

LAS Observing Site Planning Meeting

IHOP, Longmont. 7pm, 2/18/2010

What do we want? Vern mentioned that he compared LAS to other groups in the state and region, and found that most groups had their own facility or dark observing site. He also mentioned that many have their own Board of Directors, as well as are networked with an observatory or planetarium.

He listed options for the club to consider, and reminded all that not choosing one of these ideas is also acceptable. No action has to be done, but if the majority of members want to see some new activities for the group, we will have to start somewhere.

- Very dark site; 4-5 hours drive (many want this, but agree that buying land and risk insurance would need to be included)
- Dark site; 2-3 hours drive (many believe that this is also about buying land and risk insurance).
- Observing site: 1 hour drive such as CU Mountain Research Station (Vern says that bathrooms would be available if members go up to observe from the observation pad. Generally speaking, winter months are not optimal for getting to this site).
- Local Site: ½ hour: Sandstone South, collaborate with city. (Many liked this idea as well, except that there will be a lot of city light which will limit the amount of objects that can be studied).
- Robot scope: Possible at MRS. Wayne announced he is building his own robot scope at his home, one he can control from within his house, and he will be able to rent time to other users. He offers to let LAS learn from his experience if we decide to build one. Vern suggests that LAS could build one on the MRS site. This can be a problem as CU can change policies at any time.
- Local facility for teaching classes? Ideas mentioned included: Berthoud Observatory, CDC, City Parks, etc... Julie announced that Fiske Planetarium has always welcomed LAS, even though BASS is there now. Classes can be taught at Fiske and SBO or at The Little Thompson Observatory, however, none of these facilities are within Longmont city limits.

Vern suggested a planning process similar to what cities or counties do. Local government sketch, preliminary, and final subdivision reviews.

Governance can look like the following:

- LAS only: change charter to include Board of Directors, audit requirement to apply for grants.
- Involve other clubs to create a very dark or dark site similar to what Colorado Springs has done.
- Separate 501-c or LLC (Limited Liability Corporation)
- Astroleague MARS (Mountain Area Research Society)

A committee was created to meet before the March meeting to come up with a proposal of how to move forward, and to report back to Vern with their choices.