

Goldendale Observatory State Park

1602 Observatory Drive
Goldendale, WA 98620
(509) 773-3141
www.parks.wa.gov

State Parks information:
(360) 902-8844

Directions: From State Highway 97: Take State Highway 142/Broadway exit into Goldendale. Drive one mile to four-way stop, turn right onto North Columbus Avenue, and drive .7 mile to fork in the road. Take the right fork, stay on paved road, and continue .7 mile uphill to the observatory parking lot.



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Tour Schedule

April 1 – Sept. 30:
Wednesdays-Sundays
2-5 p.m. and 8 p.m.-midnight

Oct. 1 – March 31:
Fridays-Sundays
2-5 p.m. and 7-10 p.m.

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

P.O. Box 42650
Olympia, WA 98504-2650
(360) 902-8500
www.parks.wa.gov



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Commission members:

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for the enjoyment of all people.*

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Goldendale Observatory

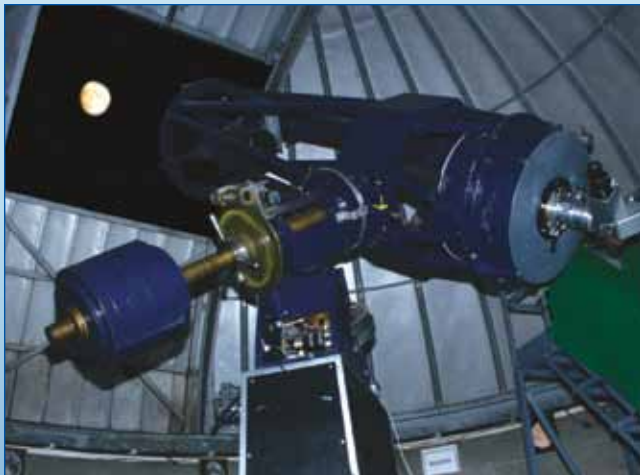
Goldendale Observatory sits atop a five-acre state park and has been attracting skywatchers since 1973. The observatory houses one of the nation's largest public telescopes and a number of others. The park offers spectacular views of the countryside from atop the observatory hill in the daytime and magnificent views of the universe at night.

History

The Goldendale Observatory is the result of the dream of four Vancouver, Wash., men — M.W. McConnell, O.W. VanderVeldon, John Marshall and Don Connor. The men began constructing the 24.5-inch reflecting Cassegrain telescope at Clark College in Vancouver in 1964. They eventually donated it to the city of Goldendale.

The city of Goldendale and a non-profit group, the Goldendale Observatory Corporation, coordinated fund-raising efforts and construction of the modern building and the dome housing the telescope. Funds were provided by a federal grant, donations and a bank loan. The facility was dedicated on Oct. 13, 1973, at its present location on a hilltop 1.5 miles north of Main Street. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission purchased the observatory in December 1980.

The observatory was chosen by the National Astronomical League as the official observation site for the total eclipse of Feb. 26, 1979. It also provided a once-in-a-lifetime glimpse of Halley's comet from late 1985 to mid-1986 and drew thousands of visitors for the appearance of Comet Hale-Bopp in 1997 and an unusually close view of Mars in 2003.



Tours of the universe

Free afternoon guided tours of the observatory include the telescope room, display area and grounds. Visitors may have an opportunity to look through a telescope to see Venus and a projected image of the sun. Programs about telescope types, their history and how to build them also are available. The history of astronomy and the space program are presented. Daytime tours conclude with an exploration of the various sundials around the observatory grounds. Visitors also may experience the daytime scenic views of Oregon's Mount Hood or Washington's Klickitat Valley.

The free evening programs may include topics about how astronomy and the space program affect daily lives. Other evening programs present an introduction to backyard stargazing, which includes viewing the skies with the unaided eye, binoculars and portable telescopes. Weather permitting visitors may see mountains and craters on the moon, the rings of Saturn or the moons of Jupiter. The last program of the evening includes direct viewing of a variety of celestial objects through the large telescope.

Special programs and guest speakers may be available throughout the year.