

What The Heck is Taking So Long!?

LH update September 25 by Bob Bourke

Everyone seems to ask the same questions, “How come the scaffolding is around the top of the lighthouse?” “It’s been up there for years now. What’s taking so long?”

In 2010 two volunteers, Ken Hinshaw and Lowell Northrop, set out to assess the deteriorated condition of the top of the lighthouse – the lantern room. What they found was serious. The steel and iron wall plates were corroded beyond repair, the aluminum deck plates were suffering from severe galvanic corrosion, and the rubber seals were beyond repair. Exhaustive attempts at fixing the deck plates in place were not successful, and in 2019 the “temporary” scaffolding was installed and efforts to remove and restore the deck plates began. When the deck plates were removed, additional problems with cracking and erosion of the underlying concrete were discovered. It was time to call for help.

Local engineer Ray Byrne, called Mark Dietrich, an architect specializing in restoration of building envelopes, who then collared Jamie Rees who’s an expert at restoration coatings. Between the two of them they convinced a manufacturer to donate two 5-gallon cans of very special (and very expensive!) coatings to seal both the concrete and the deck plates.

All of the corroded concrete surfaces were ground or cut away and new specialized mortar was applied to cover the damaged areas, and then the entire surface was coated with 5 gallons of the special white two-part epoxy. This was then covered with another thick 5-gallon layer of black rubbery paint to completely seal and protect the concrete from further corrosion.

Replacement wall plates were made from stainless steel coated with black epoxy paint and are awaiting installation. The ten 65-pound aluminum deck plates were sandblasted, heavily corroded areas were repaired and then they were coated with the special black coating. Unfortunately the sandblasting appears to have caused the panels to bend, so Lowell needed to assemble a special hydraulic press to straighten the panels.

Final adjustments are being made that should allow the deck plates to be reinstalled before the end of November, and these will then be followed by the wall panels and safety railing.



Epoxy coated concrete apron (L) with final coat of black rubberized paint (R)