

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park

m MINNESOTA
STATE PARKS AND TRAILS

Dark Skies Festival

Friday August 19th

8 – 9pm

Build a Star Wheel!

Meet at the Picnic Shelter

Every wonder what is up in the night sky on any particular night? Our stars move across the night sky from hour to hour and month to month, changing constantly! This can make it seem daunting to know and identify what you are seeing in the night sky. One easy way to know what's up in the night sky is to use a planisphere or a star wheel. So come build a star wheel (that you get to keep) with one of our naturalists and learn how to use it!

Saturday August 20th

12 – 1pm

Light Pollution with Starry Skies North

Meet at the Picnic Shelter

Artificial light at night (ALAN) is a rapidly growing problem which affects a wide range of environmental processes including disrupting circadian rhythms, hormone production, and altering foraging and predation behaviors across many species. Join Chris in learning about the different types of ALAN, its major impacts ecosystems, and outline effective solutions that protect ecosystem health without harming human safety.

12 – 3pm

Solar Scope Viewing

Meet at Historic Forestville

Safely gaze upon the Sun & Moon with an advanced, high-powered solar scope! The Sun is a dynamic and fascinating place to observe, doing so with this technology allows for safe sun viewing. Join Dr. Anderson at Historic Forestville and observe these celestial bodies with a NASA scientist and science educator!

12 – 4pm

Astrophotography Show n' Tell

Meet at the Picnic Shelter

Have you ever tried to take a photo of the moon only to be disappointed with how it turns out? Would you like to learn how the pros take photos of celestial objects? Learn about astrophotography with Kris, an expert who has spent countless hours under the dark night sky capturing the stars through an artistic lens.

1 – 2pm

What's Up in the Night Sky?

Meet at the Picnic Shelter

Join Clayton Lindsey to learn about what you can see in the Minnesota night-skies this Summer/Fall; including the major evening constellations, the moon, planets, meteor showers, deep-sky nebulae and galaxies accessible with just your eyes! Followed by a short discussion of the need and efforts to preserve dark skies for the future to enjoy.

2pm and 4pm Bottle Rocket Launches!

Meet at Historic Forestville

Shoot for the stars with Don as we construct simple rockets to launch into the skies above our heads! They are specially built to soar into space and beyond! Fun for kids and families of all ages.

3 – 4pm Kids Craft: Let's Build a Telescope!

Meet at the Picnic Shelter

Looking at the night sky can be so much better if you have a telescope in hand! We will be reading a kid's story about the constellations and their importance in our lives and make our own constellation telescopes to train our eyes to recognize the beautiful shapes and stories that can be told from the dark skies. Kids can bring them home for even more starry adventures to come!

3 – 6pm Solar Scope Viewing

Meet at Mystery Cave Visitor Center

Safely gaze upon the Sun & Moon with an advanced, high-powered solar scope! The Sun is a dynamic and fascinating place to observe, and with the right technology allows for safe sun viewing. Join Randy at the Mystery Cave Visitor Center before or after a tour to see the center of our solar system with your own eyes!

5 – 6pm The Light Shines in the Darkness

Meet at the Amphitheater

Even in darkness there is light, as we continue to observe images from the James Webb telescope, we're witnessing light appearing where we before only saw darkness. All ancient cultures saw stories in the sky, in the land, and in the water. We still see those stories everywhere. Learn a Greek cultural interpretation of the night sky with Michael.

7 – 8pm Story Time with Starry Skies North

Meet at the Amphitheater

The whole family can enjoy the night sky, but does light pollution obstruct your view at home? Discover through children's stories, adventures, and more to learn how your family can mitigate artificial light at night and delve into the issues of light pollution - learning how even a small child can take actions that improve our world.

8 – 9pm At Home in the Milky Way

Meet at the Picnic Shelter

The dusty and gas-rich disks of spiral galaxies like the Milky Way are ideal environments for stars to form and evolve. Late summer at Forestville is a superb time to observe such environments! We will explore how humans came to understand the Milky Way, discuss stellar evolution, and examine reference objects that are visible under sufficiently darks skies like ours. Learn that and more as we investigate with expert Jeff on how stellar evolution has resulted in terrestrial planets, like Earth, that are capable of supporting life.

8 – 10:30pm **Dark Skies Public Observing**
Meet at Historic Forestville

Bring your own telescope/binoculars or use two of Mystery Cave’s telescopes to gaze up into the stars and discover what deep space spectacles our stars have to offer! Join Dr. Anderson and Interpretive Naturalist Kate to learn about the wonders of the night sky and how even the naked eye can help us visualize the dark skies and its enchanting folk lore of the infinite cosmos.



If you need an accommodation, please contact the Mystery Cave Visitor Center at mystery.caves@state.mn.us or 507-808-8000, two weeks prior to the event.

mndnr.gov/events

