

Town Announces Transfer of Ownership of the Gay Head Light



The town of Aquinnah announces that it is now the owner of the historic Gay Head Lighthouse. Almost one year to the day from when the Town submitted it's application for ownership to the National Park Service, it has received word that all parties have signed off on an agreement clearing the way for the transference. On Friday 2/20/15, the Town received a fully executed deed to the structure and property from the General Services Administration.

After recommendations for this transfer from the Director of the NPS and the Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, a Memorandum of Agreement between the Town, the GSA, the NPS, the Mass. Historic Commission, the USCG, the ACHP (Advisor Council on Historic Preservation) and the Wampanoag Tribe was constructed and approved by all parties. This is required by the terms of the NHLPA (National Historic Lighthouse Protection Act) for the transference and continued treatment of historic lighthouses. This agreement covers the terms and conditions of the transfer and the plans for future management, maintenance and care for the structure in perpetuity.

This transaction clears the way for the planned relocation of the Gay Head Light away from the eroding Gay Head Cliffs. The lighthouse is currently a mere 46 ' from the crumbling bluff 100' above the Atlantic Ocean. The pre move activities are scheduled to begin as soon as weather conditions permit this spring. The move to a location 200' inland from the cliff is scheduled for May.

The town appreciates the efforts of all parties involved in this effort enabling this project to commence. Having completed the complex procedures involved from application to ownership in one year has to be a record time for such transfers. This speaks to the awareness of all the Federal, State and local authorities of the urgency of this move to beat Mother Nature's ticking clock.

This is a great and historic day for the Town of Aquinnah, the Wampanoag Tribe, the Island of Martha's Vineyard and especially for the the iconic Gay Head Light.

As it is now assured to keep on shining for generations to come.