



**Town of West Tisbury
Community Preservation Committee**

P. O. Box 278

West Tisbury, MA 02575

(774) 447-9458

ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION

Due no later than 12:00 noon on Thursday, September 17, 2026

Submit one hard copy to the CPC office and one pdf to cpa@westtisbury-ma.gov

(Please rename the file when saving to include the project name)

Applicant: Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust

Co-Applicant (if applicable): Gannon & Benjamin Marine Railway

Project Name: Restoration of the Historic Fishing Vessel, Little Lady

Project Location/Address: Gannon and Benjamin Marine Railway
30A Beach Road, Vineyard Haven, MA 02568

CPA Category/Purpose (select all that apply):

Open Space ☐ Community Housing ☐ Historic Preservation ☒ Recreation ☐

Project Budget (if multi-year project, note current phase only):

Amount of CPC funds requested:	\$150,000.00
Amount from other funding sources:	\$1,350,000.00
Total project budget:	\$1,500,000.00

The Contact person for this project is: Shelley Edmundson, MV Fishermen's Pres. Trust. ED

All correspondence should be mailed to: P.O. Box 96 Menemsha, MA 02552

The Contact can be reached via phone at: 407-414-5387 or email at: Shelley@mvfpt.org

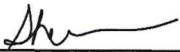
This is a two page application. Please provide project information on the next page

West Tisbury Community Preservation Committee Eligibility Application Page two

Project Name: The Restoration of the Historic Fishing Vessel, Little Lady

Please provide a brief description of the project, including goals, community need, proposed timeline, and sources of financial sustainability for future maintenance. Include information on any endorsements from regional/town boards and community organizations. Please also include sources of additional funding included in the project budget. Attach additional sheets as needed.

Please see attachments.

Signature:  Date: 09.09.26

Thank you for your application. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your application please contact our office at (508) 696-0100 extension 120

West Tisbury Community Preservation Committee
Eligibility Application for CPA Funds 2027

The Restoration of the Historic Fishing Vessel *Little Lady*

Proposal submitted by:

Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust

P.O. Box 96

Menemsha, MA 02552

Shelley Edmundson, Executive Director

Shelley@mvfpt.org

Project Category: Historic Resources Preservation

Brief Description of Project (Goals, Community Need, Proposed Timeline, Sources of Financial Sustainability for Future Maintenance):

For nearly a century, the fishing vessel (F/V), *Little Lady* has navigated our local waters and fed our community. Built in 1929 in Noank, CT, this wooden, side-rigged dragger holds the distinction of being the oldest and last wooden dragger still in operation in New England. Martha's Vineyard has been lucky to provide safe harbor for such a vessel for three generations of the Jason Family. The *Little Lady* represents a bygone era of wooden boat trawler fishing, embodying the resilience and spirit of a community deeply connected to the sea. The restoration of the *Little Lady* is important to the preservation of the unique character of the island's crucial fishing industry and ensures its continuation to educate and inspire for generation to come.

Goals and Community Need: Under the stewardship of the Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust (MVFPT) non-profit, and with the expertise of Gannon and Benjamin Marine Railway, the restored fishing vessel will be used for the educational and cultural enrichment of the island community. The restoration process will be documented by Circuit Arts Productions (also a local non-profit) to educate the community on local wooden boat building and fishing history. Once restored, the *Little Lady* will serve as a traveling, historical site for public visits, talks, and hands-on educational experiences. She will help foster a deeper appreciation for local maritime history, and for our local food producers. With a commitment to collaborative programming with like-minded organizations, the MVFPT will ensure that the *Little Lady* will remain accessible to all. In addition, the restored vessel, under the direction of Captain Denny Jason Jr., would be used to demonstrate historical fishing techniques. Any fish landed during demonstrations will be donated to the island's food insecurity organizations through the MVFPT's seafood donation program.

Proposed Timeline: The *Little Lady* is in dire condition and is currently hauled out of the water at Packer's Wharf in Vineyard Haven. Restoration under the leadership of Gannon & Benjamin, will begin as soon as funding is secured. Ideally, restoration would initiate fall 2026 and the project would be completed the fall/winter of 2027. The timeline is subject to project funding and availability at Gannon & Benjamin.

Budget: The total cost of our project is \$1,500,000, allowing for the restoration and preservation of the *Little Lady*. Currently, \$895,000 of the \$1,500,000 has been pledged toward this project, which includes CPA funds and donations. Community Preservation Act Funds have been awarded by the Town of Chilmark (\$200,000) and the Town of Tisbury (\$150,000).

Gannon & Benjamin have the expertise and ideological commitment needed to respectfully restore this vessel to her original condition, forever preserving her place in our community. Utilizing their operations also supports the island's local economy and working waterfronts. The \$1,423,000 estimate provided to us by Gannon & Benjamin includes all materials and labor costs needed for 5-6 skilled artisans to replace or repair the backbone, frames, planks, deck, wheelhouse, and rigging of the Little Lady, as well as to rebuild her motor and hydraulic winch system. We are documenting the project with help of Circuit Arts (\$51,000) and have already purchased the vessel (\$26,000).

Little Lady Restoration Budget			
Item	Amount	Description	Timeline
Purchase Vessel	\$ 26,000	Non-profit will purchase vessel	Completed 2026
Restoration of Vessel (Gannon & Benjamin)	\$ 1,423,000	See attached Quote	Fall/Winter 2026
Short film about project	\$ 51,000	Partner with Circuit Arts	On-Going
Total Estimated Cost	\$ 1,500,000		

Sources of Financial of Sustainability for Future Maintenance:

Once we reach our goal of \$1.5M to commence the project's restoration phase, we plan to raise additional funds through public outreach (\$500K) to be used as a maintenance endowment. These funds will ensure that the Little Lady remains well cared for and able to continue to navigate our waters for at least another century.



Photograph Courtesy of Alison Shaw.



HISTORICAL COMMISSION Town of Chilmark

June 20, 2025

Subject: Little Lady Historical Designation

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Committee, MV Fishermen's Preservation Trust
and Mr. Dennis Jason, Jr.,

This letter formally acknowledges the historical designation of the F/V Little Lady, a side-rigged dragger, and the oldest and last one-man wooden fishing dragger still operating in New England.

The Chilmark Historical Commission recognizes the significance of this vessel to the town and the fishing community of Menemsha. It has been a fixture of the town and part of the character of the fishing village for almost a century.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Katie Carroll, Chair
Jane Slater, Vice Chair
Barbara Armstrong
John Flender
Lenny Jason, Jr.



October 8, 2025

Town of Tisbury Community Preservation Committee

Re: Letter of Support for the Restoration of the Fishing Vessel Little Lady

Dear Members of the Community Preservation Committee,

On behalf of the Vineyard Preservation Trust, I am pleased to support the Martha's Vineyard Fishermen's Preservation Trust's proposal to restore the historic fishing vessel Little Lady. As the last surviving wooden, side-rigged dragger of its kind, she is a vital piece of the Island's maritime heritage.

At the Vineyard Preservation Trust, we believe preserving history includes protecting living structures that tell our community's story in motion. Restoring the Little Lady will keep our maritime traditions alive—offering hands-on learning, celebrating craftsmanship, and connecting new generations to the Island's working waterfront.

We strongly endorse this project as an important contribution to preserving the cultural fabric of Martha's Vineyard.

Sincerely,

Nevette Previd, Executive Director, Vineyard Preservation Trust