

## NATIONAL NEWS

# Elbow Reef lighthouse in Abaco being restored

The famous 1863 Elbow Reef lighthouse in Abaco, which graces The Bahamas' \$10 bill, is being restored by the Elbow Reef Lighthouse Society under the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation grant, through the US Embassy in Nassau. The Ambassador's Fund hopes to cover most of the repairs to the lighthouse, while the society continues to fundraise toward the entire project's completion.

The entire lighthouse has been completely stripped of its red and white stripes, revealing the cement concentric circles that were added in the 1950s to stabilize the original limestone and brick tower. Also uncovered are beautiful Bristol bricks inset in the windows and entrance doorway (part of the original tower construction). The society plans to

keep the bricks unpainted as a part of the big reveal. The focus now is on the necessary masonry repairs to the entire structure, followed by primer and finish paint using a durable, breathable, mineral-silicate paint that will bind to the substrate, creating a more resilient, weather-resistant surface.

Additional projects slated to happen between 2022-2023 under the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation grant include restoring the lantern and metal works; replacing the slate floors of the tower's interior; and finally, maintaining the tower's operational systems.

After Hurricane Dorian devastated this iconic Bahamian light station in 2019 (with damage upwards of \$1 million), the Elbow Reef Lighthouse Society has been able to repair the two keeper's quarters, five

operational outbuildings, and the gift shop. While all of these buildings have been upgraded and received new Category 5 hurricane-resistant eco-friendly roofs, the society continues to fundraise to complete the remaining light station projects and renovations.

The importance of this cultural site for The Bahamas is paramount. It is an unofficial national treasure that provides a vast blanket of opportunity for Abaco in its touristic and scenic value, therefore it plays a prominent role in the local economy. In addition, it is unique, being the last kerosene-burning lighthouse (out of 18,000 lighthouses) in the world.

You can follow the society's progress by frequenting [elbowreeflight.com](http://elbowreeflight.com). Online donations are accepted at [Elbowreef.org](http://Elbowreef.org).



► The Elbow Reef lighthouse in Abaco has been completely stripped of its red and white stripes. PHOTOS: HEATHER FORDE-PROSA



► The Elbow Reef lighthouse upon completion of the vapor-blasting paint removal process.



► The Elbow Reef lighthouse's uncovered brick.



► The last section of paint that was stripped off under the tarp. KENT LEBOUTILLIER