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Friends of the Ned's Point Lighthouse looks to restore landmark

Tim Seeberger
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The beacon that shines atop the Ned's Point Lighthouse in Mattapoisett. Photo by: Tim Seeberger
The lighthouse was inspected for lead paint traces by Amy Franklin of Franklin Analytical Service from Marion. Photo courtesy: Friends of the Ned's Point Lighthouse.
The housing for the light needs a fresh coat of paint once the lead paint is removed. Photo courtesy: Friends of the Ned's Point Lighthouse.
The unrestored walkway outside the beacon's housing atop the lighthouse. Photo courtesy: Friends of the Ned's Point Lighthouse.
Parts of the walkway's banister needs welding too. Photo courtesy: Friends of the Ned's Point Lighthouse.
The glass surrounding the light will also need to be replaced due to bullet holes that damaged its structural integrity. Photo courtesy: Friends of the Ned's Point Lighthouse.













Editor's note: The initial online version of this article contained some factual errors. All have been corrected in this version.

MATTAPOISETT — For over 175 years, Ned's Point Lighthouse has guided sailors in Buzzards Bay and been a destination for people around the world. Now, it is in need of repairs.

Over the years, the four auxiliary Coast Guard members who care for the lighthouse have noticed lead paint, rusting walkways, and bullet holes in the glass surrounding the light.

So, the four caretakers (Sal Giglia of Marion, Jane Ulewicz of Rochester, Joe Dawicki of Mattapoisett and Bill Cody of Wareham) founded the Friends of Ned's Point Lighthouse this summer as a way to raise funds to restore the lighthouse to its original state.

The purpose of the nonprofit is to fundraise and get donations for licensed contractors repairs the lighthouse under the guidance of Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 63. The Friends of Ned's Point Lighthouse

is a separate entity from the local Flotilla.

First illuminated in 1838, Ned's Point lighthouse is visible for 15 miles on Buzzards Bay and was built as a way for crews on ships coming in and out of Mattapoisett Harbor, to steer clear of the nearby rocks.

Congress appropriated $5,000 for its construction on March 3, 1837 with the backing of state congressman (and former president) John Quincy Adams, and named it after local farmer Edwin "Ned" Dexter.

The steps inside that lead to the beacon were built using stone from the nearby Hammond Quarry near Mattapoisett Neck Road.

The Coast Guard deactivated the lighthouse in 1952, but operated it during the summer months thereafter at the request of the harbormaster and boating community. The town bought park which the lighthouse sits on in 1958, and the Coast Guard reactivated the lighthouse in 1961. In 1993, Coast Guard Flotilla 63 adopted Ned's Point Lighthouse.

Recent Coast Guard funding cuts at the federal level led its caretakers to start a nonprofit for funding.

"It's a work of art and it needs to be restored," Giglia said.

Thankfully, all four officers bring expertise to the table. Giglia works in fine art restoration and has fundraised for nonprofits, Ulewicz brings her financial expertise, Dawicki is well-connected in Mattapoisett and as the lightkeeper, Cody brings expertise on the lighthouse itself. As tour guides and caretakers, all four know what needs to be done in order to restore the lighthouse.

"It's time, and we all feel we can do it through the nonprofit," Giglia said.

The most important part of the project is removing the lead paint from the interior. But restorations will also involve repainting the walkway around the beacon and the lighthouse's interior, replacing the glass that houses the light and welding the banister on the walkway, among other jobs.

"Our first goal is to get the lead out," Dawicki joked, with a Led Zeppelin reference.

Expert lead paint inspector Amy Franklin of Franklin Analytical Service from Marion was a "blessing from God" according to Giglia.

Lead remover Bob Rivet from Rochester will take care of the extracting work, and other licensed and certified workers from the Tri-Town will handle the glass work, welding, and any other jobs that the group can't complete.

When the restoration is finished and coronavirus over, the Friends hope that the lighthouse will be a place for the local community to hold special events, and hopes the Flotilla will keep holding seasonal events for Christmas and Halloween.

The Friends will also work to know more about the lighthouse's history since 1993. They have some information on renovations done, but they want to know more and find pictures of renovations.

Though the restoration plans will take time to complete, Dawicki said the Friends have an excellent rapport with Town Hall and officials receive calls constantly asking when tours are going to happen again.

For inquires or to make a donation, email **friendsofnedspointlighthouse@gmail.com**.

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