



Education & Outreach Program

New Canal Lighthouse

The site of the New Canal Lighthouse has a rich history reaching back 176 years. The first lighthouse to stand at this site was built in 1839 to mark the entrance of the New Basin Canal, which was constructed mainly by Irish immigrants in the 1830s. Thousands of these immigrants died from mosquito-borne illnesses while digging the canal, and their sacrifice is honored with a Celtic cross placed on the neutral ground between West End and Pontchartrain Boulevards, a section of the now-filled-in canal.

Within a decade, the 1839 lighthouse, an octagonal cypress tower, began to lean and the decision was made to rebuild. The second lighthouse to stand at the site was built in 1855. A square one-story dwelling with its light



shining 33 feet above the lake, it stood until the Southern Yacht Club moved to its present location across the canal from the New Canal Lighthouse in 1880. The new two-story Victorian structure prevented the light from being seen by approaching mariners, and it was determined that a taller lighthouse would need to be built. In 1890, the third lighthouse to stand at this site was completed. Built on the original iron piles with its light shining 49 feet above the lake, this lighthouse stood for over one hundred years. It boasted a unique five female light keepers, saw rescues on the lake, was home to the United States Coast Guard, and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Within this time, the lighthouse was placed on dry land for the first time, having been 1,000 feet offshore from its beginning. In 2005, the New Canal Lighthouse was severely damaged in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation signed a lease with the USCG to restore the lighthouse. The damaged structure was dismantled, and the historic materials were stored while fundraising began. Construction of the lighthouse began in 2012,



and on April 20, 2013, the fourth New Canal Lighthouse was opened to the public. A replica of the 1890 lighthouse and now 19 feet off the ground to withstand storm surge, LPBF is proud to have brought a Lakeview landmark back to the city. The lighthouse houses a museum, and visitors learn about the history of the lighthouse, the importance of the lake in the founding of New Orleans, the work that LPBF did to bring Lake Pontchartrain back to life, and what we continue to do to keep our lake clean and to restore our coastline here in Louisiana.





Lighthouse History Hall - Outside the museum, you see green shutters and black hardware from the 1890 building. Inside, you'll see salvaged wood from the 1890 building given new life as the walls, floors, and window and door casings of our new lighthouse. A timeline describes how this area has changed since the inception of the first New Canal Lighthouse. Standing across from the Fresnel lens that once shined in the lighthouse cupola is a portrait of Margaret Norvelle, the last of our five female light keepers, behind a railing from the cupola of the 1890 lighthouse. Displays show the early city of New Orleans, the New Canal Lighthouse, the lighthouse keepers, and West End from another era. Seawall images and those of the 2,000 acres of land that were created can be viewed.

Save Our Lake Hall - Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation was established in 1989 and began its first campaign, Save Our Lake. A video gives a glimpse of the beginning of the lake's return to health. Learn why the lake became so polluted that it needed to be closed to swimming and how LPBF was instrumental in getting a moratorium on oil and gas drilling in the lake, stopping shell dredging, and creating a management plan for future direction. Explore an interactive the food web for the lake, and watch a video showing the vast commercial fisheries of the area. View a map of the estuary and the entertainment it has to offer; note the many artificial reefs that beckon the local fisherman.



Save Our Coast Hall - Land loss in coastal Louisiana has greatly accelerated in the past hundred years. LPBF began its Save Our Coast campaign in 2006. A video display explains LPBF's plan for the future of the coastline. Learn about the Multiple Lines of Defense Strategy, a plan written by LPBF which uses natural and man-made lines of defense in combination with wetland restoration projects to provide hurricane protection. See a map showing the Pontchartrain Basin and the current project areas. View a final display, the content of which changes as interests arise.