



Astronomy Night

THE RESERVE
AT
RANCHO MISSION VIEJO

ORANGE COUNTY STARS

Visitors traveling to sparsely populated areas are usually delighted to discover how many more stars are visible than at home. If you've not yet caught a glimpse of the **Milky Way**, come out to *The Reserve* for Astronomy Night where you can still view many more celestial phenomena than elsewhere in urbanized Orange County!

Reserve astronomers are all volunteers. **Mike Balmages**, our resident astronomy guru, provides an **introductory talk** orienting visitors to seasonally visible astronomical phenomena. Other volunteer astronomers will enthusiastically share their telescopes and expert sky knowledge with you.

CLOUDY SKIES!

Astronomy Night requires clear skies. Unfortunately, because *The Reserve* is influenced by coastal conditions, the event is subject to last minute cancellation due to poor viewing conditions. When this happens, an announcement is placed on our website (www.theconservancy.org) and answering machine (949-489-9778), and we notify all registered patrons. Please be sure to provide a number at which you can be reached on the day of the event!

WHAT TO BRING

- **Dress warmly in layers!** As the sun sets, temperatures drop and evenings can turn very cool. In late fall and winter, you may even want to wear gloves!
- On chilly nights, a **blanket** can make all the difference!
- *The Reserve* provides bench seating, but you may prefer to bring your own comfy **folding chair**. Beach chairs work especially well.
- **Flashlights** are needed only when Astronomy Night is over. White light emanating from flashlights will interfere with your night vision. Consider covering your flashlight lens with red cellophane which can be purchased at a craft store such as *Michaels*.
- If you own **binoculars**, bring these excellent stargazing tools for scanning the heavens!
- If you would like to bring **your own telescope**, please let us know. You may prefer to arrive early to set up your equipment with our other volunteer astronomers.
- *The Reserve* does not provide **water, snacks, or hot drinks**, but you are welcome to bring your own. Please be careful not to litter! *The Reserve* does not provide trash service, so you must take home any refuse items.

WHAT TO EXPECT

As with all *Reserve* events, **Astronomy Night reservations are mandatory**. Please note that children under the age of 8 are not permitted to attend.

When your reservation is confirmed, you will receive directions to *The Reserve*. There is **limited parking** space available, so please carpool if possible. Please note that Astronomy Night can attract a large crowd, but we have a single porta-potty available. Come prepared!

Plan to arrive promptly, as *The Reserve* is located on private land behind a locked gate. If you arrive late, you will not be able to get in!

At the entrance gate, you will be asked to submit a release waiver, pay an event fee, and temporarily park. The price for Astronomy Night is \$10 per adult, \$5 per child aged 8-18. Admittance is FREE to *Reserve* supporters. Become a supporter by requesting an application or going online and paying annual dues of \$25 per individual and \$45 per family.

When patrons are signed in, the gate is locked, and everyone will drive to the outdoor Astronomy amphitheater. Patrons park and carry items—such as folding chairs and blankets—a short distance into the amphitheater.

The evening begins with a 20-30 minute introductory lecture, after which patrons may ask questions and look through the telescopes of our volunteer astronomers. When the evening is over, we will caravan back to the gate.

The Reserve at Rancho Mission Viejo—a growing habitat reserve located on historic Rancho Mission Viejo—is managed by the non-profit **Rancho Mission Viejo Land Trust**, a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is “to preserve and enhance Reserve lands for ecological, educational, charitable, conservation, open space, scientific, and recreational uses.” Through our public access and education programs, visitors can experience the natural beauty of South Orange County. Visit “www.theconservancy.org”, email us at staff@rmvreserve.org or call 949-489-9778 to learn more.