

WHAT IS A "STAR PARTY"?

A star party is an invitation to anyone wishing to enjoy and learn more about the wonders of the night sky.

At a star party, AAAP members set up their personal telescopes and operate the large fixed observatory telescopes and offer visitors the opportunity to view celestial objects. Visitors can bring their own scopes to take advantage of viewing conditions at the site. Others use the occasion to simply view the stars and planets with their own eyes. No white flashlights. Red flashlights are okay.

Star parties begin just before sunset. Celestial events such as meteors, comets or an Aurora Borealis often make our public star parties memorable events.

At AAAP star parties our members are happy to answer questions about astronomy, advise on telescope selection, or help guests set up and align their telescope.

GETTING READY FOR A STAR PARTY

Although overcast sky or rain can close the telescopes, it does not close Mingo's planetarium. A Mingo star party is a "go" even if it rains because the planetarium is indoors. With the Moon and stars visible in between clouds the telescopes will still operate.

The observatory in Mingo Creek Park has a handicap outdoor restroom. There is no running water at the facility. Food and beverages are not served at our star parties and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in Washington County Parks. Tobacco smoke fouls optics and is prohibited both in the observatory and on the grounds. Light from vehicle head and tail lights and even smart phones destroy night vision. Please limit use of these and other sources of light.

WHAT EQUIPMENT SHOULD YOU BRING?

You don't need to bring a telescope or other observer equipment to a star party. However, some items may make the night more comfortable and enjoyable. It often gets cool on a clear night, even in summer, so bring a coat, light jacket or sweater. Blankets, head cover and extra layers of clothing (including socks) are recommended for continued comfort during star parties in the spring and fall. To avoid neck strain from constant sky gazing, it helps to bring some type of portable folding chair. It is advisable to bring water to drink. Running water is not available on site.

IS THERE A FEE?

AAAP star parties have no entrance fee. However, the donations the AAAP receives, large or small, help to cover facility-operating costs and support AAAP's community education mission.

Mingo Creek Park Observatory:

The Mingo Creek Park Observatory has two permanently mounted telescopes in separate rooms – a refractor and a reflector telescope, a small lecture hall, and a planetarium. The refractor telescope has a Lunt solar scope for solar observing, opening up daytime activity. The Richard Y. Haddad Planetarium, with a 20 ft. digital planetarium dome displays the night sky indoors and is available for movies and lectures. It can operate regardless of the weather or time of day, or for special educational events.

Please make star party group reservations by phone or through the website for groups such as scouts, school groups, outdoor organizations, etc. planning to attend Mingo Creek Park Observatory Public Star Parties.

The Observatory is located in Mingo Creek County Park, Nottingham Township, and is 10 miles east of Washington PA. The park is located off Route 88 or Route 136 in the northeast section of Washington County. Inside the park, the observatory is at the end of Mansion Hill Ext. Road (across from the Henry Covered Bridge) on the top of the hill past Shelter 10. See the back of this flyer for the map to the observatory site.

Latitude 40.211degrees, Longitude -80.020 degrees
Phone 724-348-6150

Wagman Observatory: AAAP's other observatory is located in Deer Lakes Regional Park near Russellton, PA in the northeast corner of Allegheny County. The observatory entrance is at the top of the hill in the middle of the park.
Latitude 40.627 degrees, Longitude -79.813 degrees
Phone 724-224-2510

Tips for driving: Drive during daylight to help spot landmarks. Drive slowly and carefully. Additional maps and directions are also available on the AAAP web site.

Off-Observatory Star Parties: State Parks, Community Parks, Libraries, etc.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on AAAP activities and membership, visit us through the following methods...

Mail: AAAP, P.O. Box 314, Glenshaw, PA 15116

Web: www.3ap.org

Email: aaap@3ap.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Amateur-Astronomers-Association-of-Pittsburgh/114188205266611>

Club Events: https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/event-list.cfm?Club_ID=675

Monthly Public Meetings: Generally held on the 2nd Friday of the month during September – May. See Website Calendar for dates, locations, and guest speaker topics.

2016 Star Party Schedule



Mingo Creek Park Observatory



The Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh

Mingo Creek Park Observatory

Mingo Creek County Park, Washington County
724-348-6150

- April 9
- May 6 & 7
- June 10 & 11
- July 8 & 9
- Aug 12 & 13
- Sept 23 & 24
- Oct 21 & 22
- Nov 12 (Bundle-up)

Wagman Observatory

Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County
724-224-2510

- April 15 & 16
- May 13 & 14
- June 10 & 11
- July 8 & 9
- Aug 12 & 13
- Sept 10 & 24 (Dark sky)
- Oct 8 & 22 (Dark sky)
- Nov 5

Mingo Planetarium



Richard Y. Haddad Planetarium Theater

Enjoy Sky Shows and public speakers, rain or shine, day or night under the 20 foot dome. Several topics are covered, suitable for all ages and skill levels.

Mingo 24" Ritchey-Chrétien



24" F-8 Optical Guidance Systems Reflector

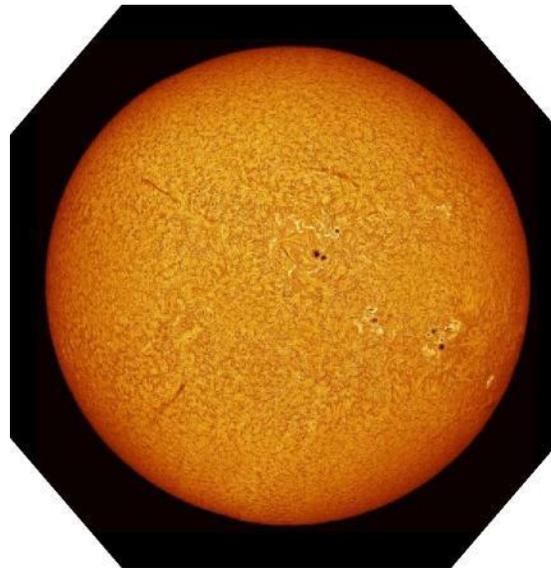
Enjoy stunning views of deep-sky objects like Galaxies, Nebula, Star Clusters, Comets and Super Novae.

10" D&G Refractor



10" F-12 D&G Refractor

Appreciate sharp images of the Moon, Planets, Double and Multiple Stars as well Globular Clusters. Also used for white light solar observing. The 4" Lunt Solar Scope and the 5" Orion Video Scope ride piggyback on the 10".



Solar Observing

In addition to Mingo's already impressive array of instruments, we have added a 4" (102 mm) Lunt Solar Systems Dedicated Hydrogen Alpha Telescope. This instrument now rides piggybacked on the 10" D&G Refractor. Together with the White Light Solar Filter on the 10", Mingo personnel are able to SAFELY present guests with extremely high quality view of many features on our own star, The Sun. The filters used reflect, reject and filter 99.999% of the incoming light from the Sun. The Lunt Ha Telescope operates at the very narrow band of 0.7 Angstroms at 656.2 nanometers.

Obs. Site Specs.
Lat: 40° 12' 42" N
Long: 80° 1' 14" W
Elevation: 1180 ft.
(360 m)

