

19th Annual

Maine State Star Party

C A M P U N D E R T H E S T A R S

August 9th - 11th

ABOUT THE EVENT:

Founded in 2006 as an effort to bring together the Maine stargazing community and all those with a passion for astronomy, the Maine State Star Party is a free to the public annual gathering of astronomers across the state and greater New England Area. This event is open to astronomers of all levels are welcome. There is a shared free camping space, scopes for free viewing, trivia, games and prizes for all ages, and more!



WHAT TO BRING:

- Bathrooms (including showers) are available at the park - bring your own soap
- Food & Water (fountains available onsite)
- Camping gear (tent, sleeping bag)
- Red Flashlights or Red Light Filters
- Outhouses are onsite



[Click Here
or Scan Code
to Check Out
Our Video From
the 2023 Maine
State Star Party](#)



WHERE IS IT LOCATED:



Cobscook Bay State Park
40 S Edmunds Rd
Dennysville, ME 04628

Friday 8/9/24

12:00 PM
-7:00 PM

Arrival & Set-Up

7:00 PM
-2:00 AM

**Open Sky Gazing &
Meet the Astronomers**

Saturday 8/10/24

All Day

Solar Viewing

Viewing through filtered telescopes will occur throughout the day

10:00 AM
-1:00 PM

Astronomy Games for Kids

A series of prizes will be awarded

2:00 PM
-2:45 PM

**Building & Operation of Ancient
Pines Observatory**

Speaker: Paul Butler, Amateur Astronomer

3:00 PM

Astronomer of the Year Award

3:15 PM

Astronomy Jeopardy Game

8:00 PM

Evening Viewing

Sunday 8/11/24

11:00 AM

Check-Out

Contact:

Charlie Sawyer

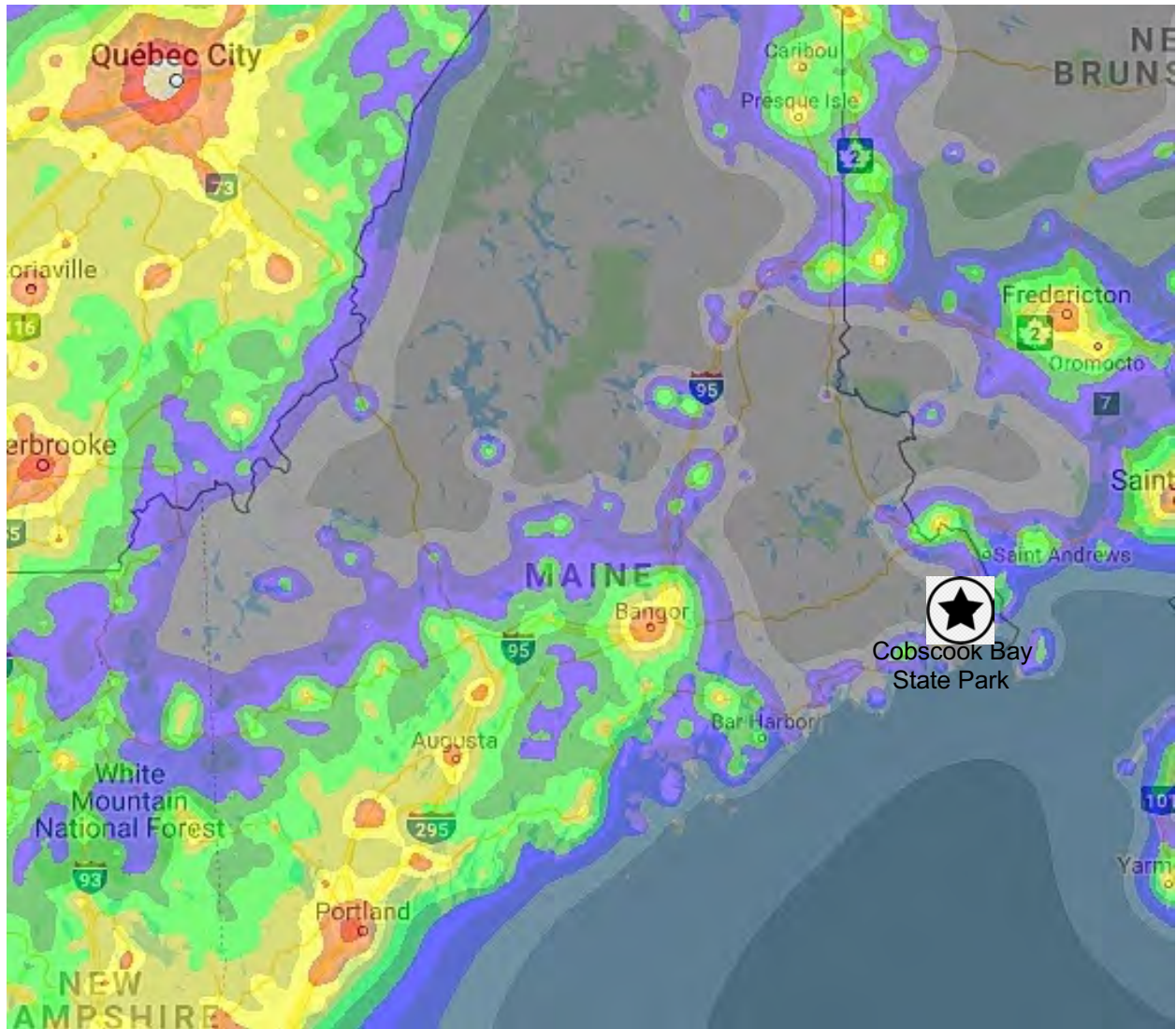
President, Downeast Amateur Astronomers



csawyer7@roadrunner.com

2024 MAINE STATE STAR PARTY

August 9 – August 11



SQM Dark Sky Measurements: Mag/Arcsec²

Katahdin Woods & Waters	21.62	Cobscook Bay State Park	21.58
Acadia Seawall Picnic Area	21.55	Mt. Mégantic, Quebec, Canada	21.42
CMAS Brower Observatory	21.40	Acadia Cadillac Mountain	21.36
ASNNE Talmage-Starfield	20.98	UNH Durham NH Observatory	19.62

Measurements all taken with the same UniHedron SQM-Classic Sky Quality Meter in August of 2016/2017

Hello Everyone,

This is a final reminder of the 2024 Maine State Star Party coming up in just a month.

Again, as in previous years, camping is free for those that camp at either the observing site or the adjacent Group Camping area with fire rings. There is no fee for the MSSP event and no signup is necessary. Come Friday or Saturday and stay through Sunday.

There have been a couple minor changes to the schedule:

Friday 8/9/24	
12:00 PM -7:00 PM	Arrival & Setup
7:00 PM -2:00 AM	Sky Gazing & Meet the Astronomers
Saturday 8/10/24	
All Day	Solar Viewing Viewing through filtered telescopes will occur throughout the day
10:00 AM	Swap Tables
10:00 PM -1:00 PM	Astronomy Games for Kids A series of prizes will be awarded
1:00 PM -1:45 PM	Solar Astronomy Speaker: Jon Wallace, Amateur Astronomer Educator, and Solar System Ambassador, ASNNE, SMA
2:00 PM -2:45 PM	Building & Operation of the Ancient Pines Observatory Speaker: Paul Butler Amateur Astronomer, DEAA
3:00 PM	Maine Astronomer of the Year
3:15 PM	Astronomy Jeopardy Game
8:00 PM	Evening Viewing
Sunday 8/11/24	
11:00 AM	Checkout

With the Solar Eclipse in April and one of key note speakers talking about solar astronomy, we have reduced the number for speakers to two and kept mid-day and later afternoon open for solar observing-

To see a video about last year's MSSP, checkout this youtube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hd-U-oOjks>

The Speakers

Solar Astronomy

Jon Wallace is a past educator and avid Solar Astronomer as well as a searcher of micro-meteorites. As a member of Southern Maine Astronomers and the Astronomical Society of Northern New England in Kennebunk, he has been sharing his well-developed solar and astro-photography techniques with clubs for many years.



PST Telescope & ZWO ASI174MM Camera



Listening to the sun with his Radio Telescope



Jon's Hydrogen-alpha image of the sun captured earlier this year with his PST Telescope

The Speakers

Building & Operation of the Ancient Pines Observatory

Paul Butler has been a long-time member of Downeast Amateur Astronomers despite living in Western Maine. His modest beginnings with a Meade 10" LX-200 didn't stop as it evolved into a new observatory with a 16" Meade LX-200. Come hear his story.



The early days of the 16" Meade LX200



and the fitting into his new observatory



Paul's image of M51, the Whirlpool Galaxy earlier this spring

Telescopes on the Observing Field

We appreciate that Paul will be dismantling his observatory telescope again for another journey across state to Maine's Cobscook Bay State Park. Come checkout his images under Cobscook's very dark skies.

We hope to see some of Central Maine Astronomer's big and unique scopes back again this year as well as our regulars from Downeast Amateur Astronomers and Penobscot Valley Star Gazers.

And we are always appreciative of the long trek made by those attending from Southern Maine Astronomers and the Astronomical Society of Northern New England. Last year we had attendees from Glouster Area Astronomy Club and New Hampshire Astronomical Society among others. There were over twenty scopes on the field in 2023.



Dwight's Lunt LS152THa, Hydrogen Alpha solar telescope.

After a couple years of struggling with a damaged Coronado solar telescope, a lucky find on Astromart, a broken Energy Reduction Filter and a discombobulated knee, I've finally figured out how to operate my new (to me) Lunt Solar Telescope. It will make an appearance at the Maine State Star Party for the first time this year. This 6" Hydrogen Alpha Telescope is believed to be one of the largest in New England.

Electronic Astronomy

With the advancement of Electronically Assisted Astronomy, this year, being widespread throughout the clubs, I'm going to declare this the "Year of the Electronic Telescope". No doubt we will see many in use on the observing field. Come find out if this is your way into beginning astrophotography.

Dwarf Labs , Dwarf 2
ZWO SeeStar*
Vaonis Hestia*
Vaonis Vespera*
Vaonis Vespera II
Vaonis Vespera Pro**
Vaonis Stellina*
Unistellar Equinox
Unistellar Odyssey
UniStellar eVscope
UniStellar eVscope II*

- * We know that these scopes are coming, and expect that some of the others will be seen as well.
- ** The Vespera Pro is brand new having finally been released just a month ago. My Vespera Pro arrived in Northeast Harbor only two weeks ago.

If someone shows up with the new Celestron Origin, we will award you a Laser Pointer!

Astronomer of the Year

Continuing last year's tradition, we will be recognizing a new Maine Astronomer of the Year. Last year all the club presidents across Maine met by zoom and selected Colin Cassie of Central Maine Astronomers as the 2023 Astronomer of the year and another as this year's candidate. Join us next month to find out who the 2024 Maine Astronomer of the Year will be.

Children's Games

You should also note that we will be featuring activities for children for the first time this year. We'd like to welcome a new organizer to this year's event. Sophia Juliana Davis joined Downeast Amateur Astronomers and Penobscot Valley Stargazers earlier this year. She was able to enroll in an astronomy program at the University of Arizona. and says that "all the essays and tests were very easy for me because of everything Charlie Sawyer has taught me. My instructors, including some from NASA, are thoroughly impressed so Mr. Sawyer definitely deserves all the credit he receives. I look forward to meeting each one of you personally and learning from all of you about my new passion of astronomy. You all are shining stars."

Sophia is generously providing prizes to be given out and we have been gifted a 6" Dobsonian telescope that we hope to present to a child interested in Astronomy.

The Site



Camping will again be allowed at both the Old Observing Site as well as the new observing area. If you'd like to setup your tent next to your scope, you can do that in the new observing area.

However, heavy campers should plan to setup at the Old Observing area. The New Observing Area has uncompacted soil so no large campers there, please. Last year several days of rain resulted in softer ground and mud that had to be filled with gravel.

Heavier campers/trailers is only recommended at the group area which has compacted ground.

OUR LOCATION THIS YEAR WILL BE AT BOTH THE OLD GROUP CAMPING SITE AND THE FIELD ACROSS THE ROAD GIVING US AN ALL-SKY VIEW

1. Once again, the camping is free for campers who stay on the star party site. Anyone who comes to the park for the event but chooses to get his or her own campsite in the park would have to pay for the site.
2. The star party site is usually for tents; but anyone with a camper can find room to park on our original site across the street. Let me know if you are planning to do this and I will make sure to let the park know who will be coming in with a camper and is planning to stay on the site.
3. There is a water fountain at the old group camping site and latrines nearby. The shower building is located near the entrance station. A small grocery store is about 4 miles to the west. Each individual / group brings their own food. The closest restaurant is about 15 miles east or 20 miles west.
4. Cobscook Bay State Park is about 90 miles Downeast on Rt 1 from Bangor. You could also travel down Rt 9 and turn right to Machias in Wesley and then head east on Rt 1 for another 20 miles.

If anyone has any questions you can e-mail me. I have already put my order in for perfect weather for that weekend, let's make the attendance equally great! One final note. The main thing that would possibly cancel this is obviously bad weather such as a hurricane or severe rain. I always watch the weather real close before the event so I could certainly send out any announcements days before the event to let anyone know who has to travel a great distance.

Charlie Sawyer
Downeast Amateur Astronomers
csawyer7@roadrunner.com



The Maine State Star Party is hosted by Downeast Amateur Astronomers of Pembroke Maine. If you have any questions they may be sent to Charlie Sawyer, President at csawyer7@roadrunner.com or Dwight Lanpher at groupastro@lanpherassociates.com

See you all in August!

Dwight Lanpher, Club Liaison
Member: AAS, ASNNE, ATMob, BSIA, CMAS, DEAA, GAAC, NHAS, NSAAC, PVSG, SMA, TVS
groupastro@lanpherassociates.com

Notes:

The site has been reserved and all you have to do is show up with your camping gear and whatever observing equipment, binoculars, etc. that you wish to bring.

Don't forget to bring a chair!

Being next to the ocean, dew has been known to be an issue. All you Schmidt - Cassegrain and Maksutov owners, should be sure to **bring a dew shield, dew heater straps or other dew control equipment**. I will have a DC blow drier and battery pack available for loan, but at 12VDC, it is only a few hundred watts compared to a 1500W hair dryer. So it is slow to remove dew.

We are expecting dozens of telescopes so you don't need to bring any optics. There will be plenty for you to look through including a half dozen solar telescopes on Saturday (and maybe Friday afternoon). This is a great place to try out different telescopes.

We have been getting plenty of positive responses from the astronomy community and expect to have a great turnout. We may even see some early Perseids.

No open ring fires will be allowed in the observing field. Coleman stoves are OK.

There is a water spigot further down the gravel road by the old observing area.

There are Campground Outhouses across the road, a two minute walk away.

The shower building is located near the Entrance Station just beyond the park entrance.

There is no electricity at the site, however, a 1 kilowatt solar generator has been acquired for charging phones and tablets and running presentation equipment.

Please bring your own food. Provisions can be purchased in the country store (Whiting Store) in Whiting, 6 miles SW on Route 1. The Town of Machias is located 23 miles west on Route 1. The Canadian Border can be accessed in Calais, 38 miles east on Route 1.

My favorite raspberry pancake house, Sue's Cobscook Bay Café is 5 miles NE on Route 1, Open 7 am to 2 pm that weekend. (Closed Wednesdays and Thursdays.) I confirmed Raspberry Pancakes by telephone a minute ago ☺

Cobscook Bay State Park has solid Bortle Class 2 skies and there are no lights in the park anywhere except for the Entrance Station and the shower building. Nearby to Cobscook Bay State Park is the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. The closest small populated areas are Calais and Machias, both about thirty miles away.

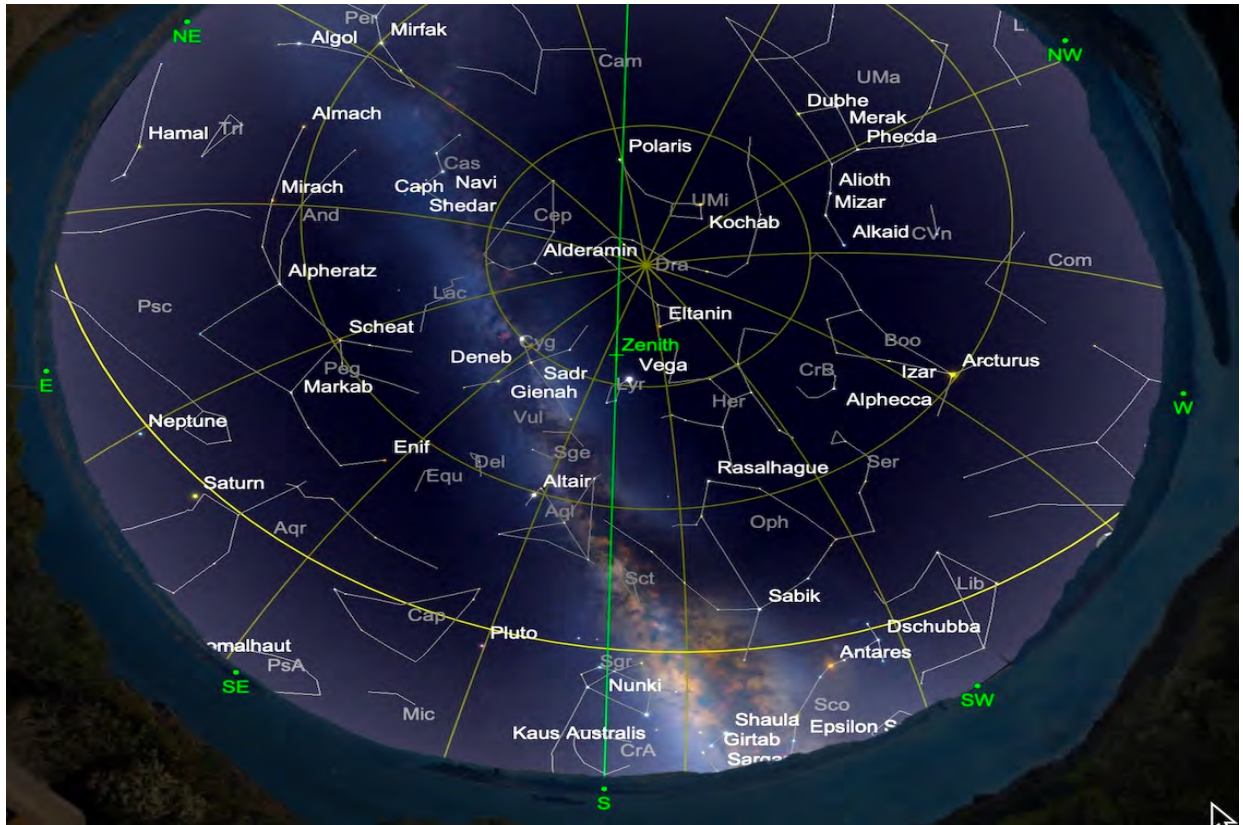
Cobscook Bay State Park has darker skies than Acadia National Park or IDA's nearby first International Dark Sky Park, Mt. Mégantic in Quebec, Canada. Only Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument Dark Sky Preserve is slightly darker. See the cover sheet).

Maine State Star Party Etiquette

The main purpose of this event is sharing the experience with other astronomers, public outreach and to have a good time.

- **Don't use white lights.** Visitors should use red lights or red cellophane over their flashlights. If for some reason you **MUST** use a white light, warn others in the area before you turn it on. Please advise visitors with red headlamps that shining their lights directly into the eyes of others also disrupts adapted night vision. The intensity of the light outweighs the fact that it's red!
- **Setup** - There will be a lot of scopes in a large open area. Try to set up allowing adequate space for groups of people, you, and your neighbor.
- **Wires** - Be especially careful if you use extended wiring for power or remote computer/camera connections. If you do run wires on the ground, try to locate the wires as safely as possible. Placing glow sticks next to the wires can help avert an accident to people and your equipment.
- **Laser Pointers** - Unless you are planning to do demonstrations, this is not the best venue for precision astrophotography. Green laser pointers are allowed and there may be star tours for the public painting the sky.
- **Alignment** - Check that your scope is still pointing at your object, often! Even if you have a tracking drive, guests sometimes knock it out of alignment using your scope to steady themselves.
- **Guests** - Advise guests what they can and cannot touch on your scope. Perhaps suggest holding the tripod instead of the eyepiece if they must steady themselves. Show them the location of the focuser if they ask. A dim red light for pointing out the eyepiece and focuser can be helpful.
- **Children** - Children are welcome. Small children should be advised to never touch any glass surface. A step stool with a handle can be extremely helpful (including for adults, too) as you can tell them to grip the handle instead of shaking the scope.
- **Smoking** - you should refrain from smoking in the telescope field. If you must take a break to smoke, please move several hundred feet downwind of the people and telescopes.
- **Don't litter** - Find a garbage can or take it out with you.

This Star Party is for beginning, as well as experienced astronomers. If you would like some assistance, let others know your situation. There are many good targets that can be easily located. Learn how your finder works and try to make sure that your finder is properly aligned before observing. Hint: this is best done during daylight, sighting your main scope on a distant target first and then aligning the finder.



August 10, 2024, 10:00 PM, Cobscook Bay Maine State Park

