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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Massachusetts Environmental Trust Grants Awarded by SEEAL

Sales of Bay State license plates with the Northern Right Whale's tail prominently displayed have helped the Southeastern Massachusetts Environmental Education Alliance (SEEAL) award more than \$21,000 in small grants for environmental education programs in local schools.

SEEAL, a program of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, received funding for the grants from the Massachusetts Environmental Trust (MET), which produces and sells the special license plates. An additional \$11,000 will be awarded by SEEAL in the coming months to support environmental education efforts that are aligned with the state's science and energy curriculum frameworks.

MET program Coordinator Ron Maribett, a SEEAL partner, is excited about the fact that large numbers of our young people will have the opportunity to learn about their environment while honing their academic skills. "This program connects our youth with the places they inhabit, and helps them begin to understand the complex challenges facing them in the future," Mr. Maribett said. "While they gain important environmental knowledge, they are also learning valuable skills."

Grants have been made to the following schools and organizations:

- The **Trustees of Reservations** was awarded \$5,000 to provide watershed ecology study for 7th graders at the Westport Middle School and the Fall River Atlantis Charter School.
- A grant for \$6,000 was awarded to **Westport Community Schools in cooperation with the Westport River Watershed Alliance** to support the Envirothon Project, an impact study on renewable and nonrenewable energy resources in the environment.
- **Fairhaven High School** was awarded \$4,856.80 to support the Energy Transformation and Reusable Energy Education project, which will include educating 5th-8th graders about wind power.
- **New Bedford Oceanarium received \$5,625** to support the educational programs of the WOW Mobile throughout the New Bedford area. The WOW Mobile is a movable classroom that teaches students about the ocean and marine life.

These small awards were made possible with a \$50,000 grant awarded through MET's Environmental Education Program to support SEEAL's innovative work toward improving math and science achievement by K-12 students in Southeastern Massachusetts.

MET is the Commonwealth's premier environmental philanthropy, awarding approximately \$1 million per year to organizations across the state working to build environmental awareness, and to protect and preserve the Commonwealth's water resources and their ecosystems.

The Trust's ability to support environmental initiatives stems primarily from the 70,000 Bay State citizens who purchase one of three environmental license plates, which feature the images of the northern right whale and roseate tern, the water mill building, and the brook trout. The images on the plates are representative of the state's coastal, central, and western regions, respectively.

SEEAL was formed under the auspices of the Community Foundation in 1997, thanks to funding from MET, the Henry H. Crapo Foundation, and Polaroid. SEEAL's initial goal was to provide environmental educational experiences to young people of New Bedford with a special focus on New Bedford Harbor, but has since expanded its sights to encompass the watersheds of Buzzards Bay and parts of the Taunton River watershed in Southeastern Massachusetts.

SEEAL currently has 31 member organizations, including the Lloyd Center for Environmental Learning, the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, UMass Dartmouth, the Westport River Watershed Alliance, the New Bedford Oceanarium, and the Woods Hole Research Center.

About the Community Foundation

Since 1995, area residents have been turning to the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts to make their philanthropic giving as effective as possible. With assets of more than \$15 million, the Foundation is a public charity serving thousands of people who share a common concern – improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts.

Individuals, families, businesses and organizations create permanent charitable funds that help our region meet the challenges of changing times. The Foundation invests and administers these funds (there are currently 66), and uses the distributions to award grants each year to many of the humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. More information about the Foundation can be found at www.cfsema.org; for information about SEEAL go to www.cfsema.org/programs_services/seeal.htm.