



Lake Afton Public Observatory

2011 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 8 - 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 - August 31	9:00-11:00 p.m.
September 1 - 30	8:00-10:00 p.m.
October 1 - Dec. 18	7:30-10:00 p.m.
December 19 - January 2	CLOSED

Program Cancellations

An Observatory program will automatically be canceled if there is a severe thunderstorm warning or tornado warning anywhere in Sedgewick 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 \$4 for persons 13 and older, \$3 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under the age of 6. We also have a family rate of \$12.00 for Mom, Dad and their immediate children. (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 to five 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

January 7-8, 21-22, 28-29
February 4-5, 25-26
March 4-5, 25-26

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.

Luna and the Starry Skies

January 14-15
February 11-12, 18-19
March 11-12, 18-19

During this program you will have a chance to view a double or binary star system, an open star cluster and Jupiter (in January). You will also get to see the Moon's craters, mountains, and smooth plains that look so close it almost seems you could touch them.

Thirty Years of Astronomy

Join us for the Observatory's 30th anniversary as we compare what astronomers knew about the universe when we opened in 1981 with what they believe to be true today.

Deep Sky Theme:

April 1-2, 22-23, 29-30
May 20-21, 27-28
June 3-4, 17-18, 24-25

The deep sky programs will feature Saturn, a binary star system, a huge cluster of stars, and a spiral galaxy as we discuss how our understanding of each of these types of objects has changed over the last 30 years.

Moon & Planet Theme:

April 8-9, 15-16
May 6-7, 13-14
June 10-11

The Moon and Planet programs will feature the Moon, Saturn and a distant star with planets of its own as we discuss what we have learned about our solar system and others from numerous missions over the past 30 years.

Native American Skies

July 1-2, 15-16, 22-23, 29-30
August 19-20, 26-27
September 16-17, 23-24, 30-Oct 1

Since ancient times, native North American peoples have looked to the night skies to see the stories and legends of their people. Join us this summer as we look at some of the wonders they saw. We will be looking at Saturn (through August), a red star, a planetary nebula, clusters of stars and a star cloud while we relate some of the stories they told about the "Sky People."

Solar System Potpourri

July 8-9
August 5-6, 12-13
September 2-3, 9-10

Come and sample some of the wonders that our solar system has to offer. See the planets Saturn (July & August), and Neptune (September) along with some close-up views of our moon.

Astronomical Zoo

October 14-15, 21-22, 28-29
November 18-19, 25-26
December 16-17

Explore some of the strange and wonderful objects in our universe as we view Jupiter, the remains of a dead star, star clusters, a multiple star system, and a galaxy, through the Observatory's 16 inch telescope.

Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon

October 7-8
November 4-5, 11-12
December 2-3, 9-10

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

Observatory programs are subject to change. Call 316-978-7827 to confirm dates and times.

Photography Programs

Have you ever wanted to take astronomical photographs of the planets, Moon, or stars? If so, join us for our special photography programs.

Bring your 35 mm single-lens reflex camera (the type with a removable lens) to take astronomical photographs using the Observatory's telescope. [Note that automatic 35 mm cameras without a manual override cannot be used to take astronomical photos.]

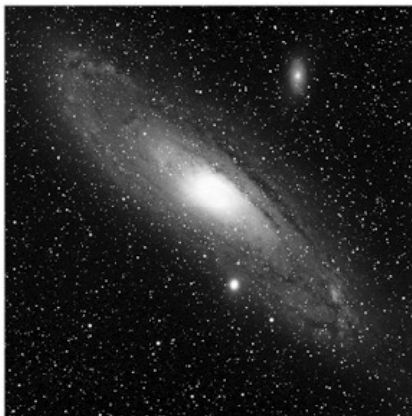
If you do not have the proper camera, bring a USB flash drive instead. We will allow you to use the Observatory's digital SLR to take your pictures, and then transfer them to your flash drive for you to take home and print.

Object	Time and Date
Pleiades (M45) ¹	10:00 p.m., Jan. 8
Orion Nebula (M42) ¹	10:00 p.m., Feb. 5
First Quarter Moon	10:00 p.m., Mar. 12
Saturn	10:30 p.m., Apr. 9
Saturn	11:00 p.m., May 7
Saturn	11:00 p.m., Jun. 4
First Quarter Moon	11:00 p.m., Jul. 9
Summer Milky Way ²	11:00 p.m., Aug. 20
Full Moon	10:00 p.m., Sep. 10
Andromeda (M31) ¹	10:00 p.m., Oct. 22
Jupiter	10:00 p.m., Nov. 19
Jupiter	10:00 p.m., Dec. 17

¹ISO 800 or faster speed film, telephoto lens, and cable release are required.

²ISO 800 or faster speed film, a tripod, 50mm lens, and cable release are required.

For all other programs ISO 400 or 800 color film and a cable release are recommended.



Andromeda Galaxy (M31)

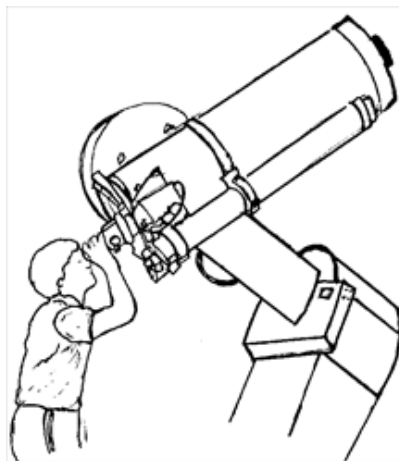
Exhibits

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 those 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 six.

Contact Us

Program information can be found at:

316-WSU-STAR
(316-978-7827)

For inquiries and reservations call:

316-978-3191

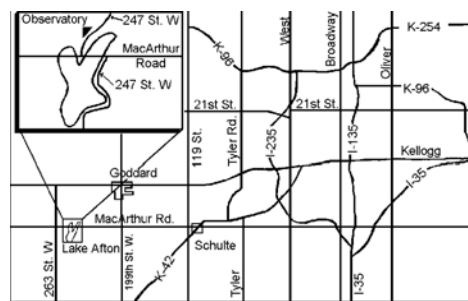
during normal office hours

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 199th St. West in Goddard, then south three miles to MacArthur and then three miles west; 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.