



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

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

Volume 4, Issue I

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

Summer2006

Area astronomy clubs to attend Southern New Mexico Star Party

By Jessica J. Savage
National Public Observatory

A greater sense of camaraderie among area amateur astronomers is the goal of offering revenue sharing to two area astronomy clubs who will promote attendance of the Southern New Mexico Star Party to their members.

Citing a need to increase attendance at the bi-annual event to be held this fall from Wednesday, Oct. 17 through Sunday, Oct. 22, 2006, National Public Observatory President John Gilkison recently made a presentation to the El Paso Astronomy Club on the benefits of using the City of Rocks State Park as a star party site.

“It’s the darkest site in Southern New Mexico,” he said. “Three or four globular clusters can be seen with the naked eye on good nights.”

His slide-show presentation included photos of the state park, past star parties and the grand opening of the on-site observatory, which will be one year old in October. In exchange for promoting the event to its members, the NPO is offering to split registration fees paid by its members with the club.

“They were definitely interested in attending,” Gilkison said of the reaction of El Pasoans attending the regular monthly meeting of the big-city club. He credited current club Vice President Corey Stone with being the motivating force behind the club’s support.

Continued above

Many attendees explained why they haven’t attended past star parties, which mirrored problems and issues that have arisen over the years. Now in its fourth year, the SNSP organizers have the experience that they hope will create a more pleasing event for attendees.

“The biggest concern was that our event occurred on the same weekend as the White Sands Star Party,” Gilkison said. Held annually in September at White Sands National Monument, locals can now attend both Southern New Mexico parties and experience the benefits and interesting differences of the two sites.

Another improvement is the location of the star party within the park. Tucked away in the northern isolated end of the public area is a separate gated compound known as the north suburbs or north site. The area has five camp sites but plenty of room to accommodate even more campers, and its own restroom.

Each evening of the star party, observations will take place in the north site where amateur astronomers can gather, although some will prefer to camp elsewhere within the park. The site will also give astronomers some privacy away from the public.

As in past star parties, the NPO will sponsor a Saturday Stars-N-Parks astronomy program for the public. During the spring party a successful second public night was held earlier in the week, so once again, two public nights will be held during the event: Wednesday, Oct. 17 and Saturday, Oct. 20, 2006.

However, the Stars-N-Parks program will be held in the reservation area where the observatory is located. This gives star party attendees the chance to mingle with the public if they so desire, or they can stay in the seclusion of the north site if they prefer.

“It’s voluntary if they want to participate,” Gilkison said. “Some people aren’t interested in public outreach astronomy or they may have expensive equipment they don’t want touched.”



The El Paso Astronomy Club Vice President Cory Stone presents during the May 19th 2006 meeting where the NPO proposed the SNMSP joint club efforts.

Reach for The Stars Grant programming and NPO grant work nearly complete

By Jessica Savage
National Public Observatory

Under the agreement with New Mexico State Parks and their Reach for the Stars initiative, the National Public Observatory has completed nearly all of its tasks, including designing an evaluation form and brochure, and conducting a lighting survey.

Extra Stars-N-Parks and other astronomy outreach programs were scheduled to provide an opportunity to use a Program Evaluation form designed by the NPO. After all the forms are collected a report will be written and submitted to the state. Data from the forms will be used to improve programming, and the state will have a form to use for astronomy or other programming.

An attractive brochure that informs the public about light pollution and steps they can take to minimize it has been created and submitted to the state for approval. The brochure explains the different types of light pollution and likely sources of it that are in their community. The effects of glare, light trespass and sky glow not only impact astronomers, but also the circadian rhythms of humans and animals. The brochure will be produced by the state and given to park attendees.

President John Gilkison will return to Pancho Villa State Park this month to evaluate changes park personnel made in response to his recommendations after conducting a lighting survey of the park.

Although not officially a part of the agreement, Gilkison will play a major role in A Light Pollution Abatement

Continued above

Joshua Walawender from Nederland, Colorado poses with his 16 inch Dobsonian at the Spring 06 SNMSP



Ashley Gilkison looks at the Bob's Knobs which were installed on the City of Rocks State Park Observatory Meade fourteen inch SCT telescope this spring.

Reach for The Stars Grant programming and NPO grant work nearly complete

Workshop, sponsored by the Night Sky Program and held in cooperation with state parks. The workshop will be held in early June in Deming, where community leaders and the media have been invited by Night Sky Program Director Lazlo Lazowska to discuss the benefits of using exterior lighting responsibly. Gilkison will have on hand photos of a light survey he conducted to show Deming area sources of light pollution. NPO member Wes Light is working with the city to pass a lighting ordinance. The Night Sky Program is sponsored by the New Mexico Heritage Preservation Alliance.

All tasks under the grant agreement are required to be completed by June 23.

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Jessica Savage holding her first place award which she won for her news release and news coverage on the grand opening of the City of Rocks NM State Park Astronomical Observatory in October 2005. Good Job Jessica!



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

Fall 2006 SS = Sunset, NT = Nautical Twilight

The Leasburg Dam SP program is canceled and the Caballo Lake State Park is substituted.

17: Saturday June 17, 2006 Caballo Lake S P, SS 8:10 PM, NT 9:20 PM, Mars & Saturn in conjunction, Jupiter on the meridian, Mercury, Cancer to Sagittarius, Sagittarius rising, program ends at 10:50 PM. Bobby Franzoy

18A: Saturday June 17, 2006 City of Rocks S P, SS 8:10 PM, NT 9:20 PM, Mars & Saturn low in the West, Jupiter on the meridian, Cancer to Sagittarius, Scorpius well presented, program ends at 10:50 PM. Matt Wilson

18B: Saturday June 17, 2006 Rock Hound S P, SS 8:10 PM, NT 9:20 PM, Mars & Saturn low in the West, Jupiter on the meridian, Cancer to Sagittarius, Scorpius well presented, program ends at 10:50 PM. Sally Allen

### Summer 2006 Programming ends in June, programming resumes in August

Saturday August 19, 2006 Leasburg Dam SP, SS 7:42 PM, NT 8:50 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Summer Milky Way is prominent., program ends at 10:20 PM, Jeff Jenkins

Saturday August 26, 2006, Caballo Lake SP, SS 7:34 PM, NT 8:40 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Summer Milky Way is prominent., program ends at 10:10 PM, Bobby Franzoy

Saturday August 26, 2006, City of Rocks SP, SS 7:34 PM, NT 8:40 PM, Jupiter, Neptune, and Uranus visible, The Summer Milky Way is prominent., program ends at 10:10 PM, Matt

### Fall 2006 Schedule continued

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 presenting.

Southern New Mexico Star Party, runs 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. See 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

Saturday 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, The Summer Milky Way is prominent., program ends at 9:00 PM, Matt Wilson presenting.

### Daylight Savings Time ends

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 at 7:40 PM, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

**Annual Membership Application or Renewal:**  
Please circle one of the following:

|                              | Member | Sponsor | Supporter | Patron  | Lifetime |
|------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|---------|----------|
| Individual                   | \$35   | \$50    | \$100     | \$400   | \$600    |
| Family                       | \$50   | \$100   |           |         |          |
| Student or Retiree           | \$20   | n/a     | n/a       | n/a     | n/a      |
| Astronomy clubs < 80 members | \$50   | n/a     | n/a       | n/a     | n/a      |
| Libraries                    | \$50   | n/a     | n/a       | n/a     | n/a      |
| Corporate & Government       | \$100  | \$200   | \$400     | \$1,500 | \$2,500  |

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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!*