



ESSEX NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**East Parish Meeting House Grant Project Completed;  
Stabilization plan created for 1838 landmark**

June 21, 2011 (Salem, MA) -- The Essex National Heritage Commission is pleased to announce the completion of a historic structures report for the East Parish Meeting House in Haverhill, Massachusetts. The planning effort was funded in part with a 2010 Essex Heritage Partnership Grant.

Built in 1838 and worshipped in by the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, the small, quintessential New England church structure is one of only seven original meeting houses remaining in Massachusetts. In 2010, faced with an uncertain future and in need of significant repair and restoration, the meeting house was named one of the most endangered historic resources in the state by Preservation Massachusetts, the statewide, nonprofit historic preservation organization. The local landmark was listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service in December 2010.

With the goal of assisting the East Parish Meeting House Society better assess and plan for the building's long term preservation, Essex Heritage awarded the organization a 2010 Partnership Grant which enabled the trustees to engage qualified consultants to develop a stabilization plan for the remarkably unaltered building.

"Essex Heritage recognizes the critical need to provide seed money to small organizations operating in the heritage area," said Essex Heritage Executive Director Annie C. Harris. "The work completed by the East Parish Meeting House Society amply demonstrates the positive impact that can be made through the partnership of a strong grant program and local volunteers. We look forward to seeing this plan come to fruition."

The Essex Heritage Partnership Grant Program is a matching grant program created to foster and support the stewardship activities of organizations and municipalities that share its mission to preserve and promote the historic, cultural and natural resources of the Essex

National Heritage Area. The program provides funding for heritage education, interpretation, historic preservation, historical records and trail development and is a prime example of how the Commission directly invests in the Area. To date, Essex Heritage has made 354 grants totaling \$1,780,600 to non-profit organizations and municipalities within the National Heritage Area. One hundred percent of the Area's 34 communities have received a grant; most have received multiple grants.

"We are honored that Essex Heritage recognized the need to support our proposal," said Shannon Hewey, president of the East Parish Restoration Committee. "The East Parish Meeting House is on the brink. The grant money is key as it helped us to step back and create a strategic plan to preserve this important but under-appreciated historic building. We look forward to ensuring that this small piece of Haverhill history is around for generations to come."

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#### **About the Essex National Heritage Area**

The Essex National Heritage Commission (Essex Heritage) is the non-profit management entity for Essex National Heritage Area, one of forty-nine heritage partnership parks of the National Park Service. Working in collaboration with the National Park Service, the Essex Heritage promotes public/private partnerships and develops and implements programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the unique historic, cultural and natural resources found within the Area. For more information, visit the website at [www.essexheritage.org](http://www.essexheritage.org) or call (978) 740-0444.