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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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December 14, 2007

SEA CALL FARM, ORLEANS, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Sea Call Farm in Orleans for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its December 12, 2007 meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of this property on the National Register will help to protect our heritage for generations to come.”

Sea Call Farm encompasses 6.53 acres, in an area that once contained other small farms and older houses characteristic of the cultural landscape of Orleans from the late 19th to the mid 20th century. The property was purchased and developed in the 1920s by William A. Fiske and his wife Bertha, initially for use as a summerhouse with some small-scale farming activities. After William’s retirement from the Hartford Railway Express Company in 1931, the Fiskes resided in the house and farmed the surrounding land on a full-time basis. The Fiskes operated the property as a small market garden farm until 1950. Similar farms were common in Orleans and on Cape Cod in general during the period of the Fiskes’ ownership. Sea Call Farm, including a farmhouse, outbuildings and land overlooking Town Cove, is the only surviving agricultural ensemble in Orleans and one of the few remaining in the Cape Cod region. Its significance is enhanced by an extensive collection of diaries, account books, and other papers that detail life on the farm, and by current town ownership and public access. It is an exceptionally well-documented 20th-century farm and well-preserved agricultural ensemble consisting of farmhouse, garage and attached shed, burning pit, greenhouse foundation, and agricultural landscape. The Town of Orleans acquired the farm in 1987 and maintains it as a conservation area.

Sea Call Farm is one of 6 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 65,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission’s programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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