SAVE OUR LIGHT

UPDATE

JULY 2026

After updated architectural and engineering investigations were completed in early 2025, it became clear that the Muskegon South Breakwater Lighthouse had experienced extensive structural deterioration. Significant corrosion was discovered along the steel panels and structural angle-iron connections, leading the project engineer to conclude that numerous structural failures had developed. Because of the extent of the deterioration, the original plan to lift and relocate the lighthouse to shore was no longer feasible. Updated restoration plans were approved by the Michigan Lighthouse Conservancy, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, and the National Park Service, allowing the project to move forward while increasing overall restoration costs.

Bid notices went out and Mihm Enterprises of Hamilton, MI provided updated estimates. The greater needs and modified approach of restoring in place escalated anticipated costs to $1.6 million. Mihm Enterprises was the lowest qualified to perform the restoration work and was awarded a contract to restore the Muskegon South Breakwater Lighthouse. While State Representative Terry Sabo had successfully obtained an $800,000 grant from the State of Michigan, that left $800,000 to be raised locally. A fund was set up with the Community Foundation of Muskegon County. To date, approximately $600,000 of that has been raised. Thank you for your donations to the **Save Our Light** campaign. **Can you help spread the word or consider an additional donation to help bring this project to completion? We would truly appreciate it.**

Restoration began on September 16, 2025 on Phase 1 of the process by repairing and rebuilding deteriorated concrete at the base. As you can see from the photo to your left, although volunteers repeatedly painted over the graffiti, keeping up with the vandalism has proved difficult. The exterior of the Lighthouse was then scaffolded and covered with environmental fiber, sealing the lower third of the Lighthouse under which it was sand blasted and the lead paint abated. The bare metal was coated with a rust inhibitor and a new zinc rich organic base coat was put on, followed by an intermediate coat, and then finished with a durable bright-red-topcoat. This was completed before the winter weather set in.

Below right is a white metal sandblast next to non-blasted paint. Sandblasting creates a microscopic profile of peaks and valleys on the steel surface, this allows the self-etching zinc primer to adhere to the metal substrate stronger.

Mihm Enterprises worked throughout the winter in their facility fabricating exterior railings needed for the project. The cost of this initial work done in 2025 is $218,722.00.

Above is the very top of the lighthouse's new safety railing that was fabricated.

The photo to the left shows sections of the base railings that were no longer present on the lighthouse and had to be fabricated from the original drawings.

Phase 2 began June 19, 2026 with Mihm Enterprises delivering scaffolding to their storage site and starting to erect it out at the lighthouse. Scaffolding erection began the next day and will eventually rise to the top of the Breakwater Lighthouse with the environmental fiber to follow. As in the last phase, the exterior surface will be blasted to abate the lead paint, then those pieces that need to be cut out, repaired, and or removed can be welded on because the welding crews will not weld on lead painted surfaces. Steel that is being saved and restored will have the zinc rich organic primer installed on it in preparation for the painting process. Interior work on panels being saved will as well be blasted and primed and painted as we go along. We are only allowed to disassemble one side at a time due to structural stability.

Interior work requires repair on one level and replacement on four upper concrete flooring levels because of deterioration. There are many repairs and replacement of the structural beams supporting the floors and metal sides. If the weather cooperates operating out on the breakwater in exposed conditions we hope to be completed before winter weather comes again.

Fundraising activities continue on multiple fronts. Community presentations are being held at civic clubs and marinas throughout the region, and a $50,000 grant request has been submitted to the Consumers Energy Foundation, with a funding decision expected by mid- to late July. We are also working with the City to install QR-code donation signs at parking meters and along the beach walkway, making it easy for visitors to support the restoration. Our Capital Campaign Committee continues to meet with prospective major donors while developing additional fundraising initiatives that will help complete this historic restoration.

We have ordered and installed additional circular sidewalk signs with QR codes along the walkway to the lighthouse near The Deck restaurant. Fundraising thermometer signs featuring the lighthouse are being erected in two locations at the beach and have been recently approved by the City.

Our Capital Campaign Committee continues to meet with prospective major donors to build support for the project. Several additional fundraising initiatives are currently being explored and are expected to move forward as they are finalized. While these efforts are still under development, the committee is working diligently behind the scenes to develop new opportunities and maintain the momentum of the campaign.

Completing the restoration depends on raising the remaining funds needed to finish this extraordinary project. Please consider making an additional donation and sharing our mission with family, friends, and colleagues. Simply visit, or share with someone you know, SaveOurLight.org. Every additional gift-regardless of size moves us one step closer to preserving this historic landmark for future generations.

Thank you very sincerely for your help and generosity,

Co-Chairs: Don and Nancy Crandall
Terry and Denise Sabo

Capital Campaign Steering Committee:

Marc Hoeksema	Don Kalisz
Roger Morgenstern	Ron Matthews
Dave Alexander	Bob Lukens

Michigan Lighthouse Conservancy: Jeff Shook and Kim Lange and all of the dedicated group of volunteers.

Please HELP Save Our Light – Donate Now!
saveourlight.org

A historic photo of the Muskegon South Breakwater Lighthouse.