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The Keck Institute for Space Studies
and The Planetary Society present a
public lecture on

Near-Earth Asteroids: Stepping Stones to an Interplanetary Civilization

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Tuesday, August 12, 2014
8:00 PM Lecture

Ramo Auditorium
California Institute of Technology

Human and robotic exploration of space beyond low Earth orbit has emphasized the Moon and Mars. But another class of target, the near-Earth asteroids, may be even more important to explore and understand in the immediate future. Unlike the Moon and Mars, asteroids occasionally collide with the Earth, posing a real threat to life and property, as demonstrated by the 2013 airburst over Chelyabinsk, Russia. But asteroid impacts are unique among natural disasters in that judicious application of feasible search and deflection technologies may be able to prevent them. Near-Earth asteroids are also interesting from a scientific perspective, offering insight into the origin and evolution of the Earth and other planets. Finally, private industry has recently begun to recognize the potential value of near-Earth asteroids as sources of metals, oxygen, water, and rocket propellant that are unconstrained by the expense of launch from Earth.

Exciting new mission opportunities, including the Asteroid Redirect Mission currently under study, will pave the way for human and robotic exploration, manipulation, and utilization of these fascinating objects.

Seating is limited and is available on a first come, first served basis.

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