

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 1: Secretary's Report 9/28/22 – Cressant Swarts

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

August 24, 2022

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

Absent: Jodie Nelson (BLM)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. David welcomed new board member Scot Addis. Attendees briefly introduced themselves.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 1. The minutes of the July 27, 2022, meeting was approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 2. July was a very good month, and the gift shop did very well. Investments have recovered more than half of what was previously lost. Harry gave a brief overview of the association's finances for Scot. The association has several investment accounts with Fidelity and takes a conservative stance on investing, with a 7-8% yearly increase. Scot asked if capital budgeting was separate from operating budget, and Harry explained the co-op agreement with BLM that pays for capital projects. Harry also noted that the co-op agreement ended on August 21; final reporting and reimbursement is in progress. There has not yet been a call for applicants for a new agreement.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – See Appendix 3. July was a good month for the gift shop, and the profit margin increased over the previous month. Harry explained that the gift shop revenue in his report is based on when the money from sales is deposited in the bank, while the gift shop report is based on when the sales were made; there can be a delay in depositing funds around the end of the month.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – See Appendix 4. The parking lot contract has been awarded, though a timeline has not yet been determined; construction will disrupt tour parking for approximately a week. The funding request for the restroom will be submitted early in the next fiscal year.

Harry and Ryan suggested accepting the lower of the two bids received for completing the lighting in the Fog Signal Building; supplies are estimated at \$15,000 and labor at \$10,000, with an estimated total of \$26,000, including a margin for additional outlets. Harry made a motion for the association to pay for the cost of completing the lighting in the Fog Signal Building, at an estimated cost of \$26,000. Jim seconded. Motion passed unanimously. There is not yet a timeline. The suggestion was made to have a celebration for the completion of the Fog Signal Building when the work is done, inviting donors such as the Hind Foundation.

Ryan will reach out to BLM engineers for an update on the tower proposal. He will ask for a timeline on their decision.

The next hike-in will be on August 31. There will be a volunteer summit on Wednesday, September 14 at 10 a.m. Ryan will serve pancakes and thank the summer volunteers who put in extra effort; there will also be an opportunity for David to update the volunteers on the PBLSA's activities and encourage membership. School tours will start again on September 16 and 23.

Katelyn's last week is next week. A full-time interpretive park ranger will be interviewed soon, with a decision planned for the third week of September. Jodie will be back at the light station from her detail next week.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 5. The submission of the geotechnical testing proposal from Yeh to BLM will complete the three projects relating to the tower that were included in January's Shoreline proposal: external material testing of the tower, geotechnical testing of the foundation, and replacement of one of the windows. Yeh's proposal for geotechnical testing would require an estimated 10 weeks and cost \$34,583. Bruce has reviewed the proposal and is satisfied it will provide the necessary information. Jim made the following motion: The PBLSA Board accepts the proposal of 8/10/22 from Yeh and Associates, Inc. for the geotechnical testing as they specified with the understanding that all three of the pre-construction tasks will be considered for funding approval after completion of their review by the BLM. The board briefly discussed the wording of the motion and how the proposal would be added to the previously submitted Shoreline proposal. Ryan and John Hodge agreed that Yeh's proposal can be sent to BLM engineers as is. David called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Shoreline and Wellsona are working on proposal for reconstruction of the top three levels of the tower; they will resume work on this proposal after their work on the lens enclosure concludes. The proposal will be reviewed by a materials expert at the Architectural Resources Group in San Francisco before submission to the board. At that point, all pieces of the tower reconstruction plan will be in place, pending approval by BLM.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – See Appendix 6. There are no changes in status. Connected Energy is ready to give a presentation to the board but understands that there are many other projects in progress.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – See Appendix 7. Jim recommends beginning capital campaign planning by the end of the year. The designs for the restoration of the tower should be complete and hopefully approved. The board will have a better sense of the costs needed and can set a fundraising goal. Sharon suggested using the celebration for the completion of the Fog Signal Building as a starting point for the capital campaign.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report.

Old Business:

1. Fresnel Lens Update (David Cooper) – See Appendix 8. Scot will be the future point person for lens and enclosure updates. David reported that the Coast Guard objected to the stakeholder group's short-term plan to repair the enclosure and wants to dismantle the lens for storage while a long-term plan is determined. David, Scot, and other members of the stakeholder group drafted a response to the Coast Guard and met today with Representative Carbajal and Supervisor Gibson to discuss the issue. Supervisor Gibson will submit the response to the Coast Guard and set up a follow-up meeting. Representative Carbajal is in favor of the short-term plan; he chairs a committee that oversees the Coast Guard. Supervisor Gibson proposed that his office create a MOU among the stakeholder groups to spell out responsibilities relevant to short-term and long-term planning. This would also clarify timelines and identify a lead agency for contact with the Coast Guard.

Scot said the response to the Coast Guard is focused on the technical elements, which will make it a compelling argument. Scot previously served in the Coast Guard and has contacts who may be able to provide assistance.

There was discussion on what impact a MOU would have on the BLM and PBLSA's role in the stakeholder group. If BLM has a formal involvement, established in the MOU, then PBLSA as a support organization can also have a more official involvement.

There was also discussion on whether BLM can take possession of the lens; John Hodge explained that BLM has no facility able to accept the lens, whether intact or in storage, as the same criteria for climate control, etc. still apply.

2. Boundary Fence Update (Gary O'Neill) – Gary, Ryan, and John Brass are pursuing bids on pressure-treated wood for the boundary fence instead of vinyl. One estimate was \$35,000, which is comparable to the lowest price quoted for the vinyl fencing. With lag-bolts, the estimate increases to \$42,000. Ryan is investigating what will be necessary from an archaeological perspective, as the pressure-treated fence would require digging post holes. Surveyors have found no records of the historical fence line other than the markers at either end.

David asked Gary to put together a report with the options and propose a motion for the board's approval in the next month or two.

New Business:

None.

Discussion Items:

None.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on 9/10/22.

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 9/28/22 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for August 2022

1. OPERATIONS INCOME: Last Month: \$9,548.60 YTD: \$59,698.10
PROFIT: Last Month: \$1,995.20* YTD: \$7,654.87

MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS: \$8,517.77
TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE: \$13,660.03

BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE: Last Month: \$308.30 YTD: \$1,748.98
BALANCES: P.P. Bank: \$690.70 ASAP: none

* Excludes Restoration Expense: \$4,475

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>
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
June 2022	660,771.95	<41,068.41>	5,455.40	--	--	625,158.94

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for July/August. Made minor adjustments.
- Completed worker's comp insurance audit and submitted to insurance company.
- Received and paid invoices for Shoreline/Wellsona for work on lens evaluation.
- BLM Cooperative Agreement finished after 5 years.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Attachment 3: Gift Shop Report 9/28/22 – Cressant Swarts

Thank you to Patti, Kerry, Azul, and Sue, for all their help in the gift shop, especially over the busy summer. And thank you to all the docents, as well as Ryan and Jodie, for adopting the new tour format; the greater amount of time that visitors are able to spend in the gift shop has made a significant difference in gift shop sales.

August Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$8,035.60
Website sales	\$0
Total	\$8,035.60

August Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$4,905.42
Profit	\$3,130.18
Percentage	39%

**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				

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 9/28/22 – Ryan Cooper

New Park Ranger

We have hired a Park Ranger. She is working through the onboarding process. I think she will have a start date in November.

Lens

Discuss during the Lens Report

Parking Lot Redesign / Restrooms

Contract has been awarded. A start date has not been set.

FSB Lighting

Most of the materials are in. The last shipment is due in the second week in October. When all the materials are in, the electrician and I will set a schedule.

Tower

The additional proposal from last meeting has been forwarded to the District Engineers. I have not heard anything from them yet. It is the end of the fiscal year, so they have been busy with that. Things should slow down next week so I can contact them to get an update.

Hike In Tours

The last one was very well attended. We estimate over 200 people

Special Event:

Dinner & Libations for the Station	October 1
Cambria Elementary School	October 14 and 21
Bat and Condor Presentation	October 22
Photo Tour	Nov 5
Monarch Grove	Dec 2, Dec 9, Dec 16
Holiday Party	Dec 10

Tour Numbers

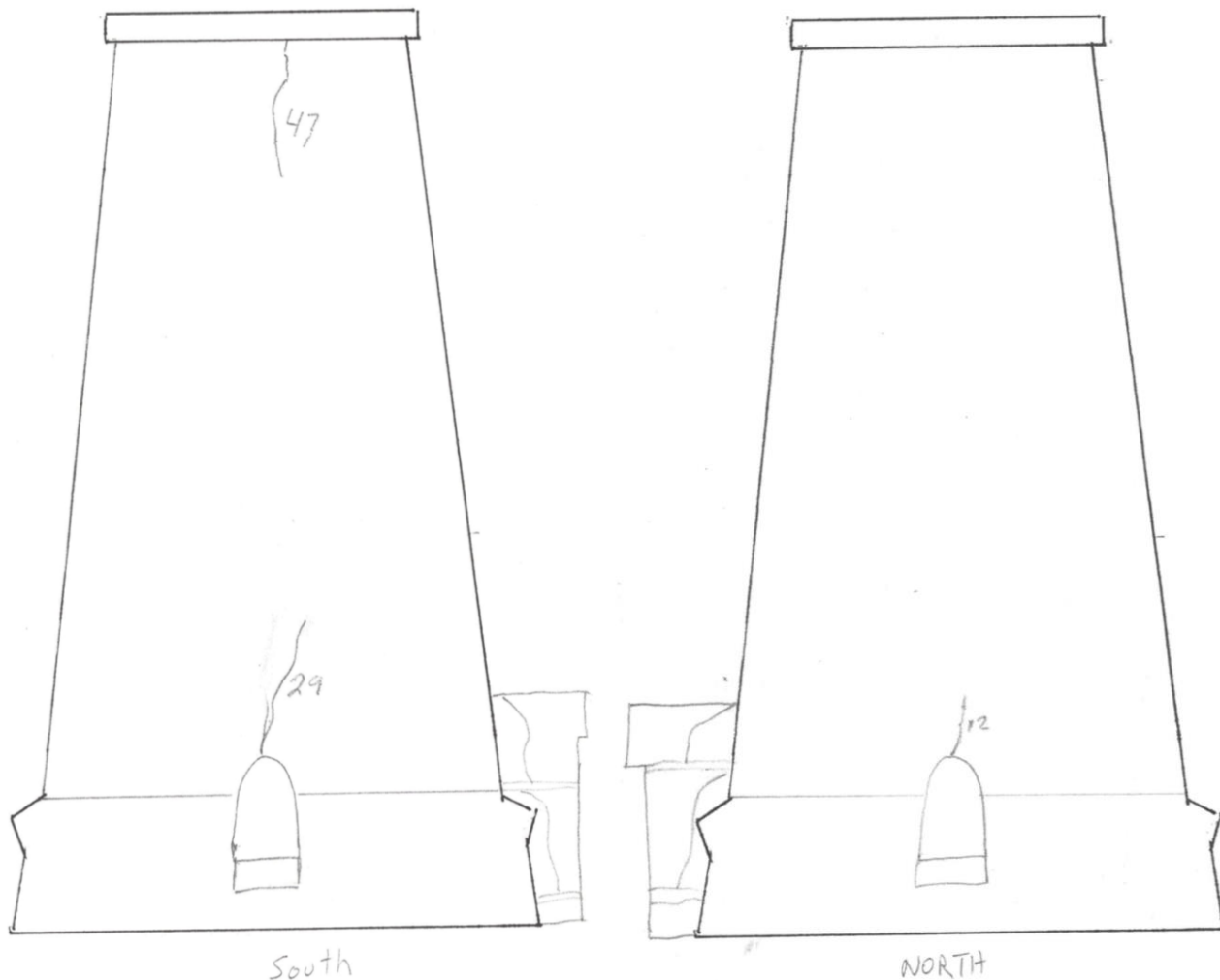
Month	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
October	637	605	516	500	506	441	535	22	552
November	622	503	474	357	523	433	334	56	350
December	404	464	426	273	829	251	518	0	208
January	661	731	623	266	608	0	715	0	300
February	573	570	572	284	780	318	578	108	407
March	696	754	560	502	662	784	185	160	471
April	663	616	581	666	684	790	0	399	524
May	432	629	352	572	362	555	0	446	452
June	658	916	521	787	732	698	0	643	661
July	1178	990	850	1125	1169	1085	0	972	881
August	985	809	693	836	1001	819	0	834	1043
September	601	481	442	437	591	374	0	547	464
Total	8110	8068	6610	6605	8447	6548	2865	4166	6313

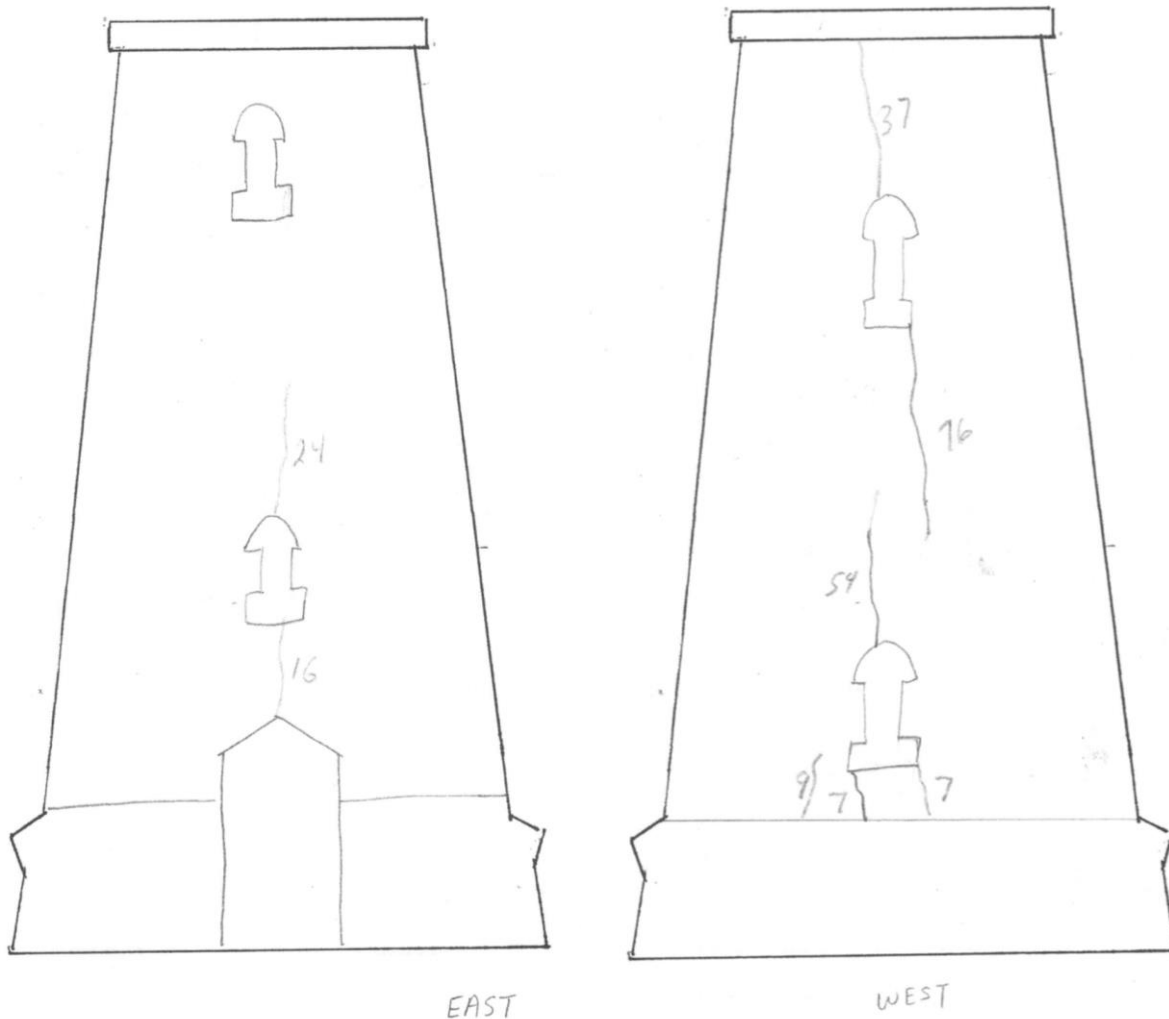
*partial

Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 9/28/22 – Jim Harris

With the submittal of the proposal for the geotechnical task by Judd King of Yeh last month, the three tasks preparatory to starting the construction/restoration of the tower have been bundled and 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. In addition, the rate of its deterioration can be somewhat measured by observing the change in the tower cracks documented by Jim Boucher in his sketches; copies dated 2015 presented below for reference. Therefore, it is recommended that the BLM at least provide a schedule for the expected completion for the review of the three bundled task proposals.

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. 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 engineering work documented to begin construction rehabilitation work for restoring the tower. In summary, 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 9/28/22 – 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 9/28/22 – 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 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 9/28/22 – Scot Addis

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, Supervisor Bruce Gibson, a representative from Congressman Salud Carbajal's office, and local stakeholders met with representatives from the Coast Guard (CG). The stakeholders included the PBLSA, BLM, SLO County officials, Cambria Lions Club, and Pinedorado Lions Foundation. Bruce of Shoreline Engineering and Dan from Wellsona Iron were also present. The CG representatives expressed their first priority was to identify a new loan holder or "borrower of record" for the lens. The president of the Pinedorado Lions Foundation expressed interest in conducting discussions with the CG with the intent of potentially becoming the new borrower of record. Documents that define the terms of the loan agreement and lens storage requirements were provided to the Foundation representatives for review.

Stakeholders confirmed the intent to pursue a two-phase strategy with an initial 5-year period devoted to repairing the existing enclosure, canvassing the public regarding a preferred location for long-term display of the lens, and to provide the time needed for a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to construct a museum quality setting that fully complies with CG requirements. Bruce and Dan spoke to their assessment of the existing enclosure and the work required to affect the needed repairs. The meeting concluded with Sup. Gibson summarizing next steps for the group to be completion of the loan agreement, CG approval of the enclosure repairs, an assessment of the condition of the lens itself, and the development of "deal points" (instead of a more formal Memorandum of Understanding) that defines the action to be taken and the responsible parties to undertake them throughout the initial 5-year period.