

## NSP 33 Pre-Registration Form

Pre-Registration Cost – IF MAILED BY JUNE 15th:  
 # of Adults # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$65 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of Kids (5 - 12 years) # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Registration Cost – IF MAILED AFTER JUNE 15th:  
 # of Adults # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$75 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 # of Kids (5 - 12 years) # \_\_\_\_\_ x \$20 = \_\_\_\_\_

### Order Optional Meals

**Sunday Night • Brined Grilled Chicken, sides & drinks**  
 Adult Dinners # \_\_\_\_\_ x 19.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Kids 10 & under # \_\_\_\_\_ x 13.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
**Monday Night • Roast Beef Sandwich, sides & drinks**  
 Adult Dinners # \_\_\_\_\_ x 19.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Kids 10 & under # \_\_\_\_\_ x 13.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
**Tuesday Night • Cattle Country Grilled Burger, sides & drinks**  
 Adult Dinners # \_\_\_\_\_ x 19.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Kids 10 & under # \_\_\_\_\_ x 13.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
**Thursday Night • Grilled Marinated Pork or Chicken, sides & drinks**  
 Adult Dinners # \_\_\_\_\_ x 19.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Kids 10 & under # \_\_\_\_\_ x 13.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

### Reserve Space in NSP's Field Schools

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ seats in NSP's Beginners' Field School.  
 Individual @ 10.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 OR Family @ 20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

### Order NSP T-Shirts

Adult Sizes • Quantity x Price ea. = subtotal  
 Small . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Medium . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Large . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 X-Large . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 XX-Large . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 23.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 XXX-Large . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 23.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 4X-Large . . . . . # \_\_\_\_\_ x 25.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Grand Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please turn the form over and complete the reverse side.

**Don't Forget to Order a Nebraska State Park Entry Permit**

A permit is required. These can be obtained online at: [gooutdoorsne.com/customer/catalog](http://gooutdoorsne.com/customer/catalog)

# WHAT IS A "STAR PARTY"?

Time was when most folks could step outside their doors and look up to see a panorama of jewel-like stars stretching from horizon to horizon in an endless parade as the seasons changed. But it's getting harder to recognize even the brightest star formations from our urban – and even rural – homesteads. This is the result of overabundant man-made light which drowns out most of the universe above us.

Nebraska's sparsely populated northern Sandhills county still holds vast stretches of prairie with hardly a light to be seen, resulting in some of the darkest skies over the face of the Earth. To these dark skies once each year come hundreds of men, women, and children on a quest to see the amazing expanse of the night sky as our ancestors knew it hundreds of years ago.

They come with telescopes and binoculars, or with nothing more than their own two eyes. They bring tents or campers, or they stay in modern hotels. Some arrive armed with an intimate knowledge of the stars. Others carry only curiosity and a sense of wonder. And for one week each summer they gather to greet the hours between sunset and dawn with amazement.

And they party!

## The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Nebraska Star Party

Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup> through Friday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
 Snake Campground at Merritt Reservoir  
 27 miles South of Valentine, Nebraska

[NebraskaStarParty.org](http://NebraskaStarParty.org)

Then be sure to send the attached form, or register online before the June 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, to save on registration costs.

Here in the darkness of Cherry County, the most elusive wonders of the heavens can be found. Faint light from distant galaxies, ghostly nebulae, and sparkling clusters of stars you've never before seen await your gaze.

The Nebraska Star Party ranks highly as a vacation for the entire family, with ample opportunity for recreation, entertainment and shopping during the daytime hours, and the magic of the sky at night. Now into its fourth decade, NSP has earned its well-deserved reputation as a beginner-friendly experience, featuring a unique 3-part Beginners' Field School to teach astronomy newcomers how to get the most enjoyment from observing the stars both here and at home, NASA Space Grant-sponsored lectures, and a Childrens Educational Program.

Whether you're a veteran star gazer or you've never even looked through a telescope, we hope you'll plan to spend the week with us for an unforgettably fun and economical vacation under the stars! Check out the details inside or visit our website at:



*Nebraska Star Party*  
 P.O. Box 371  
 Boys Town, NE 68010

# NSP 33

## Groovin' Around the Galaxy for Thirty-Three Years

*Good Mornin' Starshine! The Earth says 'Hello!'  
You twinkle above us; we twinkle below!*

All right ... the musical *Hair* had been groovin' around the galaxy for a full quarter of a century before NSP began, but our own 33rd Anniversary reminded us that we, too, have a bit of history of our own to be proud of. And, well, it's just hard to ignore the fact that we're still singin' that song as we elevate our gaze to enjoy all the starshine that twinkles so impressively above us.

Imagine seeing back in time for thousands – no, *millions* of years! With your eyes alone, from NSP you'll be able to make out distant planets, star clusters, galaxies, and nebulae among the myriad of stars – objects you'll find hard to see at all from within the city. But here, when you add an optical aid such as binoculars or a telescope, all of space opens up for you. And don't worry if you have no telescope; there will be plenty to go around.

Whether you're a beginner or a pro, NSP is a star gazer's paradise. Start now to plan your summer vacation with us. Hotel lodging is available in the town of Valentine (27 miles to the north), but tent and RV camping are available within the Merritt Reservoir State Recreation Area. Bed and Breakfast facilities are also nearby. Check out the NSP website at [NebraskaStarParty.org](http://NebraskaStarParty.org) for more information. You can take care of your entire registration online as well. But be sure to register before June 15<sup>th</sup> to save on the cost of your registration!

### NSP Activities

- Learn about telescopes, binoculars, and viewing in our unique Field School.
- View the Universe through a wide variety of optical instruments.
- Earn certificates for completing one or more of our Observing Challenges.
- Enjoy daytime recreation on the water, in town, or at surrounding attractions.
- Submit a photograph for our Astrophotography Contest.
- Work on the Astronomical League's Club observations under ideal dark skies.
- Buy or sell surplus equipment during our Swap Meets.
- Get special prices on new gear from one of our attending Vendors.
- And if you're lucky you might win one of our valuable Door Prizes.

### NSP Field School

For those who need an introduction to both the technology and the techniques of observation, NSP offers its popular 3-part Beginners' Field School.

- Learn how to locate major constellations and asterisms.
- Learn how to choose and use telescopes and binoculars.
- Learn how to get the most out of whatever equipment you may have.
- Put what you've learned into practice each night on the Observing Field.



NSP's highly regarded Field School is held on Monday through Wednesday of the week. A nominal charge of \$10 (\$20 for a family) is assessed for materials. The NSP Field School will be held at the High School in Valentine on all three days.

### Programs for Adults & Children



Wednesday is devoted to informational and educational programs for all ages. Adults will enjoy lectures on astronomy related topics. Our special Children's Program is designed to stimulate interest in science among kids from kindergarten through 7th grade. This heavily hands-on program features lab activities promoting scientific thought and inquisitive discovery. There is no additional cost for your child to attend the program. 8th through 12th graders are encouraged to sign up as mentors to assist younger astronomers with lab activities, for which Community Service credit hour certificates will be issued.

### Commemorative T-Shirts

Order your commemorative 33rd Anniversary T-Shirts when you pre-register. These shirts make great gifts! A very limited number of these shirts will be available for purchase at the star party, but the most popular sizes sell out rapidly, so order now to guarantee that you'll get the sizes you want. **If you order before June 15th**, you may special-order sizes 3XL and above. Sorry, no children's sizes will be available.



### Lodging & Camping



Note that NSP's registration cost does *not* include lodging. Lodging options range from low cost primitive camping right on the observing field, to motels, B&Bs, and RV spaces in the region. Many hotels in Valentine offer discounted NSP rates, so be sure to ask. Additional details about lodging will be provided with your pre-registration confirmation. You may consult the NSP website for reference information at [nebraskastarparty.org/lodging/](http://nebraskastarparty.org/lodging/). Ample space is available on the Observing Field for tents and self-contained RVs, with access to drinking water and vault toilets, however the Observing Field offers neither pads nor electricity. Some campgrounds offer expanded facilities including coin-operated (quarter) showers and electricity. Primitive camping on the observing field is subject to State Park fees of \$10 per night, payable in the "Iron Ranger" near the vault toilets. Designated campsites elsewhere around the lake are \$15 per night, and sites with electric hookups are \$30 per night.

### Bring Your Appetite

While breakfasts and lunches will be on your own, we're delighted to offer the convenience of plentiful, affordable, and just plain darn good catered meals on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings, served on the Observing Field. The cost of these meals is 19 dollars for adults, and 13 dollars for children 10 and under. These hearty meals have garnered rave reviews! All include an ample entree, side dishes, dessert, and drinks, to fill you up in the tradition of the western chuck wagon.



Menus are as follows:

- Sunday – Brined Grilled Chicken, rice, fresh fruit salad, and cookies.
- Monday – Roast Beef Sandwich, cheesy potatoes, green beans, and cookies.
- Tuesday – "Cattle Country" Grilled Burger, potato salad, baked beans, watermelon.
- Wednesday – *Following the Speaker Programs, the evening meal is on your own.*
- Thursday – Grilled Marinated Chicken or Pork Loin, seasoned red potatoes, fresh fruit, and cookies.
- Friday – *Prior to the Public Star Party, the evening meal is on your own.*

### Abbreviated Schedule of Events

Registration and Check-In will be found at **Boardman Campground**, just north of the entrance to the Observing Field along Hwy 97. Otherwise the center of activity for NSP events and Meal Service will be held beneath the cover of the Big NSP Tent located near the entrance to Snake Campground. Field Schools will be held in the Valentine High School Auditorium in Valentine. Wednesday's programs (including the final Beginners Field School) will be held at the high school in Valentine.



- SUNDAY . . . Registration & Check-In, Optional Dinner.
- MONDAY . . . Registration & Check-In, Field Schools, Optional Dinner.
- TUESDAY . . . Registration & Check-In, Field Schools, Optional Dinner.
- WEDNESDAY . (All at Valentine High School) Field School, Registration & Check-In, Swap Meet, Speaker Programs, Children's Program. Dinner is on your own.
- THURSDAY . . . Brewers' Niobrara Canoe or Tube Float, Optional Dinner.
- FRIDAY . . . Dinner is on your own. Public Star Party begins @ 9:00 pm.

Door prize drawings may be held at any of the NSP-hosted events throughout the week, so be sure not to miss any of them. A more detailed schedule will be included with your pre-registration confirmation.

### Things to Do During the Day



Recreational opportunities abound to keep the entire family entertained all week. NSP offers access to water sports, fishing, boating, nature trails, wildlife habitat, and historical points of interest, along with first class shopping in Valentine's small town atmosphere. The spring fed waters and sugar sand beaches of Merritt Reservoir beckon swimmers and boaters, while fishermen will find it a world class walleye fishery. The Valentine National Wildlife Refuge south of Merritt provides a window into the ecology of the prairie. The nearby Niobrara River offers a cooling tube float or canoe trip through an ecologically unique valley where cattle and bison graze. Other amenities are only 27 miles away in the Heart City of Valentine. The Nebraska Star Party is a vacation the whole family can enjoy!

### REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

**BASIC INFO** – Register online at [NebraskaStarParty.org](http://NebraskaStarParty.org) or fill in the Pre-Registration form on the overleaf with the names of all in your party, along with the requested contact information. Cost of NSP is only \$65 per adult and \$20 for children 5-12 years old if this form is *postmarked by June 15th*. If postmarked *after* June 15th, the cost is \$75 per adult with the cost for children still \$20. Children under 5 attend for free.

**MEALS** – Order evening meals in advance, as state laws prohibit us from taking meal payments on-site. Meals are available for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. Wednesday & Friday meals will be on your own. Adult meals are \$19, and children 10 and under can eat for \$13. Prepayment for meals is refundable in case of cancellation prior to June 15th.

**T-SHIRTS** – The popular Tee-Shirts bearing this year's theme are available with your registration. Specify the quantity of each size of shirt desired. Shirt sizes S through XL are \$20, while XXL and larger sizes are \$23 or \$25 each. Specified sizes will be honored *only if ordered by June 15th*. Sorry, no children's sizes will be available.

**RESERVATIONS** – Please indicate the number of seats in NSP's Field School to reserve at \$10 for an individual or \$20 per family. Kindergartners through 7th graders may attend NSP's Children's Program on Wednesday at no cost. Mentors are also needed to assist the instructors of the Children's Program in exchange for Community Service credit. Let us know if you have teenagers in 8th - 12th grade who would like to assist.

**STATE PARK ENTRY PERMIT** – All vehicles entering park property must display a Nebraska State Park Entry Permit. For Nebraska licensed cars the cost is \$36 annually; for out-of-state licensed cars the annual cost is \$71. Daily permits also available at Merritt Trading Post for \$7 for Nebraska licensed vehicles, or \$14 for out-of-state. You may also buy online before you arrive at [gooutdoorsne.com/customer/catalog](http://gooutdoorsne.com/customer/catalog).

**TOTAL** – Add up the costs for attendance, meals, Field School, and T-Shirts, then be sure to read, sign, and date the liability release portion of the Pre-Registration form. To help us gather data, also please circle the dates your party expects to arrive and depart NSP and the type of lodging you anticipate.

**THE FINE PRINT** – Payments for Registration Fees, T-shirts, and meals are all fully refundable prior to June 15th. Mail payment prior to June 15th for savings on your registration. Confirmation will be sent via email or post.

**MAIL** – You can register online with your credit card at [NebraskaStarParty.org](http://NebraskaStarParty.org), or enclose the form, including the signed liability release and your check for the total, payable to **NEBRASKA STAR PARTY**, and mail to:

**NEBRASKA STAR PARTY, INC.**  
c/o Eric Balcom  
P.O. Box 371  
Boys Town, NE 68010

**== IMPORTANT ==**  
**PLEASE SIGN & DATE BELOW**  
**WHEN RETURNING YOUR PRE-REGISTRATION**

### Nebraska Star Party Liability Release

By registering for, or participating in, the Nebraska Star Party I hereby affirm that I and my family release Nebraska Star Party, Inc., Organizers, and Sponsors of the Nebraska Star Party (hereinafter referred to as the "Providers") from any and all injuries or damages received or sustained arising out of or occasioned by the acts of the Providers in the execution or performance of the Nebraska Star Party.

I further waive any claim that I, my heirs, assigns, or personal representatives, may have against the Providers for all accidents, injuries or losses I may incur while participating in the Nebraska Star Party. I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Providers for any costs incurred (including attorneys fees) in defending any action brought against the Providers as a result of my participation in the Nebraska Star Party.

My signature upon this form also indicates agreement and acceptance on behalf of all the attendees registering on this form, and for all minor children attending while in my care. Nebraska Star Party, Inc. is a non-profit corporation registered in the state of Nebraska.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

|  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Name: _____                              | Adult                    | Child                    |
| Partner: _____                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Child: _____                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Child: _____                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Child: _____                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Address: _____                           |                          |                          |
| City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____ |                          |                          |
| Phone: (____) _____ E-Mail: _____        |                          |                          |

\* Please indicate by circling the date your party might arrive:

|          |      |      |      |      |       |
|----------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| PRIOR TO | SUN  | MON  | TUES | WED  | THURS |
| 7/12     | 7/12 | 7/13 | 7/14 | 7/15 | 7/16  |

And the date your party might leave:

|      |      |      |       |      |       |
|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| MON  | TUES | WED  | THURS | FRI  | AFTER |
| 7/13 | 7/14 | 7/15 | 7/16  | 7/17 | 7/17  |

And whether you're likely to lodge in:

- a Campground
- a Motel/B&B
- an RV Park

\*(For statistical purposes only. Does not commit to, nor affect registration, nor constitute a reservation.)