WHAT IS A "STAR PARTY"?

A star party is an invitation to anyone wishing to enjoy and learn more about the wonders of the night sky.
At a star party, AAAP members setup their personal telescopes and operate the large fixed observatory telescopes and offer visitors the opportunity to view celestial objects. Visitors can bring their own scopes to take advantage of viewing conditions at the site. Other use the occasion to simply view the stars and planets with their own eyes.

Star parties begin just before sunset. Celestial events such as meteors, comets or an Aurora Borealis often make our public star parties memorable events.

At AAAP star parties our members are happy to answer questions about astronomy, advise on telescope selection, or help guests set up and align their telescope.

GETTING READY FOR A STAR PARTY

Although overcast sky or rain can close the telescopes, it does not close Mingo's planetarium. With the Moon and stars visible in between clouds the telescopes will still operate. At Mingo the star party can be a "go" even if it rains because the planetarium is indoors.

The observatory in Mingo Creek Park has a handicap outdoor restroom. There is no running water at the facility. Food and beverages are not served at our star parties and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in Washington County Parks. Tobacco smoke fouls optics and is prohibited both in the observatory and on the grounds. Light from vehicle head and tail lights and even smart phones destroy night vision. Please limit use of these and other sources of light.

WHAT EQUIPMENT SHOULD YOU BRING?

You don't need to bring a telescope or other observer equipment to a star party. However, some items may make the night more comfortable and enjoyable. It often gets cool on a clear night, even in summer, so bring a coat, light jacket or sweater. Blankets, head cover and extra layers of clothing (including socks) are recommended for continued comfort during star parties in the spring and fall.
To avoid neck strain from constant sky gazing, it helps to bring some type of portable folding chair. It is advisable to bring water to drink. None is available on site.

IS THERE A FEE?
AAAP star parties are free to the public. However, the donations large or small AAAP receives at its star party reception desks help to cover facility-operating costs and support AAAP's community education mission.

WHERE ARE THE STAR PARTIES HELD?

Mingo Creek Park Observatory: The Observatory is located 10 miles east of Washington PA in Nottingham Township in Mingo Creek County Park. The park is located off Route 88 or Route 136 the northeast section of Washington County. Inside the park from the Henry Covered Bridge the observing location is up Mansion Hill Ext. Road on the top of the hill past Shelter 10. See the back of this flyer for the map to the observatory site.

The Mingo Creek Park Observatory has two permanently mounted telescopes, a refractor and a reflector telescope, in separate rooms, and a very small auditorium. The building also houses the Richard Y. Haddad Planetarium, with a 20 ft. digital planetarium dome where the night sky and movies can be displayed indoors. It can operate regardless of the weather or time of day, or for special educational events. Please make star party group reservations by phone or through the website for groups such as scouts, school groups, outdoor organizations, etc. planning to attend Mingo Creek Park Observatory Public Star Parties. **Phone 724-348-6150 Latitude 40.211degrees, Longitude -80.020 degrees Declination -9 degrees**

Wagman Observatory: The Wagman Observatory is located in Deer Lakes Regional Park near Russellton, PA in the northeast corner of Allegheny County.
The observatory entrance is at the top of the hill in the middle of the park. Wagman observatory is a small building with a conventional gable roof design.
Phone 724-224-2510 Latitude 40.627 degrees, Longitude -79.813 degrees

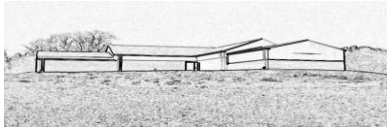
Tips for driving: If you are unfamiliar with either location we recommend that you drive during daylight to help spot landmarks. Always observe speed limits in the parks. Additional maps and directions are also available on the club's web site (see below).

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on AAAP activities and membership, visit our homepage at www.3ap.org.
Mailing address: AAAP, P.O. Box 314, Glenshaw, PA 15116
AAAP email to: aaap@3ap.org
Club Events List: https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/event-list.cfm?Club_ID=675
Public Monthly Meetings, September – May, at Carnegie Science Center. See Website Calendar and AAAP newsletter, The Guide Star, for dates and speaker topics.

Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh

Mingo Creek Park Observatory



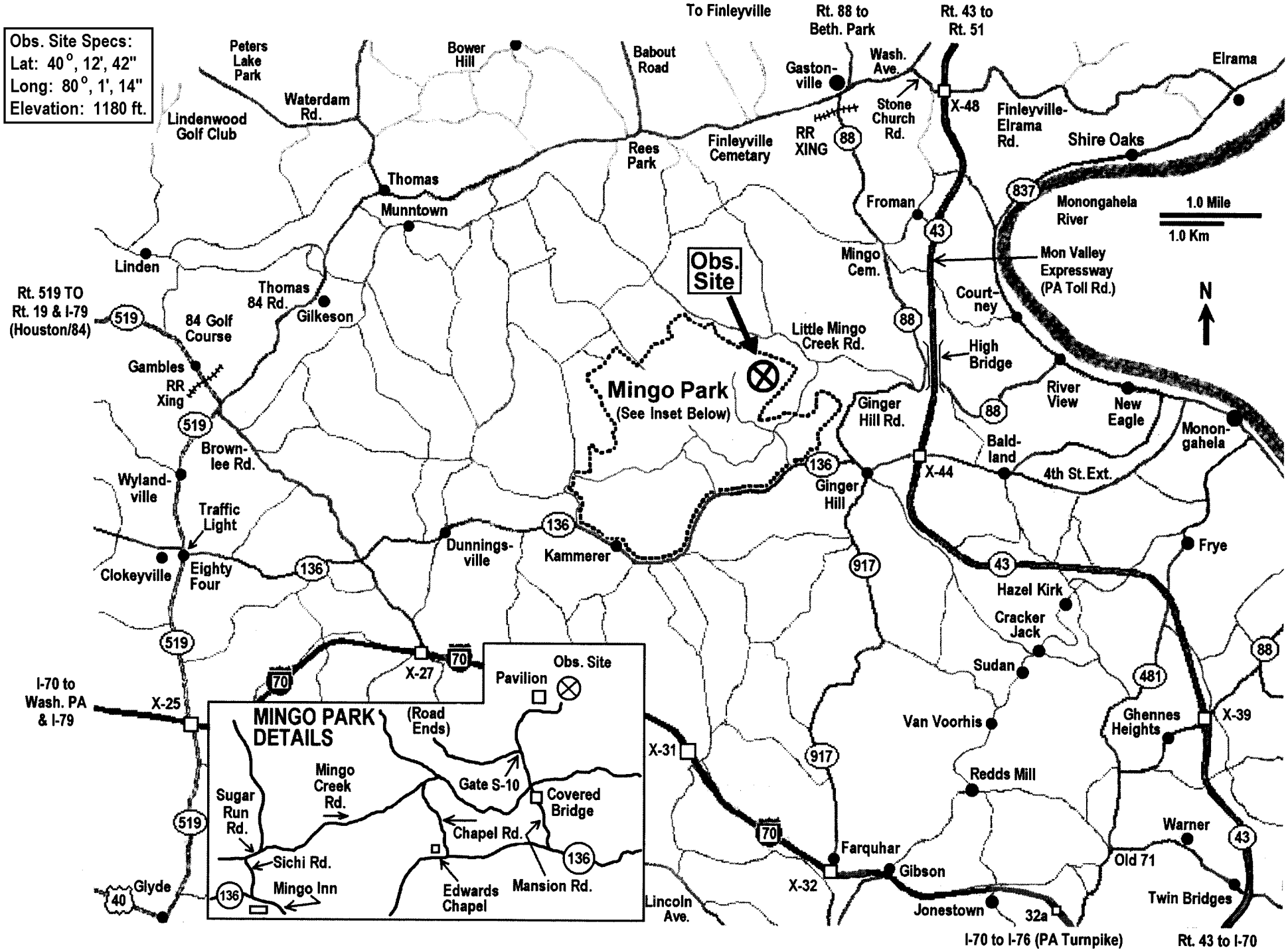
AAAP 2013 Star Party Schedules

Mingo Creek Park Observatory
Mingo Creek County Park, Washington County, PA

Apr 19, 20
May 17, 18
Jun 14, 15
Jul 12, 13
Aug 9, 10
Sep 7
Sep 28
Oct 12
Oct 26
Nov 9 Bundle Up Starfest

Wagman Observatory
Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County, PA

Feb 16 Winterfest
Apr 19, 20
May 17, 18
Jun 14, 15
Jul 12, 13
Aug 9, 10
Sep 14
Sep 21 Moonrise Star Party
Oct 12
Oct 26 Dark Sky Star Party


Obs. Site Specs:
Lat: 40°, 12', 42"
Long: 80°, 1', 14"
Elevation: 1180 ft.
To Finleyville
Rt. 88 to Beth. Park
Rt. 43 to Rt. 51
Peters Lake Park
Bower Hill
Babout Road
Gaston-ville
Wash. Ave.
Elrama
Lindenwood Golf Club
Waterdam Rd.
Stone Church Rd.
X-48
Finleyville-Elrama Rd.
Shire Oaks
RR XING
88
Rees Park
Finleyville Cemetary
Thomas
Munntown
Froman
837
Monongahela River
1.0 Mile
1.0 Km
43
Mingo Cem.
Mon Valley Expressway (PA Toll Rd.)
Linden
Obs. Site
Court-ney
N
Rt. 519 TO Rt. 19 & I-79 (Houston/84)
519
Thomas 84 Rd.
Gilkeson
84 Golf Course
Little Mingo Creek Rd.
High Bridge
Gambles
RR Xing
Mingo Park
(See Inset Below)
River View
New Eagle
Ginger Hill Rd.
Monon-gahela
Brown-lee Rd.
Bald-land
136
X-44
4th St. Ext.
Wyland-ville
Ginger Hill
Traffic Light
Dunnings-ville
Kammerer
Frye
Clokeyville
Eighty Four
917
Hazel Kirk
Cracker Jack
Sudan
481
I-70 to Wash. PA & I-79
X-25
70
X-27
Obs. Site
Pavilion
MINGO PARK DETAILS
(Road Ends)
Van Voorhis
Ghennes Heights
X-39
X-31
Mingo Creek Rd.
Gate S-10
Redds Mill
Sugar Run Rd.
Covered Bridge
Chapel Rd.
Warner
Sichi Rd.
Farquhar
Old 71
Glyde
40
Mingo Inn
Edwards Chapel
Mansion Rd.
X-32
Gibson
Lincoln Ave.
Jonestown
32a
Twin Bridges
I-70 to I-76 (PA Turnpike)
Rt. 43 to I-70