



January 2024

Request for Expressions of Interest for the Rehabilitation, Management and Maintenance of:



Bullard Farmhouse, Cottage and Barn

Stearns Reservoir

Framingham, Massachusetts

RESPONSES DUE: March 15, 2024



The **Department of Conservation and Recreation** is steward of one of the largest state parks systems in the country. Its 450,000 acres is made up of forests, parks, greenways, historic sites and landscapes, seashores, lakes, ponds, reservoirs and watersheds. DCR's mission statement is:

*To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural,
cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all*

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e-mail: mass.parks@state.ma.us

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Maura Healey, *Governor*

Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Rebecca L. Tepper, *Secretary*

Department of Conservation & Recreation
Brian Arrigo, *Commissioner*
Priscilla Geigis, *Deputy Commissioner for Conservation and Resource Stewardship*

INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is pleased to release a **Request for Expressions of Interest** to solicit ideas for the preservation and management of a ten-acre section of DCR parkland located on the banks of the Stearns Reservoir in Framingham.

The site is a natural oasis in Boston's busy western suburbs, and includes potential access to recreational opportunities including boating, hiking, bird-watching and picnicking. The site is also a significant historic landscape, and includes three historic buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

This effort is meant to be an informal way for potentially interested parties to present possible reuse ideas that would:

- Maximize the property's potential as a public asset
- Provide for the rehabilitation, maintenance and management of the historic buildings and surrounding landscape
- Be financially sustainable
- Preserve the natural and cultural character of the site

There are no bad ideas at this stage, and only a few concrete parameters:

- DCR in coordination with the DFG Office of Fishing & Boating Access will design and construct a boat launch on the eastern shore of the property, and include a parking area for recreational boaters.
- At the very least, the Bullard Farmhouse must be preserved as part of any reuse idea.
- DCR will favor reuse ideas that offer the greatest levels of public access and benefit
- Substantial new construction would be discouraged.

There are many different possible partnership / development options -

- Short term use permit for part or all of the property for up to 10 years
- Long term lease through DCR's Historic Curatorship Program for 10 years or longer
- Provide passive recreational opportunities in a scenic setting
- An integrated use that connects the buildings with the natural landscape
- A separate use for the buildings that does not connect with the rest of the park, while maintaining public access and use for the remainder of the property
- Residential, commercial, or non-profit reuse

This RFEI will assist DCR in developing a plan for next steps. The end result may be a public private partnership, or may result in DCR retaining control over the entire property – the decision process will be driven by responses to this document.

The purpose of this RFEI is to:

- Present the opportunity provided by the property to a potential future partner
- Stimulate interest from potential public-private partners
- Identify development concerns, challenges and questions from potential partners
- Gather feedback from neighbors and other local stakeholders about potential reuses
- Help DCR plan for the next stage

This document is a general description and call for interest and **not a request for formal proposals**. Any party with a creative, compatible and feasible idea for the site is encouraged to respond to this RFEI. Submission of an Expression of Interest will not be a prerequisite for submitting a formal proposal through any future solicitation, nor will DCR consider information submitted at this time to be binding on the respondent. Responses to this solicitation may be made available to the general public.

DCR will provide an opportunity for interested parties to visit the site, and to discuss ideas and concerns with DCR staff.

Estimated Timeline

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| • Release of Request for Expressions of Interest | January 2024 |
| • Review and discussion with interested parties | Winter/Spring 2024 |
| • Release of Request for Proposals | Spring/Summer 2024 |

REUSE POSSIBILITIES



Conceptual design for the Stearns Reservoir peninsula showing the existing buildings and proposed boat access. (Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge 2018)

DCR is seeking creative reuse ideas from outside parties to create a new vision for this suburban oasis

BUILDING HISTORY



Bullard House, 1898

GEORGE BULLARD HOUSE

George Bullard was a machinist who lived in Framingham during the 1st half of the 19th century. The house, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990, was constructed between 1800 and 1832 according to the Town of Framingham Historic Preservation Plan, and in the 1820s or 30s as described in the National Register listing. Mr. Bullard's machine shop was located to the east of the house on Stony Brook, on a site that is now under water.

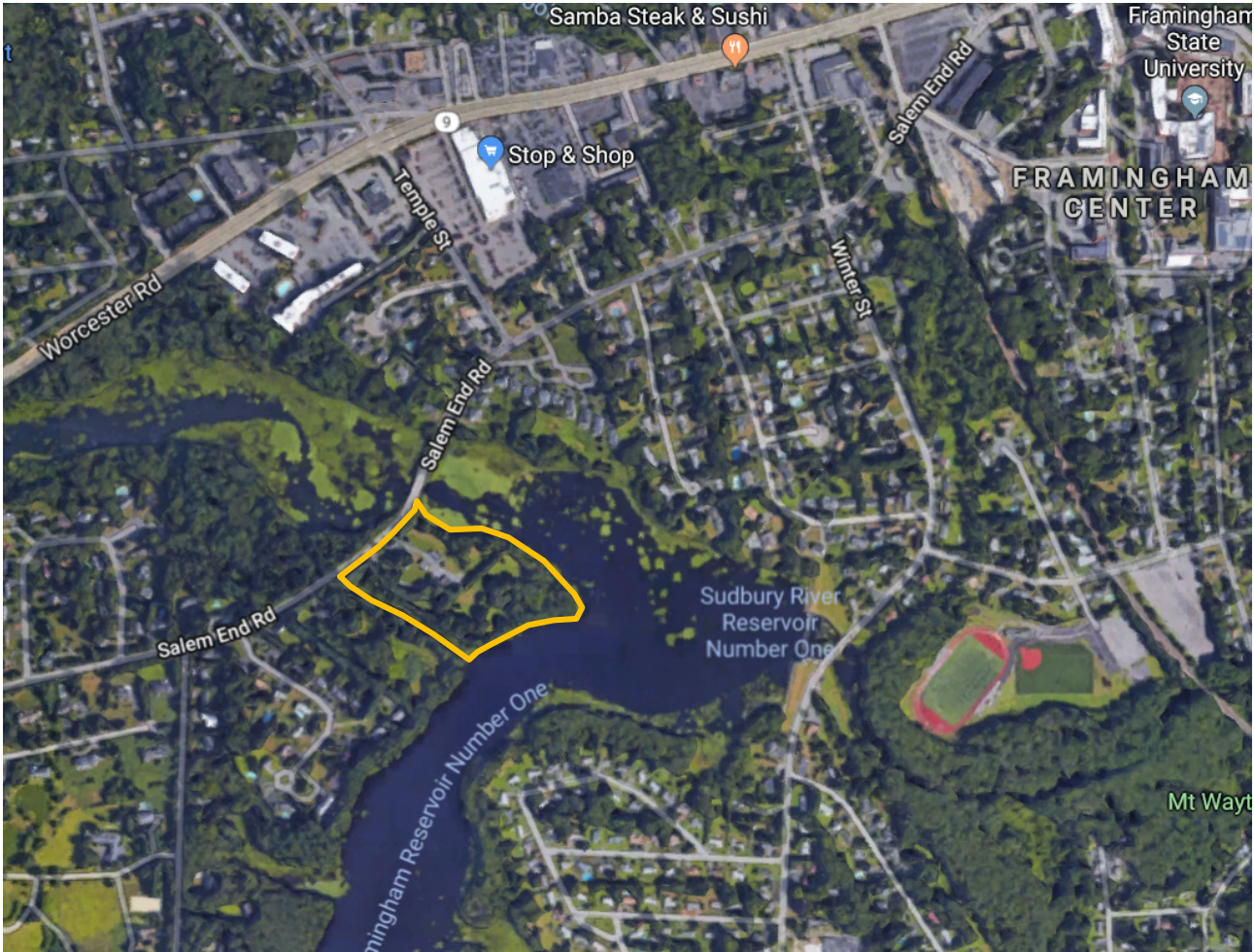
BARN

The Barn was constructed between 1878 and 1898. It's likely that the Barn was erected by the Boston Water Board subsequent to transfer of ownership from the Bullard family.

COTTAGE

The Cottage was constructed after transfer of the property to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1898, and considering structural features, was most likely erected prior to 1945.

SITE CONTEXT



The peninsula on Stearns Reservoir was acquired by George Bullard in the early 1800s for construction of his family home and an adjacent machine shop. In 1878 the City of Boston, for the Boston Water Board, acquired the property as part of the Sudbury Aqueduct and Framingham Reservoirs construction project. In 1898 the property was transferred from the City of Boston to the Metropolitan Water Board, and subsequently through successor water supply management agencies. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) managed the property for over 100 years.

During the 1900s the house was occupied by employees of the water supply agencies who were responsible for management of several reservoirs and associated dams in the region. Most recently, the house was used as an office and a caretaker's house for the MDC Sudbury Section, and the barn as a carpentry shop. Operations and associated use of the buildings ended around 1987. The MDC merged with the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to become the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) in 2003. Ownership of the property until now has been under DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection.

The area surrounding the Framingham reservoirs is a densely populated suburban/urban landscape. Much of the residential development occurred after World War II. The busy Route 9 corridor is less than one-half mile north of the Stearns Reservoir peninsula. The reservoirs and surrounding conservation land play an important role in the landscape for wildlife habitat, water quality, scenic qualities, and potentially recreational purposes.

While part of the greater Boston drinking water system, the reservoirs and associated lands have been closed to public access. Since they are no longer used for drinking water, DCR is transforming the property to parkland so all can enjoy the beauty of the site. This renewal was initiated by grant funds awarded by the Nyanza Natural Resource Damage Trust, which is related to an upstream superfund site in the Town of Ashland. The grant has paid for a stewardship plan for the Stearns and Brackett Reservoirs and surrounding DCR land; the plan included establishment of a public boat access site for non-motorized boating. Additional use of the grant funds, if available, include boat access infrastructure and staffing.

There is substantial flexibility at this stage for future use of the peninsula on Stearns Reservoir. The only certainties are development of public boat access, and preservation of the Bullard House due to its recognized historical significance. The types and extent of public recreation activities and the potential for public / private partnerships are still to be explored.

AMENITIES

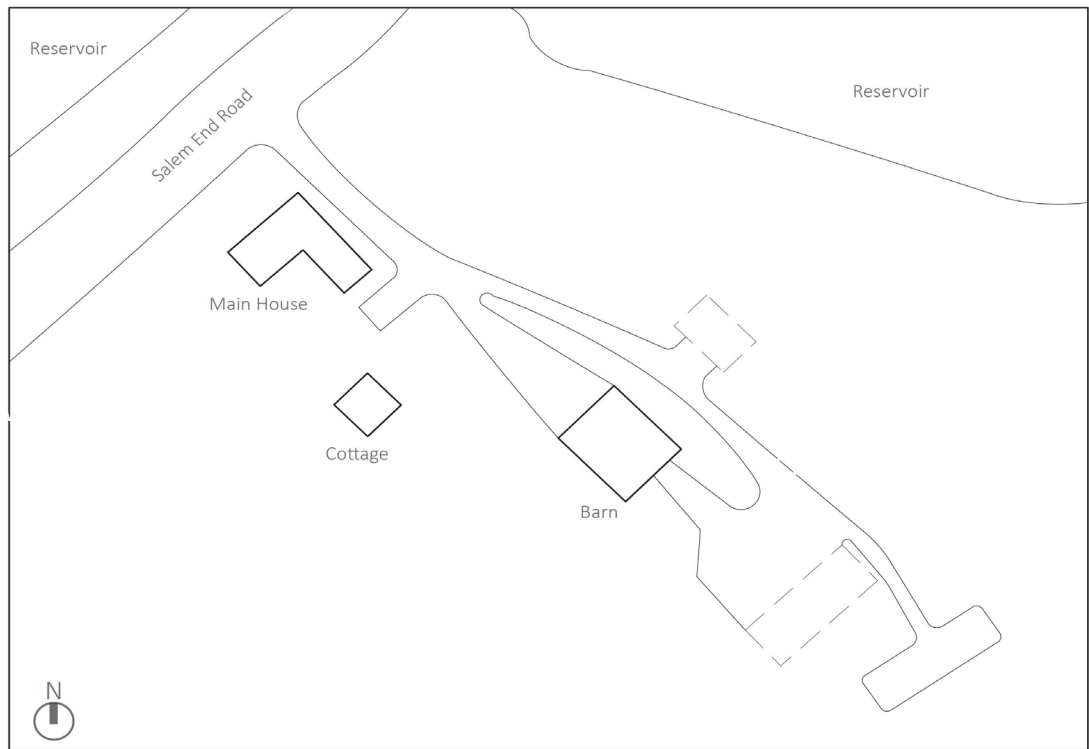
Potential eligibility for federal and state tax credits due to National Register listing of the Bullard House and its associated outbuildings.

The property is in a unique and scenic location, in a moderately populated suburban area, less than a half hour from Boston, and within a half mile of a popular commercial corridor. The peninsula on the Stearns Reservoir is attractive for a variety of potential nonprofit, commercial or residential purposes.

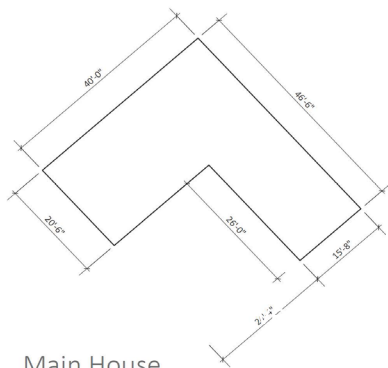
The following building information is summarized from:

Taylor & Burns Architects, Building Maintenance Plan for Structures at Frederick P. Stearns Reservoir Site, prepared for Crosby Schlessinger Smallridge LLC and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, 2018.

BUILDING INFORMATION



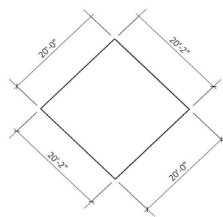
Site Plan



Main House

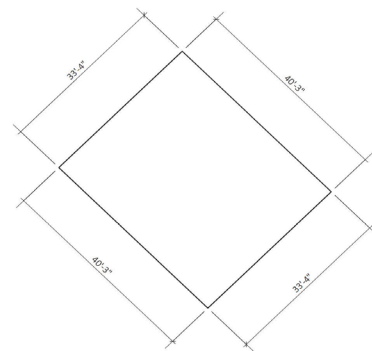
Door Count: 3
Window Count: 46
 (Includes 1 Boarded-Up Window)

Area Per Floor: 1,227 SF
Usable Floors: 2
Usable Area: 2,454 SF



Cottage

Door Count: 2
Window Count: 6
 (2 Additional In-filled Former Openings)
Area Per Floor: 403 SF
Usable Floors: 1
Usable Area: 403 SF



Barn

Door Count: 4
Window Count: 13
 (7 Additional Miscellaneous Openings)
Area Per Floor: 1,342 SF
Usable Floors: 3
Usable Area: 4,026 SF

The Bullard House is set close to the road, and is a typical early 19th century Federal-style dwelling of the 1 room-deep, double back chimney plan. It has a good Federal, pilastered front doorway with sidelights laid out in strictly rectangular patterns suggesting Greek Revival influence. The massing of the house is in an “L” configuration: the main volume facing the street has two full stories and a high cross gable with an attic level; the ell at the southeast side along the driveway has two stories and lower gable with no attic. The house has a center-entrance organization that includes a lovely entry hall with a gracious spiral staircase and well-proportioned flanking rooms to either side.

The Barn is a three-level gabled building with two entries at different floor levels. Defining features are its simple gable form, exposed structure, voluminous interior, and straightforward unadorned detailing. There is a cylindrical metal silo installed on an exterior wall that was a sawdust collector when the barn was used as a carpentry shop.

The Cottage is a small freestanding structure located in the glade behind the house and not connected with pathways or proximity to the driveway. It has defining features that include Dutch lap siding and door canopies. The interior consists of one room with a fireplace that is a central freestanding element. There is a work bench and cabinets along one side.

The buildings likely contain hazardous materials and cannot be accessed by the public at this time. DCR has already performed asbestos abatement in the basement of the Bullard House as well as giving the building a new roof.

Square Footage

See summary on previous page.

Sanitary system

The site is connected to the municipal sewer system.

Plumbing System

Bullard House: Bathrooms and kitchen have plumbing fixtures consistent with contemporary standards. Connected to municipal water system.

Barn: No domestic hot water or domestic plumbing fixtures.

Cottage: None.

Electrical System

Bullard House: Wall-mounted electrical outlets throughout the house are three-prong duplex types. It is estimated that the electrical system / wiring was upgraded in the late-1960s as required by code. In the ell, the third bedroom has wall-mounted receptacles for cable and Ethernet connectivity.

Barn: Electrical supply from a pole enters the building at the northeast corner, where two meters and the main panel are located, and is distributed via internal conduit to subpanels. Service is single-phase 110/220 (and therefore probably not more than 100 Amp service) with a fuse box.

Cottage: An overhead wire connects from the barn. Exterior flood lights are mounted on the south façade.

HVAC System

Bullard House: Oil-fired cast-iron radiators have piping consistent with hot water supplied by an oil burner.

Barn: There are three heating distribution systems, all on the main middle level: a wall-mounted electrical radiant coil unit; a forced air duct; and wall-mounted radiant pipes. The wall-mounted coil space heater was not tested to determine operability. The boiler in the lower basement serves both the forced heat as well as wall-mounted radiant pipes. The boiler needs to be replaced. There are two oil tanks, both approx. 250 gallons.

Cottage: Perimeter electrical baseboard heating units mounted on the east and west walls appear in good condition

Roof

Bullard House: Roofing is asphalt shingles. Original assessment by architects showed that the south gable roof of the main house and the west gable roof of the ell are in much better condition than the other two slopes, as shingles on those slopes are in rough condition. DCR subsequently replaced the entire roof.

Barn: Roofing is asphalt shingles, with no rain gutter system. The shingles are in good shape.

Cottage: The shingled roof is generally in good shape. The eave at the SW corner is damaged.

Exterior and Interior Elements

Bullard House: Gutters, siding, windows, doors, sills, interior finishes – all require rehabilitation. DCR performed asbestos mitigation in the basement.

Barn: Gutters, walls, windows, trim, sills – all require rehabilitation

Cottage: Window, door, sill & skirting – all require rehabilitation

A more detailed analysis of the buildings in the form of a Building Maintenance Plan will be available for interested parties

REHABILITATION COST ESTIMATES (all approximate)

Bullard House: \$300,000

Barn: \$130,000

Cottage: \$30,000

Rehabilitation tasks are required to upgrade the buildings if they are to be open for a basic level of public use. Interested parties are encouraged to also consider the cost of rehabilitating the interiors to allow for a particular re-use.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Request for Expressions of Interest

Former Bullard Estate, Stearns Reservoir, Framingham

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address (if no email): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Briefly describe the proposed reuse concept.

Describe the public benefits of the proposed reuse.

Provide a statement of qualifications and experience in the rehabilitation, management and maintenance of historic buildings / landscapes and natural / recreational areas.

Describe in general terms the anticipated funding sources

Describe potential obstacles and barriers to success. Would your idea require assistance from DCR or another source? If so describe in general any required assistance.

Describe any additional information that could be provided by DCR to assist in the preparation of a proposal.

Please send Expressions of Interest in electronic form and hard copy to:

Joel Zimmerman

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Division of Water Supply Protection

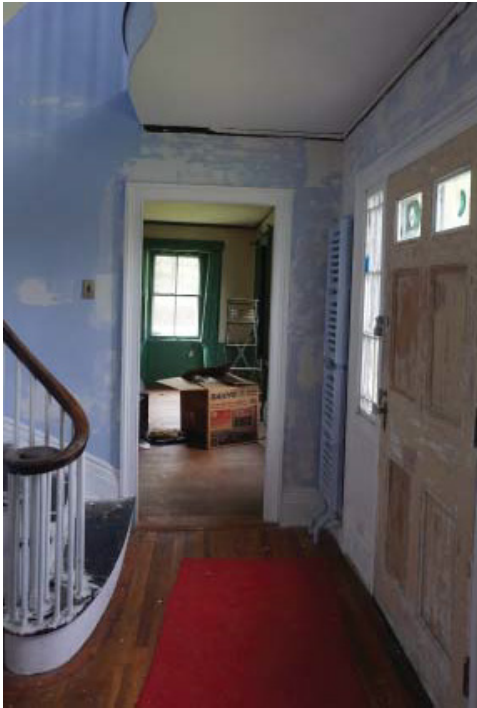
10 Park Plaza, Suite 6480

Boston, MA 02116

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(857) 286-0371

BUILDING PHOTOS (Taylor and Burns Architects, 2018)



George Bullard House – Main Entry and Spiral Stair



Cottage



Barn – Roof Framing



Barn – Middle Level Overview