

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 setup 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. Other 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 the forecast suggests rain, consider postponing your visit until the next event. If there are just a few scattered clouds in the sky (with the Moon and stars visible in between), the star party will be a "go".

The observatory in Mingo Creek Park is close to Shelter 10, which has a handicap environmental restroom. A portable toilet may also be available on the observing hill. Food and beverages are not served at our star parties and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in Washington County Parks.

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 is located 10 miles east of Washington PA in Nottingham Township in Mingo Creek County Park. The park is in the northeast section of Washington County. The observing location is on the top of the hill past Shelter 10. The park is located off Route 88 or Route 136 in Washington County. 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 refractor and a reflector telescope. The building also houses a small planetarium where the night sky can be displayed indoors when there's bad weather, or for special educational events.
(phone# 724-348-6150)

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.
(phone# 724-224-2510)

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

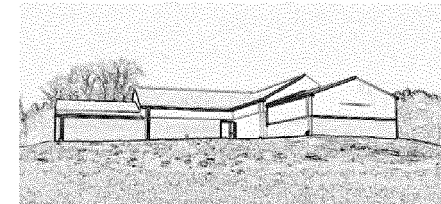
Or access the homepage on the Internet:

<http://www.3ap.org> Or send email to:
aaap@3ap.org

Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh



2009 Star Party Schedule



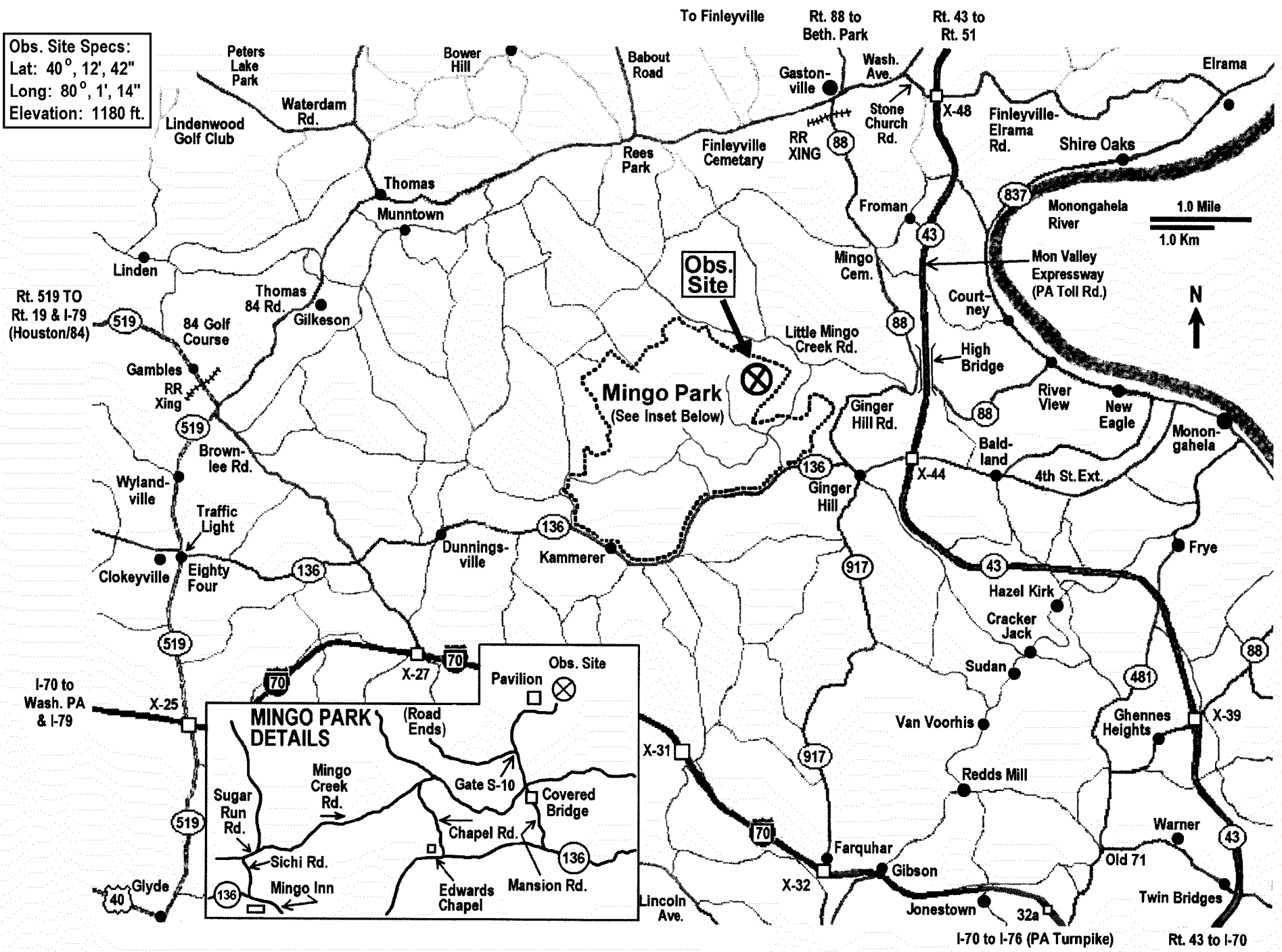
Mingo Creek Park Observatory (Mingo Creek County Park, Washington County)

April 17 & 18
May 1, 2, 15 & 16
June 12, 13 & 27
July 24 & 25
Aug 21 & 22
Sept 12 & 26
Oct 10 & 24

Nicholas E. Wagman Observatory (Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County)

Feb 28 Wagman Winterfest
April 3 & 4
May 1, 2, 29 & 30
June 26 & 27
July 24 & 25
Aug 28 & 29
Sep 12 Dark Sky & 26
Oct. 10 Dark Sky & Oct.24

Obs. Site Specs:
 Lat: 40° 12', 42"
 Long: 80° 1', 14"
 Elevation: 1180 ft.



To Finleyville
 Rt. 88 to Beth. Park
 Rt. 43 to Rt. 51

Rt. 519 TO
 Rt. 19 & I-79
 (Houston/84)

I-70 to
 Wash. PA
 & I-79

I-70 to I-76 (PA Turnpike)
 Rt. 43 to I-70