

Tours of the universe

Free afternoon tours of the observatory may include exploring the primary telescope dome, display areas or scenic grounds, but the main event is observing the sun through a specially filtered telescope during the once-daily solar show. Visitors also will have an opportunity to look through the main 24.5" telescope at distant scenery and experience an impressive landscape which includes Oregon's Mount Hood and Washington's Klickitat Valley.

The free evening program includes classroom presentations on astronomical topics, laser-guided outdoor tours of constellations with the unaided eye, and observations through the real eyepiece of the big 24.5" telescope. Mountains and craters on the moon, the rings of Saturn, the moons of Jupiter, distant star clusters, nebulae and galaxies are all potential subjects of evening observation.

Special programs and guest speakers may be available throughout the year.

Hours

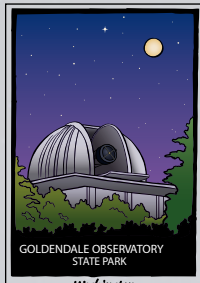
For observatory hours, visit online at www.parks.state.wa.us

The Discover Pass is required for day visits to state parks and access to other state-managed recreation lands. The pass provides access to millions of acres of parks, wildlife areas, trails, natural areas and water-access sites. The annual pass is transferable between two vehicles.

- Annual pass: \$30 • One-day pass: \$10 (transaction and dealer fees may apply)

The Discover Pass can be purchased online, by phone or in person. For details, visit www.discoverpass.wa.gov or call (866) 320-9933.

Thank you for supporting Washington state recreation lands.



Goldendale Observatory
1602 Observatory Drive
Goldendale, WA 98620
(509) 773-3141

State Parks information:
(360) 902-8844

Reservations: Online at www.parks.state.wa.us or call (888) CAMPOUT or (888) 226-7688

Other state parks located in the general area:
Brooks Memorial, Maryhill, Columbia Hills and Doug's Beach

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If you would like to support Washington State Parks even more, please consider making a donation when renewing your license plate tabs. You also may place a check in a donation box when you visit state parks.

Donations are a significant part of the State Parks budget and are needed to keep your parks open and operating.

For more information, visit www.parks.state.wa.us/donations

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission



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All Washington state parks are developed and maintained for the enjoyment of all people.

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Washington State Parks

Goldendale Observatory

State Park Heritage Site



History

Working in the 1960s, four amateur astronomers—Mack McConnell, John Marshall, Don Conner and Omer VanderVelden—built the 24-inch Cassegrain reflecting telescope that is housed at Goldendale Observatory. The men, only one of whom had a college degree, began their project in an astronomy club at Vancouver's Clark College. They spent more than six years designing and assembling the telescope and grinding the glass for its mirror, spending only \$3,000 on materials.

Due to light pollution and persistent cloud cover, Vancouver was not an ideal location for astronomical observation. The group set out to find a more suitable location for their telescope. As part of their search, Marshall and his wife made a trip to eastern Washington with Don Conner and stopped to eat lunch at a café in Goldendale. They mentioned their project to the café's owner who arranged for them to meet with the town's mayor, George Nesbitt. Eventually,

a proposal was developed to create an observatory and science center with a mission of furthering public astronomy education. Funding for the construction of the observatory was provided by donations, a federal grant and a bank loan. The observatory was dedicated as a public education center on Oct. 13, 1973.

On Feb. 26, 1979, Goldendale Observatory served as the National Astronomical League's headquarters during a solar eclipse. An estimated 15,000 people showed up to watch the event.

The Goldendale Observatory Corporation, a non-profit, volunteer organization, operated the facility through 1980, when the observatory was acquired by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. In 2010, the International Dark-Sky Association designated the observatory a Dark Sky Park due to its low levels of light pollution. It is one of the largest public observatories in the nation.



Welcome to Goldendale Observatory

Goldendale Observatory sits on five acres and has been attracting skywatchers since 1973. The observatory houses one of the nation's largest public telescopes and a number of others. The observatory offers spectacular views of the countryside from atop the observatory hill in the daytime and magnificent views of the universe at night.

