

MEDIA CONTACT: Alison Prieto
Historical Museum of Southern Florida
Phone: 305.375.1492
Email: a.prieto@hmsf.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Historical Museum Explores South Floridians' Interaction
With Water in New, Family-friendly *Water Stories* Exhibition**

MIAMI, FL (June 4, 2007) – In South Florida, water surrounds us. It provides nourishment, transportation, recreation and, at times, causes destruction. The Historical Museum of Southern Florida will explore our interaction with water over the last 10,000 years in a new interactive, family-friendly exhibition. *Water Stories* will be on display June 23 through January 20, 2008 at the downtown Miami museum.

The public is invited to attend the grand opening for *Water Stories* on Saturday, June 23 from 1–4 pm on the Cultural Plaza outside the museum. Museum guests will enjoy guided tours of the exhibition, interactive children's activities, live music by Steel Away, hot dogs and drinks by Frankitude, and much more. Admission for museum members and children under 12 is free, and \$5 for non-members. The community can visit www.hmsf.org and submit their own water stories for a chance to win two guest passes to the opening.

“*Water Stories* explores human adaptation to our aquatic environment at a critical time when South Floridians are faced with a severe drought, the massive restoration of the Everglades to facilitate historic water flows, and a forecast for a very active hurricane season,” says Jorge Zamanillo, Objects Curator at the museum. Over 25 stories about survival and recreation in South Florida's aquatic world will be presented in audio/visual stations in the exhibition.

For generations, South Floridians have relied on aquatic species for food. Visitors to the exhibition will see a prehistoric subsistence diorama, a lobster trap, shrimping net and commercial fishing gear, and faunal remains from the 2,000-year-old Miami Circle.

Boats have been an important means of transportation throughout South Florida's history. *Water Stories* will feature a Seminole canoe, an Everglades skiff, a 1930s wooden racing boat and a metal boat used by Cuban refugees. Visitors will also be able to listen to interviews with Seminole canoe-maker Brian Zepeda and Biscayne Bay pilot Michael Wiegart.

Recreational fishing and boating, water-skiing, swimming and other beach activities continue to draw tourists from around the world. In this section of the exhibition, visitors will hear an interview from the Black Archives on Virginia Key Beach, once known as the “Colored Only Beach”, listen to legendary fishermen Flip Pallot, Chico Fernandez and Al Pflueger reminisce about sport fishing in South Florida in the 1950s and 60s, and watch a video of fly-tying artist Tim Borski. Visitors can also view vintage fishing tackle and catch a sailfish with a fishing simulator.

While South Florida's waters can be a source of unlimited fun, they can also have catastrophic consequences. Hurricanes, floods, over-fishing, dredging, residential and commercial development, mangrove deforestation, and sewage and chemical contamination have had a destructive impact on the region. Exhibition visitors can track hurricane activity with a live feed from the National Hurricane Center, hear an interview with hurricane hunters, see weather sampling equipment used in research planes, view NOAA and Hurricane Andrew film footage, hear an interview with DERM scientists, view water testing equipment and visit a hurricane preparedness room.

A variety of educational programs will be presented in conjunction with *Water Stories*. On select Thursday evenings from September to December, the museum will offer lectures and other programs related to the exhibition. Family Fun Days will be offered every Saturday beginning September 29 from 1 to 3 p.m., with hands-on activities for children. Thursday evening programs and Family Fun Days are free and open to the public.

For more information about the *Water Stories* exhibition, call 305.375.1492 or log on to www.hmsf.org.

About Your Historical Museum of Southern Florida

The Historical Museum of Southern Florida tells the stories of South Florida and the Caribbean. The museum promotes understanding of the past in order to inform the present and create a better quality of life. The Historical Museum hosts a permanent exhibition gallery and a special gallery with several changing exhibitions each year. In addition, the museum houses the Research Center, a non-circulating library and archives open to museum visitors, and The Indies Company, the museum's store, which offers a unique array of Florida-themed books and gifts. The Historical Museum is located in downtown Miami in the Miami-Dade Cultural Center, across the street from Metrorail's Government Center Station at 101 West Flagler Street, Miami, Florida 33130. Hours are Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., third Thursdays 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. and Sunday noon - 5 p.m. Admission for adults is \$5, children (ages 6-12) is \$2, and children under 6 are free.

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