

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN'S
HURRICANE
ON THE **BAYOU**

August 3, 2006

Meryl Streep to Narrate "*Hurricane on the Bayou*"

Film Premieres in New Orleans on Anniversary of Katrina, August 29, in Los Angeles on September 8, and in IMAX® Theatres Worldwide on December 22; Starring Celebrated New Orleans Musicians Allen Toussaint, Tab Benoit, Amanda Shaw, and Chubby Carrier.

MacGillivray Freeman Films announced today that Academy Award®-winning actress Meryl Streep will narrate the company's upcoming giant screen film, *Hurricane on the Bayou*, shot in the midst of Hurricane Katrina and featuring powerful giant screen images shot before and after the devastating storm. This marks the second giant screen film narrated by Streep, following her participation in MacGillivray Freeman's Academy Award-nominated giant screen documentary *The Living Sea*.

Hurricane on the Bayou will open August 29 at the Entergy IMAX Theatre in New Orleans to coincide with the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, and on September 8 at the California Science Center IMAX Theater in Los Angeles, and to IMAX theatres worldwide on December 22. The film is produced and distributed by MacGillivray Freeman Films (Everest, Coral Reef Adventure) and executive produced by Audubon Nature Institute with major funding from the State of Louisiana and in association with MacGillivray Freeman Films Educational Foundation.

Hurricane on the Bayou carries audiences behind today's headlines on a journey deep into the heart of Louisiana. Filmed before and after the unprecedented devastation of Hurricane Katrina and featuring state-of-the-art computer generated special effects depicting the storm's fury, *Hurricane on the Bayou* brings into focus the startling loss of Louisiana's rapidly disappearing coastal wetlands—New Orleans' first line of defense against deadly storms. Tragically, these wetlands are eroding into the sea at the speed of one acre every thirty minutes, or a land area the size of Manhattan every year.

Directed by two-time Academy Award-nominated director Greg MacGillivray, *Hurricane on the Bayou* stars legendary New Orleans music producer, songwriter and Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame inductee, Allen Toussaint, blues singer/guitarist and long-time wetlands activist Tab Benoit; 14-year-old fiddling prodigy Amanda Shaw; and zydeco accordion master Chubby Carrier. Also appearing in the film is Marva Wright, New Orleans' 'Queen of Gospel.' Through their eyes the tragedy the city faced during Katrina and its burning hopes for a revitalized future unfold.

“Hurricane on the Bayou is an emotional giant screen document of Katrina’s powerful effects as well as a profound musical celebration of a city that has been called the ‘soul of America,’ and a call to restore New Orleans and the vital wetlands from which the city’s unique identity first arose,” says director/producer Greg MacGillivray. “Meryl Streep’s ability to connect with audiences and the depth she brings to everything she does makes her the ideal narrator for this film, which has so many moods and which uses the full force of the IMAX theatre film medium to not only educate and entertain but inspire.”

One of America’s most lauded leading screen actresses, Meryl Streep has twice won an Academy Award and is the recipient of a record-breaking thirteen Oscar® nominations. She has played an astonishing array of characters in a career that encompasses film, theater and television. Most recently, Streep was seen in *A Prairie Home Companion* and *The Devil Wears Prada* and her voice can be heard as the Queen Ant in *The Ant Bully*. Her upcoming projects include *Dark Matter* directed by Chen Shi-Zheng and the New York Public Theatre production of “*Mother Courage*” in an adaptation by Tony Kushner.

Originally conceived as a cautionary tale about Louisiana’s wetlands and the consequences of a hypothetical hurricane hitting New Orleans, *Hurricane on the Bayou* began production in early 2005. The filmmakers simulated an apocalyptic hurricane, complete with recreated scenes where flooded homeowners burst through rooftops to get to safety. When Hurricane Katrina hit just four months after production wrapped, the filmmakers were forced to rewrite their story and raced to New Orleans to record the powerful giant screen images of Katrina’s aftermath.

Hurricane on the Bayou now features breathtaking images of Louisiana’s bayous and swamps, playful underwater scenes with a family of alligators, state-of-the-art computer generated special effects depicting Katrina’s fury, and startling images of Katrina’s devastating impact including never-before-seen aerial images of the flooded city of New Orleans. The film’s soundtrack features songs from such lauded Louisiana musicians as Dr. John, Aaron Neville, Fats Domino, Charles Brown, Allen Toussaint, Tab Benoit, Amanda Shaw, the band Zydeco Force and the Rebirth Brass Band.

“Ultimately, nothing can shake the spirit of the people of New Orleans. Our city is already recovering, as it has from previous hurricanes many times in its long history,” says Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman. “New Orleans WILL endure as one of the world’s greatest cities and Audubon is committed to helping ensure its future. We will continue to educate people about the need to restore our wetlands as a key defense against any hurricanes to come.”

“Ultimately, *Hurricane on the Bayou* has come to be about something more than just the treasure that is New Orleans; and more than just the urgency of solving the wetlands crisis,” says Audubon Aquarium of the Americas Managing Director Karyn Noles Bewley. “It’s really about the human spirit – about our ability to overcome tragedy in our lives and to commit to saving things that are truly worth saving.”

About MacGillivray Freeman Films

MacGillivray Freeman Films is the largest, most experienced independent producer and distributor of giant screen 70mm films in the world. Throughout the company’s 40-year history,

MFF films have won numerous international awards including two Academy Award nominations for Best Documentary Short Subject for Dolphins in 2000 and in 1995 for The Living Sea. The company's film Everest achieved unprecedented acclaim and box office success for a large format film and is currently the highest grossing giant screen film in history with more than \$135 million in worldwide box office receipts. MacGillivray Freeman's films are known for their artistry and successful blend of education and entertainment, as well as their celebration of science and the natural world. www.hurricaneonthebayou.com www.macfreefilms.com For more information, please contact: Lori Rick, 949-494-1055 ext. 218, lrick@macfreefilms.com.