

## **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

May 22, 2024

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

**Absent:** John Brass, Veronika Kocen, John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM)

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

David congratulated BLM staff on a good turnout for the Meet the Scientists event earlier in the month.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the April 2, 2024, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – The operating fund showed a small loss in April due to lower sales in the gift shop. Investments are also down, which is a normal fluctuation. A correction was made to the Victorian/Keepers Reconstruction Fund; a typographical error in last month's report showed donations as \$100,000 lower than was correct. The fund includes all anonymous donations made toward the Victorians' reconstruction.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Gift shop sales were slightly lower than in April last year. Cressant is still ordering stock for the summer. There was discussion on whether gift shop sales might improve in mid-to-late summer when the Highway 1 closure is anticipated to reopen. Harry said the lower sales are likely due to the economy. The gift shop is also open for events and special tours to try to capture additional sales.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – Ryan is still trying to get more information on the current format of assistance agreements and on June 12 will attend a meeting with Thelma that is focused on getting answers to questions regarding assistance agreements. Harry asked if the limitation to Cultural Restoration as an agreement category would limit the scope compared to previous agreements. Ryan said there is an effort to have standardized agreements rather than the custom ones the PBLSA was able to create with BLM previously. David asked if Cultural Restoration could include educational outreach, and Ryan said he would ask. The funds for the agreement would come out of tour fees as in the past; there is currently approximately \$400,000 in the tour fee fund, but it is hoped that some of that can be used for painting the lighthouse.

Testing showed that the well near the white gate does not conform to the standard for potable water. The well on the bluff was set up to be used for potable water but is likely to be brackish; samples are being tested to determine if the water is treatable or if water will have to be hauled in, either to the existing tank house or to a new tank for potable water. Options are being

discussed on routing the water to the Coast Guard units and eventually the Victorians once reconstructed, though there are many archaeological concerns to be addressed.

A vehicle ran into the older part of the highway gate, which will now have to be rebuilt; the new gate was not damaged. The fencing near the gate will also be replaced with white fence boards. There was discussion on replacing the information kiosk near the gate, and Ryan will investigate options and approach the PBLSA if funding assistance is required.

The goal is to have the tower repainted before the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations begin. There was discussion on how the timeline will impact the work that Dan will be beginning on the south window. Ryan is talking to a graphic designer about a logo for the 150th anniversary and welcomes suggestions. The plan is to start using the branding with the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on September 28, with the VIP event planned for Saturday, February 15, 2025.

There were 60 attendees to the Meet the Scientists event, which featured presentations on elephant seals, red-legged frogs, and gray whales. The last field trip for the year will be on May 31, and summer hours start on June 15. This summer's Hike-In Open Houses are on July 10 and 24 and August 14 and 28.

Ryan is hoping that an ad can go out next week for a new park ranger to replace Bre and is attempting to get interns for the summer as well. David will send Bre a letter for her portfolio on behalf of the association.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – Jim reported on his meeting with Yeh regarding the analysis of the ground penetration testing. A report will hopefully be ready for the June meeting, and Yeh can make a presentation if the board wants. Yeh has so far been paid approximately \$30,000 of the estimated \$54,000 fee. Bruce and Dan will be completing work on the documentation for Component #4 when work on the lens enclosure is complete. There was further discussion on the timeline of the tower painting in regards to Dan's work on the south window; the time-consuming part of Dan's work will be off-site.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – Jim reminded the board that money has been committed to the project.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – David will contact Spokes informally for recommendations for local capital campaign nonprofit consultants and report back to the board.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – Two proposals to modernize the historical Victorian plans were submitted out of the five requested from architectural firms. Amber is analyzing the proposals and will report back to the workgroup.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – Dan is doing final work on the lens enclosure to address corrosion on the interior structural framing and to add a crown piece to block wind-blown moisture. Dan's work and the subsequent painting by Gregg Whitfield are anticipated to be finished by the end of June. There was discussion on how to appeal to the tourism boards by tying hotel use to visits to the light station and the lens.

11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – Reach and content interactions for the Facebook and Instagram page continue to fluctuate, while followers grow very slowly.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** None.

**Discussion Items:** None.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on June 20, 2024.

## Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 5/22/24 – Cressant Swarts

### Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

April 24, 2024

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

**Absent:** David Cooper (Chair), John Brass, Jodie Nelson (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) – The minutes of the March 27, 2024, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – The operations deficit for the year so far is due partly to gift shop sales being lower than expected. Restoration funds are excluded from operating funds. Investments improved in March. A \$50,000 donation toward the Victorian/Keepers Restoration Fund was deposited into the Fidelity account. A check was sent to the Pinedorado Lions Foundation to cover costs for the lens enclosure. A check was sent to Yeh & Associates for the seismic testing on the tower.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Gift shop sales increased significantly over March last year, due to high tour numbers. Ideas for gift shop merchandise for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the light station were discussed.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – Tour numbers in March were high, and there were several events. Ryan met with the BLM state archaeologist, who has expressed that she is willing to help figure out an assistance agreement between BLM and the PBLSA. An example agreement has been shared with David and Harry. A well-drilling company will be testing two wells, near the white gate and the whale observation platform, in an effort to get potable water at the light station. Other issues to consider are water treatment, trucking water in, and maintaining the fire suppression system. The district engineer has found funding for the project. The entrance gate remains inoperable, and the company that sells the operator for the gate has not responded to Ryan's calls. There was coverage of the tower reconstruction by the local KSBY reporter earlier in April; she showed interest in covering other light station events in the future. Ryan spoke to BLM district engineer, Sheryl Parker, regarding the Victorian keepers' houses project and how to keep the Bakersfield engineers in the loop as the project progresses.

A meeting with local and Bakersfield BLM staff, and Cressant, discussed plans for 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. A rough schedule includes a social media campaign by BLM and

PBLSA beginning January 1. On the anniversary, Saturday, February 15, 2025, a VIP event is planned, inviting local tribes, politicians, BLM higher management, and local reporters. Venue ideas include Hearst Castle or the Hearst Visitor Center, followed by a tour at the light station, weather permitting. Ideas for an event later that spring include a living history timeline along the trail, explaining the Native American, Spanish land grant, Lighthouse Service, Coast Guard, and BLM eras of Piedras Blancas. The Meet the Scientists event in May 2025 will focus on the history of research at the light station. Celebrations will conclude on Lighthouse Day in August. It's also planned to brand all events throughout the year with a logo specific to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, starting with the next Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser, tentatively planned for September 28, 2024, which is also National Public Lands Day. The series of events will be a good opportunity to get the word out about light station projects and lay foundations for future fundraising.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – The next phase of the tower project is waiting on Bruce and Dan to wrap up their report on the lens enclosure. Next is external mortar testing and the replacement of the south window. Plans for Component #4, the replacement of the top three floors of the tower, will also progress when work on the lens enclosure is finalized.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – Jim reported that there is no change with the project, but he would like to ensure it's not forgotten.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – There was discussion of the opportunity to coordinate fundraising with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including an additional fundraising event. It would be a good time to start cultivating relationships with potential local donors by inviting them to events. Harry noted that as progress on projects like the tower restoration and the Victorians progresses, there will be sketches and engineering drawings that can be shared with potential donors. Sharon said that it would be ideal to tie the capital campaign to the anniversary celebrations and offered to help. Jim said that it's time to develop the structure of the capital campaign and introduce restoration goals to the community as part of the anniversary events.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – The RFP for converting the historic plans to modern standards has been sent to prospective engineering/design firms. Proposals are due on May 10, and Amber Long will submit a report on the results.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – The lens enclosure project as originally envisioned, including structural repairs, UV coating, and painting the exterior, has been completed. Dan Murphy also replaced rotted wood soffit at the base of the roof, removed surface rust and repainted, and fixed the entrance door. The Pinedorado Lions Foundation has approved \$15,000 to cover payments to Dan and the painter. Bruce Elster's final report identified other issues that should be addressed, including corrosion of the inside vertical metal supports near the top. He also suggests creating a cap to seal the vents to prevent future moisture intrusion. The bid by Dan Murphy and Gregg Whitfield Painting for a second phase of work is \$19,092. There is approximately \$8,000 left in the lens checking account maintained by the Pinedorado Lens Foundation. Scot asked the board if PBLSA would be willing to consider providing the additional \$11,000. Harry asked Scot to forward a formal proposal from Dan to the board for consideration. Other funding sources are being pursued, including a funding request for \$3,000 to SLO County Supervisor Bruce Gibson's office and the local tourism boards. The GoFundMe is also still active.

Bruce has extended his recommended inspection period from every year to once every four years. Dan estimates the life of the enclosure as 15 years rather than five. The safety fencing remains around the lens enclosure pending the informal approval of the SLO County Planning Department, as the project was a repair rather than new construction.

There was discussion of the place of the lens in relation to other projects at the light station, including the reconstruction of the Victorians and an overall capital campaign strategy. Scot stated that the focus should be on the tower but that having the lens enclosure project completed will take less attention away from the tower.

Scot will send the board members the engineering report on the lens enclosure and will send the correspondence and agreements for the project to Cressant for the PBLSA archives.

11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – Cressant has been updating the website media page with recent news coverage as well as promoting it on social media. The GoFundMe has raised \$1,560, not including the offline donations that were added.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:** None.

**Discussion Items:** None.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 7 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) on May 17, 2024.

Appendix 2: Treasurer’s Report 5/22/24 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER’S REPORT for April 2024

<b>1. OPERATIONS INCOME:</b>	Last Month: \$6,375.50	YTD: \$18,930.51
<b>PROFIT:</b>	Last Month: <\$209.08>*	YTD: <\$4,541.71>**
<b>MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:</b>		\$23,830.30
<b>TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:</b>		\$13,660.03
<b>CONSTRUCTION FUND:</b>		\$112,717.86
<b>VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND:</b>		\$261,468.13***
<b>BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:</b>	Last Month: none	YTD: none
<b>BALANCES:</b>	P.P. Bank: \$500.00	ASAP: none

- \* Excludes restoration/BLM: \$3,042.89
- \*\* Excludes restoration/BLM: \$31,581.34
- \*\*\* Adjusted

**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>
<b>Apr 2024</b>	894,255.34	<19,143.44>	2,051.51	--	--	877,163.41
<b>Mar 2024</b>	860,540.13	17,406.51	1,308.70	501,000	35,000	894,255.34
<b>Feb 2024</b>	848,923.09	10,286.82	1,330.22	--	--	860,540.13

**3. OTHER:**

- Reviewed transactions for March/April – made adjustments.
- Filed and paid first quarter sales tax.
- Corrected Victorian/Keepers targeted funds balance.

*Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.*  
Treasurer

### Appendix 3: Gift Shop Report 5/22/24 – Cressant Swarts

#### April Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$4,435.60
Website sales	\$117.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,553.30</b>

#### April Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$3,005.04
Profit	\$1,548.26
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>34%</b>

*\*Includes cost, scrap, inventory shortages, taxes, fees, and shipping*

#### NET SALES COMPARISONS

*Shaded month indicates lower sales than last year. Includes website sales starting 2021. Excludes donations, memberships, engraved bricks, and event sales.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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	7,493	5,204	5,329	3,693	3,824
2023	1,705	3,836	3,274	4,605	6,493	5,760	7,875	8,017	3,880	6,380	3,549	4,369
2024	2,799	2,660	4,919	4,246								

*COVID-19 closure Mar 2020 - Feb 2021. Weather/road closures Jan – March 2023.*

#### Yearly Net Sales Comparisons

	Jan – Jun	TOTAL
2020	\$7,187	\$8,743
2021	\$16,959	\$48,376
2022	\$28,717	\$63,496
2023	\$25,673	\$59,743
2024		



## **Appendix 4: BLM Update 5/22/24 – Ryan Cooper**

### **Assistance Agreement**

Hanna has not gotten very far but there is a Q&A meeting with Thelma on June 12<sup>th</sup>. I plan on attending that and getting to the bottom of this.

### **Piedras Water**

The wells have been tested, and we are waiting on the water results to get back. The unfortunate thing they found was the well near the gate was not built to be a potable water source. Nobody knows why. So, we are riding on the well near the parking lot to not be too brackish. If the water is not treatable, we may have to look into hauling water.

### **Entrance Gate**

Total rebuild! Since our last meeting someone crashed into the gate. I did just get the go ahead from State Parks to do the work.

### **Tower**

Waiting on the final testing and opening exploration. Do we have a timeline?

### **Lens**

Discuss during the Lens Report.

### **Victorian Duplex**

Proposals are in and being reviewed by the consultant.

### **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Working on branding and a logo. The plan is to use your fundraiser in the Fall to be the kickoff. Then everything from then to the anniversary will be the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary culminating with a big VIP event at the Light Station.

### **Meet the Scientists**

This was a success. We had approx. 60 folks out at the Light Station to hear 3 presentations from local researchers. NOAA and the Whale Team, Cal Poly with E-seals, and BLM with a presentation on Red Legged Frogs.

### **Events This Past Month:**

April 26	Del Mar field trip
May 6-14	Wells testing
May 18 <sup>th</sup>	Meet the Scientist
May 10	Baywood Presentation
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Baywood Field Trip

### **Future Events:**

May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Baywood Field Trip
June 15 <sup>th</sup>	Start of Summer Tours
July 10, 24 Aug 14, 28	Hike in Tours

## Tour Numbers

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
October	506	441	535	22	552	421	599	
November	523	433	334	56	350	439	378	
December	829	251	518	0	208	411	405	
January	608	0	715	0	300	196	561	
February	780	318	578	108	407	341	580	
March	662	784	185	160	471	329	800	
April	684	790	0	399	524	570	771	
May	362	555	0	446	452	444	451*	
June	732	698	0	643	661	752		
July	1169	1085	0	972	881	1087		
August	1001	819	0	834	1043	1192		
September	591	374	0	547	487	493		
<b>Total</b>	<b>8447</b>	<b>6548</b>	<b>2865</b>	<b>4166</b>	<b>6336</b>	<b>6675</b>		

\*partial

## Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 5/22/24 – Jim Harris

The on-site work for the geotechnical project for component #2 of the MOA performed by Yeh and Associates was completed in February, and it is now estimated that a draft of their work on the analysis of the site data should be available for review at the PBLSA June meeting. A second invoice 222-284-2 from Yeh and Associates, Inc. for \$18,030.95 was authorized to be paid on May 3, 2024; in rough terms we will have paid about \$30k of the estimated limit of \$54,198. A virtual status meeting for the geotechnical project was held on May 7; a summary of the discussion written by Judd King of Yeh is presented below.

May 7, 2024

Hi Folks,

Thanks for joining the meeting today. Below are some highlights.

Attendees: Jim Harris – PBSLA, Bruce Elster – Shoreline, Dan Murphy – Wellsona, Gresh Eckrich, Hayden Brake, Judd King – Yeh

- Judd reviewed the geophysical and GPR survey report prepared by AGI with the group.
- Plots of seismic refraction profiles and GPR profiles were reviewed and discussed amongst the group.
- The site class from the MASW survey for Vs30 is Site Class B which will be used in the seismic analyses.
- Gresh clarified that the email provided by Bruce from Mason Walters at Forrell | Elsesser on September 21, 2023, is the scope of the seismic analyses to be performed.
- Draft Geotechnical Report is in preparation and Yeh plans to submit the draft report sometime in mid-June 2024.
- Jim Harris asked if Yeh would be willing to present the information to the BLM and PBLSA board. Yeh can do so.

Meeting adjourned.

Judd J. King, PE\*, GE

Senior Project Manager

Bruce Elster and Dan Murphy continue to work on the Lens Project as a priority. They plan to complete the documentation defining Component #4 of the MOA (replacing the top three levels of the tower) for review by the June PBLSA meeting. This document also will discuss the addition of a structural engineer Mason Walters, a Senior Principal at Forrell | Elsesser in the Bay Area; he will work with them on the completion of the project. As stated before, with the Shoreline final report of

October 14, 2021, and the four task proposals for Components #1, #2, #3, and #4, work expected to be completed in 2024, there will be sufficient documented engineering work to begin the construction rehabilitation phase for restoring the tower. It also is recommended that planning and documentation be developed for this construction rehabilitation phase before the end of the year (December 2024).

#### **Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 5/22/24 – Jim Harris**

The status of this project remains the same as last month: the undergrounding 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. Given the current set of activities being addressed by the BLM, this project has a low priority. As stated previously, the PBLSA provided an \$8K deposit with PG&E a number of years ago as a condition for their cost proposal for the estimated work. 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. 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 5/22/24 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe/Cressant Swarts**

The status remains the same as last month: the PBLSA Board is awaiting the progress of the work outlined in the MOA before initiating any plans for a capital campaign. The four components outlined in the MOA are expected to be completed by the end of 2024.

#### **Appendix 8: Victorian Keepers Cottage Workgroup Report 5/22/24 – David Cooper**

Of the five firms we sent the Request for Proposals to, we received two bids on the project to prepare code-compliant plans for the two Victorian Keepers Cottages. The bids came in late last week, so there is not enough time to prepare an analysis and presentation for this month's Board meeting. Amber Long is going over the bids now. When she finishes her analysis, the Work Group will reconvene and review/discuss her recommendations. We'll invite her to our June Board meeting so she can go over the bids, offer her recommendations, and consider questions from the entire Board.

#### **Appendix 9: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 5/22/24 – Scot Addis**

I want to express my thanks to this Board for backstopping the funds needed to begin the "Phase 2" work on the enclosure. Dan Murphy is mobilizing to begin this work to address corrosion on interior structural framing and to add a crown piece to block wind-blown moisture. He and Gregg Whitfield expect to complete the Phase 2 work by the end of June.

Fundraising continues, albeit slowly. The GoFundMe page donations total \$1610 as of this writing. SLO County Supervisor Bruce Gibson has authorized funds in the amount of \$1500 to be disbursed to us after July 1st. Funding applications have been submitted to the local tourism boards. I appeared before the Cambria Tourism Board (CTB) on May 14th requesting \$10,000 for the second phase work and was turned down. The appeal to the San Simeon Tourism Alliance pends.

While before the CTB, I observed other presentations that were successful in securing funds. The key is to have an event with registered participants so you can quantify how many “room nights” the event will generate. It was also important to have the ability to track the number and location of views to a website promoting the event. One group sweetened their pitch by showing some swag (a towel) they were giving participants at their event that was co-branded with the CTB’s logo prominently displayed. Perhaps this Board can brainstorm ideas on an event that would produce more compelling data for the tourism boards to consider.

## **Appendix 10: Communications/Social Media Report 5/22/24 – Cressant Swarts**

Overall reach (the number of views that posts received) has decreased for both Facebook and Instagram in May, compared to April. Content interactions for posts (likes, comments, shares) had a similar pattern for both Facebook and Instagram. The top viewed post in May for both Facebook and Instagram was wildlife photos of elephant seals and a bobcat by local Bill Franciscovich, who frequently bikes past the light station and shares his photos with us. Total Facebook followers: 1,696 (previous 1,697), Instagram followers: 2,016 (previous 2,010).

The KSBY story from Scot’s April 23 interview about the lens enclosure has been added to the website’s media page.

<https://www.piedrasblancas.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation>

<https://www.instagram.com/piedrasblancaslightstation>

<https://gofund.me/7e47292d>