

The Beacon

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

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Dinner & Libations for The Station

A Fundraiser for the Piedras Blancas Light Station

Join us for an intimate sunset event on **Saturday, October 1, 4 - 6:30 p.m.**! Enjoy pours of Harmony Cellars wine and Firestone Walker beer as you wander the grounds of this national treasure.

Dinner by Hungry Mother (menu to the right), live music by Kenny Taylor, and a silent auction to aid the restoration of the light station will complete the experience.

Tickets are \$100/person and include entrance, logo glass, dinner, dessert, and unlimited pours of wine and beer.

Visit piedrasblancas.org/events to purchase tickets.

Questions? Contact Harmony Cellars at 805-927-1625 or info@harmonycellars.com.

Dinner Menu by Hungry Mother*

Appetizer (choose 1):

Chicken on a Stick (*peanut sauce, house pickles*)

OR

Grilled Veggie Bruschetta (*zucchini, squash, mushroom, goat cheese, garlic, lemon, sourdough*)

Main:

BBQ Pulled Pork Sandwich and apple cider slaw

Dessert:

Assorted Chocolate Truffles

*Veggie & GF options available with advance notice.



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.
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WELCOME TO NEW PBLSA BOARD MEMBER SCOT ADDIS!

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association is very pleased to announce the addition of Scot Addis to its Board of Directors. Scot, who is fairly new to the Central Coast, has already demonstrated a deep commitment to the area, becoming a very active community member within a short period of time. He serves as treasurer for both the Lions Club of Cambria and the Pinedorado Lions Foundation. He is also a member of the Friends of the Elephant Seal.

Scot serves on the community stakeholder group formed by County Supervisor Bruce Gibson to address the future of the lighthouse's Fresnel lens, on display in a glass enclosure in Cambria for seventy years. The stakeholder group is working on plans to protect and preserve the lens for future generations.

From Scot: "Having served many years as a Coast Guard officer, I always thought the service's motto was appropriate—'Semper Paratus'—meaning 'always ready'. The Piedras Blancas light was always ready to serve as an essential aid to navigation for mariners. Similarly, the PBLSA stands always ready to serve the public in promoting the rich legacy of the light station. I am honored to join this important organization and hope to contribute to its continued success."



Please join us in welcoming Scot to the PBLSA Board.



Bruce Elster and Jeff Olson of Shoreline Engineering and Dan Murphy of Wellsona Iron examine the enclosure of the Fresnel lens in Cambria. The enclosure is in need of repairs to ensure public safety and better preserve the lens. A group of community stakeholders, including the PBLSA, is working on a plan. Photo by David Cooper.

JOIN THE PBLSA BOARD MEETINGS ON THE 4TH WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. (except for November and December). We are currently holding virtual Zoom meetings.

The public is always welcome to listen, ask questions, or voice concerns, so please email us if you would like to participate. Meeting minutes are published on the piedrasblancas.org website on the About Us page.

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

Please email if you are interested in the board or have questions concerning the Piedras Blancas Light Station: contact.pblsa@gmail.com.

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, visit:
PointSanLuisLighthouse.org
or call 805-540-5771.

Point Sur Light Station

(65 miles north of PBLS)
Visit their website: PointSur.org or call 831-625-4419 for the current tour schedule. No reservations; first come, first served.

Point Pinos Lighthouse

(90 miles north of PBLS)
Located in Pacific Grove. Open Saturdays and Sundays. Tours are outside on the lighthouse grounds; the interior of the lighthouse is closed. For more information, visit: PointPinosLighthouse.org.



WELCOMING A NEW GENERATION OF LIGHTHOUSE ENTHUSIASTS!

Some of our most dedicated volunteers have passed on their love of the Piedras Blancas Light Station to their grandchildren, who also stepped up to help out with the preservation and interpretation of the light station this summer. Intern Katelyn is the granddaughter of Kathy Escobar, a docent who has been volunteering since 2018. Katelyn is returning to college in Oregon, where she is studying to become a middle school science teacher. Kathy also volunteers with the Friends of the Elephant Seal.

Reaghan is the granddaughter of Gary O'Neill and Sara Kelly, two of our most steadfast volunteers. Gary is a PBLSA board member as well as a docent and avid light station photographer; he has been volunteering since 2015. Sara has been volunteering since 2021. Reagan is entering third grade this year.

We hope to see both Katelyn and Reagan back at the light station soon. And thank you to Kathy, Gary, and Sara for inspiring the next generation!



Katelyn and Kathy. Photo by Gary O'Neill.



Sara, Reagan, and Gary. Photo by Gary O'Neill.

PBLSA MEMBER BENEFIT

Join the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and get 10% off all gift shop purchases!*



Simply enter coupon code: **MEMBER** in your shopping cart at shop.piedrasblancas.org, or let the gift shop volunteer know that you are a member the next time you visit the light station.

**Does not apply to donations, engraved bricks, memberships, or tour fees.*

To join PBLSA, complete and mail the form on the back of *The Beacon*, or join at shop.piedrasblancas.org.

Questions about your membership status? Email us at membership.pblsa@gmail.com.

Thank you for supporting the light station!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED AT THE LIGHT STATION

Would you like to help preserve a historical landmark while enjoying beautiful coastal scenery? We currently have a need for volunteers in multiple roles. Are you interested in delving into the history of the light station and sharing that information with our visitors, or would you prefer to help in the gift shop? Some volunteers like working on restoration projects or helping with native plant rehabilitation. Whatever your interests, we'd be glad to have your help. If you'd like more information about volunteering at the light station, contact Jodie Nelson, our Outdoor Recreation Planner, at PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com.

Volunteers clear plants in front of the lighthouse to make room for seaside poppies.



LEARNING ABOUT NATIVE AMERICAN USES OF PLANTS

On Saturday, June 25, Allyson Brooks, Sierra Foothill Conservancy's Community Engagement Manager, treated volunteers and staff to a presentation on plant uses by Native American groups living in the Sierra Foothills. She brought examples of the plants and described their uses as she learned them from friends in the Yokut (specifically Mono and Chuckchansi) Tribes. Many of the same plants are also present on the coast and were perhaps used by the Chumash and Salinan peoples who lived near Piedras Blancas in some of the same ways.

Examples that Allyson shared included the importance of acorns in a traditional diet. Acorns require significant time and effort to process, as the skin must be peeled and the nut soaked, pounded into a fine powder, and cooked. Acorns are not only extremely nutritious, however, but they can also be stored for up to 10 years in woven baskets.

Plants used for basket weaving, either the structural elements or the more flexible weaving fibers, include mule fat, whiteroot, sourberry, deer grass, whitethorn, blackroot, and redbud. Bay-laurel also serves as an insect repellent, important in the weaving of acorn storage baskets. Some of these plants also have edible berries.

Elderberry is another plant valued not only for its berries, which are dried or juiced, but also for the sturdy walking sticks, digging sticks, and musical clappers made from hollowed and split elderberry sticks. In addition, elderberry recovers well after fire. Soap root was used for its strong root hairs to make good brushes, and the saponin in the root creates a good glue and paste for applying to insect bites.



Photo by Jodie Robb Nelson

Sierra Foothill Conservancy preserves undeveloped land as a natural habitat for native plants and animals. The organization also offers classes and docent-led hikes for the public, as well as outreach to underserved youths. A partnership with BLM allowed for the creation of this portable "Native Life Ways" presentation.

Thank you to Allyson and the people of the Yokut tribes for sharing your knowledge with us! Visit Sierra Foothill Conservancy's website for more information: sierrafoothill.org.

VISIT THE LIGHT STATION ANY TIME, DAY OR NIGHT . . .

. . . with our live webcam, courtesy of Surflife. Enjoy a view of the light station grounds, the beaches to the north and south, and the waves crashing on the rocks offshore. Look for elephant seals on the beach and pelicans and seagulls perched on the rocks. Whether it's a foggy morning or a moonlit night, check us out:

piedrasblancas.org/webcam



LIGHT STATION DENIZENS: LONG-TAILED WEASELS

Mustela frenata

Volunteers and staff at the light station were recently treated to a hunting display by a long-tailed weasel who didn't seem to mind having an audience. As the weasel determinedly dug into the ground, everyone watched from a respectful distance and speculated whether the weasel was hunting or digging a burrow.

Long-tailed weasels can be found throughout the contiguous United States, but are mostly active at night, making them a rare sight. The distinct black tip on their tail can help tell them apart from other weasels. Their preferred habitat ranges from suburban areas to scrub forest, chaparral, and coastal scrub like that found on the light station grounds. They don't actually dig their own burrows, though they often take advantage of abandoned ground squirrel holes, as well as crevices in rock piles and spaces under tree stumps.



Weasels are solitary, only coming together to mate between July and August. Implantation is delayed, however, and the litter of four - eight kits is not born until April or May. At birth, kits are blind and hairless and weigh about as much as a hummingbird. They develop quickly, however. By three weeks old, kits have fur and start eating meat. Not long after, they learn to hunt from their mothers, becoming independent and leaving the nest by autumn.

Long-tailed weasels are carnivores that primarily hunt small rodents, but also eat birds, lizards, and insects. Weasels have earned their reputation as fearless, aggressive hunters, however, from attacking prey their size or even larger, such as squirrels and rabbits.

Visitors to the light station sometimes see weasels crossing the trail or running over the rocks, but seeing one so close to the buildings was a rare treat. This weasel kept searching and digging. And finally, success!

Thank you to volunteer Gary O'Neill for providing these amazing photos!



Information from Encyclopedia of Life. Available from <http://eol.org>. Accessed 27 August 2022.

Find out more about the Piedras Blancas Light Station at piedrasblancas.org

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. Make your reservations online through our website, piedrasblancas.org. 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 10 or more,
please make advance
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 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)
- ___ Donation \$ _____

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please make checks payable to PBLSA,
or join online at shop.piedrasblancas.org.

Thank you for your support!



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and Instagram:
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