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Tradition dances on in Stinking Desert

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STINKING DESERT NATIONAL MONUMENT — Fun may be in the eye of the beholder, but the idea of dancing in the middle of nowhere sounded like a good time to participants in the fourth annual Stinking Desert Square Dance.

As the Uncompahgre Plateau swallowed up the last rays of sun over the band of merry-makers Sunday, lights from generators took over for Mother Nature.

Caller Pat McBride bellowed into a portable public address system and, once again, the desert 17 miles north of Delta off U.S. 50 came alive.

With their petticoats flying and

heels kicking, it was time to renew what has become a Memorial Day tradition for dancers from Grand Junction, Montrose, Cedaredge and Delta.

"We didn't plan to make this an annual event, but..." said McBride, whose voice four years ago was largely responsible for the gaiety.

"A group of us were on our way back from a dance in Montrose when we stopped at this rest area over the weekend. It was after midnight and someone suggested I put a tape in the deck and call a dance."

With a do-si-do and an allemande left, a ritual was created that has survived chilly evenings and cold coffee.

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Dancers from Grand Junction, Montrose, Cedaredge and Delta were on hand for the fourth annual Stinking Desert Square Dance Sunday.