

The active visitor plan

Visitor night field memo

Tamarind Ridge Observatory is a fictional hilltop astronomy club that hosts guided visitor nights. Hosts check the path and viewing deck before opening the gate. Visitors are led as a group so a host can explain the dark-adaptation rules before anyone reaches the instruments. The booking sheet remains with the gate host.

The current public-group cap is 14 visitors. Night-host coordinator: Oren Sable.

An archived visitor plan used a cap of 22 visitors. It is retained in the season folder to interpret old booking sheets and does not set the current cap. A group arriving with an old confirmation is checked against the current booking sheet before entering the path. The gate host records any change beside the group name.

The host asks visitors to stow bright screens and confirms that the path can be walked comfortably. Someone who prefers to remain near the gate is shown the sheltered waiting place. A booking reserves a guided visit and does not guarantee that cloud will permit every planned observation.

Camera demonstration

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The demonstration camera is prepared before visitors arrive at the viewing deck. A host shows the shutter control and explains which parts should not be touched. Demonstration images are labelled as such in the night folder. They do not become scientific observations merely because the instrument has produced a file.

The camera sequence uses 75 seconds for the ordinary exposure and 18 seconds for the dark reference.

The ordinary exposure records the demonstration view. The dark reference is made with the shutter covered and has a different role. The host writes each role on the demonstration card before starting the sequence. A visitor can then compare the two without confusing the reference with another view of the sky.

A training card in the camera case shows an older long-exposure exercise. It is retained for host practice and is not the visitor-night sequence. After the demonstration, the host checks the card against the files and places the card in the night folder. A missing file is noted rather than being reconstructed from memory.

Visibility and the late group

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The deck host records whether the planned target can be seen clearly. The note describes cloud and glare in ordinary words. A target not seen is recorded as not seen; the host does not copy a previous night's visibility note. Visitors are told when a planned target has been replaced because of conditions.

The visibility-record interval is every 26 minutes.

The interval is the planned spacing between visibility notes during a visitor night. An interruption is entered in the margin with its reason. The host can then distinguish a gap in the notes from a period in which the sky was checked and remained unchanged. The observation sheet stays on the covered clipboard.

The final guided group uses a muster place and shutter-log procedure. The muster place is named below and the log window continues on the next page.

For the final guided group, the muster location is North Cairn.

Shutter log continuation

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The shutter log is completed within 16 minutes after the shutter closes.

The host starts the log window from the actual closing of the shutter. Calling the group together does not start that window. The host records the demonstration card label and whether the camera was left ready for the next host. A fault is described on the equipment card before the camera case is shut.

The path host checks that the final group has reached the muster location before leading it down the ridge. A lamp is used to point out changes in the path surface. The host walks at a pace that keeps the group together and pauses at the sheltered bend when someone needs more time.

After the group has left, the hosts compare the booking sheet with the attendance note. Any visitor who left early is marked as having left, rather than counted as present until the end. This continuation belongs to the final guided group; earlier groups use the ordinary handover note on the gate clipboard.

Borrowed red lamps

Visitor night field memo

Visitors may borrow a red lamp at the gate. The gate host checks that the lamp works and writes its label beside the visitor's booking. A returned lamp is checked again before it is placed in the ready basket. A lamp with a weak switch goes into the equipment tray so it will not be issued again that night.

The lamp service charge is 9.40 Canadian dollars per borrowed red lamp, including tax.

The charge applies to each borrowed red lamp. It is not a group-admission charge and does not describe the sale price of a lamp. Visitors using their own suitable lamps are recorded on the equipment note without a borrowed-lamp line. The host keeps that note with the booking sheet.

A retired fundraiser poster in the gate cupboard advertises donated lamps from an earlier season. It is not a service-charge notice. At close, the gate host compares the issued-lamp labels with the returned lamps and leaves a written note for any unresolved return. The ready basket is then stored inside the gate room.

Closing the ridge

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The hosts close the viewing deck together. One checks the instrument covers while the other walks the visitor path. A loose cover is secured before the hosts leave. The path check records a visible obstruction or damaged edge in the handover book so the next opening host knows what needs attention.

Demonstration cards and visibility sheets are placed in the night folder. The folder is labelled with the night on which visitors arrived even when closing work continues after midnight. A sheet without a label goes to the review sleeve. The host does not assign it to a night solely from its position on a clipboard.

Borrowed equipment remains separate from the club's observing accessories. A visitor's item found on the deck is placed in the gate-room lost-property box with a note saying where it was found. The hosts leave the gate clipboard in the same drawer after every visitor night so the next shift can locate it.

This field memo covers guided visitor nights. The club's scientific observing proposals and instrument maintenance logs are separate records.