

# HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, June 18, 2018

Contact: Heidi Hagemeyer, director of communications, 541-382-4754 ext. 166,

[hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org](mailto:hhagemeyer@highdesertmuseum.org)

## **High Desert Museum partners with Oregon Folklife Network to present Traditional Arts Day on June 23**

BEND, OR — *Traditional Arts Day*, a collaborative project between the High Desert Museum and the Oregon Folklife Network (OFN), will bring area culture keepers — including a silversmith, a saddle maker and more — to the Museum on Saturday, June 23 at the Miller Family Ranch.

Culture keepers, often referred to as folk or traditional artists, have strong cultural ties to their art forms, which they actively practice and work to preserve and pass on through presentations, demonstrations and performances. Five culture keepers from around the region will be stationed at the ranch from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Museum visitors will have the chance to witness the meticulous skills behind handcrafting traditional art and to ask questions as they watch the artists work.

D.W. Frommer II of Redmond will be at the Museum, sharing how he began learning traditional bootmaking as a boy. He has devoted himself to improving the craft throughout his career, establishing himself as one of the leading Western bootmakers and bespoke shoemakers in the country. Frommer is passionate about passing on his knowledge and preserving his disappearing art for future generations, a sentiment shared by each of the culture keepers participating in *Traditional Arts Day*.

Dan Fowler, a traditional rawhide braider from Hines, dedicates hours to each piece he handcrafts, beginning with drying, rolling and scraping his cowhides and through intricately weaving reins, romals and bosals, which he sells across the region. Prineville's Steve Campbell handcrafts guitars, mandolins and fiddles out of Oregon timber and exotic foreign tonewoods. Traditional saddle maker Steve McKay, from Burns, combines function and art, tooling one-of-a-kind saddles featuring hand-drawn patterns. Also from Burns, Pat Horlacher found his passion in silversmithing, handcrafting a range of intricately carved tack and jewelry while also openly sharing his knowledge and insights with other aspiring artists.

In addition to demonstrating their skills for Museum visitors, each artist will also participate in a public panel discussion from 3 – 4 p.m., moderated by Museum Curator of Art and Community Engagement Andries Fourie, that will explore the importance of preserving traditional arts.

"These traditional arts are extremely valuable — historically, culturally and for the future," Fourie said. "This program is a way for young people to see the artists working, to understand that these types of opportunities still exist and to encourage them to participate in their preservation. It's an extension of the important work that OFN does."

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“Since 2014, OFN’s statewide survey has documented over 100 folk and traditional artists in 18 counties in Eastern Oregon,” said Oregon Folklife Network Executive Director Riki Saltzman. “Many of those culture keepers have performed in Oregon parks, taken part in festivals, conducted public workshops and been featured in exhibits.”

Support for the Museum’s partnership with OFN comes from national and state funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Oregon Arts Commission, which includes \$3,000 for *Traditional Arts Day*.

“This is a tremendous opportunity to work with Oregon’s traditional artists and to share a deeper understanding and appreciation of their arts with our visitors,” said Museum Executive Director Dana Whitelaw, Ph.D. “We are honored to have been selected by Oregon Folklife Network for participation in their Regional Collaborative Partnership project.”

## *ABOUT THE MUSEUM:*

THE HIGH DESERT MUSEUM opened in 1982 and brings regional wildlife, culture, art and natural resources together to promote an understanding of the natural and cultural heritage of North America's high desert country. The Museum uses indoor and outdoor exhibits, wildlife in natural habitats, and living history demonstrations to help people discover and appreciate the high desert environment. The Museum is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and is a Smithsonian Affiliate.

<https://www.highdesertmuseum.org>

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