love of film and passion for conservation into his future endeavors.



Jake Castellanos recently graduated from California Polytechnic State Universi-

ty, San Luis Obispo with a bachelor's degree in Forestry and Natural Resources Management. Jake specialized in Forest and Environmental Practices. Jake grew up in the city of Santa Barbara, California. As a kid, he learned to appreciate and developed a love for the outdoors. Jake's favorite part of the internship at Piedras Blancas is the interpretation aspect of the job. He has a passion for teaching in the natural sciences and has hopes of one day opening up his own outdoor education camp. During his free time Jake enjoys backpacking, running, kayaking, hiking and avoiding ticks!





PBLSA Update

This edition: Frequently Asked Questions About our Non-profit Association

What is the PBLSA?

Established in 2005, the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization. Although the association has no formal relationship with the Bureau of Land Management, we work closely with BLM and the PBLS Park Manager to support the restoration, preservation, maintenance, and interpretation of the cultural and natural resources of the Piedras Blancas Light Station (PBLS).

What does the PBLSA do?

Among its many activities, the association's primary function is fundraising. We apply for grants and sponsor fundraising activities and community outreach efforts. The Association operates the gift shop, maintains the PBLS website, social media outlets, and the light station newsletter. The PBLSA supports educational outreach efforts and actively promotes new paid memberships. We advance public awareness of the PBLS through printed materials. We also support light station volunteers and work in concert with other local non-profit groups. Additionally, the association assists the scientific community conduct site-specific research.

The current board is very active in building restoration and replication efforts. At our last meeting, for example, we reviewed preliminary results from an engineering study we commissioned on the lighthouse. We also discussed a bid to replicate the historic entrance gate.

Who serves on the PBLSA?

Our bylaws establish a Board of Directors to oversee PBLSA activities. We currently have five board members. The Park Manager is an ex officio member. We also employ a part-time administrative assistant. All directors volunteer their time on the board. Some of us also serve as light station tour guides and assistants, gift shop volunteers, or in maintenance, administration, and construction activities. As retired business owners, teachers, and professionals, we bring an array of

talents to our interest in Board work. We are united by our love and dedication to Piedras Blancas and the ideals of land conservation and stewardship.

The current Board is looking to add more directors. If you are interested in joining us please contact Holly Gant at 805-927-3719 or email: contact.pblsa@gmail.com

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association board members welcome your comments or questions. Phone: 805-927-3719 or email: contact.pblsa@gmail.com Board meetings are held at Rabobank in Cambria at 6:00 PM on the fourth Wednesday of every month. The public is welcome and encouraged to participate.

Gift shop items are available on online. Check it out! www.piedrasblancas.org

Join us on the path to restoration!

Your purchase of a personalized, engraved brick will help with restoration of the light station. It will also be viewed by generations of lighthouse lovers, who will enjoy and appreciate your contribution.



Mail form to: PBLS Association P.O. Box 127 San Simeon, CA 93452

or order online www.piedrasblancas .org.

To order by phone, call 805-927-3719. *Thank you!*

Maximum o letters are o donation \$1	apitalize									
Line1										
Line 2										
Line 3										
I am paying by check (Made out to PBLSA) ☐ MasterCard ☐ or Visa ☐										
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Spotlight on volunteers: **Getting-the-word-out**

There is a fantastic team of volunteers working behind the scenes to get the word out about tours. Each person has an area for which they are responsible for seeing that rack cards and/or flyers are placed in motels, chambers of commerce, and selected businesses. The volunteers monitor the locations and keep records to indicate when the cards need to be restocked. They are the silent heroes of the public tours. All together they stock about 150 locations from Pismo Beach to north of Ragged Point. Please join in thanking:

Joe Zenk - San Simeon Jim and Roberta Major - Cambria Tom Hardwick - Paso Robles

Nancy Hartwick - Cayucos, Paul Kellett - Moonstone Beach Dave Babcock - Los Osos Cheryl Lewis-San Luis Obispo, Pismo Beach, Avila, Ragged Point and north.

Paul and Kris Rockenbach - Morro Bay Tim Postiff - elephant seal viewing area Abel Martinez—Farmer's Market, Cambria Plus others who help!







Nancy Hartwick



Paul Rockenbach



Kris Rockenbach



Roberta Major



Jim Major



Paul Kellett



Tim Postiff



Tom Hardwick



Dave Babcock



Abel Martinez



Cheryl Lewis

Volunteer Work Day November 4th Calling All Current Volunteers!

You are invited to a special work day to assist with an important project at the light station

> When: Wednesday, November 4th 9 am - 12 pm

Come out and help for as long as you like; stay for a little while or for the whole time. We would love to have you here!

More details will be sent out soon.

Twilight Tour, October 24, 2015

Don't miss the next living history tour on the evening of October 24th! The Twilight Tour is offered only once this year and reservations are required. This is a wonderful opportunity to experience the light station at twilight, view the sunset, and get a feeling for what life at the light station was like in the old days. The date portrayed will be 1909, which falls within an important window of progress at Piedras Blancas. Enactors will include a keeper getting ready for exhibiting the light at sunset, a keeper working in the fog signal building, a blacksmith making important repairs, and wives discussing daily life in the historic district. With luck, a beautiful sunset will be visible. Start times will be 5:00, 5:15, 5:30, and 5:45. The fee is \$15 for adults. Details will be given at the time reservations are made. Call 805-924-1807 to reserve a spot on this very popular tour.

Lighthouse neighbors

Point Sur Lightstation

November through March tours are offered at 10:00 am on Saturdays and Sundays and at 1:00 pm on Wednesdays. During the summer there are additional days and times. For a complete listing of tours, go to www.pointsur.org or call 831-625-4419.

Point Pinos Lighthouse

Located in Pacific Grove, open Thursday through Monday, 1:00-4:00. www.ci.pg.ca.us/lighthouse

Point San Luis Lighthouse

For a complete listing of tours and access, go to www.sanluislighthouse.org or call 805-540-5771 to reserve a ride on the trolley.



For information on Piedras Blancas Light Station www.piedrasblancas.org or www.piedrasblancas.gov

Piedras Blancas Light Station Tours

Tours are offered year-round on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. There are no tours on federal holidays. The 2-hour tour includes the historic Piedras Blancas lighthouse and support buildings and a half mile interpretive trail that provides spectacular ocean views and opportunities to view wildlife. Meet at the former Piedras Blancas Motel located 1.5 miles north of the light station at 9:45 a.m.

Please do not wait at the gate to the light station!

For information email PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com or call 805-927-7361.



Groups of ten or more please make advance arrangements.

\$10 for adults, \$5 ages 6-17, no fee for children 5 and under.

Dress warmly and wear comfortable walking shoes.

No pets!

Tours may be cancelled on the day of the tour due to inclement weather.

PBLS Association P.O. Box 127 San Simeon, CA 93452-0127 805-927-3719 membership.pblsa@gmail.com



All memberships include the quarterly newsletter and knowledge you are helping with restoration and maintenance of the Piedras Blancas Light Station.

\$50 Friend of the Li (1 complimenta	Help restore and preserve Piedras Blancas							
\$100 Acting Keepel (2 complimenta								
\$250 Assistant Kee (4 complimenta	Light Station by joining PBLSA!							
\$500 Principal Keel (engraved brick	FBLSA:							
\$1000 Superintendent of Lights (engraved brick & private tour for up to 6)								
Name:								
Address:								
City:	_ State:	_ Zip:						
Phone:	_ Email:							

Please make check payable to PBLSA.
You may also join online at www.piedrasblancas.org. *Thank you for your support!*