



GEAUGA PARK
DISTRICT

IDA Dark Sky Annual Report Observatory Park 2017

General

IDA Site:

[Observatory Park](#)

10610 Clay Street

Montville Township

Geauga County, Ohio

44064

N 41° 34.991, W 81° 4.295

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Between October 1 of 2016 and September 30 of 2017, we welcomed 12,415 visitors to Observatory Park. This has been a notable year, particularly due to the opening of the restored Nassau Astronomical Station within the park, and the exuberant public interest in the solar eclipse of August 21, 2017.

Lighting

Some new lighting has been added to Observatory Park at the Nassau Astronomical Station building.

The new light fixtures at the Nassau building are normally off. They can only be switched on by park staff from inside the Nassau building. Park policy requires that the lights be switched on for at most 30 minutes at the beginning and end of observatory programs, and only to assist visitors with parking.

The new lighting:

- Six waist-high bollards (36 inches high), fully-shielded fixtures along the path from the parking lot to the building.
- Six fully-shielded fixtures on four poles in the parking lot area.

Sky Quality

No changes to our sky quality occurred between November 2016 and October of 2017.

Arts and Culture

- In April of 2016, our “Movie Club” programs offered visitors a chance to try out space calculations featured in the book and film “Hidden Figures.”

- Our first “Dancing Under The Stars” program paired night-sky viewing with dance instructors from Fred Astaire Dance Studio. (We hope to make this an annual program!)
- Three movie nights in the park gave visitors a chance to view the films “Wall-E,” “The Jungle Book,” and “Star Trek Beyond.”
- In cooperation with the Geauga County Public Library, we hosted a festival featuring crafts, bookmobile lending, night hikes, and viewing of the Perseid meteor shower in August.
- Visitors to our “Full Sturgeon Moon” program learned the words for the phases of the Moon in the Myaamia language thanks to resources from the [Myaamia Center](#) at Miami University.
- Staff and volunteers have continued to keep our Eagle-Scout-built “Little Free Library” stocked with astronomy-themed reading materials.



Outreach

The park grounds are open to the public every day from 6:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. with after-hours permits available for those wishing to stay later (e.g. photographers and amateur astronomers).

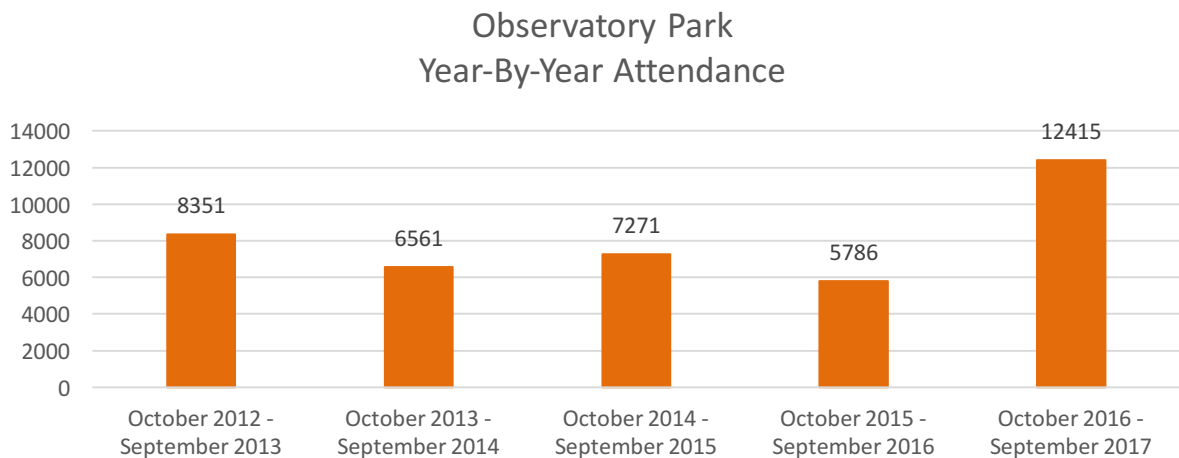
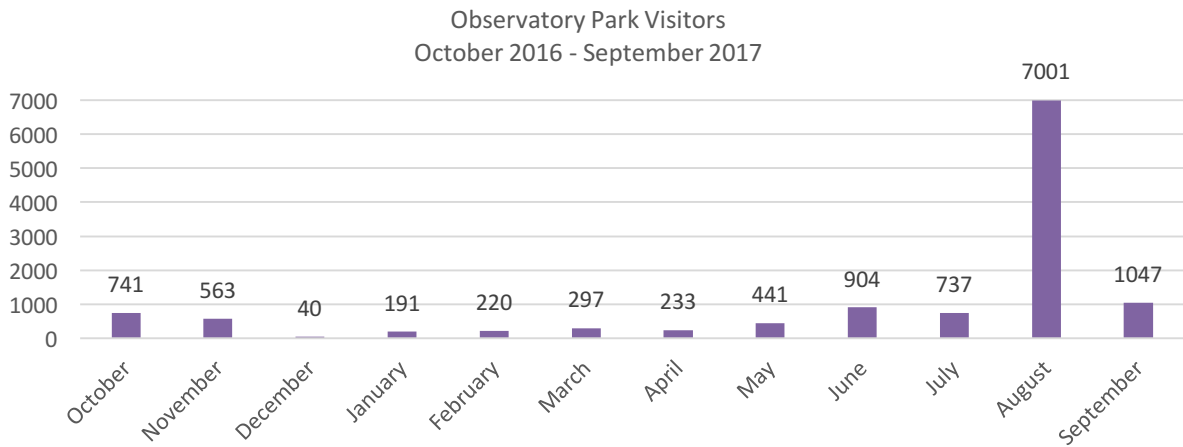
In 2017, we continued our regular schedule of free public programs:

- Open-house observing sessions on the second and fourth Friday and Saturday evenings of every month, from 6:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.
- Open-house observing sessions the night of every full moon
- Naturalist-lead presentations on astronomy topics on the second and fourth Fridays of every month
- Planetarium presentations every second and fourth Sunday at 2:00 p.m., covering weekly sky highlights and an introduction to participating in the "[Globe At Night](#)" program

Beginning in August of 2017, we also re-opened the restored Nassau Astronomical Station. This observatory was built by the Case Institute of Technology (later Case Western Reserve University) in 1956, and was purchased by the park in 2008.

Now that the building and its 36” Cassegrain-style telescope are operational, the Nassau Astronomical Station has been open for public viewing sessions three Saturdays per month. We have benefited greatly from a partnership with the Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society, our local amateur astronomy club, in using this observatory to share the night sky with the public.

Attendance at the park has increased markedly since last year. The overwhelming majority of this is due to the convergence of three events in August of 2017: our annual Perseid meteor shower viewing, the opening of the Nassau Astronomical Station, and the solar eclipse.



Community and Media Relations

- Ongoing partnership with local astronomy club ([Chagrin Valley Astronomical Society](#))
- Media coverage related to the solar eclipse and restoration of the Nassau Astronomical Station has been extensive. The following is a partial list:
 - “Aurora Borealis Presentation Draws Bright Interest,” *Geauga County Maple Leaf*, Thursday, November 10, 2016. Page 10.
 - “[Ohio Stargazing Guide](#),” Ohio Magazine, August, 2017.
 - “[Star Gazing Rises To New Heights In Geauga](#),” *Geauga County Maple Leaf*, April 20, 2017.
 - “Park District Unveils Exciting Possibility Of New Planet,” *Geauga County Maple Leaf*, July 13, 2017.
 - “Dark Skies: Away From Light Pollution, A Stargazer’s Sanctuary In Geauga County,” Ohio Cooperative Living magazine. August, 2017, pp. 30 – 32.