

Winslow Homolovi Observatory

HOMOLOVI STATE PARK – WINSLOW, ARIZONA

NIGHT SKY HIGHLIGHT: September 2026

Cooler weather brings great opportunities to explore the night sky. **September 2026 Highlights:** Winslow Homolovi Observatory Opens at 6:00 PM (AZ-MST). Our guest presenter on September 12, 2026 is **David Mayer**. David Mayer is a Geographer at the USGS Astrogeology Science Center where he specializes in creating and analyzing topographic maps of planets and moons throughout our solar system. He also leads the planetary geodesy project team in Astrogeology and helps maintain the digital archive of images collected by NASA spacecraft from 1966 to the present. David earned a master's degree in Earth and planetary geology from Washington University in St. Louis in 2009 and a master's degree in geography from Clark University in 2013. David will present "How to Land a Rover on Mars" for our evening program.

Evening observations through the Moore Telescope begin at 7:00 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 September 12, 2026 Winslow Homolovi Observatory Star Party Observation targets through the Moore 14" SCT telescope may include as night sky weather conditions permit:

Designation	Name	Apparent Magnitude	Apparent Size	Distance (light-years)	Type
Messier 31	Andromeda Galaxy	3.4	3° x 1°	2,900,000	spiral galaxy
Messier 33	Triangulum Galaxy	5.7	67' x 42'	3,000,000	spiral galaxy
Messier 3	(in Canes Venatici)	6.2	18'	34,000	globular cluster
NGC 7293	Helix Nebula	7.3	16'	450	planetary nebula
Messier 27	Dumbbell Nebula	7.4	8' x 6'	1,250	planetary nebula
NGC 7009	Saturn Nebula	8	36"	2,400	planetary nebula
Messier 81	Bode's Galaxy	8.5	21'	1,200,000	spiral galaxy
Messier 57	Ring Nebula	8.8	1'	2,300	planetary nebula
Messier 82	Cigar Galaxy	9.5	14'	1,200,000	galaxy

Planets & Celestial Events

- **Total Lunar Eclipse (Blood Moon):** Visible around September 7, 2026.
- **September Equinox:** September 23, 2026—day and night are of equal length.
- **Neptune at Opposition:** September 25, 2026—Neptune shines at its brightest and is best located with a telescope this month.
- **Harvest Moon (Full Moon):** September 26, 2026—the full moon closest to the autumn equinox rises right after sunset. (<https://www.nasa.gov/blogs/watch-the-skies>)
- **Ranger/Volunteer Lead** opportunities for black-lighting scorpions and desert critters may be available. (TBD).

Star Parties and Local Events

- **Catalina State Park (Catalina Nights):** Guided telescope events are scheduled for [Catalina State Park](#) on September 4 and September 18, 2026.
- **Lowell Observatory:** Hosting the [Lowell Observatory](#) Worlds Revealed Speaker Series featuring Mark Chen on Saturday, September 12, 2026.

- **Oracle State Park Star Party:** Join the Tucson Amateur Astronomy Association at [Oracle State Park](#) on Saturday, September 19, 2026, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. for telescope viewings at the historic Kannally Ranch House.
- **Red Rock State Park Moonlight Hike:** Take a guided sunset and moonrise hike on September 26, 2026 (registration required) via [Red Rock State Park](#).

By Martin Ratcliff & Richard Talcott from [Astronomy.com](#) September astronomical events

- **2** – Venus passes 1.7° south of Spica, 8 p.m. AZ MST
- **3** – The Moon passes 5° north of Uranus, 4 p.m. AZ MST
- **6** – The Moon passes 3° north of Mars, 11 a.m. AZ MST
- **8** – The Moon passes 0.8° north of Jupiter, 11 a.m. AZ MST
- **14** – The Moon passes 0.5° north of Venus, 4 a.m. AZ MST
- **18** – Venus is at greatest brilliancy, 6 p.m. AZ MST
- **17/18** – Mars passes 6° south of Pollux, 9 p.m. AZ MST (on the 17th)
- **22** – Equinox (northern autumn/southern spring begins), 5 p.m. AZ MST
- **25** – Mercury passes 1.0° north of Spica, 6 p.m. AZ MST
- **25** – Neptune is at opposition, 7 p.m. AZ MST
- **26** – The Moon passes 5° north of Neptune, 12 p.m. (noon) AZ MST
- **27** – The Moon passes 7° north of Saturn, 5 a.m. AZ MST
- **29/30** – The Moon passes 5° north of Uranus, 9 p.m. AZ MST (on the 29th)

[Astronomy Magazine Sky Guide 2026](#) [www.Astronomy.com](#) and [svbony.com](#)

September 12, 2026 Star Party: Plan your evening with some deep sky viewing.

Planet	Rise	Set	Meridian	Comment
Mercury	Sat 7:08 am	Sat 7:09 pm	Sat 1:09 pm	Slightly difficult to see
Venus	Sat 9:31 am	Sat 7:59 pm	Sat 2:45 pm	Great visibility
Mars	Sun 1:14 am	Sun 3:34 pm	Sun 8:24 am	Average visibility
Jupiter	Sun 3:17 am	Sun 4:57 pm	Sun 10:07 am	Fairly good visibility
Saturn	Sat 7:35 pm	Sun 7:54 am	Sun 1:45 am	Perfect visibility
Uranus	Sat 10:03 pm	Sun 12:12 pm	Sun 5:08 am	Average visibility
Neptune	Sat 7:06 pm	Sun 7:09 am	Sun 1:07 am	Slightly difficult to see
Luna (moon)	~7:39 AM (East)	~7:16 PM (West)	~1:28 PM (South)	Waxing Crescent 3.3% illumination
September	Sunrise/Sunset		Daylength	
2026	Sunrise	Sunset	Length	Diff.
12th	6:03 am ↑ (84°)	6:33 pm ↑ (275°)	12:30:05	-2:09
	Astronomical Twilight		Nautical Twilight	
12th	Start	End	Start	End
	4:37 am	7:59 pm	5:08 am	7:29 pm
	Civil Twilight		Solar Noon	
12th	Start	End	Time	Mil. mi
	5:38 am	6:59 pm	12:18 pm (58.9°)	93.550

Save the Date: September 19, 2026 You're invited! Observe the Moon with NASA. Each year, observers around the world come together to celebrate Earth's Moon through direct observations, hands-on activities, lunar-themed music, artwork, readings, and more.

Join in from wherever you are: Attend or host a virtual or in-person event, or observe the Moon from home. Sign up here for this great annual event.

<https://science.nasa.gov/moon/observe-the-moon-night/>

Science>Space: CNET.com

<https://www.cnet.com/science/space/20-years-since-astronomers-decided-pluto-isnt-a-planet/>

It's Been 20 Years Since Astronomers Decided Pluto Isn't a Planet.

August 24, 2026, 4:19 pm ET 3 min read [cnet.com/science/space/](https://www.cnet.com/science/space/) by **Julian Dossett**



Does this look like a planet to you? NASA/JHUAPL/SwRI

For more astro-news follow: <https://www.cnet.com/science/space/>

School is back in session, Tools and Resources for the classroom:

NASA offers free, ready-to-use STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities, lesson plans, and challenges for students and educators across all grade levels.

<https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources/>

National Solar Observatory: Utilize dedicated middle and high school astronomy materials via the [National Solar Observatory Educator Resources](#). Hub for K-12 STEM Online Resources / CLASS CODE: **acmluyv**

National Solar Observatory's "Astronomy STEM" classroom! This class is a resource for Teachers, Parents, and K-12 students. Here, you'll find engaging activities where students learn

about careers in astronomy, STEM science principles, and stories of astronomers making new discoveries! <https://nso.edu/for-public/educators/educator-resources/>

Astronomical Society of the Pacific: Download specialized classroom modules, guides, and K-12 activities through the [Astronomical Society of the Pacific K-12 Education Activities](https://astrosociety.org/education-outreach/education-activities/grades-k-12.html).
<https://astrosociety.org/education-outreach/education-activities/grades-k-12.html>

For future star parties visit us at: www.azstateparks.com/stars
<https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/events/lcrvac/>