

Hello astronomers:

The Home Planet stellar views were awesome as usual. Bob Spohn, Vern Raben, Andrew and Susan Planck, and myself went to check out sky conditions at Delatour Boy Scout camp. We had an incredible two good nights at the Boy scout camp in Red Feathers lake area The Boy Scouts Delatour camp is over 3400 hundred acres in a beautiful valley high in the Rockies northwest of Fort Collins, about 7900 ft elevation. I took some pictures (just checking the conditions) to show at the May club meeting. Joe Defranco is the construction guy up there at Camp. We met with him Friday and spent several hours showing off the skies in my 30 inch scope, just to spoil him some. We did M51 , M81 and M82 NGC edge on 4565, Sombero M104 bright edge on galaxy, then did some huge globulars, M3, M53, M 13, M92, Ring Nebula, M57, then M27, Dumbbell, the Veil nebula was awesome late in evening. We did so many, we burned a few impressions into his mind for sure. I think we got a friend now, Joe is getting this new observatory going. Andrew, Vern, Bob and myself ventured out late about 2 am looking for best southern views to be had from the valley. The Soaring Eagle campground is the best choice for new observatory site. Power lines run thru the meadow and almost a flat area, higher than valley floor where we did weekend observing for test of darkness. The East side of the valley was a mountain, but that blocked the eastern lights of Fort Collins. South, north and west were very dark skies. I would rate it as good as Pawnee, CFN, but not as good as my favorite place, Fox park .

The conditions for using the boy scout observatory: you have to be pre checked out by the scout organization with background checks for the safety of kids we will be working with , then become a volunteer member of boy scouts. No uniforms, just some kind of ID card I would expect. You will get to use area and scopes, teaching them how to use scopes and finding things in the skies. Then after they go to bed you get to use your own scopes or use the 16 inch for pictures or web camera work, or just plain enjoying the darkness of high country. I personally like just viewing thru large aperture. M 51, Ngc 4565 and M 101 just came out so good in eyepiece, no picture, just pure photons to the brain , especially in the new moon darkness.

The camp has over 500 kids per week there, Wow!! way more than I thought. Talk about reaching out, LAS outreach there will put us into orbit. No way we could handle that many, so will have to work out some details. We will want to get some volunteers to help out, maybe once a month then get a few others involved so we can get them going on their own. The bright moon nights work too - besides my dark sky adventures, I also do moon and planets the rest of month in what I call yard views. I will keep you all posted on progress with pictures and stories as work begins, Probably not till next year for things to get rolling along. I will ask for volunteers and get you in touch with Scout leaders. Thanks Bob, Vern, Andrew, you guys are die hard, proud to be helping getting this project going.

LTO, (Little Thompson Observatory in Berthoud), has had a few volunteers to help them with their open house nights from LAS people. If you have not been there, go check it out, fun family event, no long drive and friendly astronomers who love to share the skies.

We sure have made some great astronomy friends overtime! We are getting in demand almost too much for me to keep up with, so much fun, so little time to do it all, but we try harder in LAS. See you in the dark,bye, Gary



The nice dark valley at Delatour Boy Scout Camp.



Andrew setting the equipment up. Look! Facilities in the background.