FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Invited to Celebrate the Stars at Dark Sky Festival in Cedarville

Reno, NV. – The uniquely dark skies of Surprise Valley and the surrounding area will be celebrated August 6 & 7 in Cedarville, CA with a series of free events for the whole family to enjoy. The third annual Dark Sky Festival will be hosted by Friends of Nevada Wilderness, the Bureau of Land Management Applegate Field Office and Modoc Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.

The sparsely populated area of far northwest Nevada and northeast California is home to some of the starriest skies in the country. In recognition of the uniqueness of the area, the International Dark Sky Association in 2019 recognized the BLM Massacre Rim Wilderness Study Area just east of Cedarville as an International Dark Sky Sanctuary, one of only 14 in the world.

“The Dark Sky Festival is a perfect opportunity for families to get away from it all and just get lost in the wonders of a star-studded sky,” said Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director of Friends of Nevada Wilderness. “People who live in more populated areas don’t realize what they can’t see due to all the artificial light that drowns out the night sky. We encourage those folks, as well as locals, to join us in Cedarville to gaze upward and gain new appreciation for what the dark reveals.”

“We are happy to join with Friends of Nevada Wilderness to host this event to celebrate the Dark Skies Sanctuary,” said Craig Drake, manager of the BLM’s Applegate Field Office. “Public lands in the Massacre Rim provide the ideal setting to appreciate the grandeur of the night sky in a setting like no other. Appreciating the dark sky is a great way to spend time with your family doing an activity that naturally lends itself to COVID mitigation. All activities are outdoors and ideal for social distancing.”

The Festival will feature a series of fun and informative events for stargazers of all ages. The schedule includes:

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6th

4:30pm - A Dark Sky Painting Class will be hosted by BLM’s talented Jen Rovanpera in the garden at the Country Hearth Restaurant, Bakery, and Gift Shop. Painting supplies will be provided. Participants can purchase snacks and beverages at the adjacent restaurant.
7:00pm - **Trivia Night**, also in the garden at [Country Hearth](#) and hosted by Friends of Nevada Wilderness, will test participants’ knowledge of starry skies. First and second place prizes will be awarded!

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 7th**

10:00am - 1:00pm – Back at the Country Hearth garden, a **Science Fair** will feature fun and informative displays where everyone will learn something new.

8:30pm: **Astronomy Night** will be held at [Surprise Valley Hot Springs](#). Citizen astronomers are encouraged to bring telescopes, binoculars, star charts, or star apps, and get ready for some world-class star-gazing. Participants will learn about one of the most unique, dark places in the world and see some amazing stars, planets, moons and galaxies. Stargazers are also encouraged to bring a blanket or a chair.

10:00pm: Shutterbugs will get tips on **Astrophotography** from a skilled professional. Photographers of all skill levels are welcome and encouraged to bring their cameras and tripods.

More information on where to stay and dine in Surprise Valley is available at [https://www.nevadawilderness.org/dark_sky_festival](https://www.nevadawilderness.org/dark_sky_festival) or at the [Surprise Valley Chamber of Commerce](#). **In light of increased concerns about the spread of COVID-19 variants, Festival participants are asked to follow recommended COVID-19 safety protocols.**

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**About Friends of Nevada Wilderness**

Founded in 1984, Friends of Nevada Wilderness has helped protect over 3.4 million acres of Nevada’s wild lands by leading efforts in the expansion or designation of all 70 Wilderness areas in the state. Over the past twenty years, the Wilderness Stewardship Volunteer Program has generated over $2 million of in-kind services to benefit Nevada’s public lands. For more information, visit [http://www.nevadawilderness.org/](http://www.nevadawilderness.org/).

**About the Bureau of Land Management**

This year, the BLM celebrates 75 years of stewardship and service to the American people. The BLM manages approximately 245 million acres of public land, primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. For more information, visit [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov).
Massacre Rim Wilderness Study Area & IDA Dark Sky Sanctuary

Photo by Chris Cutshaw