

**Friends of Cape Florida, Inc.
% Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park
1200 South Crandon Boulevard
Key Biscayne, Florida 33149**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sarah Ballinger, 305-733-9549

**Florida Lighthouse Day at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park
Saturday, September 15, 2007**

KEY BISCAYNE – Thanks to a recently signed proclamation from Governor Charlie Crist, Friends of Cape Florida will again celebrate Florida Lighthouse Day on **Saturday, September 15, 2007**. As one of 30 remaining lighthouses in the state, and one of only six open to the public on a regular basis, Cape Florida is proud to participate in this annual statewide event, sponsored by the Florida Lighthouse Association, Inc.

The **Cape Florida Lighthouse** will be open for special tours and exhibits between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Originally built in 1825, the lighthouse currently stands 95 feet tall and was visible 18 miles out at sea. Built to protect sailors from the offshore reefs, the lighthouse has survived a Seminole Indian attack, damage during the Civil War and dozens of hurricanes. Restored after Hurricane Andrew, the tower is now the oldest standing structure in South Florida.

Members of Friends of Cape Florida will be available to discuss membership opportunities and sell t-shirts, featuring an 1883 photo of the lighthouse taken by Commodore Ralph Middleton Munroe. Information regarding the Florida Lighthouse Specialty Plate being organized by the Florida Lighthouse Association, and the economic opportunities it will offer the historic lighthouses in Florida will be available. If approved, this specialty plate will feature the Cape Florida Lighthouse.

Friends of Cape Florida members will again be working with local Girl Scout troops, providing lighthouse history and information on native plants within the park. The girls will be eligible to earn a limited edition badge for this annual event.

The Friends of Cape Florida, Inc. is a non-profit, citizen support organization that strives to promote, protect and restore the natural and cultural resources of Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park. Members receive 12 free entry days to the park, discounts, entry to member's-only events, a quarterly newsletter and much more.

For more information visit: www.capeflorida.org
www.floridastateparks.org/capeflorida
www.floridalighthouses.org

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THE FLORIDA LIGHTHOUSE ASSOCIATION, INC.
A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION

Stan Farnham, President
Eric Martin, Executive Vice President
John Kennedy, Treasurer

81 Lighthouse Avenue
St. Augustine, Florida 32080
Flapresident@gmail.com

Christi Sessions, Secretary

www.floridalighthouses.org

For additional information call Stan Farnham, 239-354-1240

News Release

July 30, 2007

Governor Charlie Crist has proclaimed September 15, 2007 as Florida Lighthouse Day.

Of the 59 historic lighthouses constructed in the state, 30 are still standing. Of the 30, six are open to the public: St. Augustine, Ponce de Leon Inlet, Jupiter, Cape Florida, Key West and Boca Grande lighthouses. Many of the lighthouses plan special events for September 15.

The 30 Florida historic lighthouses, which string along like emeralds on a coastline necklace, are a national resource treasured for their historic, cultural and scenic values. They represent our heritage as "America's Castles." Florida's six reef lights along the Florida Keys are "America's Eiffel Towers".

Lighthouses, which once protected coastal shipping and guided mariners into Florida's ports and river safely since 1824, have become major tourist attractions.

The Florida Lighthouse Association promotes, preserves and protects the rich maritime heritage of the remaining 30 historic Florida lighthouses for future generations. The all-volunteer association, with more than 1,000 people, educates and raises attention to get public support to increase Florida lighthouse preservation measures. The association meets quarterly at a lighthouse and publishes a quarterly newsletter, FLASH. The Web site, www.floridalighthouses.org, provides detailed information about the association.

"The Florida Lighthouse Association is a non-profit group of citizen activists dedicated to the preservation of the 30 remaining historic lighthouses that line our state's 1200 mile coastline. Once central to the economic growth and settlement of our nation, many of Florida's lighthouses face uncertain futures.

Our mission is to preserve, restore, protect and defend Florida's lighthouse towers, along with their material culture, buildings, artifacts and records to assure that the magic of Florida's lighthouses and lighthouse keepers will be available for the enjoyment and understanding of future generations."

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**Florida Lighthouse Specialty License Plate
Q & A and Key Points-August 14, 2007**

The 30 Florida historic lighthouses*, which string along like emeralds on a coastline necklace, are a national resource treasured for their historic, cultural and scenic values. They represent our heritage as “America’s Castles.” Steeped in the United States maritime history, and going back more than 180 years in Florida, lighthouses are too special to let fall down or be torn down. They can be forgotten and neglected, if not protected. *Imagine if all were restored and open!*

What are the funds for? Funds go to saving and restoring the 29 historic lighthouse treasures of Florida.*(One of the 30 remaining historic lighthouses is a private residence and not involved in the funding).

Does FLA own or restore lighthouses? No. FLA provides funds to local lighthouse and historical organizations that do restore, operate and support the local lighthouse. Most of the 20 local organizations (with more than 5,000 members), are FLA members.

What amount of the funds collected goes to the mission? The maximum amount because FLA, a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation, is an *all-volunteer organization* of nearly 1,000 members with **no paid staff, nor are officers even reimbursed for personal expenses, so FLA expenses are minimal.**

What is the need for a license plate when there have been state grants? First, state grants and other funds have been sporadic and inadequate, so the license plate adds a *sustained funding*. Second, grants often require matching funds (10%) so the license plate funds can be used to help local organizations with matching funds. FLA will continue to work vigorously with Governor Crist, the Legislature and Historical Bureau for state funding.

What are the estimated restoration costs for all Florida Lighthouses? Estimate: \$23 million.



Key Points and “Sound Bites:”

☐The Florida Lighthouse license plate will be a mini-billboard; a beacon to bring visitors to Florida lighthouses, while at the same time raising funds for saving and restoring lighthouses.

☐Florida Lighthouses, which once protected coastal shipping and guided mariners safely into Florida ports since 1824, are *significant historic properties.*

☐Historic lighthouses are a beacon for *heritage tourism.....a legacy of the past to visit,*

learn and be inspired. The State of Florida says, “Museums of lighthouses offer a window into Florida’s cultural heritage.” They are steadfast reminders of the major historical events, living symbols of our nation’s past that help inform future generations of the stories on which this country was founded.

☐Functioning historic lighthouses have proved their economic return for investment in restoring and opening: \$10 for every dollar invested by the state, for example with the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum.

☐Florida Department of State points to \$813 million economic benefit from 160 state parks. Several have lighthouses, including highly visited Bill Baggs State Park with Cape Florida Lighthouse (780,000 visitors/year).

☐Florida’s six historic reef lights along the Florida Keys are “America’s Eiffel Towers”.

☐ Among famous lighthouse architects and engineers, George Meade, who later as *General George Meade*, won the battle of Gettysburg, was involved with six of the Florida Lighthouses.

☐Other states have had success with specialty license plates with the lighthouse plate the number one seller in New Jersey. Mississippi will put the Biloxi Lighthouse on all its license plates later this year.

☐The six publicly open lighthouses are members of *Florida Association of Museums*. FLA also partners with *Visit Florida* (Visit Our Lighthouses) and *Florida Trust for Historic Preservation* (Save Our Lighthouses).

References.

Website: www.floridalighthouses.org.

Marketing Plan, Florida Lighthouse Specialty License Plate

Spreadsheet, Florida Lighthouse detail: District, Built, Lit or not, Endanger Priority, cost to restore, local association
For additional information, call Stan Farnham, 239-354-1240, or email at FLApresident@gmail.com.