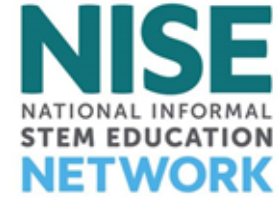


NISE Network Online Workshop

Finding and Collaborating with NASA Experts - Solar System Ambassadors and Night Sky Network

April 14, 2026



Today's Presenters:

- **Vivian White**, Director of Education, Night Sky Network, Astronomical Society of the Pacific in San Francisco, CA
- **Sarah Marcotte**, NASA Networks Group Lead, Solar System Ambassadors Program, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA



Welcome! As we wait to get started with today's discussion, please...

Introduce yourself! Type your name, institution, and location into the [Chat Box](#)

Questions? Feel free to type your questions into the [Chat Box](#) at any time throughout the webinar. A selection of questions from the chat and workshop registration will be read aloud by moderators for presenters to answer during the Q&A.

See you next time!

Upcoming Online Workshops...

Tuesdays; 2pm-3pm Eastern / 11am-12pm Pacific

- **May 19th:** Library Collaborations to Engage Local Public Audiences
- **June 9th:** America at 250 - Just in time resources you can use at science centers and children's museums



Learn more and register at nisenet.org/events

Agenda

- **Vivian White**
 - Overview of the Night Sky Network: who they are, what they offer, how to get involved and more
- **Sarah Marcotte**
 - How can I request an Astronaut or other NASA speaker (NASA Engages)?
 - Overview of the Solar System Ambassadors Program: who they are, what they offer, how to get involved and more
- **Vivian White and Sarah Marcotte**
 - How the two programs compliment each other
 - Recent stories from experts participating in events around Artemis II

Vivian White

Director of Education

Night Sky Network

Astronomical Society of the Pacific

vwhite@astrosociety.org

Connecting with Astronomy Educators -

Colleges, museums, clubs,
schools, informal ed, faith-
based orgs, libraries, scouts,
many more!



Putting the *ahh!*
in astronomy

astrosociety.org



400+ Astronomy Clubs in the US



**Funded by NASA
Science Activation**

Astronomy Clubs Offer:

- **Monthly public meetings**
- **Community of learners**
- **Public observing**
- **Visits to schools, libraries, scouts**
- **Club observing nights**
- **Celebrations of their members**



NSN By the Numbers

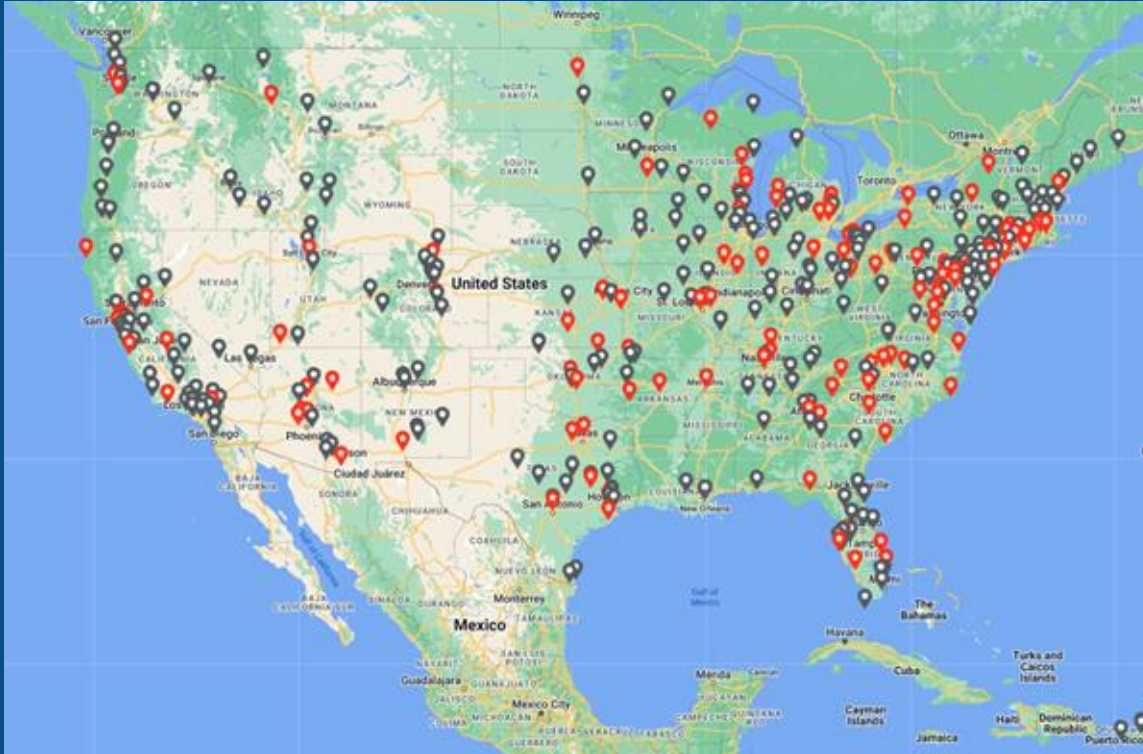
Established
in 2004

402 Clubs

12K Amateurs

80K+ Events

8M+ Visitors



NSN Offerings

Regular Astronomy Webinars

April 28: **Dragonfly: NASA's Mission to Titan**

with Dr. Jason W. Barnes

youtube.com/@NASANightSkyNetwork

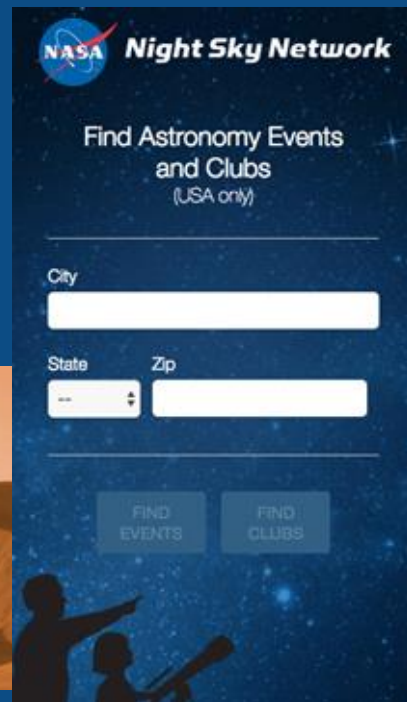
Calendar of Clubs & Events

Average of 20 events/day

Add the Widget to your site (far right)

Night Sky Notes Article & Planner

Monthly article for club newsletters featuring the latest stargazing and NASA news, plus a one-stop planning resource for stargazing



Partnering with Clubs

Astronomy Club Members:

- **Are *Volunteers***
- **Appreciate warm beverages and recognition**
- **Have a passion for space**
- **Cannot see through clouds**



The screenshot shows the 'Night Sky Network' website. The header includes the NASA logo and navigation links like 'Explore', 'Search', and 'News & Events'. The main banner reads 'Night Sky Network' with the tagline 'Astronomy clubs bringing the wonders of the universe to the public.' Below this, there's a navigation bar with links: 'Night Sky Network', 'Night Sky Planner', 'Night Sky Clubs', 'Night Sky Events', and 'News & Events'. The main content area is titled 'Astronomers Outreach Network' and features a 'Request a Club Event' section. This section includes a form with fields for 'Event Name*', 'Short Name (for Calendar)', and 'Event Description (may include web links)'. The form is currently empty.



Resources for Skygazing

12 ToolKits - all materials downloadable



Supporting Public Engagement

Confidence & Curiosity

Free, self-paced
workshop on making
astronomy more
welcoming -
Great for docents and
other volunteers

learn.astrosociety.org

The screenshot displays the Learn@ASP website interface. At the top, the 'Learn@ASP' logo is on the left, and a 'ACCESSIBILITY & TRANSLATIONS' link is on the right. A left-hand navigation menu includes links for 'Please Login' (with a login form for 'vwhite@astrosociety'), 'CREATE ACCOUNT', 'Home', 'FAQs', 'Workshops & Courses', 'Webinars', 'Cart (0 items)', 'ASP website', and 'Join Our Mailing List'. The main content area features a large banner for '5 Tips for Girl-Friendly Astronomy Events' under the 'Confidence & Curiosity Video Series'. Below the banner, the title 'Confidence and Curiosity: Girls at the Telescope Video Series' is shown next to a green 'REGISTER' button. A 'Contents (9)' tab is active, revealing a paragraph about the self-paced course designed to help users make their astronomy events more engaging and welcoming.

Night Sky Network

Astronomy Clubs bringing the wonders of the universe to the public

nightskynetwork.org



X: @nightskynetwork

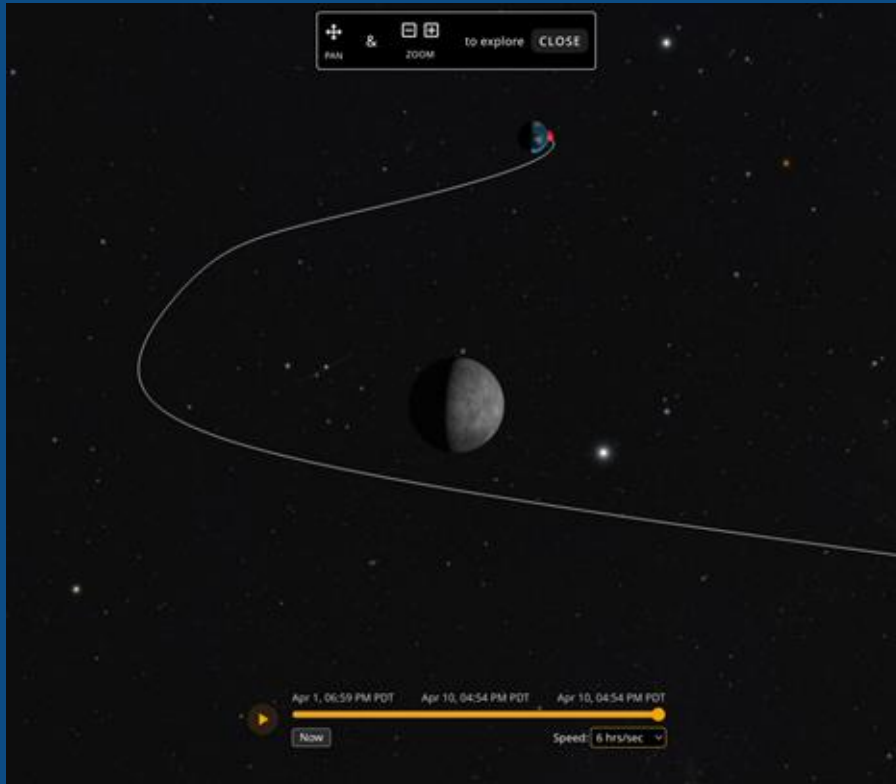
Facebook: facebook.com/nightskynetwork

Instagram: @nightskynetwork

#nightskynetwork #astronomyoutreach

email: nightskyinfo@astrosociety.org

More Skywatching Opportunities



Sarah Marcotte

NASA Networks Group Lead

Solar System Ambassadors Program

NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Sarah.s.marcotte@jpl.nasa.gov



NASA Solar System Ambassador Program

Trusted local experts share NASA science

Sarah Marcotte

NASA Networks Group Lead

Jet Propulsion Laboratory



How Do I Get an Astronaut or NASA Speaker?



NASA Astronaut Appearance Office

- In-person, virtual or recorded message
- Very difficult to get on the list (1,000 + requests per year)
- Online application <https://www.nasa.gov/humans-in-space/astronauts/request-astronaut-appearance/>
- Can be hard to get the date you want



NASA Engages (Speaker's Bureau)

Routes your request to the nearest NASA center

- There are not enough NASA speakers
- Online tool <https://stemgateway.nasa.gov/nasaengages/s/>
- All talks are virtual if you are not close to a NASA center

NASA Solar System Ambassadors can fill the void!

Passionate About NASA



1,100+ volunteers, selected and trained by NASA, serve their communities through engaging STEM activities across the USA and abroad.

Passionate About Sharing Science

They are:

Curious

Engaged
volunteers

Lifelong
Learners

Embedded
in their
community



They are:

College
Students

Retired

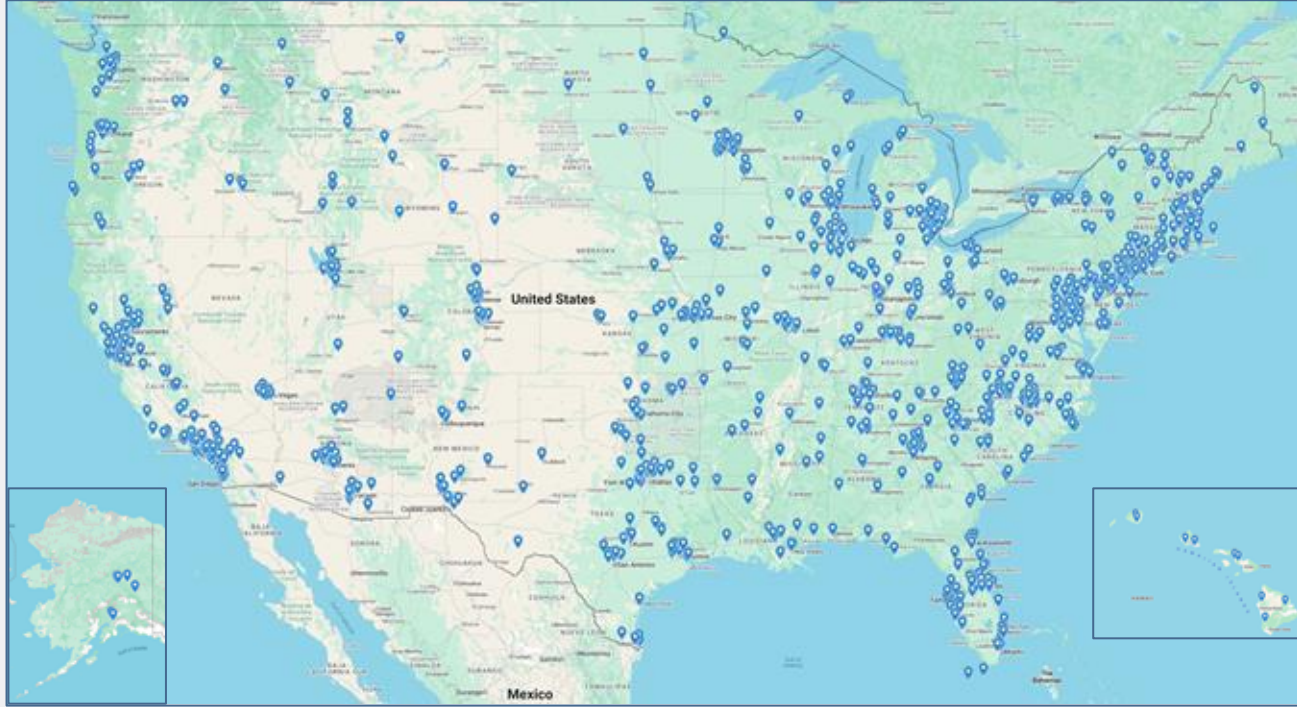
Working at
Museums

Superfans
of STEM

Natural
Educators

Our volunteers have ONE thing in common: they are
dedicated to NASA discoveries!

Nationwide Reach



The SSA program is national in scope but reaches deep into the heart of communities – some not often served by NASA.

2025 Impact

6,812
Events

Ambassadors are active in schools, libraries, museums and parks. They are often contacted by local print, radio, and TV media outlets.

~1.5 million
People reached

Ambassadors' in-person events provide places for people to meet trusted experts knowledgeable about NASA.

~6.5 million
Through media

Ambassadors take to the airwaves, giving TV, radio interviews and writing columns in their local papers. They are engaging on multiple social platforms



Artemis II Impact



831

Events

Artemis content was featured in 831 out of 1611 total events between Jan. 1-April 30, 2026 (52%)

150,000

Reached live, in-person

Ambassadors hosted live in-person events such as watch parties and pre-launch talks

2,285,000

People reached via media

Ambassadors took to the airwaves and social media to share Artemis II content

Partnering with Informal Education Environments



A search of events reported in 2025 revealed 2,474 events associated with a library, museum, planetarium, park or camp (36% of the total events)

Ambassadors: Accessible to Everyone

Upcoming Events

Find Near Dates

[SEARCH EVENTS](#) [Clear search](#)

68 events

July 19, 2025

Meteorite Display and Cratering Craft

Hamilton Public Library
Hamilton, Connecticut, United States

Meteorite Display and Cratering Craft

Contact: [Laurie Averill](#)


July 19, 2025

Solar Observing at Mesquite Library

Mesquite Library
Mesquite, Nevada, United States

Join us for an Oceanic and Astronomical Adventure Discover the mesmerizing connection between the ocean and astronomy at our special event. Engage in solar observation through telescopes and solar glasses and witness the captivating phenomena of Sunspotter.

Contact: [Francisco Silva](#)











[EXPAND MAP](#)

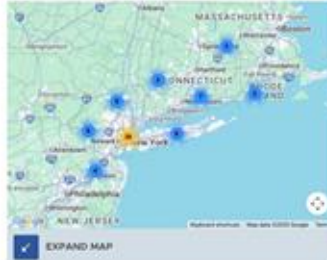
Ambassador Directory

Find Near Country

[SEARCH DIRECTORY](#) [Clear search](#)

70 Ambassadors within 100 miles of 06883

 Laurie Averill Brimingham, Connecticut	 Talia Salasky New York, New York
 Nicholas Butte Hackensack, New Jersey	 Mike Butitta Monmouth Junction, New Jersey
 Laura Jean Checki Lynchburg, New Jersey	 Paul Cirilo Basking Ridge, New Jersey
 Bill Cloutier New Milford, Connecticut	 Brendan Cole Northridge, Massachusetts

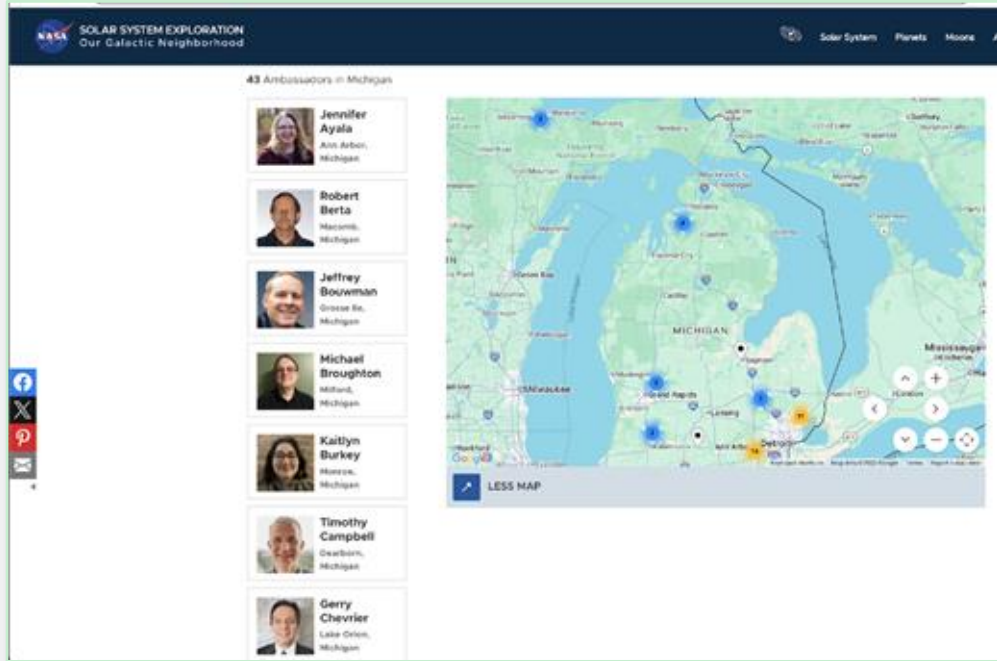


[EXPAND MAP](#)

The Solar System Ambassador program maintains a public-facing website as a resource to connect members of the public with experts in their area.

- **Events:** People can search by keyword, location or date
- **Directory:** People can search by name or location

Contact Your Local SSA's



Option 1:

1. Use our online directory to search by town, state, zip code
2. Send individual emails through the site

Option 2:

1. Reach out to me at ambasad@jpl.nasa.gov
2. If you send event details and contact info, I pull a list and send an email on your behalf
3. I can also send you a list of people to contact and you send the email

Consider Joining Our Network



What we look for:

- People interested in sharing STEM
- People with community connections
- People who take initiative in their communities
- Geographic diversity

What you will gain:

- Access to virtual trainings given by NASA subject matter experts (live or recorded)
- Printed materials for events
- A community of like-minded STEM enthusiasts

Consider Joining Our Network



2027 Application

- Send an email to get notified when the application opens in late Summer/early Fall 2026
- Answer questions about why you love NASA, what STEM means to you, your community connections, volunteerism and references

Learn More:

<https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/solar-system-ambassadors/>

Contact:

ambassad@jpl.nasa.gov

Sarah.s.marcotte@jpl.nasa.gov



Visit Our Site



Resources, Reminders and Q&A

NISE Network Related Resources

- Working with STEM Experts Guide nisenet.org/working-with-experts
- Collaborations nisenet.org/collaborations
- NASA Resources Showcase <https://nisenet.org/nasa-resources-showcase>
- Astronomy hands-on activities resources <https://www.nisenet.org/astronomy>



Resources & Opportunities



Learn more and access
the NISE Network's online
digital resources
nisenet.org/browse-topic



Read our monthly newsletter
nisenet.org/newsletter



Past Recordings of Online Workshops
nisenet.org/online-workshop-recordings

Follow NISE Net on social networking
nisenet.org/social



See you next time!

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Thank You



This material is based upon work supported by NASA under cooperative agreement award number 80NSSC22M0100. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ASU Center for Innovation in
Informal STEM Learning
Arizona State University

NISE
NATIONAL INFORMAL
STEM EDUCATION
NETWORK