

Piedras Blancas Light Station Outstanding Natural Area

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Replication of entrance gate will honor former Park Manager

According to David Cooper, Chair of the PBLSA Board of Directors, "the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Board gathered ideas for a suitable memorial from groups that Boucher worked with, including association members, the Bureau of Land Management, light station volunteers, and community and non-profit partners."

Before his assignment at Piedras Blancas Light Station, Boucher worked at Muir Woods, Yosemite National Park, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Boucher was instrumental in designating over 400 acres surrounding the light station as an Outstanding Natural Area within the Bureau of Land Management Natural Landscape Conservation System.

"Symbolically, and visibly," says Carole Adams, a Piedras Blancas Light Station volunteer, "the replica entrance gate is an appropriate project to designate as a tribute to Jim Boucher."

Those wishing to contribute to the fund can send tax-deductible donations payable to "PBLSA Jim Boucher Memorial Fund" to:

Harry Thorpe

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association
Jim Boucher Memorial Fund P.O. Box 127
San Simeon, CA 93452

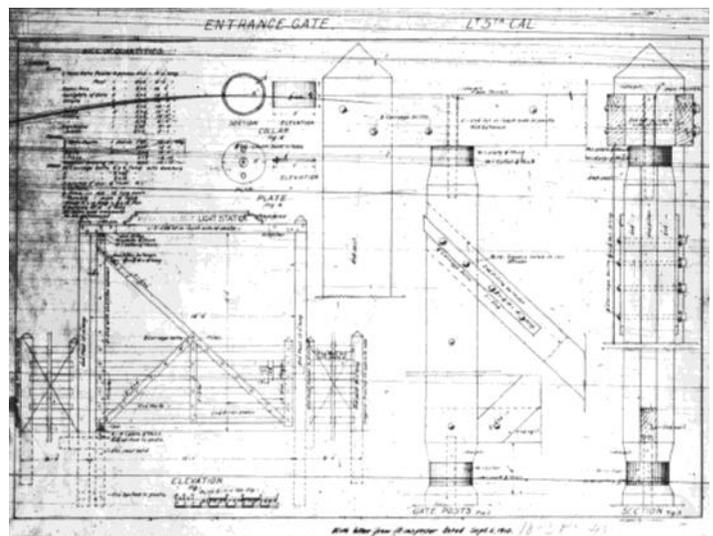


Another piece of history will soon be replicated at Piedras Blancas Light Station. First constructed around 1910, and removed by 1960, an entrance gate will once again welcome visitors to the light station.

Replication of the historic light station entrance gate has been selected as the project supported by donations to the Jim Boucher Memorial Fund.

The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Board of Directors established the memorial fund to honor former BLM Park Manager Jim Boucher. Boucher served as Park Manager at the light station from 2006-2014. He died November 5, 2014.

During his 8 year tenure, Boucher completed several historic restoration and reconstruction projects at the light station, including repainting of the lighthouse and replication of the elevated water tower. He also developed an educational outreach program. Under Boucher's leadership, public tours of the light station were expanded to 6 days a week during the summer. Over 45,000 visitors have taken part in public tours at Piedras Blancas Light Station since 2008.



The original plans, drawn in 1910, will be used.



A joint publication of the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association and the Bureau of Land Management. The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association is a non-profit partner for the Bureau of Land Management. It provides support for the restoration, conservation, interpretation, and stewardship of the unique natural, historical, and cultural resources at the Piedras Blancas Light Station. © Copyright 2015



Question: Why isn't the replica weight in the lighthouse centered over the weight well?

If you look closely at the cable holding the weight you will notice it comes down from above and wraps back up to a point of attachment on the first landing. This arrangement gave the keepers a mechanical advantage when winding the weight, but it also positions the weight slightly off-center.

How do we know the cable was attached in this manner? The following information about the attachment comes from the 1907 Structural Report: "Steel cable from drum of clockwork to base of tower through sheave on weight then up to first landing" The point of attachment under the first landing is part of the original construction.



The weight well is 6 feet deep and had a layer of sand at the bottom to cushion the weight if it fell. The weight had to be wound every 2-3 hours.

How often was the lighthouse whitewashed?

The best answer to that question is probably, when it needed it! Here is what several nationally recognized lighthouse experts say:

"Whitewashing, like painting, was somewhat up to the keeper, and of course the inspector. Some stations would need more than others due to weather conditions. We had a saying in the regiment that was, I'm sure somewhat the same, 'If it does not move, paint it.' You can be sure if paint or whitewash was needed, the Keeper would have heard about it on inspection day". Colin MacKenzie, Librarian, U.S. Lighthouse Society

"To the best of my knowledge it was once every three years unless the District Inspector found it needed it sooner". Thomas Tag, Technical Advisor, U.S. Lighthouse Society.

Plant talk: Sticky sand spurry

One of the native plants that is thriving at the light station is a dense, low-growing, stout perennial with a big long name: *Spergularia macrotheca* var. *macrotheca*. Common names for this little plant include sticky sand spurry and large flowered sand spurry. At Piedras Blancas it can be seen in front of the lighthouse and fog signal building. It can occur in canyons and coastal areas; in wetlands or non-wetlands. One thing seems certain, it doesn't seem to mind growing in hard-packed, wind blown conditions at the light station. Look for the pretty little pink to lavender flower petals!



Kid's Corner

We love letters from children. They cut right to the heart of things. Below are comments from some of the Vineyard Elementary School 4th grade students who recently visited Piedras Blancas Light Station.

"Thank you for the tour of the lighthouse. My favorite part was when we got to wring out the wash cloth, and blow down the lighthouse. The most interesting fact that you told us is how some ocean animals keep warm with their blubber." Sincerely, Lauren

"I had a great time at the lighthouse today. I liked looking at the ocean with binoculars. I also liked to ring the big bell. It was so loud. I liked seeing all of the skulls that you had. Thank you for teaching me about the Piedras Blancas lighthouse." From Maddox

"Thank you so much for inviting us to come to the Piedras Blancas Lighthouse. I liked going in the lighthouse and learning about the light. The lighthouse keeper must have got plenty of exercise going up and down those steps every day. After the field trip we went to see the original light in Cambria. I also enjoyed using the binoculars to look at seals and elephant seals on the rocks and beach. I also thought the clothes wringer was very interesting since I had not seen one before. It was very different from a clothes dryer today. I am going to ask my parents if we can come to the Piedras Blancas lighthouse very soon. I can't wait to come again with my family. I learned a lot and had fun." Sincerely, Kendall

"My favorite part was when we went into the blacksmith shop and learned about marine life. I think the staff kept the lighthouse looking great! I also liked testing the different shapes to find out that the best shape that stood in the wind was the shape of Piedras Blancas. I think it was fun because I learned about the lighthouse and I want to come back." Thank you, Max



Above: Abby captured some terrific detail in her drawing. Notice the flagpole on the left, the weight hanging down inside the lighthouse, and of course, the light! Great job, Abby!

6th name added to Piedras Blancas list of Principal Keepers

Thanks to Kraig Anderson, whose website, Lighthouse Friends, is enjoyed by legions of lighthouse fans, Piedras Blancas has a sixth name on the list of Principal Keepers. In an email message from Kraig he noted: *"I ran across the name George W. L'Hommedieu recently while working on Point Vicente Lighthouse. I found a newspaper article that said he was transferred from Mile Rocks Lighthouse in 1926 to become the first head keeper at Point Vicente. He was not at Point Vicente in the 1930 census."* Kraig discovered L'Hommedieu's name in the 1930 San Simeon census records, employed as Keeper. Previously we believed Andrew Czarnecke was at Piedras Blancas until 1934. However, Craig found Czarnecke was living in San Francisco in 1930 and employed as a Keeper in that area. We do not know the exact date of the change over from Czarnecke to L'Hommedieu, but we do know Czarnecke was still at Piedras Blancas in 1928.

The lighthouse community is one of caring and sharing. Thank you Kraig Anderson! If anyone has more information about either Andrew Czarnecke or George L'Hommedieu please call 805-924-1807 or email PiedrasBlancasLibrary@gmail.com.

Note: Prior to 1939, the person in charge of the light station was referred to as "Principal Keeper" or "Keeper". After the Coast Guard took over management of lighthouses and light stations (1939), the person in charge was called "Officer-in-Charge".

Principal Keepers Piedras Blancas Light Station

1875-1879	Stephen H. Morse
1879-1906	Lorin V. Thorndyke
1906-1911	Charles S. Kaneen
1911-1928	Andrew Czarnecke
1930-1934	George L'Hommedieu
1934-1948	Norman L. Francis



Above: Kraig Anderson and his wife Linda on a recent visit to Piedras Blancas.



BLM update by Ryan Cooper

How time flies! By the time you read this article my detail as Interim Light Station Manager will be over. BLM may have already announced the name of the next permanent PBLS Park Manager. Since the Coast Guard transferred ownership to the BLM in 2001, each manager, John Bogacki and Jim Boucher, have put their unique fingerprints on the light station. John was definitely the organizer and planner. He established the volunteer program, wrote the management plan, and put BLM on the map in an area where BLM never had a presence. Jim, on the other hand, was the doer. He got things done by any means possible. He built the watch room, nature trail, water tower, among many other construction projects. Anyone who spends some time at the light station will witness both of these men's unique fingerprints on the light station. John's planning skills and Jim's talent for doing complemented each other to make Piedras Blancas Light Station what it is today.

In the near future, if not already, the BLM will pick the next Park Manager. He or she will likely have to be both a planner and a doer. Whomever the BLM chooses, the new Park Manager is going to have an amazing opportunity to put the next fingerprint on one of the gems of the California coastline. Who knows what the light station will look like in ten years. The upper three levels of the lighthouse may even be replicated. That will take some planning, and doing, and lots of working together.



Left: Ryan Cooper positioning the memorial plaque for Jim Boucher near the pond and elevated water tower. Jim created the pond as a place where wildlife can obtain fresh water.

For information on Piedras Blancas Light Station
www.piedrasblancas.org
or www.piedrasblancas.gov



PBLSA update by David Cooper, Chair

The PBLSA board is jump-starting a conversation about replacing the top three levels of the lighthouse tower. About 30 feet in height, those sections were removed after damage from an earthquake in 1948. Such conversations have ebbed and flowed—mostly ebbed—ever since the BLM conducted an engineering study and cost analysis in 2007. The BLM study was premised on using original materials—bricks, mortar, concrete, iron, etc.—and labor-intensive construction techniques for the reconstruction. That analysis yielded a jaw-dropping estimate of over \$7M to restore the top.

A couple years ago, the PBLSA board under the leadership of chair emeritus Jack Morehead began to ask: What if we replicate the missing levels using a combination of traditional and *modern* lightweight materials such as fiberglass, stainless steel, and high tech composites? The replicated levels would provide all the functional, aesthetic, and exacting architectural features of the pre-1949 tower. Preliminary estimates suggest that a modern materials and construction approach could radically slash costs by as much as 80%. The replica top concept is clearly a game-changer. Still, many important questions remain unanswered. First and foremost, structural engineering modeling studies have to be conducted on the existing tower before any decisions can be made about replacement of the missing levels. To that end the PBLSA board commissioned a study by Shoreline Engineering, Inc. to undertake an exacting structural and seismic analysis of the masonry lighthouse tower. This is an important first step in renewing serious conversations about the future of the lighthouse.

Bruce Elster of Shoreline Engineering Inc. briefed the PBLSA board about the goals and plans of that study at our March meeting. Read a summary of that briefing on the light station website (<http://www.piedrasblancas.org/contact-us.html>) under "Monthly Minutes." What do you think about replicating the upper part of the lighthouse? We welcome—indeed *encourage*—your comments. Write us at contact.pblsa@gmail.com.

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association
board members welcome your comments or questions.
805-927-3719 or membership.pblsa@gmail.com

Board meetings are held at the Rabobank in Cambria,
at 6:00 PM on the fourth Wednesday of every month.
The public is welcome.



Above: PBLS volunteers and staff prepare for the birthday tour



Above: Paul Beaver as painter and Linda Waring doing laundry.

Piedras Blancas Light Station celebrated the 140th birthday of the lighthouse with a living history tour on February 14, 2015. Enactors portrayed life at the light station in 1895 and included: a keeper painting a fence, wives doing laundry and mending, a keeper doing carpentry work, a keeper preparing the lighthouse lens for illumination, and grown daughter of one of the keepers looking forward to moving away from the isolation of the light station. The highlight of the tour, for many visitors, were homemade cookies..

Join us on the path to restoration!

Your purchase of a personalized, engraved brick to be placed in the path around the lighthouse will help restore the light station.

Maximum of three lines. Each line can have up to 16 characters, including spaces and punctuation. All letters are capitalized. Not all three lines have to be used. You may purchase multiple bricks. Minimum donation \$100.

Line 1																	
Line 2																	
Line 3																	

I am paying by check (Made out to PBLSA) MasterCard or Visa

MC or Visa number: _____ cvv _____ Expiration date _____

Donor's name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail form to:
 PBL Association
 P.O. Box 127,
 San Simeon, CA 93452
 or order online:
www.piedrasblancas.org
 To order by phone, call
 805-927-3719.

Thank you!



Keeper's Cottage tour in June

There is wonderful news! The owner's of the former Piedras Blancas Keeper's Cottage have granted permission to the Piedras Blancas Light Station Association to hold a special fund-raising tour of the cottage on Sunday, June 7th, 2015.

The Keeper's Cottage was constructed at the light station in 1905 and moved to Cambria in 1960. While at the light station, the dwelling was occupied by Principal Keepers under the Lighthouse Service and by Officers-in-Charge during Coast Guard years. It was first occupied in 1906 by Principal Keeper Kaneen and his wife. The last light station occupant would have been Officer in Charge William McGovern and his family. The cottage is currently available as a vacation rental through Scenic Coast Property Management, Cambria.

This living history tour will feature enactors portraying several time periods and is a rare opportunity to glimpse life in the historic Piedras Blancas Keeper's Cottage. Guides and enactors will be in period attire. A two night stay at the cottage will be raffled during the tour. You may purchase raffle tickets at www.piedrasblancas.org and do not have to be present to win.

Space is limited. Reservations are required. Call 805-927-3719 or go to www.piedrasblancas.org to reserve. Details about the location, and where to park, will be given at the time reservations are made.

Date: Sunday, June 7th

Fee: \$15

Tour times: 1:00, 1:30; 2:00, 2:30, and 3:00.



Above: Tour group forming outside cottage during a 2013 tour.



Above: Toni Martinez portraying Mrs. Breedlove during the 2013 tour.



Above: Members of Betty Nelson's family locate their bricks on the lighthouse path.

Lighthouse neighbors

Point Sur Lightstation November through March tours are offered at 10:00 am on Saturdays and Sundays and at 1:00 pm on Wednesdays. During the summer there are additional days and times. For a complete listing of tours, go to www.pointsur.org or call 831-625-4419.

Point Pinos Lighthouse Located in Pacific Grove, open Thursday through Monday, 1:00-4:00. www.ci.pg.ca.us/lighthouse.

Point San Luis Lighthouse For a complete listing of tours and access, go to www.sanluislighthouse.org or call 805-540-5771 to reserve a ride on the trolley.

Piedras Blancas Light Station Tours

Tours are offered year round on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. From June 15 through August 31, tours are offered 6 days a week, Mondays through Saturdays. There are no tours on federal holidays. Tours last about 2 hours and include the historic Piedras Blancas lighthouse and support buildings and 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 a.m.

Please do not wait at the gate to the light station!

Groups of ten or more please make advance arrangements.
\$10 for adults, \$5 ages 6-17, no fee for children 5 and under.

For information on tours email PiedrasBlancasTours@gmail.com or call 805-927-7361.



Dress warmly and wear comfortable walking shoes.
No pets!

Tours may be cancelled on the day of the tour due to inclement weather.

PBLS Association
P.O. Box 127
San Simeon, CA 93452-0127
805-927-3719
membership.pblsa@gmail.com



All memberships include the quarterly newsletter and knowledge you are helping with restoration and maintenance 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 www.piedrasblancas.org.

Thank you for your support!

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