



Underground Research Facility

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South Dakota Science and Technology Authority

www.sanfordlab.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SURF invites the public to “Deep Talks: Ethnobotany of the Black Hills”

Rylan Sprague, a botanist and natural resource specialist, will discuss the cultural significance of native plant species in the Black Hills

LEAD, SD— Native plants have long influenced humanity’s way of life: the plants rooted around us can determine where we live, what we eat, the stories we tell, how we heal and even how we pray. From our sap-soaked pine trees to sugary sweetgrass, the Black Hills are no exception. For thousands of years, Indigenous communities have gathered and passed down traditional knowledge of the Black Hill's native flora.

The Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF) invites the public to “Deep Talks: Ethnobotany of the Black Hills” featuring Rylan Sprague on Thursday, May 12, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center (Visitor Center). The event will be available via livestream.

Sprague, a botanist and natural resource specialist for the Bureau of Land Management, will introduce attendees to the distinctive habitats within the Black Hills and will discuss the unique array of plant life each habitat supports.

As a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Sprague will share about the cultural influence of several native plant species. Some of these species will be featured in *Cangleska Wakan*, the [Sacred Circle Garden](#) that will be built on a hilltop at SURF.

Attendees will have the opportunity to make Echinacea tea and create their own seed starter pots with Echinacea, White Sage and Fringed Sage, all native Black Hills plant species. SURF will supply seeds, starter pots and tea.

“We are excited to welcome Rylan back to Deep Talks to discuss the ethnobotany of the Black Hills and some of the native plants that will be featured in SURF’s Sacred Circle Garden,” said Constance Walter, communications director at SURF. “It’s a perfect opportunity to learn more about the unique flora of the region and the ways you can introduce these beautiful native plants to your own gardens.”

Deep Talks is held at the Visitor Center, 160 W. Main Street, in Lead. The event begins at 5 p.m. MT with a social hour that includes free beer (must be 21 and older to drink) and light refreshments. The presentation will begin in the Visitor Center classroom at 6 p.m. MT. The presentation will be livestreamed on Vimeo, YouTube and Facebook starting at 6 p.m. MT.

For full event details or to register for the Vimeo event link, visit <https://www.sanfordlab.org/event/deep-talks-ethnobotany-black-hills>.

The Deep Talks lecture series is sponsored by Crow Peak Brewing Company, RCS Construction, Northern Hills Federal Credit Union and Chuck and Jolene Lichtenwalner.

Sanford Underground Research Facility is operated by the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (SDSTA) with funding from the Department of Energy’s Office of Science. Our mission is to advance world class science and inspire learning across generations. Visit SURF at www.sanfordlab.org.