

*Michigan Lighthouse Alliance
2016 Great Lakes Lighthouse Conference
Conference Sessions and Presenters*

Keynote: The Finest Hours

Jeff Shook, Motor Life Boat Technical Advisor

Keynote speaker Jeff Shook will describe and show behind-the-scenes images of how he advised Disney during filming of "The Finest Hours; The Real Story," as well as supplying lifeboats and Coast Guard artifacts that were used to enhance the film's authenticity. Hear parts of the true story that are not in the film and learn how they made such a challenging rescue come to life on the big screen! This is truly a one-of-kind experience you won't want to miss!

The Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan – Opportunities for Lighthouse Tourism

Dr. Sarah Nicholls, Associate Professor, Michigan State University

This session will provide an overview of the 2012-2017 Michigan Tourism Strategic Plan, with a special focus on the goals and objectives related to Promotions, Marketing & Communications, Product Development, and Resources & Environment, and the relevance of those goals for enhancing and better promoting Michigan lighthouse tourism.

Is Your Lighthouse "Audience Focused"?

Terry Pepper, Executive Director, Great Lakes Light Keepers Association

Buzz Hoerr, Board Chair, Harbor Beach Lighthouse Preservation Society

Amanda Wetzel, Assistant Executive Director, Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum

Bruce Lynn, Operations Manager, Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum/Whitefish Point Lighthouse

Building on the tourism strategic plan session, this session discusses successful promotion and marketing strategies -- focused on unique historic site attributes, developed with the audience in mind, and using various mediums -- to reach a shifting and multi-generational audience. Attendee discussion follows.

Bring Back the Light!

Buzz Hoerr, Board Chair, Harbor Beach Lighthouse Preservation Society

Dan Spinella, President, Artworks Florida

Kurt Fosburg, President, Superior Lighthouse Restoration

This session explores the power and benefits of returning a Fresnel lens replica to a lighthouse and what it can do for the community, for tourism, and individual lighthouse tours. Learn about 16 Fresnel replicas that have been installed throughout the US, how they were funded, and how they have benefited their communities.

Developing a Successful Organizational Culture

Buzz Hoerr, Board Chair, Harbor Beach Lighthouse Preservation Society

Amanda Wetzel, Assistant Executive Director, Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum

This session discusses how to motivate and manage lighthouse staff and volunteers -- who may have differing priorities, backgrounds, and functions within the organization -- to work toward a common mission. Learn the perils of not doing this well and discuss strategies to minimize potential problems.

From Preservation to Public Access: Be Careful What You Wish For!

Buzz Hoerr, Board Chairperson, Harbor Beach Lighthouse Preservation Society
various lighthouse organizations (to be announced)

You may get it. You'll have a completely different focus once you have "saved" your lighthouse! How do you provide public access? How do you structure tour schedules, recruit docents and build a social media and booking website? How do you keep up with maintenance while the public is in and out of your lighthouse?

Lighthouse Organization Financial Planning

Marilyn Fischer, Seul Choix Pointe Lighthouse

Bruce Lynn, Executive Director, Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum/Whitefish Point Lighthouse

Operating and maintaining an historic lighthouse can be an overwhelming financial challenge in the best of times, let alone in a sluggish economy. Different lighthouse preservation organizations approach this challenge in different ways and, while not every approach will work for all groups, you might hear a few ideas that resonate with your situation. Join us and hear how others tackle the ongoing challenge of operations funding.

Succession Planning: Building the Next Generation of Lighthouse Stewards

Terry Pepper, Executive Director, Great Lakes Light Keepers Association

Amanda Wetzel, Assistant Executive Director, Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum

Others to be announced

Take a look at that gray hair on most of the folks visiting your lighthouse. Attracting and inspiring younger people is critical in ensuring a durable volunteer and leadership force. In this session we will not only brainstorm possibilities, but will share successful strategies to incorporate into your planning process.

Capital Project Funding: How to Obtain Grants

Lou Schillinger, President, Port Austin Reef Light Association

Various state and federal agency panelists to be announced

Representatives from multiple stakeholder agencies and organizations -- e.g., MDOT, MEDC, MLAP -- will explain an array of local, federal, and state-sponsored grants that can help fund the expensive and ongoing projects of protecting and rebuilding our lighthouse assets, and provide insights on how best to approach the grant process and other funding strategies.

Annual Michigan Lighthouse Alliance Member Meeting

Buzz Hoerr, President of MLA

Terry Pepper, Vice President of MLA

Ann Method, Treasurer of MLA

This interactive session will explore what MLA members want from their organization and how together MLA members might be able to assist in resolving their concerns and issues.

Lighthouses on the Fringe

Terry Pepper, Executive Director, Great Lakes Light Keepers Association

So you think your lighthouse is tough to maintain? Do you know which lighthouses are farthest away from "civilization"? See a presentation about the loneliest lighthouses on the Great Lakes (and a few from elsewhere) that provide navigation aid in the most challenging places.