



THE FIELD OF VIEW (F.O.V.)
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“Where the Public Meets the Stars”

Astronomy education, dark skies and quality experiences for ALL!!
www.Astro-npo.org

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STARS-N-PARKS PROGRAMS IN FIVE SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO STATE PARKS

FALL 2006

Fall Southern New Mexico Star Party biggest yet

By Jessica J. Savage

A new isolated location within the park, a set of rules and two regional astronomy groups as co-hosts promise to make this fall's Southern New Mexico Star Party the best ever.

The event will be held from October 17 through October 22, 2006 at City of Rocks State Park, and will be jointly hosted by the National Public Observatory, the Astronomical Society of Las Cruces and the El Paso Astronomy Club.

Since agreeing to co-host the star party, Rich Richins of the ASLC got involved by developing a webpage announcing the event. "It's good to have a fresh view point," NPO President John Gilkison said. "I'm very impressed with the site."

Sporting an attractive banner featuring a greenish star-littered night sky silhouetted by monolith boulders, the webpage highlights the superior dark skies available in Southern Grant County and menu links give readers more information.

"Rich provided organizational material, rules, an itinerary and local attractions that were definitely needed," Gilkison said.

For the first time, the SNMSP will have a set of rules that regulates noise, pets, alcohol and various uses of light including camp fires. For example, lighting will be restricted between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. each day, and quiet time begins at 10 p.m. and lasts until 7 a.m. Park Manager Ken Abalos has

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agreed to discourage the use of light for non-star-party participants who may be camped near the north suburbs where the star party will take place. Alcoholic beverages will be allowed as long as they are in non-glass containers.

As usual a Stars-N-Parks program will be held two evenings of the five-day event, Wednesday, October 18 and Saturday, October 22 in the reservation area where the solar-powered observatory is located. The programs begin at 7 p.m. and ends at 9 p.m., with a presenter pointing out highlights of the constellations, followed by deep-sky observations through the park's 14-inch Meade LX200 go-to telescope. Other amateur astronomers attending the star party are welcome to bring their telescopes to the program and participate in public outreach astronomy.

On Friday, October 21 an all-night Caldwell Count event will be held. Similar to a Messier Marathon, the Caldwell catalog was put together by Patrick Moore to compliment the Messier list of deep sky objects.

Also on Saturday at 2 p.m. the park has agreed to hold a nature walk to give participants a daytime park activity. Attendees are also encouraged to take advantage of a 20 percent discount offered by Faywood Hot Springs, located just west of the park, on all-day passes to soak in the springs. "It's a really generous offer," Gilkison said.

Attendees must register for a minimum of two days with prices ranging from as little as \$8 per day for an individual member of a hosting organization, or as much as \$50 for a family staying all five days. Camping and day use fees are separate and payable to the park upon arrival.

Only five developed camp sites are in the north suburbs where the SNMSP will be held, although the area can

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National Public Observatory coffee meeting to plan publicity and website strategy for the Fall Southern New Mexico Star Party to be held at City of Rocks S. P. from October 17-22 / 2006.

Fall Southern New Mexico Star Party biggest yet (continued from pg 1)

By Jessica Savage

accommodate even more campers. Prime areas are expected to fill up quickly, and early registration ends on October 10.

The web site also features a map to the City of Rocks and a link to New Mexico State Parks City of Rocks webpage. Even though summer rains have made astronomy viewing difficult, if not impossible in the region, Gilkison doesn't expect this to be a problem during the star party. "The weather is not a concern in October," he said.

With the participation of members of the ASLC and EPAC, Gilkison said he expects the event have the synergy to create the type of camaraderie desired at an amateur astronomy event. "There's a certain amount of energy in coming together," he said. With the star party being held at the north suburbs, participants will be isolated from the rest of the park, and yet brought in closer proximity to all the other participants.

To visit the Southern New Mexico Star Party website go to http://aslc-nm.org/SNMSP_Home.htm. Registration forms are available on the site, as well as contact information.

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NPO President John Gilkison (upper right) stands below the largest refractor in the world, the 40 inch located at Yerkes Observatory on the north side of Lake Geneva in Wisconsin, USA.



National Public Observatory acquires an 80 mm Meade Triplet Refractor

The North Site at City of Rocks S.P. which will be the site of the Southern New Mexico Star Party. NPO Headquarters will be at the Cepheus site, site #15 camping trailer.



By John Gilkison

While on vacation and visiting Astronomics headquarters in Norman, Oklahoma NPO President John Gilkison placed an order for the new Meade 80 mm Triplet Refractor. While not quite as big as the telescope pictured above, the new telescope will have its uses.

Used in conjunction with the new Orion Color Deep Sky Imager the NPO should be able to start producing deep sky images for the FOV Newsletter and for the NPO Website.

An 80 mm short tube refractor like this is also an excellent adjunct for use at star parties. Not everyone can access the binoculars mounted on a parallelogram mount, or even successfully use both eyes looking through a pair of binoculars, but they can look through a single eyepiece of a regular telescope.

Since the new instrument is a triplet we should be able to use high powers and do high quality imaging.

## Fall 2006 Star-n-Parks Schedule for the National Public Observatory

Fall 2006 SS = Sunset, NT = Nautical Twilight

### Fall 2006 Schedule

Saturday September 16, 2006, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 7:07 PM, NT 8:20 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Summer Milky Way is prominent, program ends at 9:50 PM, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

Saturday September 16, 2006, Rock Hound SP, SS 7:07 PM, NT 8:20 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Summer Milky Way is prominent, program ends at 9:50 PM, Sally Allen.

**Southern New Mexico Star Party, from Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup> 2006, until noon Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006, this a register and pay to attend event with a two day minimum. For information visit the National Public Observatory website [www.astro-npo.org](http://www.astro-npo.org) for registration.**

### Public programs held during the Southern New Mexico Star Party

Wednesday October 18, 2006, City of Rocks SP, SS 6:57 PM, NT 8:10 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Summer Milky Way is prominent, program ends at 9:40 PM, John Gilkison presenting.

Saturday October 21, 2006 City of Rocks SP, SS 6:22 PM, NT 7:30 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, Summer Milky Way is prominent., program ends at 9:00 PM, Matt Wilson presenting.

Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 AM, Oct. 29th.

Schedule continued next page

Wednesday November 8, 2006, Leasburg Dam Special Program, Transit of the Sun by the Planet Mercury. Runs from Noon until 2:00 PM for Vista Middle School, then a public program from 3:00 PM until 5:00 PM, program ending at Sunset, John Gilkison Presenting.

Saturday November 11, 2006, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 5:00 PM, NT 6:10 PM, Neptune, and Uranus visible, Fall Sky becoming prominent, Taurus rises by programs end, program ends 7:40 PM, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

Saturday November 11, 2006, Rock Hound SP, SS 5:00 PM, NT 6:10 PM, Neptune, and Uranus visible, Fall Sky becoming prominent, Taurus rises by programs end, program ends at 7:40 PM, Sally Allen presenting.

Saturday November 18, 2006, City of Rocks SP, SS 4:55 PM, NT 6:10 PM, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Fall Sky and M-31 are prominent., program ends at 7:40 PM, Matt Wilson presenting.

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The NPO observed the maximum of Chi Cygni in late August of 2006. Chi the star to the right of Alberio on the left side of the picture. Chi is the upper left star that makes a triangle with 17 Cygni and Eta Cygni on the right. Eta is the brighter of the three at magnitude of 3.5.



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ABOUT THE NATIONAL PUBLIC OBSERVATORY PROJECT

Tens of thousands of people visit major U.S. research astronomical observatories every year. These research facilities do not advertise, and quite altruistically, set aside monies and time from their limited budgets to accommodate the public. Many people travel great distances for the opportunity to observe through a world-class telescope but due to the high cost of telescope time, this generally is not feasible. Where observatories have been able to set aside a night for public observing, it is often booked up well in advance.

While some upscale observatory/lodge facilities have been developed, none have been established to reach families or individuals looking for an intimate public park/camping experience with the proper telescopes, facilities, and knowledgeable tour guides.

The National Public Observatory, Inc. has been established to provide this kind of facility and we need your help.

Please join the National Public Observatory or make your tax-deductible contribution today!