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Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**FOUR CORNERS/GOODNOW FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT, PRINCETON, APPROVED FOR  
NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William F. Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved the Four Corners/Goodnow Farm Historic District in Princeton for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March meeting. The nomination has been 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 historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of the Four Corners/Goodnow Farm Historic District in the National Register will help to preserve an intact collection of historically significant houses and outbuildings, set within an extensive agricultural landscape in Princeton.”

In contrast to Princeton’s five other National Register historic districts, all of which are villages, the Four Corners/Goodnow Farm Historic District is a large, rural area. Located at a crossroads (the “Four Corners” from which the district takes its name) in the northwest part of town, the district covers more than 1,500 acres. It includes the farmsteads and agricultural lands of fourteen farms, as well as a fragment of the long-abandoned early 19<sup>th</sup> century Barre Turnpike.

The district boasts a collection of late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century, 2 ½-story, center-chimney houses. The largest and best preserved of these is the Goodnow Homestead, owned today by the Massachusetts Audubon Society as part of its Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary.

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

The Goodnow House opened as a stagecoach tavern called Goodnow Inn in 1823, and grew over four generations to become one of the largest farms in Princeton, at more than 800 acres by the 1890s. Charles Crocker, Jr. of Fitchburg bought the farm in 1917, and it stayed in his family until the mid-1980s. The Crockers ran the property as a state-of-the-art gentleman's farm, where they raised sheep and shorthorn dairy cows and developed a line of champion sheep dogs. They rehabilitated two Goodnow barns and in the 1920s added several outbuildings. The Crockers gave the farm to Mass Audubon in 1956, and the organization has since received more donations of adjoining land. Today the sanctuary is 990 acres, covering nearly two thirds of the district, and the land is preserved in perpetuity as a wildlife sanctuary.

The Brigham/Thompson/Stimson farm is another of the district's well-preserved farmsteads, and has the only surviving silo in the Four Corners. A tiny, 1790s house forms part of the present-day farmhouse, which was enlarged and updated many times over the course of 250 years under the ownership of one family. The twelfth generation still owns the property. Agricultural preservation restrictions now ensure that much of the woods and farmland at the Four Corners will be preserved forever. Also in the district are an 18<sup>th</sup>-century ¾-Cape, an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick house, an 1850s brick schoolhouse converted to a summer residence in the 1930s, and two late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, sidehall-entry cottages.

The Four Corners/Goodnow Farm Historic District is one of 7 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 more than 70,000 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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)).

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