

Admiralty Head Lighthouse

The grand and beautiful Admiralty Head Lighthouse was built in 1903 to replace the Red Bluff Lighthouse, which had operated from 1861. Lighthouses were imperative to the safety of mariners and could never be left unattended. Technologies changed however, and Admiralty Head Lighthouse was deemed obsolete less than 20 years later.



Washington State Parks acquired the lighthouse in the 1950s and restored the lantern house, but it did not stand up to the salty air and eventually needed to be replaced again. This was the basis of an amazing island-wide effort in 2010, where students from Oak Harbor, Coupeville, and South Whidbey High Schools planned and rebuilt the





ABOVE: Fresnel lenses, circa 1800s. **RIGHT:** Spiral staircase leads visitors up to the lantern house.

lantern house themselves. This was made possible with guidance from their teachers and park volunteers, as well as metal work experts from Nichols Brothers Boat Builders.

The lighthouse sits 127 feet above the water and you can tour it with volunteer docents, learning about the keepers who lived there. Remnants of their daily lives remain, such as the original coal-fired hot water heater and the first indoor bathtub on Whidbey Island. See ornate Fresnel lenses from the 1800s, still in pristine condition today. It's only about 30 steps to the top of the tower, but steep and tight enough that it feels more like climbing a ladder than a staircase. It's well worth the climb if you're not claustrophobic, because the views from the top are magical.

Visit the lighthouse at 1280 Engle Road, Coupeville. Go to parks.wa.gov for lighthouse and gift shop hours.