Spring 2025 Stargazing Programs at the

John Glenn Astronomy Park

The John Glenn astronomy Park (JGAP) is open at all times *(with the exception of our program nights, see below)* for people to enjoy views of sky, day or night. Just drive up!

On clear Friday and Saturday nights, from March 7 through the weekend before Thanskgiving, we do "guided stargazing" programs starting at sunset. *(Check times listed below.)* These often involve a laser-guided "tour" of the constellations and features of the sky. Volunteers bring, or "adopt" telescopes for the evening and share views in our telescope. Visitors to our programs can get in line for a view through our enormous "Wow!" telescope in our observatory when conditions are favorable. On many nights astro-imagers on site will share live views of celestial objects on their computer screens.

Please note: Because our parking space is limited, **we require visitors to our Friday and Saturday night programs to secure a free parking pass for the early evening hours.** Please respect this requirement to ensure that we do not run out parking space for those who have pre-planned a trip to JGAP. *Space is infinite, our parking area is not.*

Get one at: **registration.jgap.org**

Additional parking passes are frequently posted a few days before each event. Watch for them at the bottom of the list.

Visitors to the Hocking Hills Lodge and the Hocking Hills State Park Cabins (immediately alongside JGAP) are welcome to walk over without a pass.

If you have your own telescope, binoculars, or just two eyes that love to gaze upon the stars, you are free to drive into JGAP on a *non-program* night without a parking pass. Clear, moonless nights show off the dark skies of the Hocking Hills the best.

Here's what to expect at our programs this Spring:

March 7-8: Jupiter, Mars and the Moon: Mars, having reached its closest point to Earth back in January, is still bright and high in the sky. Jupiter, is also well placed for viewing. Joining them is the rugged first quarter moon. We'll be talking about next Friday morning's Total Lunar Eclipse, which does not happen during our regular program time, but which will be visible from anyone's back yard just after midnight. If conditions are good, Mercury might be visible as well. (6:30 PM EST)

March 14-15 : The Moon Illusion: Having just gone through an eclipse the previous morning, the full (not eclipsed) moon rises early Friday and Saturday evening providing a lovely chance to experience the curious "moon illusion" which makes the moon seem larger to human eyes when near the horizon. (7:30 PM EDT)

March 21-22: The Great Orion Nebula: One of the most spectacular objects in the "deep sky" is the stellar nursery, the Great Orion Nebula. It will be well placed for viewing this weekend, and given the dark skies, easily seen. (7:45 PM)

March 28-29: Celestial Dogs: Canis Minor and Canis Major, the big and little dogs, are well placed for viewing tonight. Come learn about the second brightest star in the sky, Sirius (the sun, of course, is the first) and the star clusters and nebulae in these often overlooked constellations. Also, the Great Orion Nebula. (8:00 PM)

April 4-5: The Rugged First Quarter Moon: The line between night and day on the moon, the terminator, runs right down the middle of the moon this Friday. This brings the mountains, valleys and craters on its surface into stark relief. On Saturday evening we may get a chance to see the "Lunar X" a strange light and shadow feature that makes a bright "x" out of the rims of two craters. Also, Mars and Jupiter. (8:00 PM)

April 11-12: The Micro Moon: You've probably heard of a Super Moon, a full moon that occurs when it is a bit closer than usual to the Earth. This month, with the moon a bit further away than usual, we get a Micro Moon. Also Mars and Jupiter. (8:00 PM)

April 18-19: The Celestial Beehive: High overhead on spring nights, in the heart of Cancer the Crab, is a strange fuzzy blob just visible to the naked eye in the dark skies of JGAP. In binoculars and small telescopes, it blooms into a beautiful star cluster. Also, we'll be saying goodbye to Orion. (8:15 PM)

April 25-26: Leo the Lion: Perhaps the oldest of the western constellations, Leo is perfectly placed. Leo lies in the direction of many galaxies, like the pair M65 and M66. We will be hunting down these objects this weekend in dark skies. (8:15 PM)

May 2-3: The Asteroids: The name "Asteroid" comes from the ancient Greek word meaning "Star-like", and they do, indeed look like stars. This weekend, one of the brightest of them, Vesta, is well placed for viewing. It's small, and looks just like a star, but if you observe it multiple times you'll see that it does something that stars do not do: move. Also, the rugged crescent moon. (8:30 PM)

May 9-10: The Moon's Hump: The Ancients looked at the moon that was not half and not full as having a hump. The Latin word for Hump is "gibbous". This weekend's moon is gibbous. On Friday, the bright crater Aristarchus is easily seen. On Saturday, the large crater Pythagoras, with its central mountain, is peeking out of the shadow. (8:30 PM)

May 16-17: The Mother of the Hubble Space Telescope: May 15 marks the 100th birthday of the "Mother of the Hubble Space Telescope" Nancy Grace Roman who guided the conception and planning of the most famous observatory of all time. So we'll be looking at a few of the spring objects that the Hubble has featured in its images. To the human eye these objects are not bright and colorful like deep Hubble images, but the light you see is the actual light that left on its way to Earth thousands, or even millions, of years ago. (8:30 PM)

May 24-24: Galaxy Season: With the glare of the moon out of the way, the faint, distant universe can be more easily seen. This month marks the start of Galaxy Season, when the multitudes of galaxies in the constellations Leo, Virgo, Ursa Major, and Coma Borealis can be explored. (8:45 PM)

May 30-31: The Crescent Moon and the Big Dipper: The crescent moon is both lovely in its own right, and not so bright that it overwhelms other celestial objects. Take a look at its rough and rugged surface, and then stick around to see some the brightest galaxies behind the stars of the Big Dipper. (9:00 PM)

June 6-7: The Bay of Rainbows: One of the most distinct features on the gibbous moon is ancient, eroded, Ohio-sized crater which lunar mappers call sinus iridium, the *bay of rainbows.* It is just one of many lunar features visible tonight. (9:00 PM)

June 13-14: Two Bears and a Dragon. Ursa Major, Ursa Minor and Draco the Dragon are high in the north on late spring evenings. (9:00 PM)

Because our programs are about the stars, they are dependent on weather. They will be called off on rainy or cloudy evenings. Please check the hour-by-hour weather forecast before setting out.

We post notice of whether or not an evening's program will go forward on our website, JGAP.org, and our Facebook Page "John Glenn Astronomy Park", by noon on the same day as the program.

I also recommend checking:

Weather.gov

Put "Logan, OH" into the search bar.

As astronomers say, *Clear Skies!*

The John Glenn Astronomy Park is brought to you by the Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park a non-profit (501c3) membership organization for people who love the Hocking Hills and take special interest in improving Park features and preserving it for the enjoyment of future generations.

If you'd like support the mission of The Friends go to

http://www.friendsofhockinghills.org/

or scan the QR code at right.

FRIENDS OF HOCKING HILLS STATE PARK