

## 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, 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. With the Moon and stars visible in between clouds the telescopes will still operate. At Mingo the star party can be a "go" even if it rains because the planetarium is indoors.

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 large or small AAAP receives at its star party reception desks 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, a refractor and a reflector telescope, in separate rooms, and a very small auditorium and a planetarium. The refractor telescope has a Lunt solarscope 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 10 miles east of Washington PA in Nottingham Township in Mingo Creek County Park. The park is located off Route 88 or Route 136 the northeast section of Washington County. Inside the park from the Henry Covered Bridge the observing location is up Mansion Hill Ext. Road on the top of the hill past Shelter 10. See the back of this flyer for the map to the observatory site. **Phone 724-348-6150 Latitude 40.211 degrees, Longitude -80.020 degrees Declination -9 degrees**

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 Latitude 40.627 degrees, Longitude -79.813 degrees**

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

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

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on AAAP activities and membership, visit our homepage at [www.3ap.org](http://www.3ap.org).

Mailing address: AAAP, P.O. Box 314, Glenshaw, PA 15116

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

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

AAAP Facebook:

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

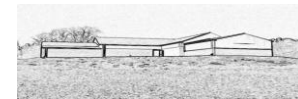
Public Monthly Meetings: September – May, at Carnegie Science Center. See Website Calendar and AAAP newsletter, The Guide Star, for dates and speaker topics.

# Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh

[www.3ap.org](http://www.3ap.org)



## Mingo Creek Park Observatory



## AAAP 2015 Star Party Schedules

**Mingo Creek Park Observatory**  
Mingo Creek County Park, Washington County, PA  
Phone 724-348-6150

March 27, 28  
April 24, 25  
May 22, 23  
June 19, 20  
July 24, 25  
August 14, 15 (Mingo 10 Year Anniversary)  
Sept 5 (Dark Sky), 19, 27 (Sunday Lunar Eclipse)  
Oct 3 (Dark Sky), 17  
Nov 14 Bundle-up Star Party

**Wagman Observatory**  
Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County, PA  
Phone 724-224-2510

March 27, 28  
April 24, 25  
May 22, 23  
June 19, 20  
July 24, 25  
August 21, 22  
Sept 5 (Dark Sky), 19, 27 (Sunday Lunar Eclipse)  
Oct 3 (Dark Sky), 17  
Nov 7 Mid-Autumn Star Party

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

