

Dark-Sky Festival Guide Oct. 21 & 22 (Final - 10/16/22)

LOCATION

The principal activities of the festival will occur at the **Tyler Bend campground** pavilion on the Buffalo National River, a designated International dark-sky park. However, everyone should check in at the **Silver Hill Float Service**, located near the park entrance on Highway 65, where you can get Information about the festival, and various guides and pick up or purchase relevant items. A food truck and coffee wagon are also planning to be at the Silver Hill location Friday afternoon and during lunch and dinner Saturday.

If you arrive when the Silver Hill venue is closed (see schedule below), you can check in at the information desk at the pavilion, but no purchases will be possible there, and some literature will not be available.



ACTIVITIES

The centerpiece of this event will be the nighttime programming. Beginning with a guided naked-eye tour of the principal constellations of the Fall sky seasoned with classic mythology followed by a “star party” in which telescopic views will be shared of the major planets and deep-sky objects - galaxies, open clusters, globular clusters, nebulas, stars that are dying and being born. As a bonus, the event falls near the peak of the annual Orionid meteor shower. Finally, avid participants with binoculars can find and observe a list of prominent celestial objects in a **celestial scavenger hunt**.¹

If it is cloudy, we will not despair, as there will be engaging alternative programming lined up for each night.

The daytime programming will include lectures, demonstrations, interactive activities, and opportunities to visit with volunteers in diverse “Let’s Talk About” sessions scattered around the venue. Topics ranging from how to bird-safe your home, light your home responsibly, use telescopes and binoculars for sky watching, or taking night sky photos are scheduled. Activities will range from a children’s celestial art contest, stomp rocket, and giant bubble blowing to

¹ There is always the potential to spot a random meteor under a naturally dark sky. A meteor shower occurs when the earth passes through a stream of dust usually left by a comet in the past producing a number of “falling stars” that appear emanate from a particular area in the sky. Most meteor showers are best viewed after midnight. The Orionids typically peak at around ten to twenty meteors per hour. These are fast meteors, often leaving lingering trails and sometimes bright fireballs. The festival nights will be just past the predicted peak.

demonstrations of fluid dynamics, energy, and geology. See the schedule below for more details.

ACCOMMODATIONS – WHERE TO STAY

While the Tyler Bend campground is fully reserved as of this writing, there are first-come-first-served campsites at Tyler Bend. If those fill up, there are others on the river at Grinder's ferry. Finally, the Festival webpage has a section on [where to stay, eat, and other things to see](#). There are campgrounds, RV parks, cabins, and vacation rentals in the area.

PREPARATION

Dress warmer than you think. People so rarely spend time out of doors after dark anymore that they fail to realize how much colder it feels when the sun goes down. Also, bring something warm to **drink and a snack**, especially if you plan to stay up past the guided star party to view the meteor shower or pursue the celestial scavenger hunt on your own.²

It takes twenty minutes or more to **fully dark adapt your eyes**. Exposure to white light will erase dark adaptation in a flash. So, white light flashlights, cameras with flashes, and digital devices, unless used in a night vision mode, are not to be used. Unless you want to use a sky chart or record observations, none of which is essential to enjoy the constellation tour or the star party, you can do without a flashlight. But, if you want one, it needs to be either red or amber in color. These can be readily purchased online or in some larger retail outlets that carry flashlights. Arts & craft stores typically carry red film that you can apply to a regular flashlight. However, the easiest solution is to buy one of the little keychain flashlights on the [Festival webpage store](#), which come with a neck lanyard and sky chart of the October sky. Order now on the festival webpage, and we will have them at the **Silver Hill location** for you to pick up. Don't count on picking these up if you have not pre-ordered as supplies are limited. While you are at it, you might reserve a copy of **Learn the Constellations** as well. We will ship them to you before the event for a small fee if you like, or pick them up at **Silver Hill**.

Parking at the pavilion is an issue because of concern for car lights coming and going from the lot. Please follow these guidelines if parking in the pavilion area during the evening sessions:

1. If you are staying in the park leave your vehicle at the campsite and walk to and from the pavilion.
2. If coming from outside the park, please try and come before the evening activities start (see schedule below) and if possible stay until the event is over at 10:00.
3. Park facing north (toward the river and away from the pavilion). This will require backing into the spaces closest to the pavilion (see sketch below). The bus spaces in the middle of the parking lot should hold several vehicles. If you are the first into one of these spaces, pull all the way forward.

² The only telescopes allowed on the field are those brought by the volunteers who are sharing views with the public. Telescope volunteers are welcome. If that interests you go here to [register as a volunteer](#).

4. Park as far into the west end of the lot as you can unless you plan to leave early, in which case, park in the northernmost row as near the exit as you can.

Binoculars are great for sky-watching but are not needed during the organized program. After the program, they could be used with a sky chart, Learn the Constellations Booklet, or a smartphone app (if it has a night vision feature) to do your own exploring or to participate in the celestial scavenger hunt. They are of no value in meteor watching.

The organized program of the festival ends each night at 10:00. Anyone planning to observe after the program, meteor shower watchers especially, will want some kind of **ground blanket, sleeping bag, mat, or reclining chair**. The circle in front of the visitor's center will be available for meteor watchers to lay out, as will the Homestead field at the top of the ridge. These are entirely on-your-own activities.

There will be a number of Door Prizes, including two pairs of binoculars, A light-n-Lanyard pair, Learn the Constellations Guide, by Rocky Togni, a Solar Eclipse Pinhole Projection Kit, and CAAS/ANSA custom Rainbow Symphony eclipse glasses. A door prize ticket can be picked up by visiting the Silver Hill venue, visiting certain tables at the pavilion, and listening to certain talks. See the program below and look for the *.

Program Schedule Outline: (Note: numbers in parentheses are keyed to the event location map below. Please check back ten days out for any final adjustments to the schedule.)

➤ **Silver Hill Float Center - Open Friday 4:00 – 7:00 PM, Saturday 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM & 5:00 – 7:00 PM**

- Information: Event news, event guides, and various informative handouts. (Note: general event information will also be available at the pavilion site, but not all handouts will be.)
- Sales: Observing kits (flashlights, lanyards, guides), Eclipse glasses, bird-safe window materials (Audubon). Oct. sky charts and celestial scavenger hunt materials are free while supplies last, but donations are most welcome to help cover the costs of the event. As noted best to order the observing kits in advance and pick them up at the event.
- Third-party services: Ol'Barts Southern Eats food truck and Blue Sail coffee trailer.

➤ **Tyler Bend Pavilion – Friday:**

- 4:00 PM, let's Talk Show-N-Tell tabling open:
 - Telescopes (1)
 - Solar Telescope (CAAS) (2)
 - Nightscape photography contest (3)
 - Library telescopes & Nature at night (NCAMN)(12)*
 - Meteorites (ASGC)(11)*
 - 2024 Solar Eclipse (CAAS & BRDCD)(10)*

- Birds, amphibians, and light pollution & bird-safe homes (AR & Greater Ozark Audubon & Lights-out Heartland)(14)*
- Private Land Conservation in the Buffalo River Valley (BRF) (13)*
- Responsible lighting (ANSA) (15)*
- Audio Visual Presentations (4):
 - 4:15 – Welcome remarks (Jeff Hoeper)
 - 4:30 – What’s up tonight, the celestial scavenger hunt and Meteors(Rocky Togni)
 - 5:00 – Observing with Binoculars (Daniel Barth)
 - 5:30 - Observing celestial objects through a telescope, (etiquette, don’t move it, use averted vision, avoid white light, & how to watch a meteor shower (Michael Borrelli)
- 5:45 PM, Closing the daytime program – what to expect tonight (Jeff Hoeper).
- 6:00 – 7:30 PM, Dinner break
- 7:30 PM Constellation tour begins (1 & 6) (N.T. ends 7:23)(Darrell Heath & Dr. Barth)
- 7:50 PM Telescopic views begin (1 & 6) (astronomical twilight ends 7:52)
- 7:50 PM Nightscape photography workshop (7)
- 10:00 PM, Formal star party ends; on-your-own observing continues (Watch for meteors, learn the constellations, pursue the celestial scavenger hunt).

➤ **Tyler Bend Pavilion – Saturday:**

12:45 PM, let’s Talk Show-N-Tell tabling open:

- Telescopes (1)
- Solar Telescope (CAAS) (2)
- Nightscape photography contest (3)
- Library telescopes & Nature at night (NCAMN)(12)*
- Meteorites (ASGC)(11)*
- 2024 Solar Eclipse (CAAS & BRDCDC)(10)*
- Birds, amphibians, and light pollution & bird-safe homes (AR & Greater Ozark Audubon & Lights-out Heartland)(14)*
- Private Land Conservation in the Buffalo River Valley (BRF) (13)*
- Responsible lighting (ANSA) (15)*
- Audio Visual Presentations (4)
 - 12:45 - Welcome remarks (Jeff Hoeper)
 - 1:00 - The birth and death of stars (Bruce McMath)
 - 1:30 - Birds After Dark -Learn what birds do during a typical October night (Jack Stewart)*
 - 2:00 - The Resurrection of a Giant Refractor – (Kent Marts)*
 - 2:30 - Buffalo River Foundation: Conservation Easements, Acquisitions, and Dark Skies (Ross Noland)*
 - 3:00 - Observing 2024 solar eclipse (Carl Freyaldenhoven and Darcy Howard)*
 - 3:30 - Lights out Heartland (Don Ficken)*
 - 4:00 - Beginning nightscape photography (Eric Stinnet)
 - 4:30 - Pollinators and light pollution (Casey Johansson)*

- 5:00 - The Hunt for Planet B (documentary on James Webb and six key women scientists behind the development)*
 - Children's (of all ages) programs:
 - 1:30 - Children's celestial art (3)
 - 2:15 – 3:15
 - ◆ Stomp Rockets & Bubble Blowing (7)
 - ◆ Stem Cluster (fluid dynamics, energy & geology) (3)
 - 3:30 - Children's celestial art (3)
 - 4:15 – 5:15
 - ◆ Stomp Rockets & Bubble Blowing (7)
 - ◆ Stem Cluster (fluid dynamics, energy & geology) (3)
 - The Model Solar System (Darrell Heath) (8)
 - 6:00 PM Dinner
 - 7:30 PM Constellation tour begins (1 & 6) (N.T. ends 7:23)(Darrell Heath & Dr. Daniel Barth) 7:50 Nightscape photography workshop (7)
 - 7:50 PM Telescopic views begin (1 & 6)(astronomical twilight ends 7:52)
 - 10:00 PM, Formal star party ends; on-your-own observing continues (Watch for meteors, learn the constellations, pursue the celestial scavenger hunt).
- CLOUDY NIGHT PROGRAMMING – Possible offerings:
- A million, billion, trillion (Dr. Daniel Barth)
 - A very brief history of observational astronomy (Jeff Hoyer)
 - About BNR Dark-Sky designation and program (Park Ranger)
 - The Naming of stars (Bruce McMath)
 - How to measure your sky's light pollution level and report it as a citizen scientist (Bruce McMath)
 - An Owl Prowl, wolves spiders, and glow worm search.

Dark Sky Festival • Tyler Bend Campground Pavilion • Buffalo National River

