Lake Afton Public Observatory
2015 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 5 - February 28 7:30-10:00 p.m.
March 1 - 31 8:00-10:00 p.m.
April 1 - 30 8:30-10:30 p.m.
May 1 - August 31 9:00-11:00 p.m.
(Closed July 4)
September 1 - 30 8:00-10:00 p.m.
October 1 - December 20 7:30-10:00 p.m.
December 21 - January 2  CLOSED

Program Cancellations
An Observatory program will be canceled automatically 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 any program cancellations.

Admission
Admission is $6 for adults, $4 for children ages 6-12, and free for children under the age of 6. We also have a family rate of $18.00 for Mom, Dad and all their immediate minor children. (Please note that we cannot accept credit and debit cards.) 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 program information.

Public Programs
Each program consists of observing three to five objects though the Observatory’s 16-inch telescope. These objects are chosen with a common theme in mind. Of course if it is cloudy the program objects cannot be seen, although exploration of the Observatory’s exhibits and displays is still possible.

Wonders of the Winter Sky
Jan. 9-10, 16-17
Feb. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
March 6-7, 13-14, 20-21
On a dark clear night the winter skies offer a host of heavenly delights. Views of faint clouds of glowing gas, star clusters, and distant galaxies all await an Observatory visitor during this program.

Gazing at Jupiter and the Moon
Jan. 23-24, 30-31
Feb. 27-28
March 27-28
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.

Big, Bigger, Biggest!
April 10-11, 17-18
May 8-9, 15-16
June 5-6, 12-13
It should come as no surprise that Earth is rather small when compared to other objects in the universe. During this program you will see Jupiter, a giant star, a cluster of stars, and a galaxy – objects much larger than Earth and in some cases even larger than the sun and solar system.

Life Story of a Star
July 3, 10-11, 17-18, 31
Aug. 1, 7-8, 14-15
Sep. 4-5, 11-12
Stars are born, live out their lives, and die. During this program you can use the observatory’s large telescope to take a look at examples of the various stages in a star’s life cycle. We will also be looking at Saturn, which is made of the same material as a star.

Sizing up Saturn
July 24-25
Aug. 21-22, 28-29
Sep. 18-19, 25-26
Saturn with its beautiful rings is the jewel of the solar system. In this program the Moon, Saturn, and Neptune (beginning Aug. 21) will be seen through the 16-inch telescope as differences in their size, composition, and features are explored.

Astronomical Zoo
Oct. 2-3, 9-10, 16-17, 30-31
Nov. 6-7, 13-14, 27-28
Dec. 4-5, 11-12
Explore some of the strange and wonderful objects in our universe as we view Uranus, the remains of a dead star, star clusters, a multiple star system, and a galaxy, through the Observatory’s 16 inch telescope.

Planetary Weather
April 3-4, 24-25
May 1-2, 22-23, 29-30
June 19-20, 26-27
If you think we get some extreme weather here on Earth, you haven’t seen anything yet. Wait until you learn what the weather is like on some of the other planets in our solar system while observing the Moon, Venus, and Jupiter or Saturn (beginning May 22) through our big telescope.

Luna and the Starry Skies
Oct. 23-24
Nov. 20-21
Dec. 18-19
During this program you will have a chance to view a multiple star system, a cluster of stars and Uranus. 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.

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 your camera must have a manual override and you should be familiar with using its manual settings such as changing ISO, and exposure times.]

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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Time and Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Moon</td>
<td>6:00 p.m., January 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orion (M42)</td>
<td>10:00 p.m., February 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>10:00 p.m., March 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>10:30 p.m., April 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>9:00 p.m., Thursday, May 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td>11:00 p.m., June 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td>11:00 p.m., July 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Moon</td>
<td>11:00 p.m., August 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>10:00 p.m., September 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gibbous Moon</td>
<td>10:00 p.m., October 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pleiades (M45)</td>
<td>10:00 p.m., November 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andromeda (M31)</td>
<td>10:00 p.m., Dec. 12</td>
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1ISO 800 or faster setting, telephoto lens, and cable release are required.

For all other programs, a 400 or 800 ISO setting and a cable release are recommended.

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

Friend us on Facebook: Lake Afton Public Observatory

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, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation, status as a veteran, genetic information 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.

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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.