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Ontario foundation donates \$550,000 to B.C. lighthouse preservation group

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VICTORIA – A Vancouver Island lighthouse preservation group has received the largest private donation to a lighthouse restoration project in Canada.

The Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society (SPLPS) has received a multi-year financial commitment totaling \$550,000 from the Ontario-based Westaway Charitable Foundation. Sheringham Point Lighthouse, located 57 km west of Victoria, is now owned by the society, one of 21 heritage lighthouses in B.C. There are also 27 staffed lighthouse stations on the B.C. coast.

“Lighthouses are popular heritage sites in coastal Canada as well as being symbols of guidance and protection,” said SPLPS board member John Walls. “The Westaways’ supremely generous donation offers us a beacon to help us navigate through our ambitious restoration project, a gesture that is outstanding in Canada. As the recipients, we are honoured that the Westaways have such confidence in our plans. Their donation allows us to proceed with a major restoration to both the lighthouse and the lighthouse reserve property.”

The relationship between the Westaway Charitable Foundation and the SPLPS started with a small donation of \$1,000. “We heard about the group and thought it deserved some financial support, so we sent a cheque,” said Foundation President Peter Westaway. “Later when I met the board members and volunteers, I was impressed with the planning expertise and their vision of this site as a coastal asset open to all. I am proud to be able to partner with SPLPS and magnify the substantive community-based financial support they have been given to further this important maritime heritage project.”

Westaway himself lives in the Old Cut Lighthouse on Lake Erie which he and his wife restored in 2000. Their restoration project won the Ontario Homebuilders Award as well as the Canadian Homebuilders Association Award in the Most Outstanding Home Renovation category.

Walls added that the total gift requires approximately half the required funds to be raised through the community, a large portion of which has been already completed.

Currently the SPLPS is working to restore power to the lighthouse and improve public safety. Then restoration of the tower and engine room will begin, including metal re-fabrication, re-glazing, painting and rustproofing, as well as concrete repairs. The plan is to have interpretive displays and educational programs at the heritage site.

ABOUT

Westaway Charitable Foundation

The Westaway Charitable Foundation was formed in 1986 by Peter Westaway and his sister, Lynn, to support primarily the arts, medical research, and heritage projects. Major ongoing gifts have been made to further both ovarian and prostate cancer research, and to support theatre. Ellis Chapel, built in 1861 in Puslinch Township (in south-central Ontario) was completely restored with Foundation help. The Sheringham Point project is the first major gift by the Foundation to a lighthouse restoration project.

Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society

The Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society was formed in 2003 to protect, preserve and restore the heritage lighthouse and act as stewards of the surrounding property, located in Shirley (57 km west of Victoria). Ownership of the lighthouse was transferred to the society in 2015. The Lighthouse View Trail and Jennie's Trail were created on private property and managed by the society for the first five years under an agreement with the Capital Regional District. The 3.4-km loop trail provides access to the lighthouse and the surrounding area.

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Media Resources: HD video and photos available on the website (under NEWS/media outlets) www.sheringhamlighthouse.org

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Canadian Heritage Site - 1 Sheringham Point Road, Shirley, BC

Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society

"Dedicated to Preserving and Protecting"

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