



# Historic Curatorship Program

*Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Within the thousands of acres of the Commonwealth's Forests and Parks are a number of unused, historically significant buildings with enormous potential for adaptive reuse. Over time, these properties have fallen prey to the elements and vandalism. The **Historic Curatorship Program**, in DCR's Office of Cultural Resources, was established in 1994 to address this issue through a unique public-private partnership. Through the program, DCR partners with a Curator who agrees to rehabilitate, manage and maintain a historic property in return for a long-term lease. As a result, DCR secures the long term preservation of some of the Commonwealth's most threatened historic sites and Curators, from non-profits to families to businesses, enjoy the benefits of living and working in a one of a kind location, exchanging their hard work and unique skills for the opportunity to live or work in a one-of-a-kind location.



**Glendedge Cottage, Halibut Point State Park, Rockport, Before and After**



**Garden tour, Litchfield House, Great Brook Farm State Park**

Curators are selected through an open and competitive process and proposed reuses must be compatible with the historic and natural character of the surrounding park or forest. Proposals are also required to provide a public benefit beyond the rehabilitation of the property, including, at a minimum, allowing public access to the property at least twice a year. Over thirty properties are eligible for the program, from mansions on the North Shore to cottages in the Berkshires, and average lease terms range from 20 to 30 years. To date, fourteen of the program's properties are under agreement, totaling an investment to date of over \$10.5 million from the private sector in state-owned historic properties. Five newly designated curators will invest an additional \$6 million towards the preservation of significant historic structures and landscapes.

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**Bradley Palmer Mansion (Willowdale Estate), Bradley Palmer State Park, Topsfield**

## PROPERTIES CURRENTLY UNDER AGREEMENT

### Litchfield House at Great Brook Farm State Park (Carlisle)

This mid nineteenth-century Greek Revival farmhouse and barn sit in a wooded glen in Great Brook Farm State Park. The current tenants signed a twenty-five year lease in 1996 and are in the process of restoring the house and barn.



### Gatekeeper's House and Shed at Lowell Heritage State Park (Lowell)

This 1847 house, once the residence of the Gatekeeper of the Pawtucket Dam's lock and canal systems, sits in a prominent spot overlooking the Merrimack River. The current tenant entered a ten-year lease in 1998 and currently uses it as a single family residence. DCR performed basic rehabilitation work on the barn and house prior to occupancy.

### Barton House at F. Gilbert Hills State Park (Foxborough)

This 1901 Colonial Revival building overlooks placid Sunset Lake in Gilbert Hills State Park. The current tenants have entered into a twenty-five year lease in 1996 and have fully restored the house and are in the process of restoring the historic garden landscape.



### Swann Lodge and Barn at Beartown State Forest (Monterey)

This turn of the century house and barn are currently under restoration. The tenants, Youth Enrichment Services (YES), signed a twenty-five year lease in 2001. YES is using the property to provide outdoor recreation programming to urban youth and the elderly.

### Glenledge Cottage (Viereck House) at Halibut Point State Park (Rockport)

This late 19<sup>th</sup> century Queen Anne cottage is located in a wooded setting in seaside Halibut Point State Park. The current tenants signed a twenty year lease in 1999 and are currently in the final stages of rehabilitation of the house as a single family residence.





**Bradley Palmer Mansion, Coach House and Carriage Garage at Bradley Palmer State Park (Topsfield)**

This unique Tudor-Revival style early twentieth century mansion features a rubblestone exterior and elaborate medieval-inspired interiors. The house was built by famed lawyer and diplomat Bradley Palmer, and hosted President Taft and General George Patten among others. The current tenants signed a fifty year lease in 1997, have restored the mansion and are currently operating the mansion as Willowdale Estate, an events and overnight facility.

**Farmhouse at Maudslay State Park (Newburyport)**

This 1800 farmhouse sits at the entrance of Maudslay State Park. The current tenants have completely restored the property and are using it as a single family residence.



**Walter Baker Administration Building (Dorchester / Lower Mills)**

The stately Administration Building was the heart of the Baker Chocolate Factory, Keen Development Corporation, in conjunction with PreservationMass, was chosen as a tenant in November 2000 and signed a fifty year lease. The restoration of this 1919 Classical Revival office building as artist lofts was completed in 2002.

**Crosby Mansion and Graham House at Nickerson State Park (Brewster)**

Following the passage of legislation (Section 224 of Chapter 127 of the Acts of 1999), a 25-year lease was signed outside of the Curatorship Program between DCR and the Town of Brewster for the 1888 mansion and two 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages. The town plans to lease the restored cottages and invest the resulting income into the restoration of the mansion.



**Harlow House, Ellisville Harbor State Park (Plymouth)**

This 1930s reproduction of a colonial house and tavern that once sat on the site is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival Style and is the last remnant of what was once a thriving farm community tracing its roots to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Curators were selected in 2009 and propose to rehabilitate the house as a residence for a 25-year lease.

**Lamson House, Bradley Palmer State Park (Topsfield)**

The Lamson House represents five centuries of North Shore history, first as a rural colonial farmhouse, then as part of Bradley Palmer's elegant estate, and will now continue to be an active part of the historic landscape as the selected Curators rehabilitate the property as a residence under a 35 year lease.



**Bascom Lodge, Mt. Greylock State Reservation (Adams)**

In May 2009, DCR selected a Curator to operate, rehabilitate and maintain Bascom Lodge, one of the state's iconic historic properties. The Curators will continue the decades-long tradition of providing quality food, lodging and programs for visitors to Mt. Greylock State Reservation. The native stone and timber lodge was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934-7.

**Smith Farmhouse, Borderland State Park (Easton)**

Built around 1870, this rural farmhouse was built by clairvoyant healer Ezibeal Smith, and was later utilized for farming experimentation by the Ames family as part of Borderland, their country estate. The selected Curators plan to restore the unique property as an alternative healing and events center under a 40 year lease.



**Coachman's House Complex, Maudslay State Park (Newburyport)**

This collection of five structures was built at the turn of the twentieth century to support the recreational activities at the Moseley family estate on the shores of the Merrimack River. The Coachman's House, Stable, Teahouse, Wellhouse and Boathouse will be rehabilitated under a 50 year lease as a wellness and health retreat.

For more information on the program, please contact:

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