



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

Winter 2007

**2008 Stars-N-Parks program funded by New Mexico State Park’s grant**

By Jessica J. Savage  
 National Public Observatory

LAS CRUCES – Residents throughout Southwestern New Mexico will be able to learn first-hand about the zodiac and other constellations, as well as the planets, a lunar eclipse and deep-sky objects when they attend one or more astronomy presentations being offered in the first half of 2008.

The National Public Observatory is sponsoring 19 regular Stars-N-Parks astronomy programs and one special program at area state parks through June 2008. The non-profit astronomy organization was recently awarded funding through New Mexico State Park’s Reach for the Stars program.

“This grant has allowed us to expand our schedule and revisit parks we haven’t been able to offer programs at recently,” said NPO President John Gilkison. Programs will be held monthly at Leasburg Dam State Park, located 15 miles north of Las Cruces in Radium Springs, and City of Rocks State Park, located 30 miles south of Silver City between January and May 2008.

Continued above



A program will be held at Pancho Villa State Park in February and again in March. A Stars-N-Parks program hasn’t been held in the Columbus area park since early 2007. Deming residents can attend a program at Rock Hound State Park in March and again in April. Hatch and Truth or Consequence-area residents can attend a Stars-N-Parks program at Caballo State Park in March and a season-ending program there in June.

A special program to highlight a total lunar eclipse will be held from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, February 20 at a yet-to-be-determined park.

Star-N-Parks programs are held primarily in state parks on a Saturday during a portion of the month when the moon is either waxing or waning and won’t interfere with observing.

Reach for the Stars funding allows the NPO to pay presenters a stipend and mileage for their services. Presenters for the scheduled programs will be Matt Wilson at City of Rocks S. P., Sally Allen at Rock Hound and Pancho Villa State Parks, Jeff Jenkins at Leasburg S. P., Bobby Franzoy at Caballo S. P., and Gilkison filling in as needed.

A portion of the state park funding pays the NPO to maintain the 14-inch Meade Schmidt-Cassegrain LX200 GPS telescope housed in a permanent observatory at City of Rocks S. P.

“It’s been 18 months since the NPO has had grant funding,” Gilkison said, “So we’re very excited to be offering this full schedule of high-quality astronomy programming to residents and visitors of Southwestern New Mexico state parks.”

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**Sony 5 Mega Pixel par focal shot of a nearly first quarter moon taken through the National Public Observatory’s new 13.1 inch Dobsonian telescope, see story on page two.**

## National Public Observatory President John Gilkison builds a new 13.1 inch telescope.

By John Gilkison

Using the Bill Chrisley donated optics NPO President John Gilkison built a 13.1 inch Dobsonian telescope during the second and third week of October. We spent about \$150 buying a new 2 inch focuser and a 13 inch mirror cell from University Optics to speed up the project. However we had to invest another \$50.00 in hardware and wood to finish the project. We did try to build the telescope mostly using scrap lumber on hand to save money however. One piece of luck we had was finding Rip Stop Nylon at Hobby Lobby for \$11.00. A national telescope build company wanted \$140 for the same thing. Go figure?

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Builder John Gilkison stands next to the newly built National Public Observatory 13.1 inch Dobsonian Telescope.



**A Orion Deep Sky Color Camera Shot of the Galaxy M-74 in Pisces taken by Jeff Jenkins through his 8 inch LX-90 at F/6.3. Good work Jeff, more to come according to Jeff.**

**The Southern New Mexico Star Party is scheduled for April 30, to May 3rd 2008 at City of Rocks State Park.**

by John Gilkison

In order to take advantage of the wonderful spring weather and a well presented summer Milky Way we have decided to schedule the SNMSP to run from April 30, to May 3rd 2008 at City of Rocks State Park. We know it will probably conflict with the better known Texas Star Party, but we don't think it really matters.

We seriously doubt anyone planning on attending the TSP would be attending the SNMSP anyway. More to the point, persons who are considering attending a star party, and who can not attend the TSP because it is full up, because of distance, or expense, should consider the home grown NPO Star Party the Southern New Mexico Star Party.

You can find a registration form on our website [www.astro-npo.org](http://www.astro-npo.org) or contact us by e-mail at [astronop@wildblue.net](mailto:astronop@wildblue.net) and we will send you one as an attachment. You could even write us at NPO, P.O. Box 19, Radium Springs, NM 88054 and we would send you one. It doesn't get anymore old fashioned than that. Our phone number is 575-527-8386 if you want to speed things up.

## National Public Observatory Stars-N-Parks schedule from January 2008 through June 2008

**SP = State Park SS = Sunset, PS = Program Start, PE = Program End  
Stars-n-Parks Programming ends in June, resumes in August**

1: Saturday January 5, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 5:15 PM PS 6:25 PM PE 7:55 PM, Mars is in Taurus, the Winter Milky Way is well presented, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

2: Saturday January 12, City of Rocks SP, SS 5:20 PM PS 6:30 PM PE 8:00 PM, a new Moon is in Aquarius, Mars is in Taurus, The Winter Milky Way is well presented, Matt Wilson presenting.

3: Saturday January 26, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 5:35 PM PS 6:45 PM PE 8:15 PM, Mars is in Taurus, Mercury 4 days past elongation, the Winter Milky Way is well presented with Orion well up, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

4: Saturday February 2, City of Rocks SP, SS 5:40 PM PS 6:50 PM PE 8:20 PM, Mars is in Taurus, The Winter Milky Way is well presented, the planet Saturn is 11 degrees up by programs end, Matt Wilson presenting.

5: Saturday February 9, Pancho Villa SP, SS 5:46 PM PS 6:55 PM PE 8:25 PM, Mars is in Taurus, The Winter Milky Way is well presented, The Moon is 9% illuminated, Saturn is 19 degrees up by programs end, Sally Allen presenting.

### Special Program Total Eclipse of the Moon

6: Saturday February 23, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 5:59 PM PS 7:10 PM PE 8:40 PM, Saturn at opposition, Mars in Taurus, the Winter Milky Way is well presented, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

7: Saturday March 1, City of Rocks SP, SS 6:04 PM PS 7:15 PM PE 8:45 PM, Saturn in Leo, Mars in Taurus, the Winter Milky Way is well presented, Matt Wilson presenting.

8: Saturday March 1, Pancho Villa SP, SS 6:04 PM PS 7:15 PM PE 8:45 PM, Saturn in Leo, Mars is in Taurus, Moon 2.2% illuminated, the Winter Milky Way, John Gilkison presenting.

**Wednesday March 5, 2008 Special Event Moon Occult's Venus 13:09 hrs 31 degrees up.**

9: Saturday March 8, Rock Hound SP, SS 6:10 PM PS 7:20 PM PE 8:50 PM, Saturn in Leo, Mars, Winter Milky Way well presented, the Moon is 2.2% illuminated, Sally Allen presenting.

10: Saturday March 8, Caballo Lake SP, SS 6:10 PM PS 7:00 PM PE 8:50 PM, Saturn in Leo, Mars, Winter Milky Way well presented, the Moon is 2.2% illuminated, Bobby Franzoy.

**Daylight Savings Time begins 2:00 AM on March 9, 2008, set clocks ahead one hour.**

11: Saturday March 29, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 7:25 PM PS 8:35 PM PE 10:05 PM, Saturn well presented, the Spring Sky is rising, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

12: Saturday April 5, City of Rocks SP, SS 7:30 PM PS 8:40 PM PE 10:10 PM, Saturn well presented, the Spring Sky is rising, Matt Wilson presenting.

13: Saturday April 26, Leasburg Dam SP, SS 7:44 PM PS 8:55 PM PE 10:25 PM, Saturn well presented, the Spring Sky showing well, Jeff Jenkins presenting.

14: Saturday April 26, Rock Hound SP, SS 7:44 PM PS 8:55 PM PE 10:25 PM, Saturn well presented, the Spring Sky showing well, Sally Allen presenting.

Southern New Mexico Star Party April 30 - May 3, 2008

15: Wednesday April 30, City of Rocks SP, SS 7:47 PM PS 8:57 PM PE 10:25 PM, Saturn well presented, The Spring Sky showing well, John Gilkison presenting.

16: Saturday May 3, City of Rocks SP, SS 7:50 PM PS 9:00 PM PE 10:30 PM, Saturn well presented, The Spring Sky showing well, Matt Wilson presenting.

Comet Holmes 17/P Sony 3x optical zoom, tripod picture exposed for 30 seconds, then enlarged and cropped.



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*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.*

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