

The Beacon

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

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JULY-SEPT 2018

SEPTEMBER 22, 2018

THE PACIFIC COAST WINE TRAIL PRESENTS

SUNSET SOIREE

TO BENEFIT THE PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION

6 WINERIES

LIVE MUSIC FROM MARCUS DIMAGGIO

CATERING BY BEAR & THE WREN

SILENT AUCTION

4:00 TO 6:30 PM
AT THE

PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION

PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE AT WWW.PACIFICCOASTWINETRAIL.COM/EVENTS

EARLY BIRD TICKETS \$75 UNTIL JULY 31ST, REGULAR PRICE \$85

LIMITED TICKET AVAILABILITY

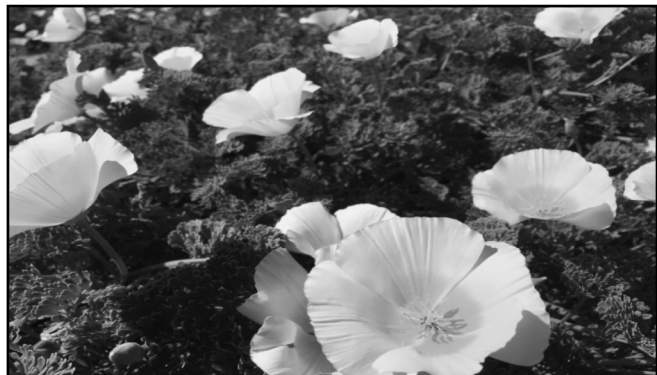


The Beacon is a joint publication of the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and the Bureau of Land Management. The PBLSA is a nonprofit partner of the BLM and provides support for the restoration, conservation, interpretation, and stewardship of the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources at the Piedras Blancas Light Station. © Copyright 2018



WHAT'S THAT FLOWER?

Piedras Blancas has erupted in golden swathes of wildflowers, and we have received many questions about the flowers currently in bloom out here. Yellow is the dominant color at the light station in May and June. The flowers responsible are *Eriophyllum staechadifolium* (what a mouthful!), a dominant shrub along our coastal bluffs belonging to the sunflower family. This plant is critical wildlife habitat, providing shelter to small mammals and food to our bee populations. The common name is split geographically, so those of you from Southern California may know it as "golden wooly yarrow" (though it is not a yarrow), while those from Northern California are familiar with this plant as "lizard tail".



Eschscholzia californica var. *maritima* (above), or California coastal poppy, is having a banner year as well, and these beautiful poppies border large stretches of the trail at the light station. While the poppy at Piedras Blancas is genetically identical to the orange poppy we know as the California state flower, the yellow coastal poppy exhibits a different physical appearance. These coastal poppies are low growing, have light grey-green foliage, and the flowers are bright yellow with orange centers. Additionally, these beautiful plants are perennial, compared to the California poppies which are annuals.



California coastal poppies lining the trail at the light station.



INTERN MIKE SAYS HELLO FROM NORWAY



Our 2017 BLM intern, Mike Holley, recently sent us an update on his adventures in Norway with his girlfriend and former PBLs volunteer, Christine Buckley. They have settled into their fast-paced jobs at a skydiving school in Norway where Mike teaches BASE jumping and skydiving and Christine handles the administrative side. They have been enjoying the warmest and sunniest season in Norwegian history and have visited three lighthouses. Their favorite was a very old lighthouse near Tonsberg called "verdans ende" which means world's end. Mike also made several wingsuit BASE jump flights from a 3,000 foot vertical granite wall that drops into the water of Kjerag fjord. Mike and Christine have been visiting Mike's family and feasting on Norwegian specialties of fresh fish and potatoes and chocolate milk. We look forward to more updates of their exploits on the other side of the world!

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)

From November through March, tours are offered at 10 AM on Saturdays and Sundays and at 1 PM on Wednesdays. During the summer there are additional days and times. For a complete listing of tours: PointSur.org or call 831-625-4419

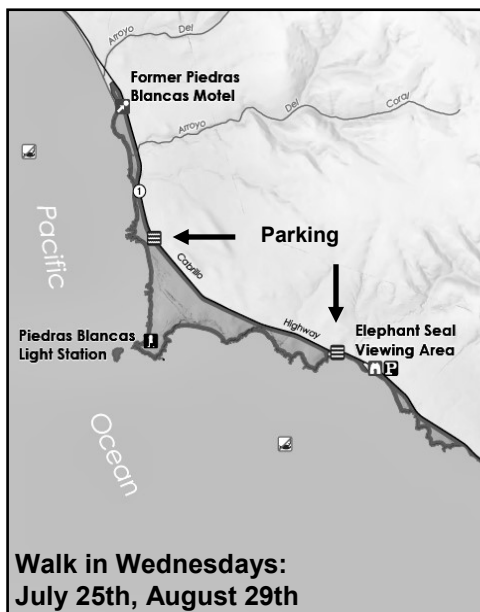
Point Pinos Lighthouse

(90 miles north of PBLs)

Located in Pacific Grove, open Thursday through Monday, 1 PM - 4 PM. For more information: PointPinosLighthouse.org



JOIN US FOR FREE "WALK IN WEDNESDAYS"



Join us for a free self-guided hike and open house on the last Wednesdays of July and August. The light station will be open to all hikers from 10 am - 2 pm. You are welcome to arrive/leave at any point within that time frame. There is no charge for entrance, though we happily accept donations.

The hike: There are two trailheads from which to access the light station. The first trailhead, and easiest to find, is from either of the two parking lots for

the elephant seal viewing area, located approximately 1.5 miles

south of the light station access road. From either parking area, you will hike on the trail north for approximately 1.5 miles to our access road, turn towards the light station and come right in! The trail is clearly marked and well maintained. The slightly more challenging trailhead to locate is about .5 mile north of us and is a small gravel parking lot on the west side of Highway 1. There are no signs, but there is a left-hand turn lane if you are driving northbound. Using this trailhead will shorten your hike considerably, with only a .5 mile hike to our access road. The hike itself is entirely self-led. You can walk at your own pace, on your own timeline, and enjoy some fresh air and exercise. Round-trip hiking distance, including the .5 mile trail around the light station, is about 4 miles from the elephant seal parking lots and about 2 miles from the north lot. The trails are mostly flat and easy. Be sure to stay on the trail at all times.

The Open House: Once you reach the light station, you are free to wander the site at your own pace. There will be docents and staff available to answer questions and point out some of the wildlife. There is a picnic area and our gift shop will be open. We sell water in our gift shop, but we do not offer food. You may bring whatever food and drink you like.

Please remember, no smoking and no pets on the trails. For more information, email us at: PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com

TRIVIA TIME

The first fog signal in this country was a cannon.

- A. True
- B. False

Which was the first American lighthouse to use electricity?

- A. Portland Head in Maine
- B. The Statue of Liberty
- C. Cape Henry Light in Virginia

How many lighthouses were there when we became a nation in 1776?

- A. 12
- B. 7
- C. 26

Answers: True! The first signal was at Boston Light. Other fog signals have been whistles, sirens, reed trumpets, bells, diaphones (BEE-oh) and diaphragms (whrrr). Statue of Liberty in 1868; Twelve.

COOKING AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

This recipe is adapted from the popular 1912 Dromedary Date Bar recipe.

Dromedary Date Bars

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3/4 C flour | 1 C brown sugar |
| 1/2 tsp baking powder | 2 eggs |
| 1/2 tsp salt | 1/2 C chopped nuts |
| 1/2 package sliced Dromedary Dates | |

Sift the dry ingredients. Beat the eggs; beat in the sugar gradually. Add the dates and nuts. Stir in the dry ingredients. Spread the mixture over a shallow pan lined with paper and oiled. Bake in a moderate oven (350F) for 30 minutes. When cool, cut into strips. Recipe will make 18 bars.

Excerpted with permission from Beverly Praver's cookbook "Dinner at the Lighthouse" available in our gift shop.



IN MEMORIAM

The light station has lost a founding member. Jerry Praver, 78, passed away April 30, 2018. Jerry and his wife Bev were among the first BLM volunteers at the light station and were founding members of our nonprofit Piedras Blancas Light Station Association. Together, they researched and assembled the history of the light station, which inspired Bev to author her cookbook "Dinner at the Lighthouse." They also recorded and transcribed the first oral histories, wrote articles, and took part in tours. Officially recognized as the San Luis Obispo County criers, they prepared and presented unique opening cries (proclamations) at special BLM events. Both have received international honors in world-wide town crier competitions. Jerry was intelligent, humorous, and devoted to his wife and their many pursuits. We are grateful for the Praver's contributions which have helped our understanding of the history of the light station enormously.



Bev and Jerry at the Rock Transfer Ceremony, Piedras Blancas, June 16, 2006.

SPECIAL INSPECTION REPORT, OCTOBER 1963

Following are excerpts from a Coast Guard Special Inspection report of Piedras Blancas, dated October 31, 1963.

"Chief, Engineering Division, 12CGD, accompanied by Chief, Operations Division and Group Commander visited subject unit on 16 October 1963 to observe all unit features, and specifically all physical features of questionable or dubious condition. A. D. Garrison, BM1, Officer in Charge (OinC) was present and conducted the tour.

This entire station, including its complement of four enlisted men and their families, presented a very smart appearance.

I wish to again state my sincere feeling that esthetically the chopped off light tower with its surmounting light deflector and rotating beacon is a disgrace to the United States' only designers of light towers. However, I cannot at this time justify the razing and replacement of this structure....

The present fog signal building is very old and in poor structural condition and is much too large to house its present and/or modern fog signal equipment. The OinC pointed out that the flooring, sub-flooring, under pinning and roofing of the frame building into which relief keepers quarters are scheduled to be installed, are very springing and in an advance state of decay. A project exists for re-working the entire fresh water system..."

The report suggests a feasibility study on a long range plan to: 1) Install fog signals on a fabricated tower with adequate fog signals as far seaward as practicable. (2) Build a power plant building that would include relief keepers quarters, water treatment and pumping equipment, toilets for use of visitors, and a two-stall garage to house a station vehicle and a workshop. (3) Upon completion of the foregoing, raze the fog signal building, the present office, and storage building. All structures and tanks of the present water system would be made surplus.

If the above plan had been approved and implemented, the fog signal building and the present day gift shop/visitor center would have been demolished. Luckily, that did not happen. Today we rejoice in the restoration of the fog signal building, the most intact historic structure on the site.

**Find us on Facebook and Instagram
for news and upcoming events:
PiedrasBlancasLightStation**

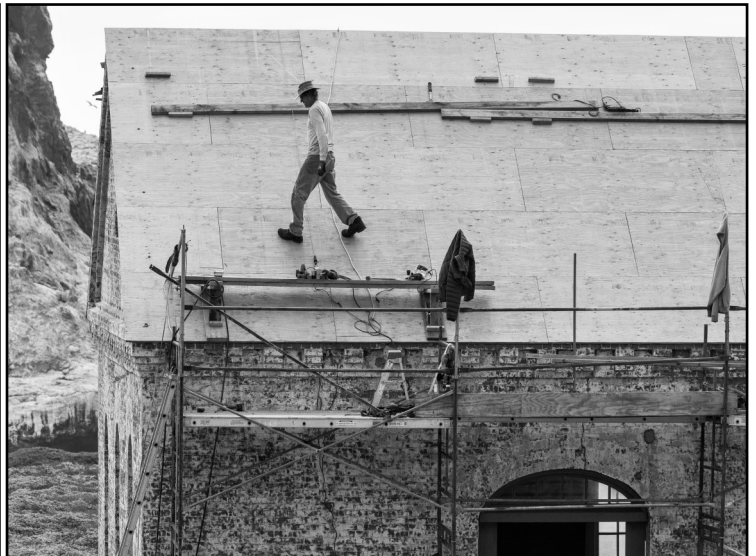


FOG SIGNAL BUILDING RESTORATION ON SCHEDULE, ENTERING FINAL PHASE

It has been an inspiring sight to watch our beloved 1906 Fog Signal Building get some much needed restoration. Phase 1, brick and mortar repair, was completed in May and Phase 2, steel beam seismic retrofit, was completed in June. Phase 3, replacing the roof, is nearly complete. Our thanks go to Wellsona Iron and Engineering for their fastidious work, the Hind Foundation and Piedras Blancas Light Station Association for their financial support, and our volunteers who have donated their time and expertise to complete this long awaited project. Our visitors have enjoyed watching the process as well!



Before: The roof leaked and had missing shingles.



*After: New plywood awaits paper and shingles.
Photos by Gary O'Neill*

PIEDRAS BLANCAS GRAY WHALE RESEARCHER RETIRES

Wayne Perryman spent nearly 25 years leading the annual springtime tally of gray whales swimming past Piedras Blancas. He would often be found peering through the "big eyes"- high-powered binoculars the researchers used as they spotted gray whales off Piedras Blancas. He will retire October 1st after a 20 year career with the US Navy and 27 years with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He founded NOAA's Southwest Fisheries Science Center's Cetacean Health and Life History Program in 1986. Perryman will receive the Department of Commerce's bronze medal soon after he retires, based in part on his innovative use of drones. The program will continue under the leadership of Dr. John Durban. The whale team conducts their research at Piedras Blancas every spring from March-May during the northern migration of gray whales.

Right: Perryman looks for gray whales at Piedras Blancas.

Photo by Joe Johnston, SLO Tribune



MEET THE SCIENTISTS OF PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT STATION

On April 29th, the Piedras Blancas Light Station celebrated National Volunteer Month by hosting the second annual "Meet the Scientists" event for local volunteers as well as agency and non-governmental partners. Biologists from a variety of fields were on hand to share their research and answer questions. Participants also heard from Melissa Clark with Ventana Wildlife Society on the California Condor Recovery project. Karah Ammann of the University of California, Santa Cruz discussed Abalone Recovery, and Carolyn Skinder of NOAA discussed Zooplankton. Brian Hatfield of the US Geological Survey shared information on California Sea Otter Recovery. Heather Liwanag of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo presented on the pilot elephant seal surveys she and her graduate students are working on. Jim Gilpatrick from NOAA, one of the official gray whale counters, discussed the annual gray whale count and was kind enough to let visitors use the "big eyes," the massive binoculars the biologists use for their work. Dr. John Durban and Dr. Holly Fearnbach from the NOAA Satellite and Information Service were on hand to demonstrate the drones they use to take aerial photographs of gray whales and check on the health of the cows and newborn calves on their northern migration.

BLM staff had a wonderful time hosting so many people from the area who give their time and energy to contribute to the conservation of this extraordinary area. Piedras Blancas had visitors from Friends of the Elephant Seal, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Exploration Center, California State Parks, Caltrans Headquarters, as well as BLM volunteers and their friends and families. The weather was amazing, whales and otters made an appearance, and the wildflowers were in full bloom.

Right: Jim Gilpatrick from NOAA waits for visitors to use the binoculars.



Dr. John Durban (right) NOAA whale team lead, discusses the gray whale research at the Piedras Blancas Light Station with visitors.



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 fun gift, too! Prices include tax and shipping and all the proceeds stay here at the light station. You may also join or renew your membership online. Visit us at: piedrasblancas.org



HAVE YOU SEEN OUR WEBCAM?

Since it was installed in 2016, many visitors have written to say how much they enjoy the live 270 degree view from the light station. You may see elephant seals on the beach or a beautiful moonrise. Check us out: piedrasblancas.org/webcam

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 2 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 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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San Simeon, CA 93452-0127
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membership.pblsa@gmail.com



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!



PIEDRAS BLANCAS LIGHT
STATION ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 127
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