

GUNNISON VALLEY OBSERVATORY VOLUNTEER INFORMATION



CARPE NOCTEM SEIZE THE NIGHT

Location and Contact

The Gunnison Valley Observatory is located at 2804 County Road 38. To get to the observatory proceed west on Hwy 50 out of town, turn left on Gold Basin Road, CR 38 (the road to Hartman Rocks), continue around the airport, then south approx. 2 miles, the observatory parking lot will be on your left.

The observatory phone number is 642-1111. We have an answering machine that will be checked weekly and the nights that we have events. If you need to contact a person quickly, try the following individuals:

- Jeff Lazo (Volunteer Coordinator) – 303-517-8064 Jeffrey.k.lazo@gmail.com
- Mike Brooks – 970-596-0927
- Suzanne Taylor – 970-964-7796

Mission

The Observatory is dedicated to achieving the following objectives:

- Public telescope viewing programs geared toward establishing a new form of science-oriented recreation that appeals to both the resident and tourist community.
- Outreach programs to improve the effectiveness of teaching astronomy to K-12 and college level students, particularly those students that are traditionally underserved.
- Facilities that can support and enrich the amateur astronomical community.
- Facilities that support basic research in astronomy.

Programming

Public Nights

For the summer of 2022 we will offer public programs every Friday & Saturday evening from June 17 through August 20. On Friday nights we offer a public astronomy talk and two dome tours. On Saturdays we offer 3 dome tours unless it's a full moon night, in which case we just offer an astronomy talk. Visitors can purchase tickets for the astronomy talks (\$5 per person) and dome tours (\$10 per person) on our website, or on site if available. Astronomy talks begin at 9 PM in June and July and 8:45 PM in August. Friday dome tours start after the astronomy talk. Saturday dome tours begin at 9:30 PM in June and July and 9:00 PM in August. The last

dome tour ends around 10:40 PM on Fridays and 11:15 PM on Saturdays. Volunteers are expected to arrive by 8:15 PM and be on site until all visitors have left (with some exceptions depending on the volunteer role).

Private Events

We offer several private parties in which a group reserves the entire facility for two hours. These happen on Sundays or Mondays (mostly) and are listed on the summer schedule. Private parties are usually run with 2-4 volunteers depending on group size. Additionally, we have several special events that will require more volunteers: two Spanish nights, private parties featuring large groups (airstream group and music camp), and a Crested Butte Music Festival concert. These can also be found on the calendar and will require a full staffing (8-10) of volunteers.

Volunteer Assignments

Observatory Host/Greeter

These volunteers greet our guests and help them to navigate their observatory experience. On Friday nights or for large special events we will have two greeters – a parking lot greeter and an inside greeter. Specific duties associated with these roles are as follows

Parking lot greeter

- Check if guests have purchased tickets online
- Provide a basic overview of the evening's observatory programs
- Tell guests where to go
- Instruct mobility-impaired individuals where to go
- Generally, the parking lot greeter will transition to assisting the inside greeter once the program has started

Inside greeter

- Sell tickets for those who did not purchase online
- Provide information on the schedule of programs
- Monitor the gift shop and sell merchandise
- Complete attendance, income, and related documents
- Oversee the traffic flow into and out of the observatory building
- Assist with cleaning, arranging seating, and setting up basic AV equipment.

Outside Small-Scope Operator

These volunteers run our smaller outside telescope and teach the public about the night sky. New volunteers will be trained in basic telescope operation and will learn to identify and point out key objects in the night sky. They will interact with a regular flow of guests ranging from very young to very old and must be enthusiastic about sharing the wonders of the night sky with guests of all levels of knowledge and ability. At the beginning and end of the night, these volunteers will also help with set up and take down, as well as assisting our guests and the lecture presenter during the astronomy talk.

Dome Scope Operator

These volunteers must undergo specific training in the operation of the large 30" telescope, its

software, and the dome itself. These individuals need to have good computer awareness, a technical mindset, and be detailed oriented and patient. They are responsible for the safe operation of the scope and the dome as well as the safety of our guests when using the dome telescope. They are also in charge of starting up the telescope prior to use and shutting down the telescope at the end of the evening.

Evening Sky Interpreters: Dome Interpreter & Small-Scope Interpreter

These volunteers must have a basic knowledge of astronomy and the night sky. These individuals are the observatory's "public face" and therefore good public speaking, presentation, and social skills are important for this assignment. Generally, these volunteers are also able to setup and run the observatory's telescopes, AV equipment, and may be asked to create basic PowerPoint presentations.

Astronomy Talk Lecturer

These volunteers need to have some formal astronomy/physics training or be a well-seasoned amateur astronomer. These individuals create and deliver formal lectures and develop the necessary supplemental or AV material for those presentations. Their programs must be crafted with an awareness of the principles of the NPS (National Park Service) interpretation process.

Additional Volunteer Opportunities

The following opportunities don't require attendance at evening Observatory events and offer flexible schedules:

Observatory Public Relations Assistant- These volunteers take an active role in creating content for our weekly press-releases, our Facebook and Web sites and other related advertising publications. Additionally, they seek to take photos, and gather other materials that can help the observatory record its history. They generally work off-site and apart from our public viewing nights. However, to do their job effectively, they should attend many of our events, gain a basic awareness of public astronomy, and attend board meetings when possible.

Maintenance: Building & Site - These volunteers assist the observatory staff with a variety of tasks related to the building, furnishings and site maintenance including trash removal and future landscaping needs.

Maintenance: Dome & Scope - These volunteers assist the observatory engineering committee with the optical and physical adjustment of the scope and its software. Under the supervision and authority of the Observatory Engineer, they help maintain the observatory's key technology, computers, AV equipment, eyepieces and imaging hardware and software.

Volunteer expectations

If you can't make your assigned volunteer slot, please let the Volunteer Coordinator Jeff Lazo: Jeffrey.k.lazo@gmail.com Cell: 303-517-8064) know as soon as possible. Also, if the conflict arises the evening of the event, you can leave a message on GVO phone 642-1111.

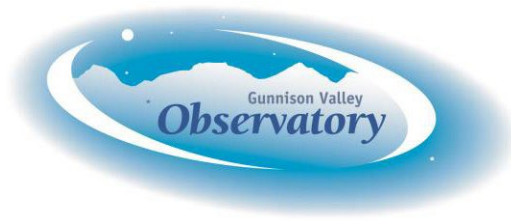
- All volunteers should report to the observatory at least 30 minutes prior the public opening of the observatory, or earlier as required by your volunteer position.
- Only trained and board approved individuals are allowed to operate the dome and its telescope.
- Most visitors don't know what to expect at a stargazing event. Talk to them about what the night's activities will entail, it will help them get more out of the experience.
- Remember as a volunteer, your focus needs to be on our guest needs. Socializing with other volunteers is part of GVO, but not our primary purpose during public viewing nights.
- Encourage the visitors to ask questions about GVO, our purpose, the equipment, the night sky, and most importantly, how they can help us continue our mission.
- If visitors wear glasses, have them try to first look through the telescope eyepiece with their glasses. If that doesn't work then suggest that they try viewing without their glasses, remember you'll need to help them adjust the telescope focuser.
- Help our visitors appreciate the importance of dark skies, and the need to have good dark adaption, for their viewing pleasure. Remember, it takes 20-30 minutes to become fully dark adapted, and one poorly directed flashlight can ruin adapted eyes. Also, where possible help educate them about light pollution and how it can ruin observational astronomy.
- Bring a small flashlight, (red filtered is preferred) as the path between the parking lot and the observatory is not well lit.
- No aerosol sprays (Bug repellents) are to be used near any of the telescopes. Such sprays have caustic chemicals that can damage eyepieces and mirrors. Please actively enforce this rule.
- We want all of our guests to enjoy their experience, so please remind parents that children are welcome, but should be well supervised. No climbing on the berm and running in the courtyard (especially when dark) is to be discouraged.
- Alcohol is prohibited at the facility, except by special arrangement of the GVO board (generally for private party events). In addition, the observatory is a smoke free zone, so please don't bring tobacco products.
- Remember to park in the outer parking area, only those with special needs are to park within the berm area.
- Don't bring animals or pets to the observatory, except service dogs.
- In case of an emergency, accident or serious weather situation please immediately contact the GVO on-site representative. They are responsible for GVO's formal response. Other than minor issues, which might be handled by volunteers, GVO will seek to use the resources available through a 911 call.

Tilden's Principles of Interpretation

- Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or being described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- Interpretation is an art which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any artis in some degree teachable.
- The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but provocation.
- Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
- Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

<https://mylearning.nps.gov/library-resources/tildens-six-principles-ace/>

GVO VOLUNTEER DATA SHEET



Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I. _____

Phone #'s: _____

Street Address _____ City _____

Preferred Email: _____

What previous astronomy background do you have? (check all that apply)

- I like to look at the night sky
- I have my own personal telescope
- I have taken a course in astronomy
- I've been an amateur astronomer for a number of years
- I have significant educational background in the field
- I have professional astronomical experience

Note: No astronomy experience is required to be a GVO volunteer!

Do you have any specialized skills that you believe would benefit the observatory? (Please use the back of this sheet for your comments)

In general, when are you available for volunteer work?

What volunteer activities/positions would you like to help with at the observatory?

I have read the Volunteer Information: _____

Signature