

The Beacon

PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION OUTSTANDING NATURAL AREA ~PART OF THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL NATIONAL MONUMENT~

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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 Beacon is a joint publication of the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and the Bureau of Land Management. The PBLSA is a nonprofit partner of the BLM and provides support for the restoration, conservation, interpretation, and stewardship of the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources at the Piedras Blancas Light Station. © Copyright 2019



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.

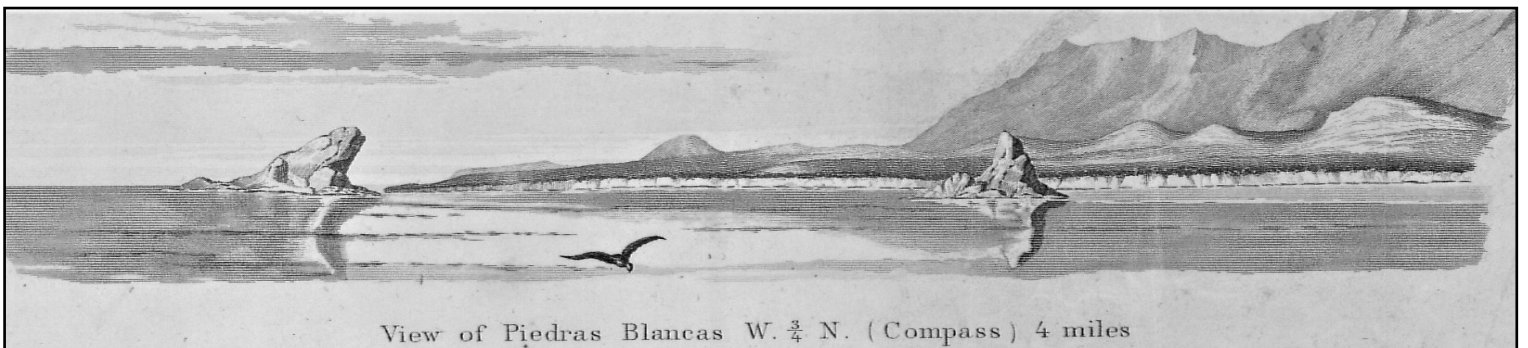
Guidebooks, referred to as light lists, helped mariners navigate safely. In addition to stating the characteristics of lights and fog signals, the light lists also contained descriptions of the coast, including rocks.

In 1885, the North Pacific Pilot; West Coast of North America states: *“From San Simeon bay the coast trends W. $\frac{3}{4}$ 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. $\frac{1}{2}$ 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.”*



Above: Three of the Piedras Blancas rocks in one image. Left to right, Piedras Blancas 1, Piedras Blancas 2, Outer Islet.



1852 image of the shoreline at Piedras Blancas (note the lighthouse was not built until 1875)

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!



Above: Ruben is often seen with a leaf blower in hand, tidying up the walkways before tours.

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.



Above: Pink and white flower balls bloom along the trail.

LIGHTHOUSE NEIGHBORS

Point San Luis Lighthouse

(58 miles south of PBLS)

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 PBLS)

Currently closed for road repairs. Check their website for updates: PointSur.org or call 831-625-4419

Point Pinos Lighthouse

(90 miles north of PBLS)

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.

IN APPRECIATION OF WILL AND SUE DALLONS

In 2007, Jim Boucher, manager of the Piedras Blancas Light Station at the time, enlisted the aid of two incredible volunteers he knew from the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Through 2011, Willis and Suzanne (Will and Sue) Dallons, who lived in Arizona, came to the light station for months at a time, volunteering full-time when they were here. Will was a gifted woodworker. Together, Will and Sue created many wonderful items: benches, displays, interpretive carts, tables, storage shelving, cases for the shipwreck artifacts, the weather shelter, and much more. The beautiful shelving and cabinets in the gift shop/visitor center were built by them. Will replicated the doors on the fog signal building. One of their last projects was restoration of the cabinetry in the lighthouse. They also helped with tours. There seemed to be no end to the talents displayed by this remarkable couple.

Will passed away in June 2019. Will and Sue's daughter, Joy, said, "He was ready and we are grateful for the ease that he slipped from this world to be able to go easily to the mountains, canyons, oceans, and stars that he loved."

Thank you, Will and Sue, for all the wonderful things you did for the Piedras Blancas Light Station.



Will and Sue peeking out from behind the oil house door.

GET INTO YOUR SANCTUARY



In August, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries hosted the fifth national "Get into Your Sanctuary" celebration to raise awareness about the value of our national marine sanctuaries as iconic destinations for responsible recreation through a series of special activities. The National Marine Sanctuary System protects America's most iconic natural and cultural marine resources and the majority are open to compatible and sustainable recreational activities that generate considerable benefits for local economies.

The Coastal Discovery Center in San Simeon hosted an event on August 3rd. Our interns, Daniel and Veronika, helped at the marine mammal station and also enjoyed some fishing from the pier at the end of the day. Be sure to mark your calendars for next August and explore your local marine sanctuary.

For more information visit:
sanctuaries.noaa.gov/visit/giys.html

CRITTER CORNER

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?



Photo by TinMan Photography

COOKING AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

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.

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.



Right: Ryan Cooper and Congressman Salud Carbajal smile from the entrance of the lighthouse.

TRIVIA TIME

The Argand lamp revolutionized lighthouse illumination in 1782.

- A. True
- B. False

The tallest lighthouse in the world is in:

- A. Greenland
- B. Saudi Arabia
- C. United States

A new type of lighthouse was designed in 1759.

- A. True
- B. False

Answers: A. True. Swiss scientist Alime Argand developed the steady smokeless flame of the Argand lamp. Early models used ground glass which was sometimes tinted around the wick. B. Saudi Arabia. The Jeddah Light in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, is 133 meters tall. Built in 1990 using concrete and steel, the Jeddah Light marks the end of the outer pier on the north side of the entrance to the city's seaport. It has a range of 46 kilometers and emits three white flashes every 20 seconds. A. True. English engineer John Smeaton designed a lighthouse built from interlocking blocks of stone instead of wood. This strengthened the structure so it could withstand powerful waves and weather.

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.



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!

PBLS Association
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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)

**Help restore
and preserve
Piedras Blancas
Light Station
by joining PBLSA**

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!



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