

Lake Afton Public Observatory

2007 Public Programs



Observatory Hours

The Observatory is open to the public on Friday and Saturday evenings. Observing through the telescope begins shortly after the doors open. Public program times are given below, but please note that they are subject to change. Call 316-WSU-STAR (316-978-7827) for information on specific programs and times.

January 2 - February 28	7:30-10:00 p.m.
March 1 - 31	8:00-10:00 p.m.
April 1 - April 30	8:30-10:30 p.m.
May 1 - September 1	9:00-11:00 p.m.
September 2 - 30	8:00-10:00 p.m.
October 1 - Dec. 21	7:30-10:00 p.m.
December 23 - January 1	CLOSED

Program Cancellations

An Observatory program will automatically be canceled if there is a severe thunderstorm warning or tornado warning anywhere in Sedgwick county during the hour prior to the start of a program. Programs will also be canceled if travel conditions are hazardous. If possible, the recorded program information at 316-WSU-STAR will be changed to reflect program cancellations.

Admission

Admission is \$3 for persons 13 and older, \$2 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under the age of 6. (Please note that credit and debit cards are not accepted.) Reservations are not necessary. Call 316-978-3191 during normal office hours for group rates. Admission charges, program times, and program topics are subject to change. Call 316-WSU-STAR (316-978-7827) for current information.

Public Programs

Each program consists of observing three or four objects through the Observatory's 16-inch telescope. These objects are chosen with a particular theme that ties them together. Of course if it is cloudy the program objects cannot be seen, although the Observatory's exhibits and displays are available.

Wonders of the Winter Sky

Jan. 5-6, 12-13, 19-20 Feb. 9-10, 16-17
Mar. 9-10, 16-17

Many of the objects in the winter sky actually look better when viewed through binoculars instead of a telescope. During this program you will have an opportunity to compare these two views. Bring your own binoculars, or use ours, and let the Observatory staff guide you through the winter sky.

Craters and Clouds

Jan. 26-27 Feb. 2-3, 23-24
Mar. 2-3, 23-24, 30-31

Observe the rocky surface of Earth's nearest neighbor, the Moon. Then, with the Observatory's 16-inch telescope, compare the Moon to the cloud-enshrouded planet Saturn.

Women in Astronomy

Apr. 6-7, 13-14 May 4-5, 11-12
June 1-2, 8-9, 15-16, 29-30

The "typical" astronomer is usually portrayed as a man. But women have made important, direct contributions to astronomy for centuries. Today a significant number of astronomers are women. Hear about the histories and achievements of selected woman astronomers while viewing, some of the many celestial objects they studied.

The Discoveries of Galileo

Apr. 20-21, 27-28 May 18-19, 25-26
June 22-23

Imagine what it would be like to have been the first person to point a telescope at the heavens. Join us as we "rediscover" craters on the Moon, Saturn's "cup handles," the phases of Venus, and a galaxy of stars – just as Galileo did in the early 17th century.

The Native American Sky

July 6-7, 13-14 Aug. 3-4, 10-11, 31
Sept. 1, 7-8, 14-15, 28-29

Since the time of the ancients, the native peoples of North America have looked at the night sky to see the stories, legends, and origins of their people. Join us this summer as we look at some of the wonders they saw. We will take a look at Jupiter, a globular cluster, a planetary nebula and a diffuse nebula, while we learn what some of the tribes believed about the stars and the stories they told about the "sky people." (A special evening of Native American story telling will be held in conjunction with this program on July 13th, August 10th, and September 7th.)

Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon

July 20-21, 27-28 Aug. 17-18, 24-25
Sept. 21-22

Explore Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system. See cloud bands in its atmosphere and up to four of its many moons. Then, observe Earth's own moon with its many craters and mountains.

Astronomical Zoo

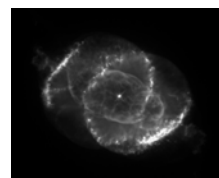
Oct. 5-6, 12-13 Nov. 2-3, 9-10, 30
Dec. 1, 7-8

Explore the strange and wonderful as we view clouds of gas, star clusters, galaxies, and other amazing objects which make up our universe.

Solar System Potpourri

Oct. 19-20, 26-27 Nov. 16-17, 23-24
Dec. 14-15, 21-22

Sample the wonders of our solar system. See the planets Jupiter (through November 1), Uranus, Neptune (through December 15), and Mars (beginning November 15th) along with close-up views of our Moon.



Photography Programs

Have you ever wanted to take astronomical photographs of the planets, the Moon, or a star cluster? If so, then our special photography programs are for you.

On selected clear nights, anyone with a 35mm single-lens reflex camera (the type with a removable lens) can take an astronomical photograph using the Observatory's telescope. Dates, times, objects to be photographed, and film recommendations are given below. **[Automatic 35 mm cameras without a manual override cannot be used to take astronomical photos.]**

If you do not have the proper camera, bring a USB flash drive instead. After you use the Observatory's digital SLR to take your pictures, we will transfer them to your flash drive for you to take home and print.



The Moon as photographed through the Observatory's 16-inch telescope.

Object	Time and Date
Saturn	10:00 p.m., January 20
Saturn	10:00 p.m., February 17
Moon	10:00 p.m., March 24
Venus ¹	8:30 p.m., Sun., April 15
Venus ¹	9:00 p.m., Sun. May 6
Venus ¹	9:00 p.m., Sun., June 24
Jupiter	11:00 p.m., July 21
Jupiter	11:00 p.m., August 25
Moon	10:00 p.m., September 22
Moon	10:00 p.m., October 20
Mars	10:00 p.m., November 17
Mars	10:00 p.m., December 8

For all of these programs ISO 400 or 800 color film is recommended

¹Note that the programs to photograph Venus are on Sunday evenings.

Exhibits

Only part of the world of astronomy can be seen through a telescope. Satellites bring us close-up views of distant planets and their moons. Computers help astronomers unravel the lives of stars. These ideas and more are brought down to Earth by the Observatory's interactive exhibits and displays.

You can make your own telescope, travel through the solar system on a scavenger hunt, explore the properties of light, examine rocks from both Mars and the Moon, learn to use a small telescope, and much, much, more.

School Programs

Tuesday and Thursday evenings as well as Wednesday mornings and afternoons are available for school groups by reservation only. For information about school programs, school resource materials, or making a reservation, contact the Observatory office at (316) 978-3191 during normal business hours.

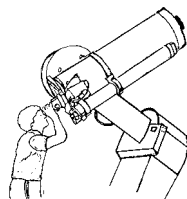
Cloudy Night Activities

It is a fact of life that there will be cloudy nights. While the telescope can't see through clouds, there is still much to do at the Observatory. You can:

- Receive a tour of the telescope and an explanation of how it works.
- Use a computer to view images of objects you would have seen that evening had it been clear and to discover how the objects are related.
- Explore the Observatory's hands-on astronomy exhibits.

Current Sky Information

For information on events taking place in the sky call 316-WSU-STAR and choose option number three.



Contact Us

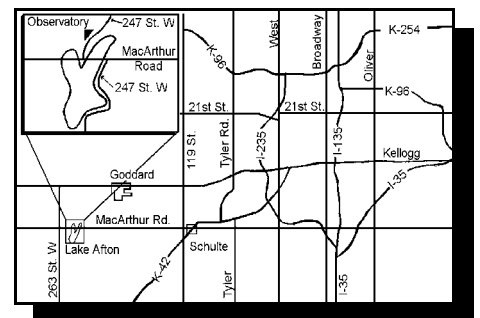
Program information can be found at:
316-WSU-STAR
(316-978-7827)

For inquiries and reservations call:
316-978-3191
during normal office hours

Our Internet address is:
www.wichita.edu/lapo

Location

The Observatory is located approximately twenty miles southwest of downtown Wichita on MacArthur Road at 247th Street West in Lake Afton County Park. It is immediately north of the lake, just off MacArthur Road. Lake Afton can be reached by any of the following routes: west from Wichita on MacArthur; west from Wichita on U.S. 54 to the Lake Afton sign at 263rd St. West (Viola Road) three miles past Goddard, then three miles south and one mile east; or southwest on K-42 to the stoplight at MacArthur Road and then nine miles west (turn right) on MacArthur.



Notice of Nondiscrimination

Wichita State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies: Director, Office of Affirmative Action, Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, Kansas 67260-0145; telephone 316-978-3371.

The Lake Afton Public Observatory is supported primarily by Wichita State University and operated by the WSU Fairmount Center for Science and Mathematics Education. Additional support is provided by Sedgwick County.