

## The Preservation Maintenance Fund

### *Property care for our second century*

With 145 structures and 1,212 acres spread across our thirty-six historic sites, ranging from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, Historic New England is intensely aware of the long-term preservation issues for our buildings and landscapes. As May is Preservation Month, this is an ideal time to give you a status report on our Preservation Maintenance Fund program, which is made possible by a three-year grant of \$3 million from an anonymous foundation.

The purpose of the Preservation Maintenance Fund is to address preservation needs with the goal of making each historic property sustainable in the next one hundred years and beyond. An important part of the process will be to develop new preservation methods, set standards for best practices for historic site care, refine philosophical approaches, and ultimately share these findings with other organizations and proprietors of historic buildings.

In 2009, the first year of the grant, staff assessed conditions at each site, from buildings to landscapes, from fences to trees, from roofs to foundations. Surveying all thirty-six properties has resulted in a “to do” list of more than 1,000 projects. These assessments allowed us to prioritize and focus on those projects that will have long-term value and ultimately reduce repair and operating costs—



preventing water penetration (chimney re-pointing, roofs, gutters and downspouts, exterior cladding, foundation infiltration); upgrading infrastructure (plumbing, electric, data lines, and heating efficiency); and caring for trees. Last year, we completed nearly \$1.5 million worth of projects—an unprecedented investment in long-term maintenance.

We are now in the 2010 work season with a prioritized list of projects focused on the goal of putting the historic sites in the best possible sustainable condition. This year, Historic New England must raise \$600,000. Because the donor foundation is providing two dollars for every one dollar you contribute, your donations will be tripled! If our members and friends can help us meet the challenge, the result will be \$1.8 million invested in property preservation during this centennial year.

The following articles highlight some of this year's projects and provide more information on how you can triple the value of your donation to the Preservation Maintenance Fund.

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## Improving the infrastructure—the hidden preservation work



Improving energy efficiency, controlling humidity, and upgrading mechanical systems are some of the key steps in safeguarding a house and its collections. Staff will continue to assess energy efficiency at every site, perform energy audits, and make weatherization and insulation improvements. Work scheduled this year includes—

- Improving the heating and environmental control systems at Cogswell's Grant in Essex, Massachusetts, and the Sayward-Wheeler House in York Harbor, Maine
- Installing and repairing lighting at Roseland Cottage in Woodstock, Connecticut, the Lyman Estate Greenhouses in Waltham, Massachusetts, and the Sarah Orne Jewett House in South Berwick, Maine
- Repairing plumbing at the Nickels-Sortwell House in Wiscasset, Maine
- Installing sump pumps at Beauport, Sleeper-McCann House in Gloucester, Massachusetts
- Providing electrical service to Jackson House and insulating the attic at Langdon House, both in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

## Restoring our landscapes

It's not just buildings—Historic New England's acres have needs too, from roads to fences to tree care.

In Massachusetts, major landscape restoration projects continue at the Codman Estate in Lincoln, and at Beauport. The priorities at the Codman Estate are work on the ha-ha wall, especially on the berm covering its top, and more tree work in the octagon garden, building on the excellent work donated by the Massachusetts Arborists Association last year. Phase two of the landscape design at Beauport focuses on bringing the front yard closer to its appearance during the mid-twentieth century. At the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm in Newbury, and at Cogswell's Grant, work is just beginning with an arborist's

assessment of the condition of the trees, including the beautiful maples at both farms.

In Maine, we have begun removing invasive trees along the riverbank at Hamilton House in South Berwick to open up space for the old apple trees in an area formerly known as Apple Tree Hill. In Wiscasset, the old apple orchard at Castle Tucker will receive care and the lilac border at Nickels-Sortwell House will be replaced.

Both the Lyman Estate, in Waltham, Massachusetts, and Watson Farm, in Jamestown, Rhode Island, are scheduled for roadway work and other improvements to make it easier to get around the properties.



## Keeping the water out



Homeowners know that keeping water out of the building and away from the foundation is essential to protecting both the structure and contents of any house. When you are responsible for 145 buildings, maintaining the elements that perform this function—the roofs and gutters—requires constant vigilance and vast resources.

This season, the Preservation Maintenance Fund will support roof work at Cogswell's Grant, which houses a renowned collection of folk art; at the Barrett House carriage barn in New Ispwich, New Hampshire; at the many gabled Beauport; at the home of writer Sarah Orne Jewett; and at the seventeenth-century Pierce House, in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where staff provide programs for inner-city school children.

An engineer will be brought to twelve properties to analyze drainage and gutter deficiencies and offer solutions to the water issues at those sites. In addition, work on chimneys, gutters, and downspouts will happen at a number of sites, including the stabilization and re-pointing of the chimneys at Beauport and addressing the chimneys and drainage around the house and the barn at Spencer-

Peirce-Little Farm. Another major project will be undertaken in York Harbor, Maine, to fix the gutters and ensure the water is properly running away from the Sayward-Wheeler House.



## Breaking news!

As this newsletter was going to press, the Patrick-Murray Administration of Massachusetts notified us of a grant award that recognizes Historic New England's leadership in making its historic buildings energy efficient and our efforts to share our knowledge with others in the field. A partnership between the Architectural Heritage Foundation, Historic New England, and the Trustees of Reservations has been awarded \$650,000 to complete deep energy retrofits at three historic properties, one of which is Historic New England's Lyman Estate in Waltham, Massachusetts. The work at the Lyman Estate includes window conservation, insulation, sealing air leaks, and installing an efficient furnace. The partnership is one of eleven projects in the state to share \$16.25 million in federal stimulus funding "to demonstrate innovative ways of achieving dramatic energy savings in buildings across the Commonwealth."

## Triple the value of your donation

As you can tell from this list of projects, the property care team has a busy season ahead. We are grateful to have the generous support to make this all possible. This year every dollar you contribute will be matched two-to-one by the anonymous foundation, thereby tripling your contribution. The result will be \$1.8 million invested in property preservation.

**We must secure the full match or risk losing this critical grant funding.**

Please support this important and historic effort. To make a contribution, contact the Development Office at 617-994-5951 or visit our web site at [HistoricNewEngland.org](http://HistoricNewEngland.org).