

The Prairie Skies Astronomical Association presents;
visit us on the web at; www.prairieskies.org

updated 08-18-11

Prairie Skies



Star Party

continuing the tradition

2011

Thursday, September 22 - Sunday, September 25

** Pre-registration deadline - August 20, 2011 **

Prairie Skies Star Party 2011 will be held at beautiful Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See 4-H camp, adjacent to Kankakee River State Park, near Bourbonnais Illinois. **Attention ATMers! We place a special emphasis on amateur telescope making, by recognizing outstanding achievement through our ATM Telescope and Accessory Awards.** In addition to the usual all night observing; Prairie Skies features an imaging contest, door prizes, a swap market, vendors, and a guest speaker or two. Children can participate in their very own age appropriate door prize drawings. Gather with your friends at our traditional Prairie Dog Community Picnics; and don't miss out on our famous Midnight Chili! As always; complimentary coffee, tea, and hot chocolate will be available in the Dining Hall all day and night throughout the event. Our popular Almost All Night Movie Festival will feature a variety of films in the Dining Hall. Join us for a great time as Prairie Skies Star Party "*continues the tradition*" at Camp Shaw. **Coordinates are: 41° 21' - 87° 99'.**

New This Year !

Camp Shaw is now operating the kitchen exclusively, therefore; Prairie Skies is no longer allowed to have our own food vendors . Please see the "Meals" section for important details.

Beginning this year, we will be holding a special door prize drawing on Thursday evening for 3-Day attendees. See the "Door Prize" section for details.

Also beginning this year, the 2:00 p.m. Friday time slot will be available for an attendee presentation. See the "Attendee Presentations and Demonstrations" section for details.

We strive to make the information contained within this brochure as accurate and complete as possible, at the time of publication. To ensure you have the latest available information, please visit the "Updates" page on our web-site at; www.prairieskies.org . Throughout this brochure, you will be referred to the "Program" for more details. You will receive a copy of the Program at the registration tent, when you arrive at Prairie Skies.

Contact Prairie Skies at infopssp@prairieskies.org or 708 481-7970

Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See provides a semi secluded location, well protected from the glare of off-site lighting. The 6 acre main observing field is grass covered, making it ideal for observing and camping. Rustic barrack style cabins are available for non-campers. The large Dining Hall serves as a gathering place for many of the scheduled activities. Enjoy walking through the woods on shady hiking trails. Follow Rock Creek as it traverses the camp property through a small Silurian dolostone canyon; that's right, this isn't just any ol' canyon it's a Silurian dolostone canyon!! Nearby Kankakee River State Park has an extensive bike trail system, and offers many other recreational opportunities.

VOLUNTEERING AT PRAIRIE SKIES

Attendee volunteers play an important staffing role at Prairie Skies and **your** help would be greatly appreciated! We need volunteers for various duties during the event, primarily at the registration tent. If you would like to help at Prairie Skies by volunteering a couple hours of your time, please fill out the appropriate section on the registration form. Be sure to include your phone number and e-mail address in the top section of the form. As a token of our appreciation, volunteers will receive a PSSP t-shirt. The volunteer coordinator will begin contacting volunteers 4 -6 weeks prior to the event.

Important notice: If you plan to volunteer and want to guarantee yourself a t-shirt, you should **order and pay for it as if you are not volunteering**. If you are called to serve as a volunteer, you will receive a refund for the shirt. By doing so; in the event you are not called to volunteer, you will still get the shirt.

ATTENDEE PRESENTATIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Do you have something you would like to share with fellow Prairie Skies attendees? Perhaps a design or building project, amateur astronomical research, or a how-to-do-it? Why not consider sharing your experience or knowledge, through a presentation or demonstration? Beginning this year, we would like to offer our attendees an opportunity to do just that. We have reserved the 2:00 p.m. Friday time slot in the Dining Hall for an attendee presentation. This can be as informal or "professional" as you want to make it. We can only accommodate one participant each year. If you would like to participate, please contact us at infopssp@prairieskies.org. Please tell us the subject of your presentation or demonstration. Later, if you are selected, we will ask you to submit a brief description for inclusion in the Program.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

To attend Prairie Skies, please complete the registration form and return it with proper payment. Please refer to the [Registration Form Instructions](#) for helpful information and to avoid problems or delays. Prairie Skies Astronomical Association reserves the right to refuse registrations.

Registration Fees Are Non-refundable. There is a \$40.00 fee for all NSF checks!

There are two registration options: 1. You can pre-register by mail (highly recommended). 2. You may register on-site (approximately 50% higher registration fees). The pre-registration deadline is 8-20-11. Registrations postmarked after 8-20-11, will be voided and returned. Registration fees are non-refundable. Refunds will be processed for the following sold out items ONLY: cabin bunks, and electrical power. After your registration form has been processed, you will receive a registration confirmation. Please bring your confirmation with you to Prairie Skies. **If you miss the pre-registration deadline, you must register on-site; as a walk-on. On-site registration prices are significantly higher!** Anyone wishing to **upgrade** (eg; attend for additional days) their registration **after the deadline** will be considered a walk-on, and must pay the walk-on fee for the entire registration; less any fee already paid. Registrations **are not** transferable. **Your registration fee includes a \$17.00 per person/per day 4-H Camp fee.** This camp fee does not benefit Prairie Skies, and goes directly to the Camp.

PRE-REGISTRATION OPTIONS

Three-Day Registration - You may attend Thursday afternoon through Sunday morning. Those choosing this option may enter the site no earlier than **12:00 p.m.** (noon) Thursday.

Two-Day Registration - You may attend Friday morning through Sunday morning. Those choosing this option may enter the site no earlier than **9:30 a.m.** Friday.

One-Day Registration - You may attend Saturday morning through Sunday morning. Those choosing this option may enter the site no earlier than **9:30 a.m.** Saturday.

Upon arrival, you will receive your badge packet and a copy of the Prairie Skies Program, which will contain the event schedule along with other useful information.

ON-SITE REGISTRATION

If you miss the pre-registration deadline, you must register on-site as a walk-on attendee. Please don't ask for an exception. **Absolutely no exceptions will be made.** On-site registration fees (approximately 50% higher) are as follows.

Adults (age 14 and up) each: **Three-Day; \$110.00, Two-Day; \$80.00, One-Day; \$50.00.**

Children (ages 6-13) each: **Three-Day; \$70.00, Two-Day; \$50.00, One-Day; \$30.00.**

The cost of cabin bunks and electrical power (if any are still available), is additional!

REGISTRATION TENT HOURS

Upon your initial arrival, you must check in at the registration tent located at the Camp entrance. The registration tent will be open during the following hours; **Thursday - 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday - 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.** Registrations (pre-registrations and walk-ons) will only be processed during open hours. You are not permitted to enter the site until your registration has been processed. **If you arrive after the registration tent is closed (8:00pm) and your registration has not been processed, you will need to wait until the registration tent opens (the next day) prior to entering the site.** Police officers at the registration tent after 8:00 p.m., will not process registrations.

CAMPING AND ACCOMMODATIONS

We are asking for all attendees' cooperation; in regard to keeping the observing fields free from potential damage, by limiting driving on it as much as possible, especially if wet. Please use the off-field parking area near the entrance, if you plan to be moving your vehicle often, during the event.

Camping space is on a "first-come, first-served" basis. Camping will be permitted in the following areas only; 1. On the Main Observing Field and around its perimeter. 2. In the **south half of the Cabin Area**, east of the Main Observing Field. 3. On the Electric Field (north end of the Cabin Area); **exclusively reserved for attendees who need 120VAC for their telescopes.** Camping will not be allowed between the north edge of the Main Observing Field and the Dining Hall / Lodge buildings. This area is reserved for vendors and Prairie Skies staff ONLY. Anyone who sets up in a traffic lane or other non-designated area, will be required to relocate. Helpful tip; If you leave the site in your vehicle, we highly recommend you save your parking space in some way, or you may return and find it occupied by someone else.

The Main Observing Field will be marked with flags, delineating traffic lanes from camping lanes. The single camping lanes are 35' deep and the double camping lanes are 70' deep (two 35' lanes back to back). Traffic lanes are 25 feet wide. The flags mark the lanes only; **they do not mark the boundaries of individual camping spaces. You may use as much space as you require for your equipment, however; please be conservative.**

Pets are not allowed at Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See.

Generators are not permitted to be operated at any time anywhere.

Recreational Vehicles: There are no utility hook-ups. Operation of RV generators (including portable generators) is prohibited at ALL times.

Battery Charging Station: A battery charging station will be located on the far end of the Dining Hall porch. It will consist of an extension cord with power strips attached, subject to a few simple rules: 1) Availability will be on a first come first plug basis. 2) You must provide your own charger and use is at your risk. 3) Prairie Skies will not be responsible for damage or theft. 4) Due to safety concerns, charging batteries inside ANY building is prohibited. 5) **Any battery found charging in any building will be removed by Camp or Prairie Skies staff.**

The Electric Field will be available for those requiring a 120VAC power source for telescopes and observing equipment ONLY (no RV hookups). **Users assume any risks associated with the dependability of the power source.** The Electric Field is located in the **north half of the Cabin Area**, east of the Main Observing Field. A "Distribution Hub" (power strips, equipped with GFI), will be located in the center of the field. Power to the Distribution Hub will have a TOTAL capacity of 15 amps for ALL users combined. **The use of blow dryers and other high amp devices is prohibited!** Only 7 sites are available for a fee of \$10.00 each; for the length of the star party. To reserve a site, see the registration form.

DO NOT locate your site near the Distribution Hub! Bring a long extension cord (14/3 recommended) to reach from the hub to your site.

Battery charging at the hub is not allowed; charge your batteries at you site or the Charging Station located on the Dining Hall porch.

Bunk Cabins: The cabins are unheated and without inside restroom facilities. There are 10 barrack style bunks per cabin. The fee is \$7.00 per bunk/per night. You must provide your own linen; blanket, sleeping bag, pillow, etc. There will be a "women's only" cabin available, upon request ONLY. Cabin assignments will be on your badge and posted on the cabins. To reserve a bunk, see the registration form.

Restrooms are located in the Cabin Area (east of the Main Observing Field) and in the Dining Hall.

Showers are located in the Cabin Area (east of the Main Observing Field).

Hotels and Motels are available in nearby Bourbonnais and Bradley.

PRAIRIE DOG COMMUNITY PICNICS

Gather with friends and fellow astronomers at one (or more) of our Prairie Dog Community Picnics. Our good friend, Gary Poliquin, will once again volunteer his time and talent by organizing these wonderful picnics. One and all are welcome; and there's no dress code! We will be gathering at Gary's telescope display, on Vendor's Row (near the Lodge). Picnic times will be; Thursday 4-6 p.m., Friday 12-2 p.m. and 4-6 p.m., and on Saturday 12-2 p.m. **And don't forget; we will gather, rain or starshine, for that famous Midnight Chilli (at midnight of course) on Friday night!**

MEALS

Camp Shaw is now operating the kitchen exclusively, to provide meals for all events held at the camp. As a convenience for our attendees wishing to order meals prepared by the Camp, we have agreed to make the Camp's meal information available on our website and in this Brochure.

Attendees wishing to have on-site meals must place their orders with, and send payment directly to, Camp Shaw. All meal arrangements, preparation, and service will be handled directly by Camp Shaw staff. Please contact Camp Shaw if you have questions regarding meals. Other than making the information available to our attendees, Prairie Skies Star Party is

not involved with on-site meals in any way. Please see the meal menu, order form, and contact information included at the end of this Brochure or on our website. **Once again; Prairie Skies Star Party is not involved with on-site meals, in any way. All meal arrangements are between you and Camp Shaw.**

Prairie Skies will continue to provide the same complimentary quality brands of coffee, tea, and hot chocolate all day and night, beginning Thursday evening. However; Camp Shaw staff will be responsible for maintaining the beverage tables and keeping them well supplied. **Camp staff will top off the beverage tables for the final time at 1:00 a.m. each night.**

Prairie Skies will continue to provide soda pop and bottled water on a donation basis. Your registration fee still includes donuts for breakfast on Saturday. All of these items will be available in the Dining Hall, as usual.

Other Meal Options - Many restaurants are located in Bourbonnais, which is about a 15 minute drive from the site. Attendees may also cook their own meals on site. Please use a cooking grill. **No ground fires allowed !**

DOOR PRIZES

There will be separate door prize drawings for children and adults. Be sure to put your ticket in the **appropriate** box no later than 1 hour prior to the drawing time. All drawings will be held in the Dining Hall. Winners **MUST** be present to win!

A new adults only door prize drawing will be held for Three-Day attendees on Thursday. Winner's door prize tickets will be returned to the door prize ticket box for Saturday's drawing!

Children - Saturday 1:30 p.m. There will be three separate age groups; ages 6-9, ages 10-13, and ages 14-17.

Adults - Thursday 8:30 p.m. Saturday 4:30 p.m. To be eligible for the adult drawings, you must be age 18 or older.

The following companies generously donated door prizes for last year's event.

AstroZap
Bob's Knobs
Celestron
Cernan Earth and Space Center
Edmund Scientifics
Garrett Optical
Hutech Astronomical Products
Kendrick Astro Instruments
Lumicon International
Oceanside Photo and Telescope

Optics Planet
Orion Telescopes and Binoculars
ProtoStar
Scope City
Software Bisque
Starry Night
Stellarvue
Tele Vue Optics
William Optics

CONTESTS AND AWARDS

All Prairie Skies attendees are encouraged to participate in the Astronomical Imaging Contest by entering or voting for their favorite images. Everyone's participation is important since winners are decided entirely by popular vote. Images will be on display in the Lodge. See the Program for details.

Astronomical Imaging Contest - Whether your images are on film, created digitally, or artistic in nature, you are invited to enter them in this contest. Awards will be given for three formats (film, digital, and artistic) within two categories (Solar System and Deep Sky). Additionally, an award will be given for Most Popular. Judging will be by paper ballot, cast by fellow Prairie Skies attendees. Self entry forms will be available in the Lodge. Certificates will be presented. If you wish to enter this contest, you should have your entries on display by 10:00 a.m. Friday morning (the time when voting opens). See the Program for details.

- a. There is no limit to the number of images you may enter.
- b. A maximum of one award per person, per category, will be issued.
- c. Professionally produced or commercially sold images may not be entered.

ATM Telescope and Accessory Awards - This is not a contest: but rather, a recognition of outstanding achievement ! Prairie Skies Star Party places a special emphasis on amateur telescope making, by recognizing outstanding achievement through our ATM Telescope and Accessory Awards. We are looking forward to another year of great handcrafted scopes and interesting, innovative ideas. Awards are presented on their own merit, so whatever your experience level; please consider submitting your project for evaluation. The ATM Award Committee will walk the observing fields to evaluate your submission. Submission forms will be available in the Lodge. Certificates will be presented. See the Program for details.

- a. Your submission must be setup by 10 a.m. Saturday.
- b. Only home-built telescopes, mounts, and accessories may be entered. Old instruments (commercially produced or otherwise), that have been personally restored, may also be entered.

ALMOST ALL NIGHT FILM FESTIVAL

So you're not coming to Prairie Skies for the telescopes and observing? What's the matter with you, anyway? OK, especially for you; movies will be shown in the Dining Hall well into the wee hours of the morning Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. **Some movies may contain material that is unsuitable for children.**

This year's Special Feature Film will, as usual, be a break from astronomy and science fiction (title to be announced). The Special Feature Film will be shown at 10 p.m. Saturday evening **.

** If Saturday night's skies are forecast to be better than Friday's, the presentation will be shifted to Friday evening at 10 p.m.

PRAIRIE SKIES T-SHIRTS AND SWEATSHIRTS

You may pre-order t-shirts and sweatshirts. It is highly recommended that you pre-order! Please note; the shirt order form and payment must be mailed to a different address than the registration form. **DO NOT mail the shirt order form and payment with your registration form !!** Shirts may be picked up at the Registration Tent during open hours only. A **very limited** number of t-shirts will be available for purchase on site. Shirt colors listed on the order form are **not guaranteed**. If the stated colors are not available at the time of printing, substitute colors will be used. **The pre-order deadline is 8-7-10.**

VENDORS and SWAP MARKET

Vendors may be located on Vendors Row, adjacent to the Dining Hall. The swap market area will be located at the end of Vendors Row, near the Main Observing Field. If you are going to sell things in the swap market, the items must be homemade, used, or factory seconds only! Bring your own table or blanket to display your items. Space is available on a "first-come, first-served" basis ONLY. There may also be additional vendors and swap markets on the Main Observing Field.

Still have questions? e-mail infopssp@prairieskies.org or phone 708 481-7970 day or evening.

PRAIRIE SKIES POLICY AND STAR PARTY REGULATIONS

To report a problem, go to the Registration Tent.

(where you stand the best chance of contacting a staff member).

The following policies and rules have been adopted to better manage the event and provide an enjoyable experience for all who attend Prairie Skies. All regulations will be enforced.

4H Camp Prohibitions - The following are prohibited by Camp Shaw; 1. Pets, alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, firearms, and fireworks are not permitted on site. 2. Per State law, smoking is not allowed inside any building.

Entry Times - Those registered for 3 days, may enter the site beginning at 12 p.m. on Thursday. Those registered for 2 days, may enter the site beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Friday morning. Those registered for 1 day only, may enter the site beginning at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday morning. **Please do not ask gate personnel to make exceptions.**

Observing Field Set up - Attendees must set up in designated areas only. Anyone set up in a non-designated area will be relocated. Please leave sufficient space between tents, cars, and equipment in order to prevent property damage.

ID Badges - All attendees must wear their ID badges at all times, while on site. Wearing your ID badge is the only way staff will know you are a paid attendee. To discourage unpaid attendees; please report individuals without badges to Prairie Skies staff.

Generators - Operation of generators is **prohibited at all times.**

Laser Pointers - The use of laser pointers, of any color, after 9:00 p.m. is prohibited.

Vehicle Lights and Flashlights - **Absolutely NO WHITE LIGHTS of any kind allowed between 8:00 p.m. and dawn!** Vehicle lights, exterior or interior, can not be on at night. Daytime running lights must be disabled or covered with heavy red material. If you plan to be in and out of your vehicle at night, the interior lights must be disabled or covered with red material. All other light sources, such as flashlights, must be covered with red material.

Vehicle Engines - Do not run your vehicle's engine on the observing fields, in cabin areas, etc., for any reason except to immediately move the vehicle. Running your vehicle's engine to get warm or to cool off is prohibited. Someone nearby will be breathing your vehicle's exhaust fumes. Please be considerate of others around you.

Nighttime Driving Restriction - A vehicle driving restriction will be in effect on the observing fields between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and dawn each night. This means you cannot drive or move your vehicle between these times, if your vehicle is parked on one of the observing fields. If you arrive after the restriction is in effect, or will need to leave before it expires, you must park off-field in the parking area near the entrance and walk onto the field. Emergency situations are exempt from this rule.

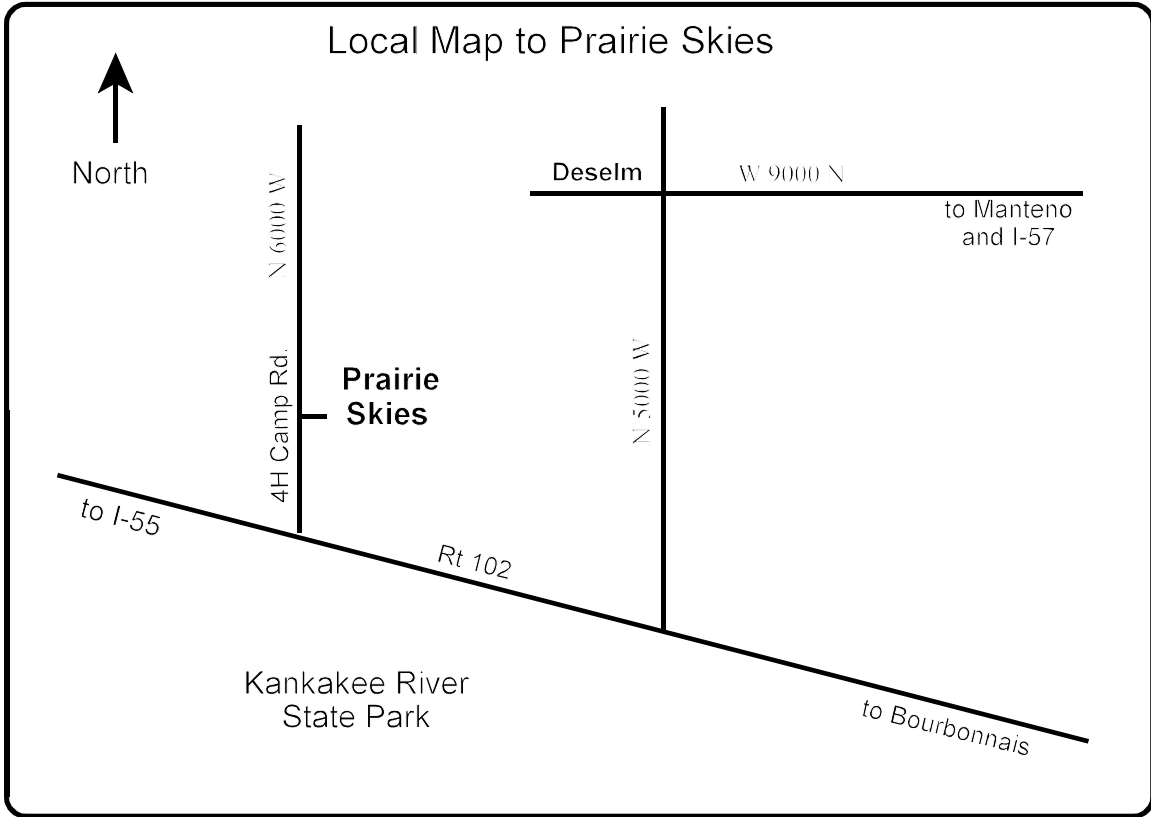
Music, etc. - Please help preserve the peaceful nature of the star party. If you wish to listen to music, sports, etc., please use headphones or keep the volume very low. People around you may not share in your interests. Be considerate. A good rule of thumb is; If the people next to you can hear what your listening to, it's too loud!

Battery Charging - Charging batteries inside any building is prohibited. Use the outdoor Charging Station located on the Dining Hall porch.

Fires and Grills - No ground fires. All fires must be in a suitable container. Do not dump your charcoal on the ground. Have an adequate supply of water nearby, in case of an emergency. Do not leave the site of a fire until it has been extinguished. All fires must be extinguished as nightfall approaches.

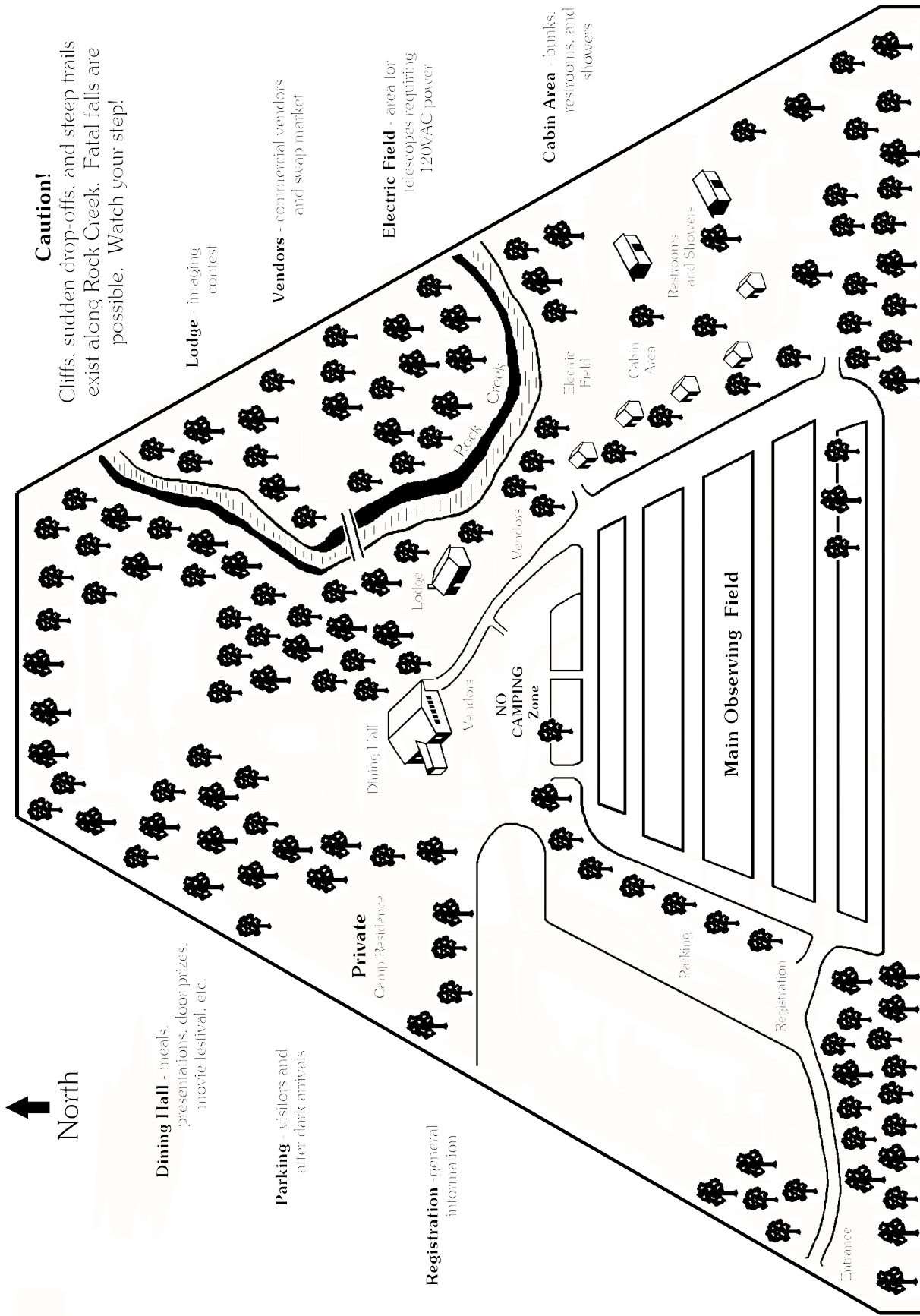
Thank you, in advance!

By observing these policies, you will help make everyone's experience a pleasant one.



PSSP coordinates: 42° 01' - 87° 51'

Prairie Skies Site Map



↑ North

Caution!
Cliffs, sudden drop-offs, and steep trails exist along Rock Creek. Fatal falls are possible. Watch your step!

Dining Hall - meals, presentations, door prizes, movie festival, etc.

Parking - visitors and after dark arrivals

Registration - general information

Lodge - imaging contest

Vendors - commercial vendors and swap market

Electric Field - area for telescopes requiring 120VAC power

Cabin Area - bunks, restrooms, and showers

Dining Hall

Lodge

Vendors

NO CAMPING Zone

Parking

Registration

Entrance

Restrooms and Showers

Cabin Area

Main Observing Field

Electric Field

Vendors

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