

Winslow Homolovi Observatory

HOMOLOVI STATE PARK – WINSLOW, ARIZONA

NIGHT SKY HIGHLIGHT: June 2026

Warmer weather brings greater opportunities to explore the night sky. June 2026 Highlights: Winslow Homolovi Observatory Opens at 7:00 PM (AZ-MST) with Dr. Lori Pigue from the USGS Astrogeology Science Center, US Geological Survey Office in Flagstaff AZ. Dr. Lori Pigue has a Ph.D. in Astronomy & Planetary Science from Northern Arizona University. Her extensive background includes terrestrial geology and has a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education in Biology. Dr. Pigue is a Lunar Volcanologist at the USGS Astrogeology Science Center, studying how different types of volcanoes erupt on the Moon and how to turn rocks on the Moon into rocket fuel. She is also the Communications Lead and works in Planetary Defense, investigating potential societal impacts from asteroid impacts. As our guest speaker, Dr. Pigue's program will include the Mare Tranquillitatis, building a replica of the Tranquillitatis landing site in Flagstaff, lunar volcanology, lunar stereophotogrammetry, lunar observing, Science of Tranquillitatis, and different techniques employed to map areas like these for study and lunar landings. Outside of work Dr. Lori, enjoys crafting, reading, and a good disaster movie.

Evening observations through the Moore Telescope begin at 8:00 PM (AZ-MST). Homolovi State Park Star Parties are conducted on the second Saturday each month. Star parties for April - August begin at 7:00 PM with our guest speaker's bureau. September through November begin at 6:00 PM. All times are Arizona Mountain Standard. Arizona doesn't observe day-light savings time.

Our June 13, 2026 Winslow Homolovi Observatory Star Party Observation targets through the Moore 14" SCT telescope may include as night sky weather conditions permit:

- **Double Star Cluster of Ursa Major:** Alcor - SAO 28751, Mizar - SAO 28738 Mizar and its fainter companion star Alcor make up one of the most famous double stars in the sky. These two stars are bound to one another by gravity. And they're located in the famous Big Dipper, an asterism which is ascending in the northeast.
- **Arcturus:** Shining high in the southern sky, this orange giant is the brightest star in the northern celestial hemisphere. Located approximately 36.7 light-years from Earth, this golden-orange red giant is easily visible to the naked eye in the constellation Boötes. It is presumed a dying red giant star, having 1.5 times the mass of our Sun.
- **(M3) Globular Cluster:** The first object in the Messier Catalog to be discovered by Charles Messier himself. Charles Messier documented the cluster on May 3, 1764, mistaking it for a nebula without any stars. This misunderstanding of M3's nature was corrected in 1784 when William Herschel was able to resolve the cluster's individual stars. Today it is known to contain over 500,000 stars. M3 is about 33,200 light years away in distance being further away than the center of our Galaxy, the Milky Way, shining at a 6.2 magnitude
- **(M57) The Ring Nebula:** Located in the constellation Lyra, this is a beautiful planetary nebula that sits well overhead in the mid-to-late evening.
- **(M13) The Hercules Cluster:** A spectacular, dense globular cluster of hundreds of thousands of stars, best viewed as it climbs high into the eastern sky.
- **NGC 3242 Ghost of Jupiter, Planetary Nebula.** Planetary nebulas are a late stage in a sun-like star's life, when its outer layers have sloughed off and are lit up by ultraviolet light from the central star. The Ghost of Jupiter, is located roughly 1,400 light-years away in the constellation Hydra.

- **(M81) Bode's Galaxy:** Discovered by the German astronomer Johann Elert Bode in 1774, M81 is one of the brightest galaxies in the night sky. It is located 11.6 million light-years from Earth in the constellation Ursa Major and has an apparent magnitude of 6.9.
- **NGC 6543 or Caldwell 6:** Cat's Eye Nebula. Discovered by English astronomer William Herschel on February 15, 1786, the planetary nebula is located 3000 light-years away in the northern constellation Draco. It was the first planetary nebula to be studied spectroscopically, by William Huggins in 1864
- **(M104) the (Sombrero Galaxy)** Discovered by French astronomer Pierre Méchain on May 11, 1781, M104 is located 28 million light-years away in the constellation Virgo, and with a mass equal to 800 billion suns, it is one of the most massive objects in the Virgo galaxy cluster.
- **(M51) The (Whirlpool Galaxy)** Discovered by French astronomer Charles Messier on October 13, 1773. M51 is located 31 million light-years from Earth in the constellation Canes Venatici. It has an apparent magnitude of 8.4 and can be spotted with a small telescope most easily during May. The Whirlpool Galaxy's beautiful face-on view and closeness to Earth allow astronomers to study a classic spiral galaxy's structure and star-forming processes.

Planets & Celestial Events

- **Planetary Trio:** Look low toward the western horizon 30 to 45 minutes after sunset to see Venus, Jupiter, and Mercury gathered close together.

Ranger/Volunteer lead opportunities for black-lighting scorpions and desert critters may be available. (TBD).

Key June 2026 Skywatching Events: Jupiter is well placed most of the night, while Venus shines brilliantly and Uranus becomes more difficult to view. By Martin Ratcliff & Richard Talcott

- 4 -Jupiter passes 6° south of Pollux, 7 a.m. EDT
- 8 -Venus passes 5° south of Pollux, noon EDT
- 9 -Venus passes 1.6° north of Jupiter, 8 a.m. EDT
- 9 -The Moon passes 4° north of Neptune, 3 p.m. EDT
- 10 -The Moon passes 6° north of Saturn, 8 a.m. EDT
- 12 -The Moon passes 6° north of Mars, 5 p.m. EDT
- 13 -The Moon passes 5° north of Uranus, 3 p.m. EDT
- 15 -Mercury is at greatest eastern elongation (25°), 4 p.m. EDT
- 16 -The Moon passes 3° north of Mercury, 4 p.m. EDT
- 17 -The Moon passes 3° north of Jupiter, 3 a.m. EDT
- 17 -The Moon passes 0.3° north of Venus, 4 p.m. EDT
- 21 -Solstice (northern summer/southern winter begins), 4 a.m. EDT
- 23 -Mercury passes 7° south of Pollux, 3 p.m. EDT

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June 13, 2026 Star Party: Plan your evening with some deep sky viewing.

Planet	Rise	Set	Meridian	Comment
Mercury	Sat 6:56 am	Sat 9:25 pm	Sat 2:11 pm	Slightly difficult to see
Venus	Sat 7:58 am	Sat 10:16 pm	Sat 3:07 pm	Good visibility
Mars	Sun 3:08 am	Sun 4:53 pm	Sun 10:00 am	Average visibility
Jupiter	Sat 7:43 am	Sat 9:54 pm	Sat 2:48 pm	Fairly good visibility
Saturn	Sun 1:33 am	Sun 1:54 pm	Sun 7:43 am	Average visibility
Uranus	Sun 3:50 am	Sun 5:56 pm	Sun 10:53 am	Extremely difficult to see
Neptune	Sun 1:06 am	Sun 1:12 pm	Sun 7:09 am	Very difficult to see
JUNE	Sunrise/Sunset		Daylength	
2026	Sunrise	Sunset	Length	Diff.
13th	5:08 am ↑ (61°)	7:36 pm ↑ (299°)	14:27:40	+0:34
	Astronomical Twilight		Nautical Twilight	
13th	Start	End	Start	End
	3:22 am	9:22 pm	4:02 am	8:42 pm
	Civil Twilight		Solar Noon	
13th	Start	End	Time	Mil. mi
	4:38 am	8:05 pm	12:22 pm (78.0°)	94.362

July Guest Speaker: Bryan Bates, The Winslow Homolovi Observatory welcomes Bryan Bates as our guest speaker for the July 11, 2026 Star Party. Bryan Bates is a prominent Flagstaff-based educator, archaeoastronomer, and wilderness guide who spent nearly 25 years teaching at Coconino Community College. He was presented with honors of Professor Emeritus in 2016. Bryan is highly regarded in the Southwest for his multifaceted career combining academic instruction with extensive field research in Archaeoastronomy & Cultural Astronomy.

In Memoriam



Facilitator and Co-Founder of the Winslow Homolovi Observatory William "Bill" Wood has put down his telescope, the universe he helped us see, will forever shine on as his legacy. William "Bill" Wood helped to facilitate the construction of the Winslow Homolovi Observatory. Bill will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are extended to his wife and family during this time. Thank you Bill for everything you helped us accomplish. "Keep Looking Up... Bill Wood"