

Hill-Stead Museum

35 Mountain Road, Farmington, CT 06032. 860.677.4787. www.hillstead.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2011

Hill-Stead Museum Awarded Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism Grants

Historic Preservation Survey & Planning Grant will help reclaim and fully interpret museum's agricultural complex

FARMINGTON, CT: Hill-Stead Museum is pleased to announce that it has been awarded two grants from the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism.

Dr. Sue Sturtevant, Hill-Stead Museum's Executive Director and CEO, said "this is a testimony to the hard work of our staff and the generosity of our benefactors," referring to the first award, an unrestricted Connecticut Arts Endowment Fund grant of \$18,000. The Arts Endowment Fund grants are calculated based on a formula tied to the amount a non-profit raised in the past year, designed to reward organizations that have realized an increase in their private contributions. The fund was established by the State of Connecticut to stimulate the development of private sector funding and to help stabilize arts institutions.

Hill-Stead Museum was also awarded a Historic Preservation Survey & Planning grant for \$20,000 to develop design-level architectural plans for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the Horse Barn and the Hay Barn, key structures on the museum's Farm Complex. This project, explained Sturtevant, "reflects the museum's steady progress over the last years in expanding the permanent exhibition and programmatic platform from a focus on the historic Pope-Riddle house and collections to one that includes the entire historic cultural landscape. Our efforts to incorporate the whole estate, including the Farm Complex, through nature programming, outdoor exhibits, and nature and garden blogs, are a result of many years of planning and investigation," Sturtevant elaborated. "The working farm was central to the vision of Hill-Stead's founder, Theodate Pope, and in our vision the barns, farmhouse, and other structures will become significant and valuable features of one of Connecticut's premiere National Historic Landmarks. Pope was always an innovator when it came to new things, as well as preserving old."

While the primary benefit of this project is that the Hay Barn and Horse Barn, both important examples of their types and periods, will be preserved as significant components of the overall exhibit at Hill-Stead, the project also offers an opportunity to expand the Hill-Stead audience and serve the community. Many visitors who are not as interested in art and gardens are

intrigued with early American barns, colonial culture, and the history of agriculture in New England. With the expansion of outdoor programs in recent years, Hill-Stead Museum is now viewed as a prime place to experience the natural world; a fully interpreted agricultural complex on the estate will engage residents in hands-on experience with organic food production, animal husbandry, and alternative energy production. The reclaiming of the Farm Complex can provide timely and meaningful opportunities for urban and suburban residents in Connecticut, including school children, to become involved in outdoor programs and learn about sustainable farming.

The Community Investment Act provides funding for the Commission on Culture & Tourism to award Survey & Planning grants on a competitive basis.

A National Historic Landmark and an Official Project of Save America's Treasures, Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, CT, is a member of CT's Historic Gardens and a stop on the Connecticut Art Trail (www.arttrail.org), a partnership of fifteen world-class museums and historic sites across the state. The museum's period rooms are open for tours Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am – 4 pm. The last tour of the day begins at 3 pm. Grounds are open to the public daily 7:30 am-5:30 pm. For tour and program information, browse www.hillstead.org or call 860.677.4787.

Hill-Stead is noted for its 1901 33,000-square-foot house filled with art and antiques. Pioneering female architect Theodate Pope Riddle designed the grand house, set on 152 hilltop acres, to showcase the Impressionist masterpieces amassed by her father, Cleveland iron industrialist Alfred A. Pope. Hill-Stead is one of the nation's few remaining representations of early-20th-century Country Place Estates. Collections include original furnishings, paintings by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Édouard Manet, James M. Whistler and Mary Cassatt, as well as numerous works on paper and Japanese woodblock prints. Stately trees, seasonal gardens, meadows, over three miles of stone walls and blazed hiking trails accent the grounds. A centerpiece of the property is the circa 1920 sunken garden designed by Beatrix Farrand, today the site of the renowned Sunken Garden Poetry Festival.