



ARTS & CULTURE

US Lighthouses for Sale or Being Given Away

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The United States is offering ten American lighthouses for new owners.

The lighthouses have stood along ocean and lake coasts for generations to help guide and protect ship and boat travel.

The General Services Administration (GSA) operates the lighthouse release program. It aims to **preserve** the properties. Most of the buildings are more than 100 years old.

Modern technology, including satellites, means lighthouses are no longer required for **navigation**, said John Kelly of GSA. And while the Coast Guard often keeps aids to navigation at or near the lighthouses, the structures themselves mostly go unused.

Yet the public likes to visit the tall, bright white towers. Many are popular with **tourists**, and are also subjects of photographs, paintings and other art.

The GSA has been changing ownership of lighthouses since Congress passed the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act in 2000. About 150 lighthouses have changed ownership, 80 or so given away and another 70 sold. The program has raised more than \$10 million.

This year, six lighthouses are being offered at no cost to federal, state, or local government agencies, nonprofits, educational organizations, or other groups. New owners must agree and be able to make repairs and preserve the buildings. They also have to make the lighthouses available to the public for educational, **recreational**, or cultural purposes.

The buildings offered include the 10.4-meter tall Plymouth/Gurnet Light in Massachusetts. The eight-sided wooden structure dates to 1842. But, a lighthouse has been at the site since 1768. The site was the first to employ a woman as lighthouse keeper.

John Kelly's personal favorite of the structures is Warwick Neck Light, in Warwick, Rhode Island. The 15.5-meter-tall lighthouse dates to 1827. It was an important navigation tool for sea travelers making their way to Providence, Rhode Island.

Other lighthouses being offered at no cost include Lynde Point Lighthouse in Old Saybrook, Connecticut and Erie Harbor North Pier Lighthouse in Pennsylvania.

Nonprofits already care for some of the lighthouses. The groups can request to continue doing so, Kelly said.

If a new owner is not found for a lighthouse, it goes on market to be sold for the highest price offered.

Four lighthouses are to be sold this year. Cleveland Harbor West Pierhead Light in Ohio is one of them. The 15.5-meter steel tower was built in 1911 and rises above Lake Erie. The property can be reached by boat only but provides an extensive view of Cleveland's skyline.

Some lighthouse owners have made the buildings their private homes and enjoy the unusual living situation.

The lighthouses "all have their own interesting history," Kelly said.

I'm Gregory Stachel.

Mark Pratt reported this story for The Associated Press. Gregory Stachel adapted it for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

lighthouse – *n.* a tower with a powerful light that is built on or near the shore to guide ships away from danger

preserve – *v.* to keep (something) in its original state or in good condition

navigation – *n.* the act of moving in a boat or ship over an area of water

tourist – *n.* a person who travels to a place for pleasure

recreational – *adj.* done for enjoyment

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