

Waiting for the Rainbow - LIGHTHOUSE ASSESSMENT



Contact us if you would like to read the full Lighthouse Assessment. Call 541-332-0521 or email heritage32@frontier.com

After many months of waiting, the results are in on the September 2022 Lighthouse Assessment

The assessment was recommended by architect Sue Licht in her comprehensive Cape Blanco Lighthouse Plan authored in 2020. This first assessment essentially deals with the most critical repairs needed in order to restore our lighthouse in order for it to be open to the public once again. Additional restoration and preservation is also recommended in the plan.

In short, the bottom line of this investigation was a rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost determined to be approximately \$682,000. This cost includes preparing the site for work (*scaffolding and mobilization which is certainly made more difficult given the state of the lighthouse gate road*), metal work as well masonry and coating work. This last and most costly step includes the removal and replacement of masonry in the interior to access metalwork, repair and pinning of horizontal and vertical cracks in the lighthouse tower, and the removal and reinstallation of all exterior coats of paint which are contributing to the rust and corrosion issues inside of the lighthouse.

It is a concerning situation, and at the time of this writing there is no clear path to a solution. It is a costly repair, made costlier due to the



Vertical anchor wall crack meets horizontal window anchor wall crack.

deterioration of the road this winter. So, it now appears that the plan for our cooperative partners to withdraw is imminent (*our original Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2004 is no longer in force*), but there could be a change of heart that will reverse the decision. It is very difficult for anyone to commit to being the “permittee” of the Lighthouse given the situation, which is the one who is responsible to keep everything in working order. Oregon State Parks is still supportive with maintenance inside and outside, and of course the Cape Blanco Heritage Society is committed to preserving our local heritage of which the Lighthouse is a major part.

Cape Blanco Lighthouse is still a navigational beacon (*in fact, the oldest existing lighthouse in Oregon still in use as one and an important historic landmark in the United States*) which makes it distinctive to preserve. Many

lighthouses are currently up for auction by the federal government agency known as the General Services Administration (GSA) to offset the expense of maintenance by auctioning them off or placing it into a private/public partnership. Is this the right route for our lighthouse?

CBHS is making every effort to bring this matter to the attention of anyone who might help and has initiated a letter-writing campaign to area businesses, legislators (*local, regional, federal*), and begun outreach on lighthouse awareness. We hope that our efforts will result in a solution that will keep the light shining out at Cape Blanco. ✨



Pioneer Waterproofing removing interior wythes of brick masonry as required for inspection in the Cape Blanco Lighthouse Watch Room.



Extensive masonry cracking and crushing at embedded stair treads.