

► Los Angeles Astronomical Society (LAAS) Rules and Policies

Rules for the use of the Steve Kufeld Observing Site (Lockwood)

Public Distribution



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Los Angeles Astronomical Society

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LAAS Rules and Policies

This LAAS rules and facility use policy is in effect for the Steve Kufeld Astronomical Site (Lockwood). Protect your membership privileges. Violation of these rules may result in loss of membership or facilities use privileges. Practice safety and common sense!

More explanation and tips can be found in the Appendix of this document.

FACILITY USAGE

1. **Who can use the site:** LAAS members and a maximum of two of their guests. Members must be present and are responsible for the actions of their guests. Guests attending star parties more than once a year are expected to join LAAS. **Any larger group shall arrange with the Board a visit to Lockwood on another night from a Dark Star Party, and scheduled well in advance to obtain sufficient Star Member supervision.**
2. **When can I visit the site:** General LAAS members may use the property only during scheduled LAAS Star Parties or on the company of a Star Member, Star Members at any time.

SAFETY

3. **The following are prohibited at anytime on the property:**
 - a. Violence; physical, verbal or otherwise.
 - b. Theft, defacing, tampering with, or damaging LAAS and Lockwood attendee property.
 - c. Not abiding instructions by an attending LAAS Board Member or Star Member (in that order).
 - d. Discharge of firearms, fireworks, air guns, or other hazardous devices and materials.

- e. Athletic games, throwing of any object, bicycle riding and running.
- f. Open fires. (Fire for cooking is permitted only in camp stoves or approved charcoal barbecues, at a safe distance from combustible materials.)
- g. Alcohol, illegal substances such as drugs, etc.
- h. Walking on the 16-inch Orien Ernst telescope roof and surrounding earth bank, with exception of a brief period of time for the Sunset Talk.

4. **The following are listed as a sample of hazards to be expected:**

- a. Snakes, ants, etc.
- b. Uneven ground
- c. Trip hazards

5. **The following are not prohibited, however these guidelines must be adhered to:**

- a. Legal smoking is allowed only in vehicles and discarded in vehicle ashtray.
- b. Pets:
 - i. are the sole responsibility for any and all actions of the owner/person bringing pet(s)
 - ii. shall be on a leash at all times when outside your vehicle
 - iii. shall be cleaned up after
 - iv. be kept quiet
 - v. shall remain on LAAS property, and away from observing area
 - vi. shall not be left unattended

FACILITY LOGISTICS

6. **Gate:** The gate shall be closed (but not locked) after twilight, and opened during departure times.
7. **Vehicles:**
 - a. The speed limit is 5mph (8kph)
 - b. While on the property, vehicles may be operated solely for transportation purposes.
 - c. Arrival Time: Before twilight. *If you must arrive after the end of twilight, the

- Board must be contacted for arrangements to be made well ahead of the event, preferably two weeks. Otherwise, no entry will be granted after twilight.
- d. **Departure Times:** Generally around 11 PM (depending on the season) and 1AM, each lasting for only thirty minutes. The actual times shall be determined at the Sunset Talk. *Only an emergency will be accepted as grounds to violate determined departure times.
 - e. **Parking:**
 - i. Vehicles are prohibited in the observing area except for the purpose of loading and unloading equipment during daylight hours only. Unload and set up your equipment before sunset.
 - ii. Do not drive or park on or across an observing pad.
 - iii. Roads, site entrance, camping and parking areas must not be blocked.
 - iv. If you plan to leave prior to dawn, park near the gate with your vehicle's headlights facing away from the observing area.
 - v. As white lights are prohibited, defeat or significantly mask the interior lights and automatic headlights if you might return to your vehicle during the night.
 - f. **Camping:**
 - i. Same rules as above for parking. Take special care to avoid trees, bushes, and equipment on the property.
 - ii. The west fence is the ideal area for campers.
- 8. Observing Pads:**
- a. Observing pads are reserved for lease holders until sunset only. The user of an observing pad must vacate the pad if requested by the owner before sunset.
- The pad in front of the shed containing the 31-inch Clyde-O-Scope is not available for lease by a Star Member. It is available for use by anyone on a first come, first served basis providing there has not been advance notice (48 hours or more) posted on the LAAS Yahoo group indicating that this pad will be used for a Board-sponsored activity (31-inch, 26-inch telescope deployment, etc.). If such notice has been posted, and someone has set up on the 31-inch pad, they will be required to immediately vacate the pad. **The sunset time cutoff does not apply for this pad.**
- b. Electrical cords, batteries, and other electrical apparatus should be kept within the perimeter of your observing pad to avoid electrical shock or tripping hazards.
 - c. The use of space heaters, air conditioners or other high wattage equipment is not permitted in the observing area.
- 9. Lights:** White lights, including interior dome lights, headlights, taillights and flashlights between twilight and dawn are prohibited. Only dim red lights are allowed. If used, computer/laptop monitors and cell phones must have red filters and should be pointed away from other observers.
- 10. Laser Pointers:** Prohibited.
- 11. LAAS Facilities:** The LAAS-owned storage sheds, observatories, and telescopes such as the 31-inch Clyde-O-Scope and the 16-inch Orien Ernst telescopes may be set up and operated by LAAS Board authorized members only. The stairway shall be used to enter or leave the observatory.
- 12. Sunset Talk:** All persons present must attend this information talk.
- 13. Noise:**
- a. We are in a quiet area - do not disturb our neighbors or each other. Electronics

equipment and musical instruments may be played as long as they do not disturb others. If anyone objects, you must cease using noise-producing equipment immediately.

- b. Generators are prohibited between 9:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m.

14. **What you bring you take:** Trash, equipment, etc. There is no storage or trash pickup.

▶ APPENDIX

More explanation on the Rules and Policies
at the Steve Kufeld Observing Site (Lockwood) and tips

FACILITY USAGE

These rules are intended to help maximize the benefit of the Steve Kufeld Astronomical Site (Lockwood) for the LAAS members.

SAFETY

Along with the intention stated above, safety is of paramount importance.

It cannot be overstated that the ground is uneven, that there are occasional holes created by burrowing animals, and people will have equipment in various places, thus creating unforeseen tripping hazards.

FACILITY LOGISTICS

Any members coming to the site for the first time are strongly encouraged to arrive before dark. Without some familiarity with the layout of the property, it will be difficult to avoid violating one or more of the rules and lighting restrictions.

The gate closure is to prevent people from driving into the site after twilight. There is little to no separation between the parking area(s) and the observing area. See more information on light restrictions in this document.

The speed limit on the property is 5 mph (8 kph). This is both for safety reasons, and because the roadway is dirt, and low speeds are less likely to throw dust into the air.

Camping is permitted, but the camp site should be away from the observing pads. Tent campers often set up near the perimeter fence on the north or west sides. Members with campers or small RVs sometimes set those up near the observing pad they are using. The camp site should be selected to avoid trees, bushes, and equipment on the property.

All electrical equipment (laptops, dew heater power supplies, power cords, etc.) must be protected against the elements (thermal, dew). In the case of power cords, be sure they are rated for outdoor usage.

Light Restrictions

Both visual observing and CCD imaging will generally be occurring at a Dark Sky Night. Both activities require that ground light be managed carefully. Visual observers require as much as 30 minutes to fully dark adapt. Fully dark adapted eyes are much more sensitive to dim light than unadapted eyes, and the dark adaptation can be destroyed by even brief exposure to white light. CCD imagers can have images damaged by ground lights. To avoid either of these issues, after the end of civil twilight in the evening, white light of any type is completely prohibited on the site. Remember to point your computer/laptop monitor and cell phone away from other observers and have red filters.

Blue painter's and red gaffer's tape works well to cover vehicle lights. Dark red lighting gel filters are ideal for lights/monitors of all kinds.

The times for civil twilight at the Lockwood Valley observing site can be obtained from the LAAS web site at http://www.laas.org/Events_StarParties-DarkSky.htm.

Web Resources

Check the local weather websites for what you might expect, as well as the local webcams.

Clear Sky Clock: www.cleardarksky.com

Heavens Above (any possible satellite passes you wish to view): www.heavens-above.com

Star Maps: www.skymaps.com

Also, check the local webcams for what the road conditions are likely to be.

Comfort

It is typical for the temperature to drop considerably through the night, and very rapidly. Remember to bring many layers of clothing, head down to your feet.

Bring plenty of water as dehydration can be a concern higher elevation. To keep alert and observing for long periods during the night, bring high-energy snacks.

Bring comfortable chair(s) to sit on and relax.