

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

October 26, 2022

Present: David Cooper (Chair), Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Scot Addis, Jim Harris, Veronika Kocen, Gary O'Neill, John Hodge (BLM), Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: John Brass

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

David thanked Gary and Sharon for their work on nominating new board member Veronika Kocen. Welcome to Veronika.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the September 28, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. September had a small loss in the operations budget, but the year to date is still showing a profit. An anonymous \$50,000 donation was received in September. It has been deposited to the operations budget. Another \$51,000 donation was received in October and deposited. Both were targeted donations for the Victorian cottage restoration plans. Harry asked the board for suggestions on how best to invest these donations, as the investment market has been volatile. Harry will convene the financial subcommittee to discuss investing the donations once he has received suggestions.

The BLM co-op agreement has ended, and the remaining funds refunded to BLM. The SF 425 report has been submitted, and Harry is working on the performance review, which is due at the end of the year. There has been no information yet on a new co-op agreement.

3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. The gift shop sales continue to increase by month over the same month in the previous year. The Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 1 raised a total of \$7,637.37 after expenses. The two previous events with Harmony Cellars raised approximately \$5,000 each.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. Ryan suggested board members look at the sextant display created by Armando, a new volunteer who has been working in the wood shop. The display is in the museum room in the gift shop; interpretive materials will be coming soon.

Bre Brown, the new park ranger, will be starting the week of November 7. She last worked at Rocky Mountain National Park as a ranger; she will be helping with tours, trail work, facility maintenance, and perhaps other duties as time goes on. She will not be a law enforcement ranger.

The parking lot has had plants removed around the edges. Ryan is hoping for the BLM contracting officer to give him notice to proceed soon, so the contractor can begin. During work on the parking lot, visitors will have to park on State Park property and walk in for tours. The materials for the fog signal building lighting have arrived; the electrician will be able to start work in the second week of November. Tours will have to be modified slightly during this work.

Ryan received an informal approval by the district engineer of the three proposals relating to the tower stabilization. He will speak with the state engineer this week and continue working with the archaeologist to get the proposals approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. He is trying to combine SHPO approvals for the tower and the fence, to expedite both projects. The 15-year agreement reached with local Native American groups when BLM created the management plan for the light station has expired; the archaeologist has sent a letter to open discussions for a new agreement. It is hoped that these discussions will also lead to better interpretation of the Native American history of the light station.

Harry suggested that a formal agreement from BLM engineers be received before the board proceeds with fundraising plans; an agreement like this was received before work proceeded on the fog signal building. Ryan will discuss this with the state engineer this week.

The Golden Hour photo tour will take place on November 5; the goal is to plan more special tours and events after the new year. More volunteers are needed for school groups; it has been necessary to make school groups smaller. There will be a holiday party and volunteer recognition on Saturday, December 10.

Total tour numbers for FY 2022 are comparable to 2019, before the pandemic restrictions.

It was suggested that February 15, 2023, the light station's 148th birthday, would be a good date for a community celebration of the completion of the fog signal building. David suggested that interested board members contribute to the organization of the event.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Jim reiterated that the need for a timeline on the tower proposal approval is not a criticism of local BLM management; however, he suggested that the board ask for a schedule from BLM so that the PBLSA can begin planning for funding. After work on the lens enclosure is completed, Bruce and Dan will be available to work on plans for the reconstruction of the tower top. Jim proposed the following motion:

MOTION: Given that it has been nine months since the Shoreline proposal of 19 January 2022 was submitted to the BLM for review, the PBLSA Board request that the BLM provide an estimated schedule for the completion of their review so the PBLSA can initiate its planning and funding for the completion of the three tasks in the proposal.

Harry seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Jim summarized the history of the Shoreline report and proposals for the newer board members. Jim will send Veronika and Scot a copy of the proposals to review. David will send a copy of the Shoreline report. There was a suggestion to postpone the vote until Veronika was able to review the proposals. In light of the upcoming holidays, the board decided not to delay the vote on the motion.

The motion passed with one abstention (Veronika, pending her review of the proposals in question).

Jim will draft a letter to be addressed to Gabe Garcia, BLM Field Manager. He will circulate the letter to the board members and Ryan for feedback.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Jim observed that the time passing since Connected Energy drafted their white paper will require that the proposal be modified for increasing costs.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Jim suggested that the board begin planning for a capital campaign as soon as possible after approval of the tower proposals by BLM; preferably around the first of next year.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report. David would like to discuss the donations targeted to this project with Harry and Ryan outside of the meeting.
10. Fresnel Lens Update (Scot Addis) – See Appendix 8. Scot reported that the Pinedorado Lions Foundation submitted an alternative to the Coast Guard's standard loan agreement and storage requirements for the lens. The Coast Guard has agreed to prepare an addendum to each item of the original documents that will address the Foundation's concerns; these addenda are expected to be received by the end of October. The Coast Guard also approved continuing the engineering work to repair the lens enclosure as a short-term solution.

David has notified Bruce that he can proceed with the engineering work on the enclosure.

The Pinedorado Lions Foundation will act as fiduciary for the lens during this short-term phase; preliminary quotes for insurance are estimated at \$1,350 per year. The property on which the lens sits is owned by the county and is on a long-term lease to the Lions.

Scot has also updated the Cambria Tourism Board of the progress on the lens and followed up on the possibility of the Tourism Board funding part of the cost of the enclosure work.

Old Business:

1. Boundary Fence Update (Gary O'Neill) – Due to the additional complications introduced by digging holes for the fence, other less-invasive methods are being considered. Gary is asking the contractor who gave the previous bid about the possibility of adding an a-frame structure to each post as support. Another possibility is embedding steel spikes with platforms to hold 4x4 posts. He is hoping to get the contractor who gave the previous bid back on site to discuss ideas. Ryan is also doing some research and plans to test some ideas.

There was discussion on having a volunteer crew dig the holes for the fence with supervision from archaeological and tribal staff, then using concrete forms (sealed at the top to prevent animal entrapment) to hold the holes open. If nothing of archaeological significance is found during the digging, then the contractor can proceed with the fence installation. Gary will check into the cost of the concrete forms.

New Business: None.

Discussion Items: The date of the next board meeting was confirmed as Wednesday, December 7, at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) on December 6, 2022.

Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 10/26/22 – Cressant Swarts

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

September 28, 2022

Present: Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Scot Addis, John Brass, Jim Harris, Gary O'Neill, Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: David Cooper (Chair), Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), John Hodge (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the August 24, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. There has been a good profit for the month and year so far, though investments are down with the market. The BLM co-op agreement has ended; the remaining balance of \$690.70 in the ASAP account will be reimbursed to BLM soon. Expenses related to the lens were excluded from the report for a better focus on operations.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. Cressant thanked all the volunteers who have helped in the gift shop this year. Thank you as well to the docents, and Ryan and Jodie, for adopting the new tour format that allows visitors to spend more time in the gift shop, significantly increasing sales.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. Jim included images from a report on the tower's cracks done by Jim Boucher in 2015. Bruce suggested comparing the report with the current condition of the tower, as the rust jacking and other damage are continuing. The board discussed the best way to approach BLM for a status update on the proposals submitted in January. Jim will contact Ryan and encourage him to follow up with the BLM engineers. Jim will report back to the board with any recommended actions before the next board meeting.

Jim reminded the board that the proposal for the tower top restoration being prepared by Bruce and Dan has been deferred due to their work on the lens enclosure.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. Jim commented that the issue of undergrounding the powerlines has been in discussion for five years but that the tower takes priority. Gary expressed an interest in looking at federal funding for renewable infrastructure; he will do some research.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. When feedback has been received from BLM on the timelines for approval and implementation of the tower

proposals, Jim recommends the board discuss a strategic plan for grants and a capital campaign.

8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report.
10. Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report (Scot Addis) – See Appendix 8. Scot and David attended a meeting on September 20, with the stakeholders' group and representatives from the Coast Guard to discuss standards for the lens enclosure. The Coast Guard wants an entity to act as borrower of record and to sign a loan agreement for the lens. The Pinedorado Foundation is reviewing the documents and has found the clauses for insurance and financial liability to be onerous. Pinedorado is attempting to craft an alternate loan agreement without insurance requirements, as the lens had been in the same location for 30 years. The Pinedorado Foundation is willing to coordinate and act as fiduciary. The Coast Guard is not willing to approve enclosure repairs until the borrower of record is assigned. The next step would be to get a quote on repairs from Wellsona and Shoreline, then begin fundraising. A grant application for \$60k has been submitted to the tourism board. The Coast Guard also wants the condition of the lens to be assessed by Bob Woodward; the last assessment was in 2018.

Supervisor Gibson's office is working to articulate 'deal points' to define in writing who is involved in the short-term plan for the lens. Once a short-term plan is decided, the stakeholders' group will begin to consider long-term plans, including permanent housing for the lens.

Old Business:

1. Boundary Fence Update (Gary O'Neill) – The bid on a pressure-treated wood fence, reported at the last meeting, has passed the 30-day period, and will need to be re-bid before the board can vote to approve it. The bid did not include the cost of painting the fence. Ryan is waiting on a reply from the BLM archaeologist on what would need to happen to install the fence; there may be additional work required while installing. Gary will follow up with Ryan.

New Business:

1. Nomination of Veronika Kocen to the Board (Sharon Flaherty/Gary O'Neill) – Gary made a motion to nominate Veronika Kocen as a new board member. He mentioned her past with the light station as an intern and her continued involvement with and knowledge of the light station through frequent visits. John Brass seconded the motion. There was further discussion of Veronika's work with USGS and her experience with social media. The board voted to approve Veronika Kocen as a new board member; the motion passed unanimously. Harry will contact Veronika.

Discussion Items:

Gary and Harry reported that they continue to receive positive feedback from visitors regarding the new tour format, some of whom compared it favorably to tours they took prior to the pandemic. Harry mentioned that better signage in some areas would help fill any gaps.

Harry is working to complete the final details of the expired co-op agreement, including reports, and refunding the small amount left. The BLM contact doesn't know when the application for a new co-op agreement will be announced.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on October 22, 2022.

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 10/26/22 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for September 2022

1. OPERATIONS INCOME:	Last Month: \$6,346.88*	YTD: \$66,045.90*
PROFIT:	Last Month: <\$1,094.08>*/**	YTD: \$6,350.28*/***
MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:	\$26,543.24*	
TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:	\$13,660.03	
BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:	Last Month: none	YTD: \$1,748.98
BALANCES:	P.P. Bank: \$500.00	ASAP: none

* Does not include \$50,000 anonymous donation

** Excludes restoration expense: \$7,800

*** Excludes restoration expense: \$12,275

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>
Sept 2022	635,693.89	<39,434.02>	1,091.68	--	<26,000>	571,451.55
Aug 2022	653,204.17	<18,595.29>	1,085.01	--	--	635,693.89
July 2022	625,158.94	26,912.15	1,133.08	--	--	653,204.17

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for August/September. No adjustments.
- Withdrew \$26,000 from reserve account to cover labor/materials of FSB lighting project.
- Ordered lighting materials from Acropolis Lighting and sent \$7,800 as 50% of balance. Delivery is expected in early October.
- Final Coop Agreement balance of \$690.70 was returned to BLM.
- Submitted final SF 425 for Coop Agreement. Final written performance report is due by 12/15.
- PBLSA check for \$500 deposited into Coop Agreement checking account as minimum balance.
- Sent tax exempt letter to anonymous donor for \$50,000 donation. Determination of appropriate investment vehicle requires Board review.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 10/26/22 – Cressant Swarts

The trend of gift shop sales increasing over the same month in the prior year continued in September.

The Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 1 raised a total of \$7,637.37, including ticket sales, the silent auction, gift shop sales, and miscellaneous donations, and subtracting costs for the food, musician, wine glasses, and miscellaneous expenses. Harmony Cellars donated their wine and staff time, as well as a silent auction item. Firestone Walker donated beer, and Harvey's Honey Huts donated two units and a wash station. We also had many generous silent auction donations, as well as centerpieces donated by Ryan and Debbie Cooper.

September Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$5,575.80
Website sales	\$0
Total	\$5,575.80

September Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$3,340.53
Profit	\$2,235.27
Percentage	40%

**includes cost, scrap, inventory shortages, taxes, fees, and shipping*

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	4,410	4,404	6,384	7,593	9,236	8,784	5,354			

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

Yearly Net Sales 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	\$28,717	

Appendix 4: BLM Update 10/26/22 – Ryan Cooper

New Park Ranger

Our new ranger will be here the week of November 7th. Her name is Bre Brown.

Lens

Discuss during the Lens Report

Parking Lot Redesign / Restrooms

I have started the process of removing plant material. We should have a start date by the end of the week.

FSB Lighting

We have the supplies in hand, and I have contacted the electrician. He is in the middle of a big project, and he thinks he can get to us in mid November.

Tower

I did hear from the district engineer, and he said he had “no issues” with the proposals. I am guessing that means we are good to go on the engineering end. I am working with the Archeologist to push the proposals through the SHPO.

Special Event:

Photo Tour	Nov 5 th
Monarch Grove	Dec 2 and Dec 9, Dec 16
Holiday Party	Dec 10

Tour Numbers

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
October	506	441	535	22	552	401*		
November	523	433	334	56	350			
December	829	251	518	0	208			
January	608	0	715	0	300			
February	780	318	578	108	407			
March	662	784	185	160	471			
April	684	790	0	399	524			
May	362	555	0	446	452			
June	732	698	0	643	661			
July	1169	1085	0	972	881			
August	1001	819	0	834	1043			
September	591	374	0	547	487			
Total	8447	6548	2865	4166	6336			

*partial

Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 10/26/22 – Jim Harris

The three tasks identified in the Shoreline proposal (Job #404-05c) dated 19 January 2022, and preparatory to starting the construction/restoration of the tower, are under review of the BLM. The deterioration of the tower continues as exhibited by the state of the rust jacking of the openings and the interior water damage near top on the north side. Therefore, it is recommended that the BLM provide a schedule for the expected completion for its review of the three bundled task proposals. Hence,

MOTION: Given that it has been nine months since the Shoreline proposal of 19 January 2022 was submitted to the BLM for review, the PBLSA Board request that the BLM provide an estimated schedule for the completion of their review so the PBLSA can initiate its planning and funding for the completion of the three tasks in the proposal.

The proposal for the tower top restoration being prepared by Bruce Elster of Shoreline Engineering and Dan Murphy of Wellsona has been deferred due to their work in support for the rehabilitation planning for the Lens enclosure in Cambria. As stated before, after the completion and submittal of their tower top restoration proposal, along with the three tasks proposals under review by the BLM, there will be sufficient documented engineering work to begin construction rehabilitation work for restoring the tower. To summarize, the Board should have sufficient information to specify a capital campaign to complete the rehabilitation of the tower, truly a “shovel ready construction project”.

Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 10/26/22 – 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 until the BLM and California State Parks come to a formal understanding of the access road to the light station along with other considerations. Connected Energy has prepared a revised version of their white paper and is willing to 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 10/26/22 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe

After the acceptance and completion of the four proposals identified in the Tower summary there should be sufficient cost and schedule as well as completed engineering design information to formally establish a capital campaign to rehabilitate the tower, including adding the top three levels. Therefore, it is again recommended that the Board by the end of the year initiate the planning for a capital campaign to begin the rehabilitation construction for the tower.

Appendix 8: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 10/26/22 – Scot Addis

As a follow up to the in-person meeting held with the Coast Guard (CG) on September 20th the Pinedorado Lions Foundation reviewed the standard loan agreement and storage requirements documents provided by the CG. The Foundation Board found the content of the documents to be unacceptable with provisions that placed most of the financial and legal liability with the Foundation. An alternative document was prepared by the Board and sent to the CG. The Foundation President also contacted the CG indicating he would not sign the documents in original form. As a result, a Zoom call with representatives of the Foundation and CG took place on October 12th. There was consensus that an agreement could be reached, and documents prepared with content acceptable to all. The CG made clear they could not alter the original documents but would prepare an addendum to each one that would address the Foundation's concerns. The larger stakeholder group met via Zoom on October 14th to brief all on the agreed next steps. During this call, the stakeholder group also obtained approval from the CG to have Shoreline Engineering proceed with the final engineering evaluation suitable for building permit processing and the development of repair cost estimates. The CG indicated they could draft addenda for review by the Foundation by the end of October.