NONPROFIT AND BLM SET PROJECT PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Board of Directors met with PBLS Park Manager Ryan Cooper in August to plot a roadmap for building and grounds improvements around the light station. “I would like to lay the groundwork,” Cooper said of the meeting, “for a vision of how we think we should proceed on projects for the next five years.”

The group brainstormed an extensive wish list of nearly two dozen tasks, then winnowed down and ranked them into a short “To Do” list of several projects. Painting the lighthouse tower topped the list. Other priority projects include moving the flagpole to its original location south of the lighthouse, updating interpretive signs throughout the light station campus, installing new public restrooms in the parking lot and near the gift shop, and exploring better trail designs to give visitors the best experience we can. There was strong support as well for planting an extensive native garden at an as-yet undetermined location along the nature trail.

In addition to these short-term projects, the planning group recognized the strategic importance of continuing to support and raise funds for on-going and longer-term light station building goals. Board member Jim Harris reviewed extensive work that has already been accomplished on retrofitting the lighthouse tower with its missing top three floors, including seismic evaluation studies and an in-progress engineering plan to reinforce the existing masonry structure. The group also agreed to discuss building plans for the Victorian keepers residences with potential architects.

After the meeting, Ryan Cooper concluded that “we are in a much better position now to focus our resources and energies.”

David Cooper, Chair  
Piedras Blancas Light Station Association

LIBATIONS FOR THE STATION FUNDRAISER WAS A SUCCESS

Harmony Cellars and 927 Beer Company partnered with Piedras Blancas Light Station for a successful fall fundraiser in October. The event was a sell out and 116 guests enjoyed live music, woodfired pizza, and libations.

We are grateful to Erin Martin of Harmony Cellars for her interest in supporting the light station with another outstanding event. Our thanks also go to Hearst Castle, Estrella Warbirds Museum, and the Paso Robles Children’s Museum for their generous donations for our silent auction. The talents of musician Marcus DiMaggio and Torricella Catering helped make the evening festive.

We look forward to hosting this popular sunset event again next year.
The Rocks of Piedras Blancas

Piedras Blancas means “white rocks” in Spanish. Depending on the weather, all four of the large rocks located within the Piedras Blancas area can be seen from the Piedras Blancas Light Station trail.

**Piedras Blancas 1 and 2** are about 0.8 miles east of the light station and 500 yards offshore. They are 31 feet and 74 feet high.

**The Outer Islet** is the large, prominent rock close to the point. The first European name for this big rock was Piedra Blanca. The Outer Islet is 100 feet high.

**La Cruz Rock** is 2.8 miles north-northwest of the light station, just south of Point Sierra Nevada. La Cruz Rock is 48 feet high.

The four large offshore rocks in the Piedras Blancas area were donated by the Hearst Corporation to the California Coastal National Monument in 2006. The rocks are used by seals and many species of birds. Although potentially dangerous to ships, some rocks were used by the mariners as aids to navigation.

Guidebooks, referred to as light lists, helped mariners navigate safely. In addition to stating the characteristics of lights and fog signals, the light lists also contained descriptions of the coast, including rocks.

In 1885, the *North Pacific Pilot; West Coast of North America* states: “From San Simeon bay the coast trends W. 3/4 N., 4 miles, to the Piedras Blancas; these are two white sharp-topped rocks, situated a short distance from the shore...They are very conspicuous rocks, and as there are none like them on this part of the coast, they are an excellent mark for the bay of San Simeon...From the Piedras Blancas the coast trends N. W. 1/2 W., a distance of 57 miles, in an almost perfectly straight line.”

The *1942 United States Coast Pilot; Pacific Coast* states: “The coast from San Simeon Point to Point Piedras Blancas, a distance of about 5 miles, is low with numerous detached rocks lying, in some cases, over 0.5 miles offshore and usually well marked by kelp...In hazy weather the Outer Islet is sometimes visible from the northward and southward, when the (lighthouse) light cannot be seen.” Under the description of the La Cruz Rock it states, “A sandy beach inshore affords a favorable landing place in heavy northwesterly weather...There is suitable anchorage, in heavy northwesterly weather and also in light southerly weather, for small boats, east of the northerly limits of La Cruz Rock.”

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**Looking for a Unique Gift? We Have an Online Gift Shop!**

We offer custom ornaments, etched wine glasses, shot glasses, mugs, t-shirts, fleece jackets and vests just to name a few. An engraved brick installed at the light station makes a memorable gift, too! Prices include tax and shipping and all the proceeds stay here at the light station. You may also join PBLSA or renew your membership online. Visit us at: piedrasblancas.org/gift-shop
**Volunteer Spotlight**

*Many of our volunteers have been at Piedras Blancas for years and Ruben Villalobos is no exception.*

Ruben was raised in Pasadena, California, and attended Pasadena High School and Pasadena City College. He met his wife, Bonnie, in Junior High and they married in 1957. He has four children, 2 girls and 2 boys, 7 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. Ruben worked for the City of Pasadena, Water and Power Department for 36 years. As part of the Power Department he helped build substations and generating plants. He went on to be a supervisor of the Electrical Mechanic Maintenance Department in the power plant.

Ruben and Bonnie both retired in November of 1995 and after looking around for a place to retire decided to move to Cambria. They became active in the community and in 2002 he and Bonnie received the Citizen of the Year award. He is still active, volunteering to drive the Community Bus, delivering lunches for Senior Nutrition, doing minor repairs for seniors through Cambria Anonymous Neighbors, and working at the lighthouse. He is also active in the Cambria Lions. Ruben enjoys working in the yard and Bonnie keeps him busy with honey do’s.

_Thank you for your dedication, Ruben!_

**Meet the Natives**

The light station is home to Cliff Buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*) which can be found near the coast from Monterey to San Diego below 3,000 feet. Buckwheat is a very important butterfly plant and one of the pillars of their community. The flowers, leaves and seeds are all used by many small mammals. The thick leaves are less than an inch in size and may be rounded or folded over resulting in a triangular shape. They are smooth on the upper surface and woolly underneath. Foliage is green with a reddish tinge and the flowers vary from white to pink and dry to a rusty brown. Buckwheat blooms year-round and grows up to 3 feet high and 3 feet wide. If you live in a coastal area please consider planting buckwheat in your garden. Its evergreen leaves and pretty blooms do not require much water and butterflies and hummingbirds will thank you for it. Many native plant nurseries carry Cliff Buckwheat and its other variations.

**Lighthouse Neighbors**

- **Point San Luis Lighthouse**
  (58 miles south of PBL)
  Located in Avila Beach. For a complete listing of guided tours and special events and to reserve a ride on the shuttle, visit: PointSanLuisLighthouse.org or call 805-540-5771

- **Point Sur Lightstation**
  (65 miles north of PBL)
  Currently closed for road repairs. Check their website for updates: PointSur.org or call 831-625-4419

- **Point Pinos Lighthouse**
  (90 miles north of PBL)
  Located in Pacific Grove, open Thursday through Monday, 1 PM - 4 PM. For more information: PointPinosLighthouse.org

**JOIN OUR MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS ON THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH**

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association meets every 4th Wednesday of the month at 6 pm at Mechanics Bank in Cambria. The public is always welcome to come and listen, ask questions or voice concerns.

The board consists of people from varied backgrounds and education who live in different parts of the county. We are always interested in speaking with anyone who is interested in becoming a board member.

Please send us an email if you are interested or have questions: contact.pblsa@gmail.com

Meeting minutes are published on our website under the About Us page.
Long-tailed weasels are widespread across the Americas, extending from southern Canada down to Bolivia. Those in the far north have an all-white winter coat. Those here in the southwestern United States are orange with a black face and a white patch between the eyes. Their tails have a distinct black tip and equal 40–70% of their total body length from head to tail. Weasels live in dens underground, under stumps or beneath rock piles. They commonly use abandoned ground squirrel holes. The nest chamber is lined with grass and leaves. Weasels are carnivores and are aggressive hunters. They primarily eat rodents, but also dine on rabbits and squirrels. Occasionally they find small birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects delicious. Weasels are solitary and elusive creatures and are most active at night. Kits are born blind and nearly naked in April-May and can crawl out of the nest and eat meat by the age of 3 weeks. Long-tailed weasels have been seen on the trail at the light station and are sometimes found running across the highway.

Did you know that a relative of the weasel, the black-footed ferret, is illegal to keep as a pet only in California and Hawaii?
**Marble Cocoa Cake**

2 1/2 cups flour sifted 3 times 2/3 cup sweet milk
3 egg whites 1 cup sugar
1/2 cup butter
1/2 teaspoon Watkins Vanilla
3 teaspoons Watkins Baking Powder

Cream butter and sugar. Sift flour and add baking powder, then sift again. Add milk and flour alternately to creamed mixture, add flavoring and the beaten whites of eggs. Separate the batter and to one half add 3 teaspoons of Watkins Cocoa, 1/2 teaspoon each of Watkins Nutmeg, Cinnamon and Allspice and 1/4 teaspoon soda. Beat well and drop into a pan with horn in middle, first white then dark batter. Bake 45 minutes in moderate oven. Ice with confectioner’s icing made by beating 1 1/2 cups confectioner’s sugar and 3 tablespoons cream and 1/2 teaspoon Watkins Lemon or Pineapple extract.

Note from the author: I presume the pan with horn in the middle is a pan used for angel food cakes. They use their own special pan which Greg Patent in “Baking in America” states was invented in the late 1800s. He says the first tube pans were, in fact, square and the “central tube assured the even distribution of heat to the batter, resulting in cakes that cooked more quickly.”

Excerpted with permission from Beverly Praver’s cookbook “Dinner at the Lighthouse” available in our gift shop.

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**CONGRESSMAN SALUD CARBAJAL VISITS**

In September, the light station welcomed Congressman Salud Carbajal and his family, as well as staffer Greg Haas and others. This was Carbajal’s first visit to the light station and he was impressed by the beauty of the national monument and the restoration efforts at the light station. Congressman Carbajal represents California’s 24th district which includes all of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties, and a portion of Ventura County.

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**SCARECROW FESTIVAL ENTRY**

PBLS volunteers Carole Adams and Holly Gant designed this year’s entry in the Cambria Scarecrow Festival. The two scarecrows, named Bright and Shiny, were busy cleaning the lens so it’s...you guessed it, bright and shiny. They held microfiber towels and had feather dusters ready. The informative panel next to them explained the intricacies required when cleaning the fragile Fresnel lens. Thank you to the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association for sponsoring our entry again this year.

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Right: Ryan Cooper and Congressman Salud Carbajal smile from the entrance of the lighthouse.
Piedras Blancas Light Station Tours

Tours are offered year-round on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. From June 15 through August 31, tours are offered daily except Wednesdays and Sundays. There are no tours on federal holidays. Tours last about two hours and include the historic Piedras Blancas lighthouse and support buildings along with 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 AM.

Please do not wait at the gate to the light station!
For information, email PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com or call 805-927-7361

Groups of 10 or more, please make advanced arrangements. $10 for adults, $5 ages 6-17, no fee for children 5 and under.

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

Dress warmly and wear comfortable walking shoes. Sorry, no pets!

Help restore and preserve Piedras Blancas Light Station by joining PBLSA

All memberships include our quarterly newsletter. Your dues help with the maintenance and restoration of the Piedras Blancas Light Station.

___ $50 Friend of the Lighthouse (1 complimentary tour)
___ $100 Acting Keeper (2 complimentary tours)
___ $250 Assistant Keeper (4 complimentary tours)
___ $500 Principal Keeper (engraved brick)
___ $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 piedrasblancas.org

Thank you for your support!