



THE ROYAL ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA CALGARY CENTRE



MEMBER'S HANDBOOK

We're glad to have you as a member. Come on out and join us in exploring the night sky and sharing our love of astronomy.

(Revised March 2009)

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INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RASC AND THE CALGARY CENTRE

The **Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC)** is a nation-wide, non-profit, charitable organization devoted to the advancement of Astronomy and related sciences.

The RASC dates back to 1868 when 8 amateur astronomers founded an astronomy club in Toronto. The expanding group obtained a charter in 1890 and the name, The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, was adopted in 1903 with the permission of King Edward VII. By 2008 the RASC had more than 4000 members, including amateur and professionals, in 28 centres from coast to coast.

An initial attempt to start a Calgary Centre occurred in the early 1930's, but the effort failed after a few years.

The current Calgary Centre of the RASC was established by a small group in 1958. This group has flourished to over 300 members who all share our love of the night sky and all its wonders.

Read on to find out who we are, where we meet and what we do.

Welcome to the club! We look forward to getting to know you better.

DONATIONS

The Calgary Centre is a registered Charitable Organization and is able to issue an Income Tax Receipt for donations made to the Centre. See our Donations Policy at:

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/donations.htm>

CONTACT INFORMATION

OUR MAILING ADDRESS

R.A.S.C. Calgary Centre
250, 300 5th Ave SW
PO Box 20282
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2P 4J3

OUR WEB ADDRESS

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/>

KEY CONTACTS

The Calgary Centre is lucky to have a fine group of people who are willing to give their time to support us. Members of Council are elected by the membership to one or two year terms based on position. Other Key Individuals are all volunteers. The current list of individuals filling the following positions and their contact information is available on our Calgary Centre web site at:

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/ems>

The Council:	Other Key Individuals:
Centre President	Librarian
Past President	Webmaster/Tour Coordinator
First Vice President	Membership Director
Second Vice President	NOVA Program Director
Treasurer	Observers Group Chairman
Secretary	WCO Observing Site Director
Councilors (8)	ERO Observing Site Director
National Council Reps (2)	StarSeeker Newsletter Editor
	Youth Group Director
	Youth Group Instructors
	Star-B-Q, ASP Coordinator
	Telescopes for Rent Director
	TELUS World of Science Observing Deck Coordinator

COMMITTEES

Many members of the Calgary Centre serve on one or more of our active committees, helping to organize and run the programs we provide to our members and the public. If you are interested in helping the Centre in any of the following areas, please contact the Committee Chair.

Executive Committee
Finance Committee
Library Committee
Light Pollution Abatement Committee (LPAC)
Membership Committee
Nominations Committee
Observing Group Committee
Program Committee
Property Committee
Public Education Committee
Publications Committee
Social Activities Committee

VOLUNTEERING

"Many hands make light work" is an adage we all know is true, and it is no different for us. Us means you too.

Whether you hold seat(s) at council; run a workshop; bring your scope to a public event; help cut the grass or fix the observatory's roof; stuff envelopes; host tours; call members with invitations; sit on a committee; plan an event, produce a newsletter or cut firewood - we need you.

The Calgary Centre has many exciting long-term projects that are currently in progress, and a future wish list. Each and every one is a valuable contribution to our current and future membership, and not one of them will happen without you.

When you hear the call at a General Meeting asking for volunteers, please help if you can. Thanks.

OUR BYLAWS

The Calgary Centre of the RASC is a registered Charitable Organization. The current Bylaws of the Calgary Centre are available to members as a downloadable PDF document in the password protected area of our web site.

MEMBER E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The Calgary Centre does not divulge personal information (including e-mail addresses) to any third party. Members may request that their e-mail address be added to, or removed from a page in the password protected area of our web site by sending a note to the webmaster.

THE RASC NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada
203 - 4920 Dundas St W
Toronto, Ontario
Canada
M9A 1B7

Voice: (416) 924-7973
or toll-free at (888) 924-RASC (7272) in Canada

Fax: (416) 924-2911
Web Site: <http://www.rasc.ca/>
e-Mail addresses: see:
<http://www.rasc.ca/contact/index.shtml>

WEB SITES AND E-MAIL GROUP

THE CALGARY CENTRE WEB SITE

Our website <http://calgary.rasc.ca/> offers a large amount of current information about club happenings, educational resources, photographs from events and links to other astronomy resources around the planet.

Please Note - The Calgary Centre web site has a password protected area containing information restricted to members of the Centre. This is not the same as the members-only area of the National web site. When you joined the RASC, the National Office sent you a userid and password for their site . The userid and password for our site is sent to you separately.

THE NATIONAL WEB SITE

The National web site <http://www.rasc.ca/> is The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's main web page. It is a great tool for keeping up to date on club happenings and astronomical events across the country. This is also where the RASC Observing Certificate Programs are described. There are links to our fellow Centres around Canada, and a great on-line store <http://store.rasc.ca/> for publications, gift ideas and other essential items.

E-MAIL GROUP

Calgary Centre members may opt to join the rasc Calgary e-mail group set up on yahoo.com.
Home page: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rasccalgary>
If you wish to join the new group, click the "Join Now" button on the web page.
Group email address: rasccalgary@yahoogroups.com
Yahoo! terms of service: <http://docs.yahoo.com/info/terms/>

OUR REGULAR MEETINGS

See the **StarSeeker Newsletter** or the **Monthly Events Calendar** on our web site for specific dates for all regular meetings:

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/RASCcalendar.htm>

GENERAL MEETINGS

Centre Members meet as a group, on the 3rd Thursday of each month (except July, August and December), at the Telus World of Science (**TWOS**) (formerly the Calgary Science Centre) 701 11 St. SW, beginning at 19:30. This meeting is free and open to the public.

Thanks to the Telus World of Science, we offer a comfortable meeting place in their Discovery Dome Theatre, and free refreshments (donations always welcome!) during the half-time break.

Many meetings feature well-known speakers hosted by our club and the TWOS and are well attended by members and the public.

Club business is conducted; motions are voted on; current astronomy news and upcoming events are discussed, and each November we hold elections at the meeting for the Council positions that have expired.

Members are invited and encouraged to present talks and/or demonstrations about their particular astronomical interest(s), including personal innovations and experiences.

This is your forum, as a general member, to communicate with your fellow "RASC-CALs". You are welcome and we want to hear from you.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council Members meet at TWOS on the 2nd Thursday of each month (except July and August), also beginning at 19:30. This meeting is open to any member (who attend as non-voting "guests").

OBSERVER'S GROUP MEETINGS

Observer's Group (**OG**) meetings are held monthly (except July and August) at the Wilson Coulee Observatory (**WCO**) on a Saturday nearest the New Moon beginning at 20:00. This meeting is open to all interested members. Please refer to the end of this Handbook regarding a map and directions to the Wilson Coulee Observatory Site.

Warm clothes, binoculars, telescopes, cameras, and charts top the list for these meetings. Because the moon doesn't follow our calendar; look for the monthly Saturday meeting dates and times in your StarSeeker newsletter or on the Monthly Events Calendar on our web site.

This is an excellent venue for new observers to mingle with seasoned gazers, see a variety of interesting equipment and do some more serious observing than your backyard likely offers.

Constellations of the Month are featured with additional presentations and sky charts and occasionally some challenge objects to test your skill.

In March and/or April the OG hosts the Messier Marathon: a Sunset-to-Sunrise event that is as much a social event as a race against the horizon as we try to observe all 110 Messier deep sky objects in one session.

Our WCO clubhouse offers warmth, shelter, a TV/VCR, PC, and facilities, but no running water - so come prepared. The dome houses a 14" Celestron telescope, eyepieces and charts, so bring your adapter for your camera and try some astrophotography.

Members are encouraged to participate by presenting their personal projects; such as homemade telescopes, astrophotographs, book reviews, observations, and other experiences.

NOVA MEETINGS

NOVA (New Observers to Visual Astronomy) meetings are held monthly (except July and August) at the WCO on the Friday before the OG meetings and are a friendly, relaxed way for new members to learn about the night sky. Clear or cloudy, come out for interesting conversation and informal lessons. Please refer to the end of this Handbook regarding a map and directions to the Wilson Coulee Observatory Site.

New members are encouraged to bring their binoculars, telescopes, their guests, or just themselves and develop, or enhance, the skills necessary to truly enjoy observational astronomy.

For the more experienced observers in the Calgary Centre, this is an opportunity to share what you have learned with others, and to help them appreciate our night sky.

Each session will begin with classroom instruction and group discussions, which will allow telescopes to cool outside. There will also be an opportunity for participants to ask questions and to prepare for the evenings observing session. Participants can take advantage of the on site

library for reference material including sky atlas', star charts, etc.

Once the classroom activities are complete the group will head outside for observing. This is a great opportunity to get hands-on instruction and guidance, whether you are looking for help in setting up your scope, or trying to learn your way around the sky.

Each participant will also be given a list of items to observe during the time between monthly meetings. This will allow members to practice some of the things that they have learned during each session.

Our WCO clubhouse offers warmth, shelter, a microwave, TV/VCR, PC, and facilities, but no running water - so come prepared.

Come on out and join us in this unique opportunity to enhance your knowledge and skills in the ever changing field of amateur astronomy.

YOUTH GROUP MEETINGS

Youth Group meetings are held the first and third Saturdays of the month at the TWOS from September to May

One of the best parts of astronomy is the sharing of our celestial interests with the curious generations that follow. One way we do that is through our Youth Group, with willing volunteers providing a combination of classroom studies, observing sessions and hands-on workshops that promote a positive, informed view of our universe.

The Calgary Centre is proud to support the best and most active youth group in Canada, with kids ages 10-18.

We offer three levels of classroom-type programs: beginners, intermediate and advanced - depending on age, with graduation ceremonies held each June at our WCO barbecue.

The beginners group meets at 10:00AM, the advanced group at 12:00 noon and the intermediate group at 2:00PM.

Watch for announcements at General Meetings and in the StarSeeker newsletter for sign-up and location information.

Astronomy is a hobby that can be shared with the whole family and we encourage you and yours to join us.

ANNUAL EVENTS

See the StarSeeker Newsletter or the Monthly Events Calendar on our web site for specific dates for all Annual Events:

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/RASCcalendar.htm>

Many of our members are relatively new to astronomy as a hobby, but by participation in any or all of the events listed below, one will soon learn new skills (and make new friends) in the exciting field of astronomy.

ANNUAL MEMBERS AND GUESTS BANQUET

Early in the New Year we put on the finery and share a delicious, friendly meal together at our Annual Banquet usually at the Best Western Village Park Inn in Motel Village. Awards are presented to members who have performed meritorious service to the club and astroimaging contest winners. Toasts, a fine meal, and door prizes galore are all on the menu. Come join us!

ANNUAL PETER SIM LECTURE

Our March General Meeting is dedicated to the memory of Peter Sim who reigned as the king of volunteer school science visits for the Calgary Centre. Notable guest speakers talking on current and relevant topics highlight this special General Meeting which is usually well publicized and well attended by the public.

ANNUAL MESSIER MARATHON

In March and/or April the OG hosts the Messier Marathon: a Sunset-to-Sunrise one-night event that is as much a social event as a race against the horizon as we try to observe all 110 deep sky objects catalogued by Charles

Messier. There are several pages on our web site dedicated to this adventure in observing.

ANNUAL SUMMER BBQ

June - the summer isn't the best time for observing, but it's a great time for a Bar-B-Q! Members and guests are encouraged to attend this free daytime event at the WCO and meet all those people you talk to in the dark. The club supplies hot dogs, hamburgers, salad, refreshments and desert. Members wishing something more substantial, like steak, must provide their own. A cleanup work party at the WCO precedes the Summer BBQ by a week or two depending on weather.

ANNUAL STAR-B-Q

July sees us camping at the Eccles Ranch Observatory (**ERO**) near Caroline, Alberta for the annual Great Alberta Star-B-Q. A full pork BBQ highlights this inexpensive relaxed family stargazing weekend, planned and operated by centre volunteers. Members are encouraged to lend a hand.

ANNUAL ALBERTA STAR PARTY

The new Moon in September is when we host the annual Alberta Star Party at the ERO near Caroline, or the Starland Recreation Area Campground near Drumheller. Since 1987 dark skies and interesting talks have been featured at this inexpensive astronomy weekend, also planned and operated entirely by centre volunteers. Members are encouraged to lend a hand.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS

Our Annual General Meeting and Elections are held at the November General Meeting.

ANNUAL NEW MEMBERS' NIGHT

November is also the month where we invite all new members and their guests to a welcoming night at the WCO. Come out and show your guests our WCO observatory and let them see where you'll be spending all those nights in the dark. The evening is primarily social in nature and gives new members an excellent opportunity to tour the observing facility and meet other members. The evening features a short program followed by refreshments and telescope viewing (weather permitting).

PUBLIC EVENTS

See the **StarSeeker Newsletter** or the **Monthly Events Calendar** on our web site for specific dates for all **Annual Events:**

<http://calgary.rasc.ca/RASCcalendar.htm>

Many of our members are relatively new to astronomy as a hobby, but by participation in any or all of the events listed below, one will soon learn new skills (and make new friends) in the exciting field of astronomy.

FRIDAY NIGHT OBSERVING

Friday Night Observing is hosted by RASC volunteers at the TWOS from approximately mid-September through end of April using TWOS equipment. This free service allows the public to view the Moon and planets as well as other astronomical delights (weather permitting). It's a perfect opportunity for new members to share their enthusiasm for observing the night sky with the general public. Usual event times are 7:30-8:30 PM during Standard Time (November to March) and 9:00-10:00 PM during Daylight Saving Time (April, September, October). Other events such as "Mars" or "Saturn" nights may be scheduled. Be sure to check the Events Calendar for the exact time as other TWOS events may require it to start at a different time. To volunteer contact the Observing Deck Coordinator.

CBC RADIO MONTHLY SKY HIGHLIGHTS

Centre member and past president Don Hladiuk appears on the CBC Radio Calgary EyeOpener show presenting his "Monthly Sky Highlights" discussing current astronomical events such as; eclipses, comets, planetary positions and NASA events. Tune in to CBC Radio, 1010 AM on your dial, at 6:35AM on the 1st Tuesday of each month for the

latest information on "what's up this month". If you can't catch the broadcast, see his monthly update on our web site.

RAO OPEN HOUSE NIGHTS

The Rothney Astrophysical Observatory (RAO) and the Calgary Centre volunteers host the public at monthly star nights from April to October at the University of Calgary's observatory west of the city. Bring your telescope and enthusiasm for the curious crowds to enjoy. On good nights hundreds of people will stand in line to look through your eyepiece and ask all types of questions; many will become members like you. In March or April the RAO Open House coincides with **International Astronomy Day**. To volunteer just show up early with your scope.

FISH CREEK PARK STAR NIGHTS

The Calgary Centre and Fish Creek Provincial Park host two star nights per year for the public at the Environmental Learning Centre, west end of Fish Creek Provincial Park. One is held in the Spring and another in the Fall. Bring your telescope and enthusiasm for the curious crowds to enjoy. On good nights hundreds of people will stand in line to look through your eyepiece and ask all types of questions; many will become members like you. To volunteer contact the Public Education Committee Director.

THE MAYOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO

Each year for the last several years we have set up our Responsible Lighting display at City Hall during the Mayor's Environmental Expo. This gives our volunteers a chance to explain to groups of primary school children and the general public how poor lighting threatens all of us in one way or another.

WCO TOURS

We offer tours of our WCO observatory to groups - schools, cubs, scouts, girl guides etc. See the "Tour Request" item on our web site to submit a request for a tour.

SOLAR ECLIPSE TOURS

Our Centre helps organize and promote Eclipse Tours with Civilized Adventures that anyone can sign up for e.g. Solar Eclipses in 2006 and 2008

SPECIAL EVENTS

In the past we have also worked with the RAO and TWOS to host special astronomical event observing at the Rothney Astrophysical Observatory. These included the Transit of Mercury and Lunar Eclipse Nights and a booth at the Spruce Meadows Nationals Jumping Event. Watch the StarSeeker and web site for information on any upcoming Special Events.

RESOURCES

THE WILSON COULEE OBSERVATORY (WCO)

The Wilson Coulee Observatory was made possible by a grant from the City of Calgary's Alberta 75th Anniversary Committee in 1980. It was constructed in 1982 and was officially opened on January 29, 1983 with His Worship Mayor Ralph Klein in attendance.

Situated just South of Calgary on land shared with Strathcona Tweedsmuir School, the WCO is a valuable site for the club. Built and maintained by volunteers, it is here that we hold Observers Group meetings, our Annual June barbecue, and Messier Marathon.

There are presently two buildings on the site. The largest is an 80 square meter clubhouse which contains a classroom, an office, storage space and a washroom. The structure has a partially completed basement and is heated with natural gas. The second structure is a 1 1/2 story domed observatory which houses the Centre's 14" Celestron Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope. As this building is unheated, it is advisable to wear warm clothing when observing (even in the summer).

Outside, there is an observing area with nine (9) piers, each with electrical outlets, that members and their guests may use for their telescopes. Any member may use the site and outside piers for observing the night sky.

The WCO also houses our Radio Astronomy group and our library.

A main focus of the WCO, and a good source of funding, is our volunteer-driven Public Education program. Cubs, Brownies, Pathfinders, Junior Forest Wardens, school and

adult groups all visit the Sid Lee building at the WCO for guided slide tours of the night sky and a chance to look through the C14 telescope.

It is also a unique privilege to be a WCO key holder and be able to go anytime or book the C14 for private observing. To ensure the security of these facilities and proper handling of the large telescope passing a course in handling procedures is essential. This course is free for members in good standing who are also known to fellow members through their participation in Observer's Group Meetings and is held at the meetings upon request. There is a key fee of \$30.00 annually. Contact the Site Director or Observer's Group Coordinator for more information on keys and the training course.

All visitors to the WCO are encouraged to make a donation of \$1.00 per person (excluding key holders). Money collected through key fees and donations is applied to the operational expenses of the observatory (i.e. insurance, electricity, natural gas, and maintenance). Any person(s) making a sizeable donation is eligible to receive an income tax charitable donation receipt, upon request.

Calgary Centre members are encouraged to come out and use this excellent facility as much as possible. When visiting the W.C.O., if your plan is to observe with the C14, please check with the Site Director before driving out - it may already be booked.

Day to day management and operation of the WCO site is the responsibility of the "Site Director". Any problems encountered at the site should be brought to the attention of the Site Director in a timely fashion. In addition the Site Director is responsible for accepting and confirming all formal bookings of the WCO site. He/she also organizes "work parties" for site maintenance as appropriate. All

members of the club have a responsibility to assist as much as they are able in maintaining the site with extra responsibility for these matters falling on key holders and members of the Observing Group.

The WCO site is a private club resource and it is important for all members and their guests to remember that certain rules apply to its use. The safety and security of the site, and the club assets it holds depend on everyone doing their best to follow the rules and also making sure that others on the site behave appropriately. In addition the rules are important to help ensure that everyone's observing experiences at the site are productive and enjoyable.

POLICIES AND RULES FOR USE OF THE WCO

- Please read the Observing Etiquette section of this Handbook as regarding rules of behaviour at dark sites.
- The site is a private facility available only for use by bona fide members of the Calgary RASC, their guests, organized tours booked through appropriate channels in advance, and supervised students and staff from Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School and their authorized guests. It is the responsibility of any member using the facility to inform anyone found on the site who does not fall under one of the above categories that the facility is private and not available for use by the general public.
- Regular members and key holders have access to the site at the pleasure of the Calgary Centre Council. Anyone who is found to consistently abuse the privilege of using the site will be reported to Council by the Site Director and their privileges may be revoked.

- All buildings on the site are designated as "NO SMOKING". In addition anyone smoking outside on the grounds is responsible for ensuring their smoke does not irritate other users of the site and does not damage the optics in use. All cigarette butts must be properly disposed of.
- Alcohol is not permitted on the site.
- Members at large of the club and other authorized users have access to the grounds, the fixed piers and the power outlets mounted on them. Only "key holders" have independent access to the clubhouse and the dome and the scope contained therein. Supervised access to the C14 is generally available to general membership during NOVA and Observers Group meetings.
- C14 accessories must remain in the dome at all times. If you wish to arrange a loan of equipment consult the site director. Any materials borrowed from the observatory must be properly signed out in the library notebook.
- Key holders who wish to reserve the use of the C14 may do so by contacting the Site Director. Unless the C14 is booked to an individual in this manner it is the responsibility of all key holders on site at any time to share the scope in an equitable manner amongst themselves.
- Council will from time to time set specific reservation policies for reserving use of club equipment.
- Currently the reservation policies for the C14 are: "The C14 may not be reserved by one individual for a "block" of nights."

- In the event that several competing requests are received for a reservation on a particular night the "first come first served" principle will rule subject to the condition that members who have already had the C14 for a night that month will go to "the back of the line".
- Scheduled tours and club activities take precedence over individual key holder requests to book the C14.
- With the exception of key holders who pay an annual fee for the facility all members who use the facility are expected to donate \$1.00 per night of use to the donation box located at the WCO. If you want to receive a tax receipt for your donation you may obtain one by making a donation by cheque or cash to the Centre Treasurer. In addition those who choose to make hot chocolate or coffee from club supplies located at the WCO should drop an appropriate donation in the coffee jar.
- Key holders may, at their discretion, open the facilities to non-keyholders present on the site while the key holder is using the facility. In all cases the key holder must properly secure the site when they leave or ensure that another key holder still on the site is willing to accept responsibility for locking up. Under no circumstances should a key holder leave the facility unsecured when they depart nor should they loan their key to a non-keyholder.
- Key holders who visit the site must always sign the logbook. Non-keyholders who visit the site when the classroom is open must also sign in. Members should make an effort to log out when leaving the site as well.
- Wipe your feet at the door before entering. Keep the window blinds closed and the lights dimmed as low as

practical. Do not turn on the outside lights unless all present agree to do so. If you set out additional chairs, put them away when you are done.

- Do not use or touch other people's equipment without their permission.
- There are a limited number of tables on the site so please share.
- All users of the site share a common responsibility to maintain it in a safe, clean, presentable condition. In particular that means users should clean up trash they encounter, not leave pop cans, or other garbage lying around anywhere, vacuum or sweep as required, clear walkways and stairs of ice and snow when visiting the site and alert the Site Director to any problems of a more serious nature they encounter at the site.
- One of the club's major objectives is educating the general public about amateur astronomy and the night sky. One of the ways we pursue that objective is to schedule and operate tours of the WCO for groups. These tours are generally scheduled for Mondays through Thursdays of the period around first quarter Moon in the September to March time frame though exceptions to these times may be made from time to time. Members wanting to use the facility during these times must recognize that they may well find a formal tour on site when they arrive in the early evening and that these tour groups are an important part of our operation and must be treated with all due consideration and respect.
- Please refer to the end of this Handbook regarding a map and directions to the Wilson Coulee Observatory Site.

THE WCO LIBRARY

The Calgary Centre maintains a significant library of Astronomy and related science material at the Wilson Coulee Observatory. Much of the material has been donated by members from their personal collections, while other items have been acquired with Centre funds. Library items are available to all members to borrow.

Our library consists of; books, references, star atlas, photographs, slides, video disks, bound sets of back issues of Astronomy and Sky&Telescope, and newsletters from many of the other RASC centres across Canada.

The library works on an honor system and members are required to sign out any material borrowed in the library lending log at the WCO. Key holders can visit the library at any time, while others will have to coordinate their use of the library to coincide with other activities at the WCO (e.g. the monthly NOVA or Observers Group meetings).

The entire Library Catalogue is available for browsing in the password protected area of our web site.

THE ECCLES RANCH OBSERVATORY (ERO)

In 1992 the Calgary Centre received the most incredible offer of land for a dark sky observing site. Valued Calgary Centre life members Dr. Eccles (Kerby and Priscilla) were so very generous in donating the use of land to the RASC, Calgary Centre. Chevron Canada and Joedeck Contracting did an outstanding job of reclaiming an abandoned well site to our specifications, resulting in a superb dark site that RASC members can use for camping and observing, year round, at no cost, for many years to come.

The Eccles Ranch Observatory is more than just 40+ acres of good observing; it's one of Alberta's first Wildlife Conservation Easements - ours to enjoy in perpetuity, as long as we respect the land and all it harbours, and that we use it for astronomy.

Home to the annual Great Alberta Star-B-Q and the previous home of the Alberta Star Party since 1995, the ERO is a great site for finishing your Messier or NGC List in agricultural peace and quiet. It's an excellent place for family camping, reserved for your private use, with dark skies, and it's close to all amenities in Caroline.

Calgary Centre members can use the ERO for camping and observing, year round, at no cost.

Remember to respect fences and gates (especially if they are closed). Remove all garbage and litter when you leave the property. The facilities can be described as crude at best, as only outhouse facilities are available. Plan on bringing everything you will need during your stay, including water.

POLICIES AND RULES FOR USE OF THE ERO

- Please read the Observing Etiquette section of this Handbook as regarding rules of behaviour at dark sites.
- The site is a private facility available only for use by bona fide members of the RASC and their guests. It is the responsibility of any member using the facility to inform anyone found on the site who does not fall under one of the above categories that the facility is private and not available for use by the general public.
- Regular members have access to the site at the pleasure of the Calgary Centre Council. Anyone who is

found to consistently abuse the privilege of using the site will be reported to Council by the Site Director and their privileges may be revoked.

- All buildings on the site are designated as "NO SMOKING". In addition anyone smoking outside on the grounds is responsible for ensuring their smoke does not irritate other users of the site and does not damage the optics in use. All cigarette butts must be properly disposed of.
- There are a limited number of tables on the site so please share.
- All users of the site share a common responsibility to maintain it in a safe, clean, presentable condition. In particular that means users should clean up trash they encounter, not leave pop cans, or other garbage lying around anywhere. Alert the Site Director to any problems of a more serious nature they encounter at the site.
- Please refer to the end of this Handbook regarding a map and directions to the Eccles Ranch Observatory Site.

TELESCOPES FOR RENT

Not sure what type of telescope will best serve your observing needs? As a member in good standing you have the unique opportunity to use a variety of telescopes in the comfort of your own backyard.

The program is aimed at allowing members to gain experience with various telescopes so that they could eventually make more informed decisions when buying a scope of their own.

For a modest fee you can try out the different sizes and types of telescopes in our program. The fee is \$2.00 per inch of aperture, per month. Thus a 6" Dobsonian rents for \$12.00 per month. That's a steal for an astronomical telescope worth about \$500!

Youth members are served directly by the Youth Group, which has its own telescopes.

Full details on the program, the telescopes, and who to contact can be found at: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/scopes.htm>

TELESCOPE BUILDING WORKSHOP

One of the best ways to learn about astronomy is to build your own telescope, and a great benefit of membership in the Calgary Centre is the opportunity to build your own Dobsonian telescope as part of a group, with an expert to guide you. Watch for announcements at General Meetings.

PUBLICATIONS

THE STARSEEKER

The StarSeeker is the Calgary Centre's club newsletter sent out 9 times a year to every member. It helps us communicate with each other about club news, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, member experiences and featured speakers. Members are encouraged to submit articles for publication to the StarSeeker Editor. Article submission deadlines are usually the date of the General Meetings for the following newsletter.

Past Issues of the StarSeeker (October 2000 to date) can also be found in pdf format on our web site at: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/starseeker.htm>

MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of all General Meetings are made available on the public area of our web site after their acceptance by the members (usually after the next General Meeting) at <http://calgary.rasc.ca/generalminutes.htm>

Minutes of Council Meetings are made available on the password protected area of our web site after their acceptance by the Council (usually after the next Council Meeting).

ANNUAL REPORTS

Annual Calgary Centre Reports are made available on the password protected area of our web site after their acceptance by the Council (usually at the end of the calendar year).

OTHER CALGARY CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

There are many other pdf, Word™ and PowerPoint™ documents available for members in the public "downloads" section of our website at: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/downloads/>

THE OBSERVER'S HANDBOOK

The Observer's Handbook (first published in 1907) is published annually and is an invaluable reference tool for observers all over the world. Compiled and edited by RASC volunteers across Canada, it is distributed to all members each fall. The major sections include; Basic data, Time, Optics and observing, the sky month-by-month, Sun, Moon, Planets and satellites, Asteroids, Meteors, Comets and dust, Stars, Nebulae and Maps of the night sky. It is included with your membership.

THE JOURNAL OF THE RASC

The Journal of the RASC is published bi-monthly at our National Office. It is devoted to the advancement of astronomy and allied sciences. It contains articles on Canadian astronomers and current activities of the RASC and its centres, research and review papers by professional and amateur astronomers, and articles of a historical, biographical or educational nature of general interest to the astronomical community. The electronic (downloadable) version is included with your membership. A printed version is optional at an extra charge.

THE BULLETIN OF THE RASC

The Bulletin was established by the RASC National Council in November 2006. It is a monthly news digest that is e-mailed to all members of the Society highlighting items of interest on the national scene including information from

the Society, its Centres and the Canadian astronomical community.

SKYNEWS MAGAZINE

SkyNews Magazine is bundled with your membership. It is Canada's bi-monthly astronomy magazine in the style of Sky and Telescope, glossy and full of observing data, great photography and informative articles by well-known authors.

THE BEGINNER'S OBSERVER'S GUIDE

The Beginner's Observer's Guide (BOG) is a great reference tool for novice and intermediate stargazers. With over 160 pages, a convenient size, a spiral binding, and fold-out star charts, it is an excellent gift idea. See the RASC National web page for purchase details.

SKYWAYS

Skyways - the RASC's Astronomy Handbook for Teachers was written specifically for Canadian educators and meets the astronomy learning outcomes outlined in the Common Framework of Science Learning Outcomes (the "Pan-Canadian Protocol"). See the RASC National web page for purchase details.

ANNUAL OBSERVER'S CALENDARS

Annual Observer's Calendars are published each year in the Fall. Great astronomical references and Canadian astrophotography that not only look spectacular on your wall, they also make excellent Christmas gifts. Look for them on sale at the fall general meetings or see the RASC National web page for purchase details.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Sky&Telescope and Astronomy monthly magazine subscriptions are offered to members each year at a reduced club rate. Check the StarSeeker for details on this subscription service.

LIBRARY SUBSCRIPTIONS

Our Library has subscribed to both Sky & Telescope and Astronomy magazines since the 1950's. Current and back issues are available for reference at the WCO, but aren't for borrowing.

Newsletters from other Centres are also kept for reference in the library for two years.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

From time to time, newsworthy events are disseminated to the media. There is no full-time person in charge of this duty. In the past, most of these releases have been prepared by members of Council in cooperation with Alan Dyer at TWOS or the RAO.

RESPONSIBLE LIGHTING

Now that you're a fellow RASC-CAL, please do your part to save our stars and turn down, or off, those outdoor lights. Shade your bulbs, use full cut-off fixtures and "be aware of glare".

Stand outside your house at night and take a look. Even better, take your telescope out on your sidewalk and see how fast a crowd can gather.

Even better - volunteer for our Light Pollution Abatement Committee (**LPAC**) and share your knowledge about responsible lighting and support municipal and club measures to improve/reduce our city's light pollution. We have an excellent brochure available that will give you and your neighbors more information and ideas about this important issue. We also have an award-winning Responsible Lighting Display that we set up at large public events where LPAC volunteers are available to answer questions.

The Calgary Centre Light Pollution Abatement Web Site (<http://calgary.rasc.ca/lp/>) contains a lot of information on Responsible Lighting. Members are encouraged to review this site and familiarize themselves with our LPAC materials and projects so they can answer questions about lighting at public events.

The Calgary Centre also stocks and sells the special "half-dome" incandescent bulbs for outside fixtures mentioned in the LPAC literature.

Watch for announcements or articles in the StarSeeker for your opportunity to be a part of this important group.

OBSERVING ETIQUETTE

In order to maximize everyone's observing enjoyment under dark skies, it is important to be aware of certain rules of etiquette. These rules are general common sense based on the nature of the hobby and the processes that let our eyes become fully "dark adapted".

- White lights must not be shown on an observing site after sundown except with the permission of all other users on the site. In particular this means:
 - Turn off your vehicle headlights and daytime running lights before driving into the observing site. If you can't disable your daytime running lights then park at the entrance to the site and walk in to check that nobody is in the midst of an astrophoto and warn all those already on site that you are coming in. If there are any objections to you coming in, then park out of sight of the observing site and carry in your equipment or wait until it is OK to drive in.
 - All flashlights used on the site must be suitably red masked. If you need to use a white flashlight for some emergency purpose make sure you warn everyone on site and gain their permission before doing so.
 - When leaving the site make sure others are aware of, and agree with, your intentions. White backup lights can ruin a photo just as well as headlights. Keep your white lights off until you clear the site.
 - **If you have to leave during the night you should have someone with a red flashlight walk with your vehicle and guide you out. Driving without lights at a dark site can be dangerous to those around you.**
- When driving into the site, park in a sensible and safe manner. Do not block the access road. Try to position

your vehicle to leave as much room as possible for other users

- Try to choose a parking position which will make it easy and unobtrusive for you to leave with the least disturbance to others.
- If you choose to set up your equipment near your vehicle in the parking area, position yourself in a safe manner and ensure you are not blocking traffic.
- Be careful when moving around the site or moving equipment. It is easy to fall in the dark and hurt yourself or others or damage equipment. Safety first!!
- Set up your equipment in such a manner as to not interfere with other people's setups.
- Many people are quite willing to loan their equipment to you to try in your scope. Remember the "golden rule" of borrowing equipment is that if you damage it you replace it. Don't accept the loan of anything you aren't willing to replace if something unforeseen happens. Remember that the size of an accessory does not reflect its price. A single filter can cost over \$300!
- Do not disturb other observers.
- If you have a question "ask if you can ask".
- If you want to get help or just chat ask if the other person is willing.
- If you want to play music, other than through headphones, ask if others mind before doing so and honour their positions.
- If you are chatting with a group of friends do it in a way that does not distract or disturb others.
- Do not stand in front of other folk's telescopes, wave your flashlight around, etc.
- Dogs are to be kept on a leash in and around the observing areas! Many telescope owners do not appreciate dogs 'visiting' their equipment.
- Parents are responsible for their child's conduct and safety at all times.

RASC ITEMS FOR SALE

The Calgary Centre has the following items for sale to members at very reasonable prices:

- RASC Calgary Centre Name Badges
- RASC Calgary Centre Commemorative Star Party and Eclipse Tour Pins
- Star-B-Q apparel
- Alberta Star Party apparel
- Annual RASC Observer's Calendars
- "half-dome" incandescent light bulbs

See <http://calgary.rasc.ca/sales.htm> for details.

We occasionally stock (or can bulk order for members) items from the National RASC e-store: <http://store.rasc.ca/>

COMMITTEES

Members are encouraged to get involved in any one of the many committees set up to carry out the smooth and efficient running of the Calgary Centre. If you are interested in the Centre administration, our elections are held in November at the Annual General Meeting and every member is welcome to run for office. For information regarding either of these areas, please contact any of the Centre Executive. Members are also invited to attend the Centre Council meetings held on the second Thursday of every month at TWOS.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Objectives: To transact the routine business of the Centre, which requires immediate attention, when Council is not meeting. The President will call a meeting of the

Executive Committee either upon the request of another member of the Executive Committee or when the business of the Center requires such a meeting. Action and decisions made by the Executive Committee will be reported, by the President, at the next Council meeting.

Director: President

Members: Past President, President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Objectives: To prepare the annual budget, administer and invest funds, review the annual financial statements prior to their submission to Council, coordinate fund raising activities, and advise the Treasurer and Council with respect to the financial affairs of the Centre.

Director: Treasurer

Members: Scrutineer1 and Scrutineer2

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Objectives: To operate the Centre library including the acquisition of new books and other library material, the lending of library material, the maintenance of a current catalog of all library material, and the exchange of library materials with other organizations.

Director: Librarian (a member of Council)

LIGHT POLLUTION ABATEMENT COMMITTEE (LPAC)

Objectives: To inform members and the community about light pollution and to influence efforts to reduce light pollution. The LPC is active in local education about light pollution, is a strong member of the RASC's National Light Pollution Committee and supports the efforts of the International Dark-Sky Association.

Director: LPAC Chairman

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Objectives: To assist the Treasurer in the collection of annual dues and fees, maintain a current list of the names and addresses of all members, assist the Treasurer in the preparation of reports on Centre membership for submission to National Council, present all motions for the election of new members to the Centre, and welcome new members, provide them with information and documentation on Centre activities, and introduce them to other members of the Centre

Director: Treasurer

Member: Secretary

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Objectives: To prepare a list of all consenting nominees for the offices for which election will be held and present this list at the Annual Meeting. This committee also makes nominations to the Council for candidates eligible for the title of "Honorary Member of the Centre" and supports each nomination with a written statement citing the nominee's qualifications.

Director: Secretary

Member: Past President

OBSERVING GROUP COMMITTEE

Objectives: To organize and coordinate programs, meetings and activities associated with astronomical observations within the Centre.

Director: A member of Council and Observers Group Chair

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Objectives: To establish the program for all meetings of the Centre

Director: 1st Vice President

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Objectives: To be responsible for the supervision, construction, maintenance and safekeeping of any property and contents owned by the Centre.

Director: a Member of Council

Members: WCO Site Director, ERO Site Director

PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Objectives: To implement projects and activities designed to promote interest in the science of astronomy among the general public.

Director: a Member of Council

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Objectives: To determine the editorial policies of, and be responsible for, any publications of the Centre.

Director: Member of Council, StarSeeker Editor

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Objectives: To organize any social activities of the Centre, such as, parties, banquets, receptions and picnics.

Director: A member of Council

MAP AND DIRECTIONS TO THE WCO

Map:

Printable maps to the WCO (several sizes) can be found in the password protected area of our web site.

NOTE: After hours access to the grounds of the Strathcona-Tweedsmuir school is controlled by a coded entry chain link gate. Members must contact one of the Executive to receive the code to open this gate. Without the code you will not be able to access the observatory when the gate is closed.

Directions:

- The Wilson Coulee Observatory is located on the grounds of the Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School 14 km south of Calgary.
- Take Hwy 2 (Macleod Trail) south to it's junction with Hwy 22X and continue south on Hwy 2 from the Hwy 22X overpass for 5 km, to the DeWinton turnoff.
- Turn right and go straight west on Hwy 552X (226 Ave S) for 1.5 km. Caution: Don't take the turn towards DeWinton.
- The road will curve left and head south (32 St W). Continue south for 8 km to 306 Av. S.
- Turn left onto 306 Av S. and travel 0.7 km east to the T in the road.
- Turn left at the T and follow the road (24 St W) through the gate and onto the school property, skirting around the athletic field to the school parking lot.
- Continue through the parking lot south of the school to a Y in the road. The left fork at the Y with the "Guest Parking" sign leads down a narrow lane to the WCO parking lot. Caution: Don't take the right Y in the road as it leads to the Head Master's residence.

MAP AND DIRECTIONS TO THE ERO

Map:

A printable map to the ERO can be found on the Star-B-Q web page on our web site: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/starbq.htm>

Directions:

- The Eccles' Ranch is locate northeast of the Town of Caroline, Alberta.
- From Calgary, go North until you reach Highway #54 at Innisfail.
- Go West on 54 about 56 km (35 miles) to Caroline. (Fill up on your water, gas and other necessary supplies here.)
- At the four-way stop in Caroline, turn right (North).
- Head North for about 2.4 km (1.5 miles).
- Turn right (East) onto the gravel road RD 36-4.
- Continue East for about 1.6 km (1 mile).
- Turn left (North) onto the private gravel road RGE RD 6-0.
- Follow the gravel road about 1.3 km (0.8 mile), turn right and go down the hill to the ERO site and you're there!
- Caution: If you reach the Tarnasky's ranch house, you have gone too far!

MAP AND DIRECTIONS TO THE STARLAND RECREATION AREA

Map:

A printable map to the Starland Recreation Area Campground can be found on the ASP web page on our web site: <http://calgary.rasc.ca/asp2008.htm>

Directions:

From Calgary: Junction Hwy 1 (16th Ave.) and Hwy 2 (Deerfoot Trail):

- Drive N. on HWY-2 N for 36.5 km
- Take exit 295 for HWY-72 E toward Beiseker / Acme / Drumheller drive 1.0 km
- Merge onto HWY-72 drive 11.3 km
- Turn left at HWY-791/Range Rd 281 drive 13.0 km
- Turn right at HWY-575/Township Rd 294. Continue to follow HWY-575 for 40.8 km
- Turn left at HWY-21 drive 15.7 km
- Turn right at HWY-27 drive 24.0 km
- The Starland Recreation Area Campground is immediately east of the bridge over the Red Deer River at the bottom of the river valley.

Directions from other Canadian locations can be found on the web page mentioned above.

NOTES