

“The Budget” aka Horse Shoal Light FB June 25 2026



“The Budget” Lighthouse
Credit: Library and Archives Canada



Clear sailing in the blue zone outside Sonora Harbour
Credit: Marinas.com

St Mary’s River on the Eastern Shore is one of NS’s most complex rivers with three branches splitting off the main section that leads to Sherbrooke. Given the volume of gold mining, lumbering and fishing industries in the area around 1900, it was decided to build a white pepper-shaker style lighthouse in 1905 to direct marine traffic away from the Horse Shoal on the left side of the river.

“The Budget” as the lighthouse was called, was not land-based but located on top of a standalone cribwork pier that included an access ramp to haul out the lightkeeper’s boat and to break up the ice floes in the spring. This lighthouse did not include any quarters as its sheltered location in the St Mary’s River meant the lightkeeper could live ashore and row out twice daily to do his job.

In 1927 it was decided to make the lighthouse the front light of a range with a pole lamp on shore acting as the rear light of the range. Then in 1976 the lighthouse and pole lamp were replaced by a pair of skeletal square metal towers each topped with a fixed white light. These towers were known as the Budget Range and were only lit between May 1 and December 15 of each year.

By 2001, both metal towers were gone. Now a buoy with a flashing green light is bobbing in the St Mary’s River doing the same job as the original lighthouse in 1905. No doubt this Horse Shoal light buoy is well known by today’s mariners, but how many of them remember “The Budget”?



“The Budget” Lighthouse showing access ramp
Credit: Library and Archives Canada



Horse Shoal Light Buoy looks like this
Credit: aceboater.com