

History San José Features Exhibit
Shaped by Water: Past, Present & Future
at the Pacific Hotel Gallery at History Park
Opening Sunday, February 10, 2013

San Jose, CA – December 19, 2012 ---

The upcoming exhibit at History Park, *Shaped by Water: Past, Present & Future*, will depict how water has literally shaped the history of Santa Clara Valley, and highlights what challenges our community will face in the future.

Created by the Los Altos History Museum and opening Sunday, February 10 at the Pacific Hotel Gallery at History Park, *Shaped by Water: Past, Present & Future* will demonstrate through photographs, artistic interpretations, stories and interactive activities for kids of all ages, the unique connection between humans and this precious and finite resource.

“This exhibit uniquely demonstrates how conservation has a direct impact on shaping local history,” said Alida Bray, President and CEO of History San José. “*Shaped by Water* affords HSJ the opportunity to partner with local museums, nonprofits and affiliates to tell local stories from a variety of perspectives.”

This multi-faceted exhibit inspires a deep connection to this essential resource. The story of water in this region is told from a historical perspective, beginning with the indigenous Ohlone People up to modern day, through a comprehensive and interactive exhibition experience. The exhibition outlines future challenges and outcomes with concrete ideas to reduce consumption, reuse and recycle water.

Shaped by Water underscores how each period in our local history has been characterized by a changing relationship between humans and water. For example, the indigenous people had an intimate relationship to water and moved around in response to the wet and dry seasons. New immigrants to Santa Clara Valley brought dramatic changes in water usage and management beginning with the Spanish; then Mexican ranchers; and later Gold Rush era immigrants from the eastern United States brought even more significant changes. As our region entered the era known as the “Valley of Hearts Delight,” windmills and water tanks dotted the landscape and the rapid depletion of groundwater made a more organized water infrastructure necessary. The post-World War II boom brought even larger water infrastructure projects, and the Valley went from being completely self-sufficient using local water to 50-100 percent reliant on imported water. The “business” of water and water companies

became necessary to help manage community water needs and conservation efforts.

"This exhibit will engage the visitor on many levels from the amount of water we use on a daily basis to methods of water re-use," stated Ken Middlebrook, Collections Manger for HSJ. "Involving a bit of science, some history and a lot of fun, components of the exhibit enhance the visitor experience and encourage patrons to take action."

Partnering with HSJ affiliate A Schmahl Science Workshop and The Health Trust, the exhibit will leave an ongoing impact with the enhancement of the "Conservation Corner" at History Park. Extending the exhibit's theme will be a permanent workspace for exploration of such concepts as composting, water conservation, native plants and bees, and demonstrations of green gardening and food. The local 4-H Club Bee Keeper Program, students and the Rock Springs neighbors will learn about health, nutrition and conservation. The Rock Springs neighbors take what they learn in the Conservation Corner and implement it the Victory Garden located at the Southwest corner of History Park where they grow their own fruits and vegetables.

Shaped by Water will also impact School Programming for Grades 4, 5 and 6 with a two-hour program that supports State curriculum standards for science and language arts, as well as history.

In addition, water-related artwork by Bay Area-based artists that further expand the story of our use of water and the need for conservation will be displayed, including "Wetland Washing Machine" by Mark Brest van Kempen; "Barreled by Plastic" by Kathleen Egan; and "46,000 and Counting" by Judith Selby-Lang and Richard Lang.

Shaped by Water: Past, Present & Future is sponsored in part by Carol Luckhardt and the San Jose Water Company.

A series of Family Days are being planned:

- Sunday, February 10: Opening Reception at the Pacific Hotel Galley
- Saturday, March 23: Celebrating World Water Day at History Park
- Saturday, April 20: Celebrating Earth Day (4/22) & Arbor Day (4/27)
- Saturday, June 8: Joins the annual El Dia de Portugal
- Saturday, August 31: Joins the second annual Taco Festival

History San José's signature series of Family Days target multi-generational families with hands-on activities and demonstrations that teach and reinforce the principals of environmental conservation, with a special focus on water.

The Gallery at the Pacific Hotel at History Park in Kelley Park is open 11am to 5 PM Tuesday through Sunday. City parking is \$6. November 1 through April 30 admission to History park is free. May 1 through October 31, weekday admission is free and weekend admission is free to members of History San José; \$8 for adults and \$5 for seniors (62 and older) and students with a valid school identification card. History San Jose memberships are available from \$50 by contacting lspencer@historysanjose.org

For more information call 408 287-2290 or visit www.historysanjose.org
History Park is located at 1650 Senter Road, between Phelan and Keyes at the south end of Kelley Park in San José, CA 95112. For GPS tracking, History Park is at 635 Phelan Road in San José, CA 95112.

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About History San José:

History San José is a non-profit organization that collects, preserves and celebrates the stories of diversity and innovation in San José and the Santa Clara Valley. HSJ manages one of the largest and most comprehensive regional history collections in the State of California, from 1784 Spanish governmental records to twenty-first century Silicon Valley technology.

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