



Michigan has more lighthouses than any other state and these unique structures are synonymous with the Great Lakes States shoreline. You can help preserve these historic places by purchasing a **Save Our Lights** license plate for your vehicle. A portion of the fee funds the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP), administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. Since 2000, the MLAP has awarded more than \$3 million in grants to lighthouse stewards for the rehabilitation of these historic icons. **Get the plate, Save a Light!** To purchase your Save Our Light license plate and support lighthouse preservation, visit [www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos) For more information about the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program, visit [www.michigan.gov/saveourlights](http://www.michigan.gov/saveourlights)



## HISTORIC LIGHTHOUSES OF MICHIGAN



### On the Cover

In 2020, the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association was awarded an MLAP grant to rehabilitate the St. Helena Island Light Station tower, constructed 1873. Matched with local dollars, the grant funded the removal of existing paint from the lighthouse tower, replaced deteriorated mortar and brick, cleaned all exterior surfaces, rehabilitated the lantern to be watertight, and repainted the entire tower, pictured here. St. Helena Island is located in upper Lake Michigan just a few miles west of the Mackinac Bridge.

### LAKE SUPERIOR

- 1 Au Sable Light Station
- 2 Big Bay Point Light Station
- 3 Copper Harbor Front Range Light Station
- 4 Copper Harbor Light Station
- 5 Copper Harbor Rear Range Light Station
- 6 Crisp Point Light Station
- 7 Eagle Harbor Light Station
- 8 Eagle Harbor Rear Range Light Station
- 9 Eagle River Light Station
- 10 Fourteen Mile Point Light Station
- 11 Grand Island East Channel Light Station
- 12 Grand Island Harbor Rear Range Light Station
- 13 Grand Island North Light Station
- 14 Grand Marais Harbor Inner Range Light Station
- 15 Grand Marais Harbor Outer Range Light Station
- 16 Granite Island Light Station
- 17 Gull Rock Light Station
- 18 Huron Island Light Station
- 19 Keweenaw Waterway Lower Entrance Light Station
- 20 Keweenaw Waterway Upper Entrance Light Station
- 21 Manitou Island Light Station
- 22 Marquette Breakwater Outer Light Station
- 23 Marquette Harbor Light Station
- 24 Menagerie Island (Isle Royale) Light Station
- 25 Mendota Light Station
- 26 Munising Front Range Light Station
- 27 Munising Rear Range Light Station
- 28 Ontonagon Harbor West Pierhead Light Station
- 29 Ontonagon Light Station
- 30 Passage Island Light Station
- 31 Point Iroquois Light Station
- 32 Portage River Light Station
- 33 Presque Isle Harbor Breakwater Light Station
- 34 Rock Harbor Light Station
- 35 Rock of Ages Light Station
- 36 Sand Hills Light Station
- 37 Sand Point Light Station (Baraga vicinity)
- 38 Stannard Rock Light Station
- 39 Whitefish Point Light Station

### LAKE MICHIGAN

- 40 Beaver Island Harbor Light Station (St. James)
- 41 Beaver Island Light Station (Beaver Head)
- 42 Big Sable Point Light Station
- 43 Cedar River Light Station
- 44 Charlevoix South Pier Light Station
- 45 Frankfort North Breakwater Light Station

- 46 Grand Haven South Pierhead Entrance Light Station
- 47 Grand Haven South Pierhead Inner Light Station
- 48 Grand Traverse Light Station
- 49 Gray's Reef Light Station
- 50 Holland Harbor (South Pierhead) Light Station
- 51 Lansing Shoal Light Station
- 52 Little Sable Point Light Station
- 53 Little Traverse Light Station
- 54 Ludington North Pierhead Light Station
- 55 Manistee North Pierhead Light Station
- 56 Manistique East Breakwater Light Station
- 57 McGulpin's Point Light Station
- 58 Menominee North Pier Light Station
- 59 Minneapolis Shoal Light Station
- 60 Mission Point Light Station
- 61 Muskegon South Breakwater Light Station
- 62 Muskegon South Pier Light Station
- 63 North Manitou Shoal Light Station
- 64 Peninsula Point Light Station
- 65 Point Betsie Light Station
- 66 Poverty Island Light Station
- 67 Sand Point Light Station (Escanaba)
- 68 Seul Choix Pointe Light Station
- 69 Skilakalee Island Light Station
- 70 South Fox Island Light Station
- 71 South Haven South Pier Light Station
- 72 South Manitou Island Light Station
- 73 Squaw Island Light Station
- 74 St. Helena Island Light Station
- 75 St. Joseph North Pier Inner Light Station
- 76 St. Joseph North Pier Outer Light Station
- 77 St. Martin Island Light Station
- 78 Waughoshance Light Station
- 79 White River Light Station
- 80 White Shoal Light Station

### LAKE HURON

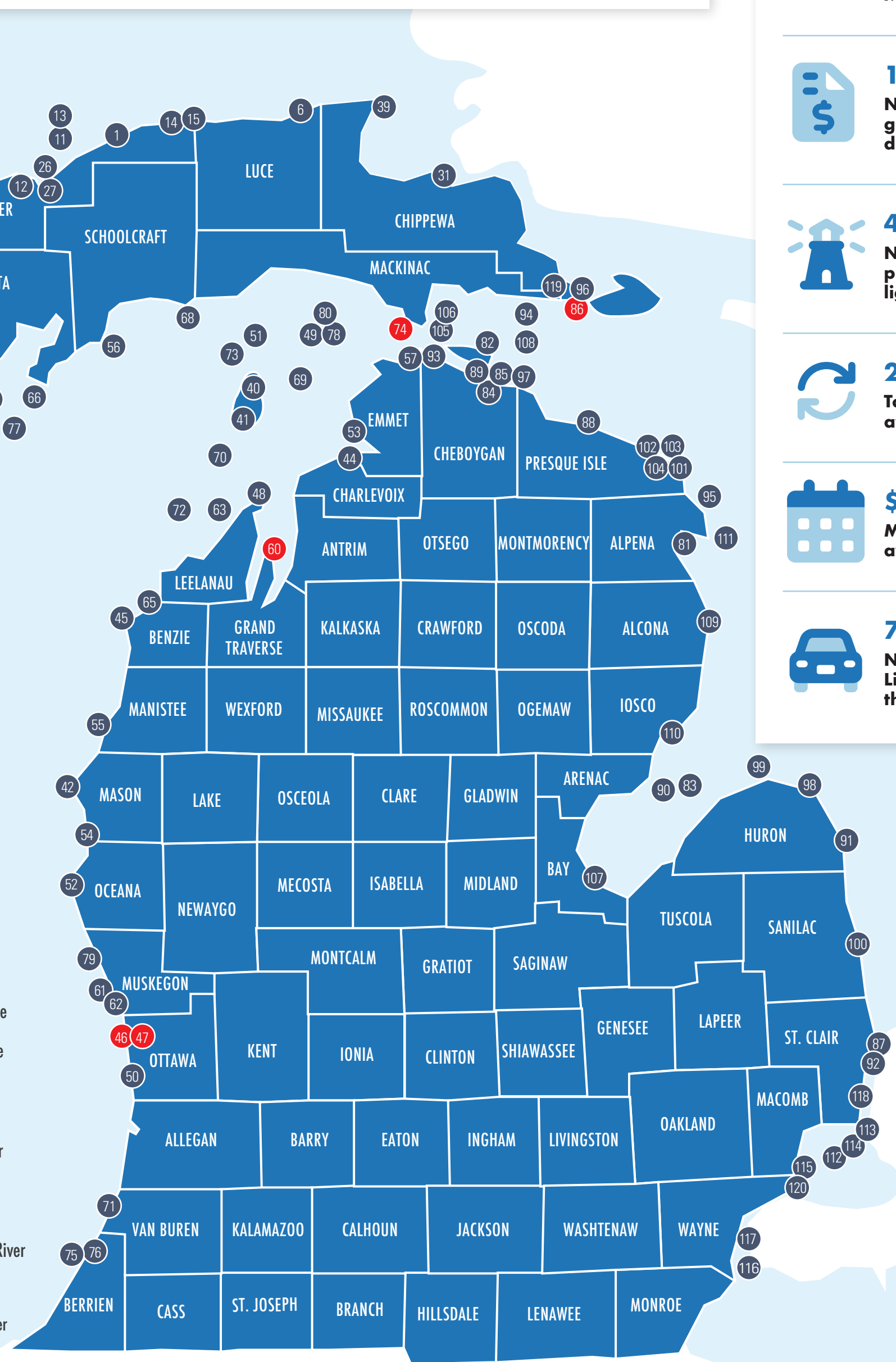
- 81 Alpena Light Station
- 82 Bois Blanc Island Light Station
- 83 Charity Island Light Station
- 84 Cheboygan Crib Light Station
- 85 Cheboygan River Front Range Light Station
- 86 DeTour Reef Light Station
- 87 Fort Gratiot Light Station
- 88 Forty Mile Point Light Station
- 89 Fourteen Foot Shoal Light Station
- 90 Gravelly Shoal Light Station
- 91 Harbor Beach (Sand Beach) Light Station
- 92 Lightship Huron
- 93 Mackinac Point Light Station

## About the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program

In the late 1990s, the federal government signaled an interest to begin divesting itself of hundreds of historic lighthouses across the country. The State of Michigan, with more lighthouses than any other state, enacted Public Act 73 of 2000, establishing the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP) to help lighthouse stewards restore and repair their historic lighthouses. An initial round of lighthouse preservation grants was offered that year.

On April 2, 2001, the first Michigan Lighthouses license plate was issued. Revenue generated from the sale of this specialty vehicle license plate has since supported a permanent funding source for the MLAP grant program. Now, 25 years later, Michigan motorists can still upgrade to a Save Our Lights license plate to show their love for lighthouses. But anyone can support the grant fund!

You can make a direct donation to the fund and learn more about lighthouse preservation in Michigan by visiting [michigan.gov/saveourlights](http://michigan.gov/saveourlights) or scanning the QR code.



- 94 Martin Reef Light Station
- 95 Middle Island Light Station
- 96 Pipe Island Light Station
- 97 Poe Reef Light Station
- 98 Point Aux Barques Light Station
- 99 Port Austin Reef Light Station
- 100 Port Sanilac Light Station
- 101 Presque Isle Front Range Light Station
- 102 Presque Isle Light Station (new)
- 103 Presque Isle Light Station (old)
- 104 Presque Isle Rear Range Light Station
- 105 Round Island Light Station (Straits of Mackinac)
- 106 Round Island Passage Light Station
- 107 Saginaw River Rear Range Light Station
- 108 Spectacle Reef Light Station
- 109 Sturgeon Point Light Station
- 110 Tawas Point Light Station
- 111 Thunder Bay Island Light Station

### LAKE ST. CLAIR

- 112 Lake St. Clair Light Station
- 113 St. Clair Flats South Channel Front Range Light Station
- 114 St. Clair Flats South Channel Rear Range Light Station
- 115 Windmill Point Light Station

### RIVERS

- 116 Detroit River Light Station—Detroit River
- 117 Grosse Ile North Channel Front Range Light Station—Detroit River
- 118 Peche Island Rear Range Light Station—St. Clair River
- 119 Round Island Light Station—St. Mary's River
- 120 William Livingstone Memorial Light Station—Detroit River

\* Light Station is used throughout to refer to either a complex of buildings, or an individual light.

## MLAP Statistics Through 2026



Nearly **\$3.2 Million**  
 Total MLAP grant dollars



**\$1.9 Million**  
 Leveraged grant match dollars



Over **\$5 Million**  
 Total investment in Michigan's lighthouses



**106**  
 Number of MLAP grants awarded to date



**41**  
 Number of participating lighthouses to date



**28**  
 Total number of repeat awardees



**\$60,000**  
 Maximum MLAP grant award per cycle



**7,427**  
 Number of Save Our Lights license plates on the road in 2025



1867

## Gull Rock Light Station

In the 1860s, ships carrying lumber, copper, iron ore, and other valuable cargos were sailing across Lake Superior, and often sought a safe harbor near Gull Rock during dangerous weather. Gull Rock islet is a small but dangerous rocky outcropping which posed a risk particularly in bad weather. On July 28, 1866, Congress provided a \$15,000 appropriation to establish the Gull Rock Light Station and build "...a light-house to mark the channel between Keweenaw Point and Manitou Island, Lake Superior." President Andrew Johnson issued an executive order on October 16, 1866, reserving the land for lighthouse purposes. This was just one year after the end of the Civil War.

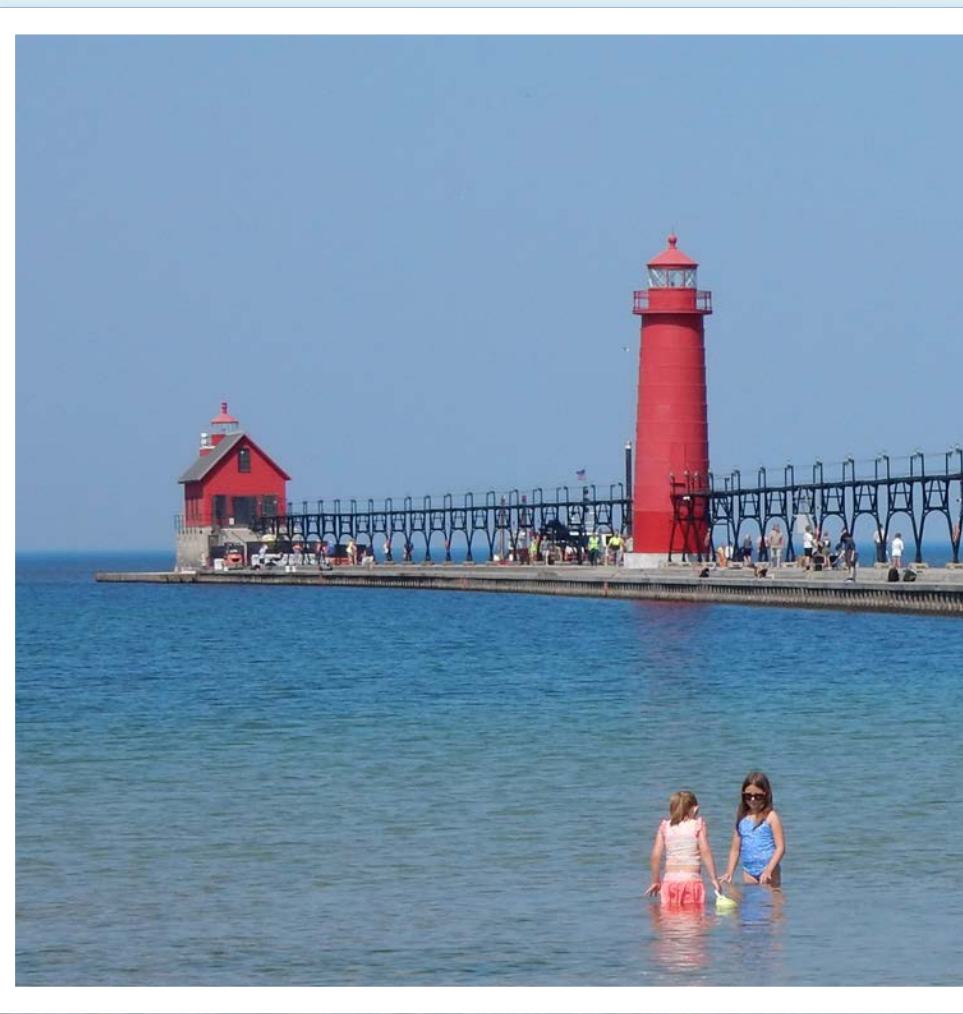
Life on Gull Rock was noted as quite mundane. With the primitive living conditions and the limited space afforded by life on the rock, this was considered one of the most isolated and difficult stations to work on the Great Lakes. With no fog signal to tend there was little to do beyond the mandatory morning lens, lantern and lamp maintenance. Both a keeper and assistant were assigned to the station, likely more to provide companionship than to share the small workload. In several instances district inspectors approved the appointment of a keeper's wife to the position of assistant. In this manner, Keeper James Corgan's wife Mary served as his assistant for all six years during which Corgan was keeper at Gull Rock from 1877 through 1883. Today, remaining 1867 structures on Gull Rock include the lighthouse – a combined keeper's quarters with attached light tower – and a privy.



Gull Rock was operated by a lighthouse keeper and assistant keeper for 46 years. It was never equipped with electricity, indoor plumbing, or phone service. The privy was constructed northeast of the keeper's quarters, near the water's edge. It incorporated a unique design feature; two openings in the foundation allowed the waves to wash out the privy pit. No need to actually clean the toilet! Given its remote location, the station was among the earliest to be automated in 1913. The light was maintained, but the lighthouse building eventually fell into disrepair. The station is currently owned by the non-profit Gull Rock Lightkeepers, while the light remains an active aid to navigation. Critical preservation projects have been undertaken at Gull Rock using the MLAP. More than \$170,000 in grant funding has been provided through six grants to develop restoration plans and specifications, install a new roof, stabilize the privy, clean and restore the lantern, and replace missing exterior doors with historically-accurate replicas.

**Top Photo:** Recent photo of the Gull Rock Light Station at sunrise. Photo courtesy Bryan Lijewski.

**Lower Photo:** Gull Rock Light Station in 1908. Photo from the Historic Structures Report for Gull Rock Light Station.

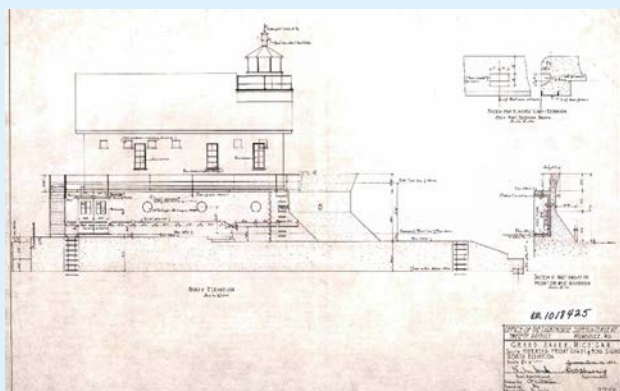


1875 & 1907

## Grand Haven South Pier Lights

The first lighthouse was lit at the mouth of the Grand River in 1839. Over the next seventy years, the lighthouse configuration changed several times, culminating in the arrangement seen today: the entrance light containing a fog signal constructed in 1875, and the cylindrical inner lighthouse completed in 1907. Together, they form a "range" light system, where ship captains on the lake vertically align the two lighthouse beams to set their course for the harbor. The prominent concrete "prow" foundation beneath the entrance light, and the steel catwalk, were both added in 1922.

Grand Haven's lighthouses were not always red. It wasn't until the 1950s that the Coast Guard required navigation aids on the right side of a harbor entry to be red when entering the harbor. The elevated walkway, or catwalk, was an important feature. It allowed lightkeepers to travel from their dwelling on the mainland out to both lights even in inclement weather. Grand Haven's lights were automated in 1969 and the buildings began to deteriorate. The catwalk was proposed for removal in the mid 1980s, but a community-led effort resulted in the catwalk being saved and repaired. Both lights transitioned to City of Grand Haven ownership in 2013.



The city of Grand Haven is inextricably linked to its maritime heritage---its nickname is "Coast Guard City USA." Once the city obtained ownership of the lights, it began to plan for future preservation efforts and eventual public access. Partnering with the non-profit Grand Haven Lighthouse Conservancy, a Historic Structure Report was completed in 2015 which explored the history and conditions of both lighthouses and prioritized future repairs. \$240,000 in four successive MLAP grants have recreated missing original wood windows, restored the deteriorated concrete prow and steps on the entrance light, and restored the lantern interior, metal fittings, and spiral stair of the inner light. The latest grant awarded in 2026 will continue interior repairs and restoration of the entrance light, allowing it to open to the public for the first time this year.

**Top Photo:** Grand Haven pier range lights in their modern configuration. Photo courtesy Bryan Lijewski.

**Lower Photo:** Engineer's drawing of the Grand Haven Entrance Light c. 1922. Drawing from the Historic Structures Report for Grand Haven South Pier Entrance and Inner Lights.



1870

## Mission Point Light

The Old Mission Peninsula divides Grand Traverse Bay's western and eastern arms. A shallow reef extends out from the end of the peninsula, posing a hazard to ships entering the bay. When a large ship hit the shallows and sank just offshore in the 1860s, Congress appropriated \$6,000 to build a lighthouse, but construction didn't begin until after the end of the Civil War. The lighthouse was completed and the lamp first lit in September, 1870. Somewhat protected from its surroundings, the lighthouse was built of locally-plentiful lumber, a rarity when most lighthouses were constructed of more durable brick, stone or metal.

Built in the "schoolhouse" style, the short tower projects up from the roofline of the keepers' quarters building, which was home to a lightkeeper and their family. The longest serving lightkeepers were Captain John Lane and his wife Sarah, starting in 1881. Sarah took over more of the duties as John's health declined, and after John passed away in late 1906, Sarah served as the sole lightkeeper, the light's only female keeper, until someone new was assigned. As shipping needs changed, in 1933 the lighthouse was decommissioned and replaced by an automatic lighted buoy just offshore. After a period of disuse and vandalism, a group of township residents came together to raise money to purchase the lighthouse and surrounding land for a park.



Three past MLAP grants amounting to \$80,000 have accomplished a series of preservation goals, by making structural repairs to the copper lantern structure, sealing the structure against moisture entry, making critical repairs to the foundation, and completing a Historic Structure Report to prioritize future work. Today, the lighthouse museum is a popular tourist destination operated by Peninsula Township in partnership with the Mission Point Lighthouse Keepers Association and has the distinction of being located almost exactly on the 45th latitude line, halfway between the Equator and North Pole.

**Top Photo:** Old Mission Point Light now restored and open to the public. Photo courtesy Bryan Lijewski.

**Lower Photo:** Old Mission Point Lighthouse in its early days around 1890, with Grand Traverse Bay stretching out into the distance. Photo courtesy National Archives.



1931

## DeTour Reef Light Station

DeTour Passage is located at the north end of Lake Huron, where one arm of the St. Marys River flows through the mile-wide gap between the eastern Upper Peninsula and Drummond Island. Although quite deep, the passage features rocky shorelines and a shallow rocky shoal extending out from the mainland about twelve feet below the water surface. The passage has long been on the main sailing route between the lower lakes and Lake Superior, and the shoal posed a frequent danger to vessels, particularly in bad weather. The first lighthouse in the area was lit on the mainland in 1848 and was replaced by a taller lighthouse in 1861, but neither accurately guarded the location of the shallow reef. Between 1855 and 1915, the Soo Locks had expanded from a single American lock to four, and shipping interests lobbied the U.S. Lighthouse Service for a newer light station to aid in navigation. The modern DeTour Reef Light Station was constructed in 1930-31, nearly a mile offshore.

The new lighthouse towered over the shallow shoal, rising to 83 feet above the water level. Known as a 'crib' light, it is composed of three distinct sections above the concrete base: The lower mechanical room and keepers' quarters, the central light tower, and the upper lantern room. The interior included the latest creature comforts including electricity and a bathtub, features unheard of at many other lights. Despite being far offshore, the light station includes several Classical Revival architectural flourishes, including arched windows, cornices, and decorative parapet roofs. The lamp on the new light was lit in November 1931.



The light carried on serving this critical function for years. It was automated in 1974 and began to fall into disrepair. The DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (DRLPS) was founded in 1998 to save and restore the light, and make it accessible to the public. Today, it offers one of the premier "Keeper Stay" opportunities, welcoming overnight guest lightkeepers since 2005. DRLPS was an early user of the MLAP and has received the grant eight times, representing a cumulative grant investment of more than \$260,000. This funding has been used to waterproof the decks, restore skylights, reconstruct a large historic deck crane, and restore the original diaphone fog signal to operation.

**Top Photo:** DeTour Reef Light Station under construction in 1931. Photo courtesy Woodward Lighthouse History Collection.

**Lower Photo:** Reconstructed and operational deck crane in 2008. Photo courtesy Bryan Lijewski.