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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Explore the Aegean Sea at the National Hellenic Museum**

*"Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago" opens November 24*

**CHICAGO, IL** - Dive beneath the surface of the Aegean Sea and explore the tumultuous history and evolution of the beautiful sea and dazzling islands that were home to Sappho, Homer, Pythagoras, and Hippocrates and inspired fantastic mythical creatures, such as Cyclops, Circe, and the Sirens.

This exhibition, developed in Greece, will make its U.S. debut on Nov. 24 at the National Hellenic Museum, 333 S. Halsted St. and will be open through August 2016.

*Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago* is an immersive exhibition, rich with audiovisual material and tangible artifacts, including underwater findings, ancient fossils, and a massive petrified tree trunk, that explores the ways in which the Aegean Sea and its dazzling islands have been shaped by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, tectonic shifts, and violent weather phenomena over 20 million years.

"It's quite stunning," said Elizabeth Martin, Executive Director. "The exhibition places you in the center of Homer's perilous 'wine-dark sea' and the beauty and mystery of the archipelago."

The exhibition, an original initiative of the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest, is presented in cooperation with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki's Geology and Paleontology Museum and the University of Crete's Natural History Museum.

“The exhibit is gorgeously designed and includes everything from volcanic explosions and earthquakes to long-extinct prehistoric animals like giant elephants,” said Chris Helms, NHM Collections and Exhibitions Manager. “We are really excited for visitors of all ages to explore what makes the Aegean area unique and experience the cataclysmic forces which shape our world.”

The museum will celebrate the opening of the exhibit on Nov. 23 with a reception from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. featuring docent-led tours and presentations by Dr. William A. Parkinson, curator of Eurasian Anthropology at The Field Museum and associate professor of Anthropology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Dr. Nickolas Zouros, professor at the University of the Aegean and Director of the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest.

The objective of the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest is to study, research, promote, preserve and conserve the unique Petrified Forest of Lesvos, a designated Protected Natural Monument of particular environmental, geological and paleontological value, and is one of the four founding members of the European Geoparks Network, established in 2000.

*Aegean: Creation of An Archipelago* is a companion exhibit to *The Greeks—Agamemnon to Alexander the Great* at The Field Museum, which features more than 500 archeological treasures from 21 major Greek museums. *The Greeks* is co-presented by the National Hellenic Museum and made possible by the generous contribution of The John P. Calamos Foundation and John P. Calamos Sr., Chairman of the National Hellenic Museum’s Board of Trustees.

Photo 1:

*Aegean: Creation of an Archipelago* opens Nov. 24 at the National Hellenic Museum



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*Located in Chicago's Greektown, the sleek 40,000-square-foot National Hellenic Museum at 333. S. Halsted St. is both contemporary and timeless, connecting all generations—past, present and future—to the rich heritage of Greek history, culture, art and the Greek American experience. The National Hellenic Museum, previously known as the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center, has been fulfilling this mission since 1983.*

For more information, visit <http://www.nationalhellenicmuseum.org> or call 312-655-1234.  
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