LAKE SHASTA CAVERNS TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CAVES AND SUBTERRANEAN WORLD ON 6 JUNE.
Cave Enthusiasts Across the Globe Bring Attention to the Importance of our Subterranean World.

LAKEHEAD, CA USA (6 June 2019) — Lake Shasta Caverns National Natural Landmark, a member of the International Show Caves Association, joins cave enthusiasts around the world to increase awareness about the importance of caves and karst landscapes by celebrating International Day of Caves & the Subterranean World.

“Caves and karst landscapes are places of wonder and majestic beauty. We see the recognition of the importance of our subterranean world increasing worldwide,” said Brad Wuest, president of the International Show Caves Association, and president, owner and operator of Natural Bridge Caverns, Texas, USA. “Show caves worldwide are embracing their role of protecting and preserving caves and providing a place for people to learn about these special natural, cultural and historical resources. Show caves also play an important role in nature tourism and sustainable development, providing jobs and helping the economy of their regions. Approximately 150 million people visit show caves each year, learning about our subterranean world” said Wuest.

Caves and karst make landscapes diverse, fascinating, and rich in resources, including the largest springs and most productive groundwater on Earth, not to mention at least 175 different minerals, a few of which have only been found in caves. These landscapes provide a unique subsurface habitat for both common and rare animals and preserve fragile archaeological and paleontological materials for future generations.
“Everyone is touched by caves and karst. Water, food, cultural history, and scientific research that supports all of our lives benefits everyone on the planet—not just the 25 percent of the world’s population who either lives on or obtains its water from karst aquifers,” said Dr. George Veni, Executive Director of the National Cave and Karst Research Institute and President of the International Union of Speleology. “Caves are incredibly diverse, and although most caves are found in karst, there are also lava tube caves, sandstone, and glacial caves. Caves can be decorated with speleothems or ice in colder climates. They can be filled with fresh water or under the ocean. Caves are also rich in biodiversity and home to many plant and wildlife species -- some that are only found in caves,” continued Dr. Veni.

Caves are diverse in-depth, length, size and shape as well. Veryovkina Cave in the Eurasian country of Georgia is the deepest cave in the world at 2,212 meters. Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, USA, has a length of over 651 kilometers and is the longest known cave on Earth. China’s immense Miao Room, hidden beneath rolling hills and reachable only by an underground stream, is the world’s biggest cave chamber when measured by volume with 10.78 million cubic meters. Sarawak Chamber in Gunung Mulu National Park in Malaysia is still the world’s largest by surface area, with 164,459 square meters of expanse. Hang Sơn Đoòng, in Vietnam is the world’s biggest cave passage with an internal, fast-flowing subterranean river and a forest ecosystem where sunlight enters the cave from giant sinkholes. It measures 38.5 million cubic meters.

Exploration and scientific research are taking place in caves around the world by speleologists. Caves are being discovered, surveyed and studied yet the world is full of caves that have never been seen by a human.
“Caves are repositories of pre-history, rich in paleontology with fossils and the bones of prehistoric creatures. Caves provided shelter to mankind’s earliest ancestors.” said Wuest.

Caves have played more recent history-making roles, from the mining of bat guano to make gun powder and fertilizer, to France’s Bedeilhac Cave which served as a hidden French, then German, aircraft hangar during World War II.

The oldest known cave paintings in Europe are estimated to be 64,000 years old in the caves of Maltravieso, Ardales and La Pasiega, Spain. Criminals, such as the famous American outlaw Jesse James, used caves as both a hideout and a place to store stolen goods. The oldest known show cave in the world is believed to be Reed Flute Cave in China with inscriptions from 792 in the time of Tang Dynasty. The first recorded cave tour in Europe was at Postojna Cave, Slovenia in 1213. Vilenica Cave also in Slovenia, holds the record for being open to visitors and collecting entrance fees since 1633.

Every cave has something different to offer. Lake Shasta Caverns National Natural Landmark is relatively new in the show cave arena, however it has been forming for over 250 million years when their portion of land was submerged under a Jurassic ocean. Now it is over 2000 feet above sea level and boasts over 30 different types of cave formation. Unlike most caves where the entrance is located near the gift store, Lake Shasta Caverns is only accessible by boat and bus. The cave entrance is 850 feet above the waters of Shasta Lake and takes 30 minutes to get there from the gift store to reach the middle of the mountain. Due to its position on the mountain side, these caverns offer spectacular views of the lake and surrounding area. In April of 2012, the National Park Service designated Lake Shasta Caverns as National Natural Landmark due to it’s rich speleothem, embedded fossils, conservation, education and
stewardship of the resource. Over the past decade the cave has been utilized for climatology research by UC Davis and Vanderbilt University. “There is a wealth of information about ecosystems and climatology beneath our feet,” states Matthew Doyle, General Manager of Lake Shasta Caverns and Regional Director of the National Caves Association. “To be able to share this new information with school students and people touring the area is the real treasure. It is the essence of exploring,” says Doyle.

Caves are important natural resources because of their unique beauty, history, and their role in a healthy environment. They play key roles in groundwater movement, serve as habitat for threatened and endangered animal species, and often yield the bones of prehistoric animals as well as the artifacts of prehistoric man. They provide outstanding opportunities for scientific study and gaining a better understanding of the geology and hydrogeology of karst landscapes, and the relationships between the environment we see at the surface and the one that is hidden underground.

Photos of the Lake Shasta Caverns National Natural Landmark as well as other electronic assets may be provided upon request.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION:
International Show Caves Association (ISCA) was founded in 1990 and is headquartered in Frasassi/Genga, Italy. ISCA is an international organization of persons, associations, corporations and government agencies who own, manage or operate show caves that are open to the public. ISCA provides a critical forum for show caves to network and collaborate on matters that pertain to their caves. ISCA aims to promote, encourage, and support the cooperation of show cave operators, speleologists and cave enthusiasts through the sharing of information and to promote the preservation and conservation of caves, while increasing public interest in the world of show caves by way of unique marketing and the evolution of methods to enhance the show cave experience.

Address: Largo Leone XII 60040 Genga Ancona, Italy Email: francescaserpentini@alice.it Tel: + (39) 0732 972108 http://www.i-s-c-a.com https://www.facebook.com/InternationalShowCavesAssociation/

ABOUT LAKE SHASTA CAVERNS NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK
Lake Shasta Caverns National Natural Landmark opened for tours in May of 1964. This unique 2 hour tour of a limestone solutional cave consists of a catamaran cruise across the McCloud arm of Shasta Lake, a scenic 2 mile shuttle drive which climbs 850 feet above the lake and an hour guided tour. The tour depicts the history of Lake Shasta Caverns’ discovery, geology of the cave and historic value to the local area. Over 65,000 people from around the world visit this landmark annually and is open everyday of the year except Thanksgiving and Christmas.