

Helicopter tours of St. George Reef Lighthouse to return

August 25, 2023



The St. George Reef Lighthouse Preservation Society will conduct 10 flights per day with a docent-led tour of the remote, historical lighthouse over Labor Day weekend, September 1-4. SGRLPS President John Zimmerman reports the flights will resume after a four year hiatus. A limited amount of seats remain.

The cost of the flight, docent-tour of the lighthouse, and membership in SGRLPS for one year is \$350, with a \$175 down payment.

“It’s truly an exhilarating experience to see up front and personal this spectacular lighthouse,” said Zimmerman.

The lighthouse was built in 1882 on an area of exposed rock seven miles off the shores of Point St. George, in the aftermath of the Brother Jonathan disaster in 1865, and named in honor of British explorer George Vancouver in 1792. St. George Lighthouse was decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1975 due to unique dangers posed to personnel. Several Coast Guard personnel lost their lives after being swept off the boom built to load supplies and assigned staff to man the lighthouse. The boom was removed with the Coast Guard exit.

The only way to access the lighthouse, is via a six minute helicopter flight. The lighthouse stands 144 feet above the ocean water line of which the actual granite structure raises 72 feet above the concrete base. St. George Lighthouse is completely surrounded by the oft-times turbulent Pacific.

After 16 years lying dormant, the iconic lighthouse was re-opened with helicopter visits. Within a month, the California Transportation Aeronautical office issued a cease and desist order for St. George pending a permit and safety re-design of a heliport pad.

In 2018, flights resumed. Present 21st century technology replaced functionality of most American lighthouses with a radar-equipped buoy system warning vessel captains of the perilous shoreline. St. George Reef Lighthouse is owned by Del Norte County with a lease agreement to maintain and operate the lighthouse.

Reservations can be secured via phone (707) 273-1905 or (541) 254-3851