

THE BARN DOOR
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News from Massachusetts

Like many states, Massachusetts has a wide variety of barn structures: from one-of-a-kind barns such as the 1826 Round Stone Barn at Hancock Shaker Village in the western Berkshires, through the tobacco barns in the fertile Pioneer Valley, to the Cape Cod cranberry screen houses in the easternmost part of the state. These barns face the same threats including urban sprawl, neglect, and changing agricultural needs, as those in many other states.

Since 2004, The Barn Task Force, a committee of the non-profit Preservation Massachusetts, has been a statewide force for preserving and reusing historic barns and outbuildings in their setting. Its three goals are awareness, education and advocacy for barn owners and the public.

The Task Force has sponsored four annual conferences in different locations throughout the Commonwealth, as well as day-long seminars on particular areas of interest. With Task Force members from each region of the State, the organization has been able to partner with local groups such as colleges, agricultural commissions and local preservationists to co-sponsor talks, barn tours, and programs on specific issues such as barn condition assessments, or technical assistance for framing, roofing and stonework.

The Task Force also publishes a bi-annual newsletter to spread the word on upcoming events, showcase local barn restoration projects and provide updates on relevant legislation for barn owners and preservationists. It provides an information resource on the website: www.PreserveMassBarns with links to other organizations and institutions working on barn preservation, and a Frequently Asked Questions section. Its goals for the next year are to develop a stable funding base through increased memberships and corporate support, finalize a standardized statewide barn survey form for use by local groups, and co-sponsor more barn talks and tours such as the Concord, Mass Art in Barns Tour to be held on September 28.

Submitted by Lili Ott and Charles McColough





