

## 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 (a wide variety of models) 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.

Star parties begin just before sunset.

Unpredictable celestial events such as meteors 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, recommend the proper telescope to buy, or help you set up and align your own telescope.

## GETTING READY FOR A STAR PARTY

Check the sky conditions before departing. If the sky is overcast or rain is forecast, consider postponing until the next event. With scattered clouds in the sky, Moon and stars visible between, the star party will be a "go".

The observatory in Mingo Creek Park has a handicap outdoor restroom. Wagman Observatory has a portable toilet. These are opened for star parties. Food and beverages are not served at our star parties and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in Washington County Parks. Drinking water is not provided on site. If you get thirsty, please bring bottled water. Cigarette smoke fouls optics and is prohibited. Light from cell phones, flash photography, glow sticks, and white flashlights destroy night vision and are discouraged.

## 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.

## IS THERE A FEE?

All AAAP star parties are free to the public. However, the AAAP appreciates any donations to help cover facility-operating costs.

## WHERE ARE THE STAR PARTIES HELD?

Mingo Creek Park Observatory: The observatory 10 miles east of Washington, PA is located in Mingo Creek County Park, Nottingham Township, northeast Washington County, atop the hill past Shelter 10. The park, between Rte. 88 and Rte. 136, is easily accessible from PA Turnpike Rte. 43 Exit 44, as well as from Rte. 79 via Rte. 519, and Rte. 70. See the back of this flyer for the map to the observatory site.

The Mingo Creek Park Observatory has two permanently mounted telescopes in separate rooms, a 10" refractor and a 24" reflector (R-C) telescope. The building also houses a 20ft. planetarium where the night sky can be displayed indoors when there is bad weather, or for special educational events.

**(724-348-6150) latitude** 40.211 degrees, **longitude** -80.020  
**Declination**, 7/2010: -9 degrees 6 minutes. Change, -2 minutes/year.

Wagman Observatory: The Wagman 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. Wagman observatory is a small building with a conventional gable roof design, housing two fixed telescopes. 225 Kurn Road, Tarentum, PA 15084 for GPS only. No mail delivery.  
**(724-224-2510) latitude** 40.627 degrees, **longitude** -79.813

Tips for driving: If you are unfamiliar with either location we recommend that you drive during daylight to help spot landmarks. Always observe speed limits in the parks. Additional maps and directions are also available on the club's web site (see below).

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the activities of and membership of the AAAP, please write us at:  
**AAAP, P.O. Box 314, Glenshaw, PA 15116**  
Access the homepage on the Internet:

<http://www.3ap.org>

Send email to: [aaap@3ap.org](mailto:aaap@3ap.org)

Find our event list at: [https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/event-list.cfm?Club\\_ID=675](https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/event-list.cfm?Club_ID=675)

# Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh



## Mingo Creek Park Observatory



## 2012 Star Party Schedule

### Mingo Creek Park Observatory

**April 27 & 28**

**May 25 & 26**

**June 22 & 23**

**July 6, 7, 20 & 21**

**August 10 & 11**

**September 8 & 22**

**October 6 & 20**

### Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory

**February 25, Winterfest**

**March 31**

**April 27,28**

**May 25,26**

**June 22,23**

**July 27,28**

**August 24,25**

**September 8, 22**

**October 6,20**