General Information

Contact Information

Park Manager Chip Harrison
Lyman Run State Park
636 Lyman Run Road
Galeton Pa. 16922
Telephone 814-435-5010
E-mail hharrison@pa.gov

Dark Sky Park Status Level
Gold Level

Number of site visitors in the last year

Total Attendance September 2014 – September 2015
50,031

Note: 2014 and 2013 reflects October to October and 2015 reflects a September to September timeline.

Night Sky Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Night Sky Programs</td>
<td>9,227</td>
<td>11,660</td>
<td>8,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astronomer overnight</td>
<td>10,171</td>
<td>9,588</td>
<td>7,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Astronomer night Sky Viewing</td>
<td>8,185</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-personal Daytime Astronomy Interpretation</td>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rustic Camping</td>
<td>7,407</td>
<td>3,608</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Night Sky Attendance</td>
<td>42,690</td>
<td>33,756</td>
<td>22,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Park Attendance</td>
<td>50,031</td>
<td>56,599</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Lighting

All lighting is 100% full cut off and compliant with the outdoor lighting guidelines and the Management Plan Night Sky Objectives.
## Sky Quality

### 2015 Unihedron Sky Quality Meter Readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>MPSAS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>11-Jun-15</td>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>21.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>11-Jun-15</td>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>21.70 = 21.62 6.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>18-Jul-15</td>
<td>1:00 AM</td>
<td>21.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>18-Jul-15</td>
<td>1:00 AM</td>
<td>21.76 = 21.78 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>5-Aug-15</td>
<td>10:30 PM</td>
<td>21.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>5-Aug-15</td>
<td>10:30 PM</td>
<td>21.76 = 21.66 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9-Aug-15</td>
<td>10:10 PM</td>
<td>21.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>9-Aug-15</td>
<td>10:10 PM</td>
<td>21.58 = 21.68 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>11-Aug-15</td>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>11-Aug-15</td>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td>21.75 = 21.69 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>12-Aug-15</td>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td>21.70 = 21.71 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>13-Aug-15</td>
<td>10:30 PM</td>
<td>21.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>13-Aug-15</td>
<td>10:30 PM</td>
<td>21.64 = 21.72 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>14-Aug-15</td>
<td>12:00 AM</td>
<td>21.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>14-Aug-15</td>
<td>12:00 AM</td>
<td>21.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>14-Aug-15</td>
<td>12:00 AM</td>
<td>21.64 = 21.67 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>4-Sep-15</td>
<td>10:15 PM</td>
<td>21.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>4-Sep-15</td>
<td>10:15 PM</td>
<td>21.78 = 21.79 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>5-Sep-15</td>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td>21.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>5-Sep-15</td>
<td>11:00 PM</td>
<td>21.74 = 21.73 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherry Springs</td>
<td>14-Sep-15</td>
<td>10:20 PM</td>
<td>21.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visual Limiting Magnitude.

Park Staff and astronomers have observed a visual limiting of 6.4 to 7.0 for Cherry Springs under clear skies and good seeing conditions.

**Conservation and Research**

Documenting Local Night Sky Brightness:

Mark Brown with DCNR Topographic and Geologic Survey has proposed a statewide project for monitoring and establishing a base line for sky brightness in Pennsylvania State Parks and Forest.

‘<<<< Goal of obtaining at least a dark sky reading or rating from every state park across Pennsylvania. The information/dark sky readings could be used in GIS (Geographical Information Science) to develop maps and/or be incorporated into DCNR’s Interactive Map. By showing dark sky measurements or a sky rating of sorts for the state parks, this would provide valuable information to amateur/serious star gazers and the public about other state parks which are available and adequate for enjoyable star gazing or astronomy purposes. At the minimum, a single reading with a Sky Quality Meter at a “dedicated” dark location in a park (as determined by the park manager) could be annotated/noted on the interactive map with corresponding information. Furthermore, a more ambitious study could be undertaken by acquiring multiple readings along and within a state park boundary. Using GIS, a map could be developed and serve as a baseline for comparison with light pollution levels, thus providing information on where lighting practices can be improved within park areas. >>>>>'

**Funding**

Operational funding is provided by general funds from the Pennsylvania State Budget allocation to Bureau of State Parks.

The Cherry Springs Dark Sky Fund (A Pennsylvania Parks and Forestry Foundation Friends Group) continues to be a critically important partner with Dark Sky Fund donations used to enhance the stargazing and astronomy experience at Cherry Springs
State Park. Donations have been used to educate local residents and visitors about the value of the night sky resource and why it needs to be preserved.

**Arts and Culture**

In 2015 we offered two Arts and Cultural events. The first event, “A Brassy Night in the Black Skies” featured a performance by the Endless Mountain Music Festival (EMMF) Brass Quintet - EMMF co-sponsored the event. The concert was followed by stargazing. The second event was called “Stars in the Arts” and was hosted by the Friends of Lyman Run at nearby Lyman Run State Park and featured PA Wilds and Rt. 6 sanctioned artisans, food vendors and music by folklorist Van Wagner and an acoustical trio called Vernal Pool.

“A Brassy Night in the Black Skies

Wednesday, August 5 at 8:00pm to 11:00pm

Come enjoy the night sky of Cherry Springs State Park accompanied by a wonderful night of brass music performed by the Endless Mountain Music Festival (EMMF) Brass Quintet.

This is a FREE part of the EMMF concert series especially designed for children and seniors. All are welcome and donations will be accepted. Seating is available or you can bring chairs or a blanket. Dress for the cooler weather at the park.

The works of Gustav Holst, Scott Joplin, the ever popular John Phillip Sousa (among others) will be featured.

After a short intermission, a special Night Sky Tour will conclude your evening under the stars.”

“<<<<<STARS IN THE ARTS>>>>>>”
Outreach

**Public Outreach:**

Light Pollution outreach to the surrounding local communities.

- Meeting with local land owner groups providing good lighting fixtures information and brochure’s
- Local fairs and community events set up Light Pollution/Dark Sky/Good Lighting displays
- Public Library Stargazing Night at Cherry Springs
- Expanded Public Library Star Gazing Loaner Trunk Program to Galeton and Ulysses.

**Programming:**
Public stargazing programs are presented by park educational staff and dark sky team volunteers every Friday and Saturday night Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend and Saturday night programs were offered from early April to Memorial Day weekend and from Labor Day until the end of October. Since its designation in 2008, attendance for the park’s evening programs and stargazing has grown to unprecedented numbers. In an effort to address the large crowds and their impact on the night sky and program quality starting in July program pre-registration was required for all advertised programs. Additionally Night Sky Tour programming at the park also was expanded to include Sunday evenings and select weeknights during the months of July and August in an attempt to control the large numbers of visitors coming to the programs.

Public Night Sky Programs attendance for 2015 was 9,227 compared to 11,660 in 2014. The decrease was a result of rainy weather and cloud cover during June and July along with program numbers cap and pre-registration requirement.

Note the total number of visitors to Cherry Springs was 50,031 and once again it is estimated that close to 80% is exposed to some type of night sky message be it interpretive waysides, brochures, or informational pamphlets on astronomy/light pollution awareness.

Cherry Springs – Night Sky Attendance increased 21% from 33,756 visitors in 2014 to 42,690 visitors in 2015. This is due to the increase of visitors coming to Cherry Springs to view the night sky largely as result of social media coverage. Campground usage almost doubled from last year going from 3,608 in 2014 to 7,407 in 2015.

Events

Star Parties: Two star parties are held at the park each year. These are pre-paid, pre-registered events hosted by Astronomy Clubs where over 500 astronomers gather to stargaze and listen to slated professional speakers. Astronomy vendors are also on site. These are either 2 – 3 day (night) events.

<<<“BLACK FOREST STAR PARTY

The Black Forest Star Party (BFSP) is an annual dark-sky amateur astronomy observing event hosted by the Central Pennsylvania Observers (CPO). Held every year since 1999, the BFSP generally spans a weekend in the late summer or early fall at Cherry Springs State Park in Potter County, Pennsylvania. http://bfsp.org/ >>>"
“Cherry Springs Star Party

The Cherry Springs Star Party is an annual dark-sky amateur astronomy event that has been running every year in early to late June since 2005 at Cherry Springs State Park and is hosted by the Astronomical Society of Harrisburg, PA Inc.
http://www.astrohbg.org/CSSP/index.php

A Sampling of Visitors Comments

Review on Cherry Springs from Tripadvisor:

Myriad Marvels”
Reviewed September 16, 2015
“This is the place to see the Milky Way on the East Coast. I learned about this Dark Sky Park during an astronomy lecture while visiting the Grand Canyon. The drive took me 5 1/2 hours, but it was worth it! I will definitely be back...again and again”

- Visitor from Maryland

“What great night sky program they do here”
Reviewed August 25, 2015

“This night sky program was done by an intelligent and entertaining state park staff member. Though we were not there on the best of nights we plan on returning. We did get to see the moon and Saturn with its rings.”

- Stephen M. from Ridgway, PA

“Cherry Spring State Park - fantastic”
“Cherry Springs State Park is fabulous. I never realized how much light pollution diminishes the enjoyment of simply being able to see the night sky.”

“The Star Gazing presentation was wonderful. The Ranger who presents the program uses a laser pen to locate stars, constellations and satellites. The audience is in a "natural" planetarium. Any star or other object is in the summer sky at that time. We had a beautiful clear sky the 2 nights we were there. The views were fantastic. At the conclusion of the presentation, audience members are invited for additional viewing through the telescopes provided. There were about 150 people and there was enough time for everyone to take advantage of this opportunity. The Rangers were very generous with their time and the telescopes were available until everyone had a turn (or turns).”

- Visited August 2015

“Cherry Springs”
Reviewed August 14, 2015

“Words can't describe the beauty of nature that you'll experience here. And all for free! A must do for virtually anyone. Check with the park for the excellent presentations run by the environmental Educators from time to time.”

- Matt M. Visited August 2015

Reviewed February 25, 2015

“It is a place that everyone should experience at least once. If you think you've seen the stars before--you've never seen them like this.”

- Mary B. Saint Marys, PA

“Star Gazing”
Reviewed September 15, 2015

“…excellent place for star gazing. highly recommend it. very unique. the dark skies provide a great back drop for viewing the stars. we saw the milky way galaxy and it was fantastic…”

“I never knew there were so many stars up there!”
Reviewed September 10, 2015

“We visited Labor Day weekend. I am not an outdoorsy person but thoroughly enjoyed gazing at the stars until 3 am each night. ”

“The Rangers rated the nights as about 5 out of 10 but I have no idea what a 10 could possibly look like. 5 was pretty darn good. So many stars! The Milky Way! The shooting stars! Wow!”

“Stars! all over the sky”
Reviewed August 25, 2015
“The best place for star gazing, very dark. Milky Way, shooting stars, satellites. Lots air traffic on the far east direction, but did not interfere the star watching.”

Visited August 2015

“Cherry Spring State Park - fantastic”  Reviewed August 24, 2015

“You will be amazed at the night sky”  Reviewed August 21, 2015

"If you are looking for a good place to see the stars on the east coast, this is it. Come up on a NEW moon when it will be really dark. On a clear night, you will be amazed at the sky full of stars and the Milky Way. The park is set up for star gazing with bermed areas and fields to setup telescopes, but all you really need is a blanket and lie back and look at the sky. There is camping at the park or at one of the other near- by state parks."

Visited August 2015

“Cherry Springs ”  Reviewed August 14, 2015

“Words can't describe the beauty of nature that you'll experience here. And all for free! A must do for virtually anyone. Check with the park for the excellent presentations run by the enviro. Educators from time to time.”

Visited August 2015

“A must see!”  Reviewed February 25, 2015

“Quiet and Visibly Stunning”  Reviewed November 10, 2014

“Unfortunately it was cloudy and raining when we visited. But what was amazing was that it was utterly quiet and we could still tell how beautiful the sky was and would be without the clouds...a must visit, at night, if in the area!”

“Mind blowing”  Reviewed October 18, 2014 via mobile
“This spot has a bunch of long benches set up in a huge field with red lights to show the path to it. Don't bring a flashlight! People’s eyes are adjusting to the dark! There is a person who professionally uses a special laser to give the group a tour of the sky. When I went, I saw Saturn, Mars, the Milky Way, a whole bunch of constellations, and satellites. I could sit there all night. Also, it was free! My gosh it was an amazing night.”

Visited August 2014

“Best star gazing east of the Mississippi.” Reviewed August 19, 2014 via mobile

“We read that this park has been called the best place to star gaze east of the Mississippi and they were right. It is high atop a mountain and dark as can be. You can stay at the park or at nearby Lyman Run State Park. Not much else to do but star gaze and hike. They hold informational programs on Fridays and Saturdays during the summer and Saturdays only during the spring and fall and our guide was informative and so interesting! Will go back again.”

Visited August 2014

“Wow” Reviewed June 17, 2014

“Seeing the stars and planets was amazing. The sky was beautiful and the site was great. I loved learning about the stars and planets and other astronomical wonders. I would recommend Cherry Springs State Park for both novices and experts. Truly a must do and must see experience!”

Visited May 2014
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 30, 2015

Cherry Springs State Park Taking Steps to Ensure Great Visitor Experience During Dark Sky Programs

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources today announced it will be initiating several changes at the park in an effort to preserve the “dark sky” experience while improving visitors’ satisfaction and safety at Cherry Springs State Park in Potter County.

“Interest in Cherry Springs State Park and its Night Sky Tour astronomy programs is growing exponentially. The park’s Dark Sky designation is drawing visitors from hundreds of miles away with international representation to the Pennsylvania Wilds,” said Bureau of State Parks Director David Kemmerer. “It is inspiring to see so many people combining their love of the outdoors with an innate curiosity about the stars.”

Cherry Springs State Park is designated as an International Dark Sky Park by the Dark Sky Association – it is the only Dark Sky Park in Pennsylvania. This designation indicates the park’s location provides exceptional night-time beauty, dark skies education programming, and preservation of the night-time environment.

Since its designation in 2008, attendance for the park’s evening programs has grown to unprecedented numbers.

“Recent traditional and “viral” social media coverage has catapulted some program attendance to more than 600 participants. The heightened popularity of this internationally recognized natural treasure has placed a heavy burden on the park facilities and staff, not to mention the integrity of the experience,” Kemmerer said. “We’re thrilled that so many people want to come, but we also want to make sure they have a quality visit when they get here.”

Changes ranging from revised program scheduling and registration processes to improvements to the viewing area landscape are being discussed by the Bureau of State Park team with an eye toward balancing public access, comfort, and experience and protecting the park’s Dark Sky characteristics.

In the interim, starting July 1, visitors who want to attend Night Sky Tour programs at Cherry Springs State Park will be asked to preregister online on the DCNR Events Calendar at http://events.dcnr.pa.gov.

To register for Night Sky programs follow these steps:
• Click on “Places to Go” and scroll to Cherry Springs State Park and click on the park name (orange text).
• Review the list of events offered at Cherry Springs State Park and select the event of your choice.
• On the event page select the blue “Register” button at the top right, and complete the required information.

Night Sky Tour programming at the park also is being expanded to include Sunday evenings and select weeknights during the months of July and August.

The park already has made several on-site changes that are complementary to the Dark Sky designation. In an effort to preserve night vision and prevent light pollution, red-lit walkways now mark the path from the public program parking area to the seating area. Red cellophane also is available to cover flashlights. Signage that explains night sky viewing etiquette is currently in design and will be placed at access points this summer.

Visitors can help protect the stargazing experience for all by:

• Arriving while it is still light so they can orient themselves to the park;
• If arriving after sunset, use low-beam headlights when arriving or departing the parking area and turn headlights off immediately after your vehicle is parked;
• Leave pets at home if attending a Night Sky Program; dim lighting, large crowds and sensitive equipment do not create a pet friendly environment;
• Visiting the park during the week of a new moon or the week prior for maximum viewing;
• Considering visiting on a weeknight -- crowds are usually smaller; and

Visitors may want to check the Clear Sky Chart for Cherry Spring’s web site for current cloud cover and viewing conditions at http://cleardarksky.com/c/ChrSprPkPAkey.html. The Cherry Springs Dark Sky Fun -- the parks friends group -- provides additional information about viewing etiquette at http://www.csspdarkskyfund.org/home/index.

Cherry Springs State Park in the Pennsylvania Wilds is nearly as remote and wild today as it was two centuries ago. Its dark skies make it a haven for astronomers. Named for the large stands of black cherry trees in the park, the 82-acre park is surrounded by the 262,000-acre Susquehannock State Forest. The Susquehannock Trail passes nearby and offers 85 miles of backpacking and hiking.

For information on Cherry Springs State Park, or any of Pennsylvania’s 120 state parks, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us, contact the park complex at (814) 435-5010 or by e-mail at lymansp@pa.gov

Additional Information about Dark Sky preservation is available at www.darksky.org.

MEDIA CONTACT: Christina Novak, 717-772-9101

# # #
Make sure you look at the entire slide show..

August

State College.Com: Weekend Getaway – enjoy a night full of stars at Cherry Spring State Park

September

Online magazine 50 Campfires mentions Cherry Springs as well as other dark parks and also has some good basic articles about stargazing.

The best September skies are bright and clear and offer breath-taking views of the universe around us. They are also rare gems because the end of summer passes too quickly. This issue of 50 Campfires encourages you to...