

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

March 23, 2022

Present: David Cooper (Chair), Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), John Brass, Jim Harris, John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: Gary O'Neill, Ryan Cooper (BLM)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

The tabled motion from last meeting will be addressed in Old Business rather than in the Tower Report. Agenda approved by consensus with this change.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the February 23, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus. David recommended board members and BLM staff refer to Section 5 of the minutes for a good summary of the approval and funding process related to the Shoreline proposal.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. There was a small loss recorded for February. A \$1,000 targeted donation for the lens was received and deposited in the Pacific Premier Targeted Donation Fund. A spreadsheet has been created to track targeted donations and expenses charged against them. There were no BLM expenses for the month. The investment market continues in a downward trend.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. Gift shop sales in February were the highest on record. Cressant is continuing to raise prices in the gift shop to compensate for increased vendor prices. She will watch sales trends to see if overall sales numbers drop as a result. Prices in the gift shop remain comparable or lower than other gift shops in the area. Jodie has observed a change in the demographic of visitors toward people with more disposable income who would be willing to pay increased prices.
4. BLM Update (Jodie Nelson) – See Appendix 4. Jodie had a recent on-site meeting with a BLM archaeologist, an environmental planner, and an engineer to discuss the parking lot, flagpole relocation, and other projects. The restroom project may be complicated by archeological concerns. Jodie is trying to facilitate a Zoom meeting where Bruce Elster of Shoreline and BLM engineers can discuss the tower window proposal.

A BLM seasonal park ranger position has been advertised for the light station; this position would work a maximum of six months to assist during the busy season, though there is the possibility of extending it. John also reported on a permanent park ranger position for the light station that has been approved for funding but not yet advertised. An intern position for the light station may be advertised through a new contract in June or July.

The Eroica event scheduled for Sunday, May 1, is still pending approval.

Jodie has been in contact with new staff at the BLM grants office. There is a possibility of extending the co-op agreement, with the limitation that the only expenditures can be for projects approved before the end of the agreement.

Jodie is planning two events for volunteers, with the possibility of opening them to partner agencies and organizations. One is on plant uses by native tribes in the Sierras.

Harry and Jodie will meet soon to discuss the electrical work to be completed in the Fog Signal Building. Steps to be completed include getting requirements for vendors to bid on, the board approving the funds to spend, and approval for the co-op reimbursement from the grants office. It's estimated that the work will cost \$25-30k and the hope is to have the work completed this summer.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Bruce is working on answering questions from BLM engineers. The mortar testing will be done before the window replacement. Bruce expects to get a proposal from Earth Systems regarding the geotechnical scans for the tower foundation.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Connected Energy is waiting for an in-person meeting of the board to present their white paper.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Jim encouraged the board to use Instrumentl to search for grants. Discussion followed.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No recent meetings.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No update since the last board meeting. Members are working on creating a case statement. The next meeting will be April 18.

Old Business:

1. Tabled motion to approve Shoreline proposal of January 19, 2022 (David Cooper) – David sent questions to BLM regarding the process of using BLM funds; it is necessary to wait until the new grants office personnel are more familiar with the job in order to get answers to detailed questions. David recommended holding off on voting on the funding request; it will take six months to complete the engineering review, which may cause a change in the proposal and budget. As a result, the proposal may need to be requested with the next co-op funding agreement. If the motion is left on the table to expire, it can be re-introduced later with more detailed budget figures.

Jim asked if the mortar testing can be done independent of BLM and SHPO approval. It would provide better information for the rest of the proposal and cost \$20,000 for three weeks of testing. This could be performed while waiting for BLM approval of the overall proposal. John Hodge didn't know if anything could be done without review. Jim will send Jodie an email detailing the question and she will ask the BLM archaeologist. Harry reminded the board that similar mortar testing was done on the Fog Signal Building with verbal agreement from BLM engineering.

Jim rescinded the tabled motion with no objections. Motion off the table. David clarified that this does not indicate the board's favor or disfavor of the project; it is moving forward through other avenues.

2. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe)
3. Fresnel Lens Update – Jodie reported there is no update from BLM, the Coast Guard, or the offices of Congressmen Carbajal and Panetta. David will contact the congressmen's offices on behalf of the board.

New Business:

1. Reporting board member volunteer hours to BLM – Because grants rely on in-kind volunteer dollars, Jodie would like to have more information from the board on time spent on light station work other than board meetings. Cressant will remind the board with the agenda draft email that total volunteer hours are due with reports. No detail is necessary, just total hours.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:09 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on April 21, 2022.

Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 3/23/22 – Cressant Swarts

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

February 23, 2022

Present: David Cooper (Chair), Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Jim Harris, Gary O'Neill, John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), John Brass, Ryan Cooper (BLM)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:02.

David thanked Jim for organizing the February 18 meeting at the light station with Bruce Elster, Dan Murphy, and Rob Down; he thanked John Hodge for organizing BLM staff presence.

The motion in New Business will be addressed in full in the Tower Report. Agenda approved by consensus with this change.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the January 26, 2022, board meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. There was a small profit last month. The name of the Tower Restoration Fund has been changed to Targeted Donation Fund, as a way to separate donations with specific requirements by the donor; they will be tracked in a separate spreadsheet. David asked if the spreadsheet will satisfy donor requirements; Harry explained that it has not been necessary to set up a specific sub-ledger or purchase dedicated software to handle donations, but that may change as fundraising efforts continue. The recent \$100,000 donation was required to be spent on "brick and mortar" but is still too general to be considered a targeted donation. The \$12,660 in existing funds in the Targeted Donation Fund are from past fundraisers for the tower.

PBLSA investments have fallen with general market trends. Harry submitted the quarterly report to BLM. David asked when the quarterly report requirement will become biannual or yearly; Harry said that will have to be clarified when a new cooperative agreement is reached.

3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. January's sales were good compared to previous years, and 2021 ended with the highest sales ever for the gift shop. Cressant praised the volunteers who have been working in the gift shop and thanked Jodie for staffing the gift shop. Cressant has started ordering stock for summer; she is planning to increase prices in the gift shop as most vendors have raised their prices.
4. BLM Update (Jodie Nelson) – See Appendix 4. There has been an upswing in visitation recently, even on typically slow days, and more tours have been filled. Jodie has contacted the Coastal Commission in regard to moving forward on tower work; their main concern is changing the appearance of the light station, so she anticipates no problems. The parking lot project has been pushed back to mid-summer; the restroom project is on hold until Ryan returns. Jodie commented that when she checks reviews of the light station, there are no complaints about the portable toilets but a lot of praise for the overall light station experience; she will try to find a way to pass on some of this feedback to the board. The California

Conservation Corps has been working on the trail and weeding. Jodie is trying to increase the number of volunteer days they are available through March or April.

Ryan's detail will be ending May 2; a replacement is lined up for that position. Jodie has been hired as acting manager at the light station until Ryan's return.

BLM has talked to the Coast Guard and Congressman Carbajal's office about hosting a public meeting regarding the lens. There was discussion on the role PBLSA can play in hosting the meeting; it was agreed that PBLSA should co-host and encourage area tourism and business groups to participate as well. The technical details of hosting the event would be handled by the Congressman's office. It will also be important to contact Congressman Panetta, as the redistricting process may overlap with the meeting planning. David will contact the congressional offices on behalf of the PBLSA.

The California BLM is working on a 3-year intern agreement that PBLS can be a part of; the timeline is unknown, so there may not be an intern hired yet at the beginning of summer.

There was a brief discussion about applying for the next cooperative agreement with BLM; there will be a public posting, but PBLSA can prepare the submission before the posting.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Discussion followed regarding the Shoreline proposal and the administrative and funding steps necessary to accept the proposal. John Hodge clarified the administrative process for BLM, which is as follows: John will review the proposal and submit it to an internal BLM team with Jodie identified as lead on the project; there will be a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review by BLM staff; the BLM archaeologist will submit the proposal to the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) for review; John anticipates a 4-6 month window for all approvals. If additional detail or changes are necessary for the proposal, it will be returned to PBLSA as the applicant, and PBLSA can work with Shoreline to make the necessary changes. Harry reminded the board that the same process applied for the Fog Signal Building.

Discussion turned to funding the proposal. Jim read the following motion into the record: The PBLSA Board accepts the Shoreline Proposal of 19 January 2022 (Job #404-05c) for the exterior mortar testing, a task taking about three weeks and estimated not to exceed fee of \$20K, and the rehabilitation of the south ground floor window, a task that will take about four months and estimated not to exceed fee of \$120K; in addition, the Board will address the geotechnical task upon its submission for PBLSA consideration. Gary seconded. Further discussion on the proposal followed. Jim will send another copy for everyone to review.

David asked if the board is comfortable committing \$140,000 or more to a project 4-6 months down the road; Jim suggested the motion be amended to make funding contingent on approval of the proposal by BLM. Harry asked if the board was willing to commit the funding without pursuing cooperative agreement funding for the project. Discussion followed. Harry described the process of submitting projects for funding through the cooperative agreement: if the PBLSA commits to funding the project, funds cannot be requested through the cooperative agreement, because the application asks how much the PBLSA has already committed and what additional costs are not covered; reimbursement is only available for these additional costs.

John agreed with Harry that committing funds now would prevent the PBLSA from requesting reimbursement for the project through the cooperative agreement. Harry would like further insight from the grants office on whether his concerns are valid. Ryan has the information on how much money is available through the cooperative agreement, as it changes based on tour

fees collected; Harry estimated \$200,000 remaining. There was discussion on amending the motion to clarify that the first source of funding would be the cooperative agreement.

John Hodge clarified that whether PBLSA commits funds or not doesn't affect the BLM approval timeline for the project.

David suggested tabling the motion until a better understanding can be reached of how to get cooperative agreement funds for the project. If the questions above are resolved, it would be possible to vote via email or at next month's meeting. Motion tabled.

Further discussion followed on how to obtain the necessary information for the PBLSA to move forward on approving funding for the proposal or applying for cooperative agreement funds to cover the costs. John said the same procedure as previous cooperative-funded projects should be followed. Harry said he had to go through Ryan to get answers from the grants office on previous projects. Jodie will meet with Ryan to discuss how work on the previous cooperative agreements has been accomplished.

Jodie reiterated that the BLM review of the proposal is a process independent of funding; Jodie will stay in contact with the engineers and update the board as necessary.

Discussion of further reports was suspended.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. No discussion.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. No discussion.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No discussion.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No discussion.

Old Business:

1. Project Priorities Revisited (Harry Thorpe) – No discussion
2. Fresnel Lens Update – No discussion.

New Business:

1. Complete motion considered in Tower Report discussion above.

Discussion Items: None

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on March 7, 2022.

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 3/23/22 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for February 2022

1. **OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$4,097.70 YTD: \$7,794.30
PROFIT: Last Month: <\$966.08>* YTD: <\$936.45>

TARGETED DONATION FUND BALANCE: \$13,660.03

BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE: Last Month: none YTD: \$382.59
BALANCES: P.P. Bank: \$2,057.09** ASAP: \$18,465.18**

* Grant software: \$902

** Corrected

2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

<i>Month</i>	<i>Beg Bal</i>	<i>Market Chg</i>	<i>Div/Int</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>W/D</i>	<i>Ending Bal</i>
Feb 2022	686,777.31	<10,158.60>	677.32	--	--	677,296.03
Jan 2022	704,380.86	<18,259.77>	656.22	--	--	686,777.31
Dec 2021	714,383.52	9,264.26	11,733.72	--	31,000.64	704,380.86

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for Jan/Feb. Posted adjustments.
- Corrected Co-op bank balance/funds available. Re-classified deposit.
- Replaced office computer display.
- Reviewed gift shop purchase orders for best selling items.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 3/23/22 – Cressant Swarts

Prices have been increased on some items, with more to follow, due to increasing vendor costs.

February Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$3,095.63
Website sales	\$194
Total	\$3,289.63

NET SALES COMPARISONS

Shaded month indicates lower sales than that same month last year. Figures include website as well as on-site gift shop sales starting in 2021. Excludes donations, memberships, and engraved bricks.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2016	1,798	2,609	2,830	1,988	2,142	2,586	4,861	3,410	2,716	2,647	1,930	2,103
2017	2,196	1,461	2,678	3,909	2,864	3,350	4,666	3,701	2,218	3,022	2,793	3,491
2018	3,077	3,094	3,104	3,316	3,133	3,707	6,225	4,157	3,383	2,552	1,597	1,730
2019	1,015	1,605	2,565	3,350	3,641	4,665	6,804	4,722	2,070	3,656	2,717	3,719
2020	2,202	2,764	1,653	215	164	189	524	244	136	56	220	376
2021	108	1,291	2,198	3,723	4,276	5,363	8,469	7,588	4,238	5,383	3,474	2,265
2022	2,636	3,290										

Government shutdown affected Dec 2018 and *COVID-19 affected 2020/2021 beginning on March 19, 2020.

Yearly Comparisons

	Jan - Jun	TOTAL
2016	\$13,953	\$31,620
2017	\$16,458	\$36,349
2018	\$19,431	\$39,075
2019	\$16,841	\$40,529
2020	\$7,187	\$8,743
2021	\$16,959	\$48,376
2022		

Appendix 4: BLM Update 3/23/22 – Jodie Nelson

- BLM scoping meeting at Piedras 3.22 regarding projects: parking lot, flagpole, and bathrooms.
- Parking lot project is moving forward. Some issues to be worked out with our contracting office, but John has kindly taken lead.
- Tower – in communication with District Engineers. Immediate project deadlines have their attention right now, but we are continuing to discuss the project. Will Birmingham and Suong Chong have some follow up questions for Bruce. I have suggested we facilitate a meeting with the engineers to try to get any additional questions addressed.
- Seasonal park ranger position for Piedras Blancas has been opened (closing date 4/1). I have forwarded the announcement to various depts at Cal Poly, other agency's staff, and the CA Conservation Corps, as well as past Piedras interns to spread the word and hopefully get some good applicants.
- Interns – Piedras is part of a statewide agreement for interns, but we're still early in the process. My hope is internships will be open for applicants June, but July is probably more realistic.
- Eroica May 1 – turned in their Special Recreation Permit application and event plan. Will be reviewing later this week and scoping with our resources team next week.
- PBLSA Agreement. Megan Bryant no longer works for the Grants office, and her position is vacant. Thelma Mosley is our new grants officer but is still getting up to speed. I emailed her today to find out what we need to do to either renew the PBLSA Agreement or extend the Agreement if that's easier given the timeline.
- Cypress tree and hedge/windscreen in historic district trimmed
- CCC's have been coming out nearly every Friday – working on the trail, weeding, erecting the NOAA researchers' wind screen, cleaning the rotunda. They've been scheduled through April. Hoping to continue this arrangement indefinitely.
- NOAA researchers begin to arrive Friday, 3/26. First observations begin Monday.
- Volunteer enrichment events: Whale team presentation and Sierra Nevada Foothill tribes presentation by Sierra Foothill Conservancy (dates/times tbd)

Tour Numbers

Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
October	637	605	516	500	506	441	535	22	552
November	622	503	474	357	523	433	334	56	375
December	404	464	426	273	829	251	518	0	208
January	661	731	623	266	608	0	715	0	348
February	573	570	572	284	780	318	578	108	404
March	696	754	560	502	662	784	185	160	
April	663	616	581	666	684	790	0	399	
May	432	629	352	572	362	555	0	446	
June	658	916	521	787	732	698	0	643	
July	1178	990	850	1125	1169	1085	0	972	
August	985	809	693	836	1001	819	0	834	
September	601	481	442	437	591	374	0	547	
Total	8110	8068	6610	6605	8447	6548	2865	4166	1887

*partial

Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 3/23/22 – Jim Harris

Bruce Elster has received two questions from Will Birmingham, BLM Civil Engineer, regarding the Shoreline Engineering proposal to the PBLSA on 19 January 2022 (Job #404-05c) and the subsequent site visit on February 18; Bruce is in the process of answering them. The first question was about the sequencing of the testing of the exterior mortar and of the work on the south window restoration - the mortar testing will be performed first. The second question asked for more detail on the anchoring of the concrete for the window and Bruce is preparing an answer. The proposal response from Earth Systems Pacific, Geotechnical Engineers, should be submitted to Shoreline Engineering at the end of this week (after the PBLSA meeting). In addition, the timeline for the issues related to archeological and SHPO oversight of the tower work that the BLM must address appears to be on the order of six months from being completed. Also, the issue of the PBLSA and the use of its Co-Op Agreement for funding the proposal is still open. Therefore, based upon this status the motion tabled from the last PBLSA meeting for action this meeting should be amended appropriately. The motion is stated below for reference:

TABLED MOTION: The PBLSA Board accepts the Shoreline Proposal of 19 January 2022 (Job #404-05c) for the exterior mortar testing, a task taking about three weeks and estimated not to exceed fee of \$20K, and the rehabilitation of the south ground floor window, a task that will take about four months and estimated not to exceed fee of \$120K; in addition, the Board will address the geotechnical task upon its submission for PBLSA consideration.

Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 3/23/22 – Jim Harris

The status of this project remains the same as last time: the under-grounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold. It is proposed that Connected Energy present their white paper and give a presentation to the Board as soon as the Board is meeting in person again, hopefully in the next few months. Their white paper is a proposed design of a sustainable option to allow electric power for the light station to be provided with or without grid input using a microgrid system with solar and motor generator input and battery storage.

Appendix 7: Capital Campaign/Grants Report 3/23/22 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe

With the planned initiation of the tower work and possible initiation of the restoration of the two Victorian structures, it is recommended that the PBLSA use Instrumental to identify potential grant opportunities to support the work for the tower and for the future restoration of the Victorians (including their possible use as the future home for the Fresnel Lens).

Appendix 8: Reporting Board Member Volunteer Hours – Jodie Nelson

To improve the accuracy of the volunteer hour statistics reported to BLM, Jodie would like board members to track hours for the following activities: meetings, time spent working on projects, travel time to and from meetings, the light station, or any other locations related to the light station. Hours should be reported to Cressant monthly. Please send your hours before each board meeting with your reports.