

Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc.

- A Not for Profit Public Organization -
P.O. Box 141591 • Gainesville FL 32614-1591 • floridastars.org

School and Organization Request Guidelines

The Alachua Astronomy Club, Inc. is a public, non-profit organization of mostly amateur astronomers who enjoy the beauty of the night sky and the majesty of the Sun. Most of our members do not have a background in astronomy, preferring to learn by experiencing the thrill itself. Because we love to share our enthusiasm about astronomy with others, we often perform outreach activities in the community. *This is done strictly by volunteers and is dependent on the availability of our volunteers.* Requests by local schools or organizations have grown so that we are no longer able to provide services to everyone. To continue our outreach programs in our community, we have put together a list of criteria needed to provide quality night viewing.

The Alachua Astronomy Club also typically provides telescopes at public events held at various locations in and around Gainesville. Many star parties occur around specific astronomical events such as optimum viewing of planets, meteor showers, eclipses and national astronomy days and weeks. Consider attending. See our web site (www.floridastars.org) for dates and more information.

In addition, we ask teachers to consider having classes attend free weekly viewing sessions on the UF campus Friday night when the University is in session. Contact the Department of Astronomy (phone 352-392-2052) for more information and see their web site at: www.astro.ufl.edu .

We use the following criteria to help determine if we can provide night viewing at your school depending on our volunteers. Please see *Request Form* for more details about criteria:

- ★ **Give us three months prior notice with a definite date.**
- ★ **Viewing start time should occur after the sky becomes dark.** (So, for example, do not request we set up by 5:30 p.m. in May when the sky does not get dark for another few hours!)
- ★ **We expect a minimum of approximately 30 students to attend.** Therefore, one school or organization might want to invite another group to join in the event.
- ★ **Teachers or people coordinating the event need to be present one hour earlier than the event.** We require this to help AAC volunteers find the location where they will be setting up. Sometimes we bring long extension cords and may need to know where electrical outlets can be found. Also, let us know the location of restrooms. In case of rain, with prior planning, we can possibly provide indoor presentations and would need to know how to find the rooms, etc.
- ★ **Find a dark sky location for your event.** Setting up in sports fields or locations where bright lights prevent seeing faint objects in the night sky is counterproductive. Light pollution is an increasing problem. When requesting club members to bring equipment for educational viewing, it is important that you find a **dark sky location** for the viewing area. This would need to be done ahead by the teacher or person making the request.
- ★ **Daytime speakers also require a three-month prior notification.** Provide a specific date, time, number and age of student audience, and length of presentation requested. Occasionally, one of our volunteers can probably set up a solar telescope for daytime observation of the Sun.

We enjoy providing glimpses of the many wonders of the universe to students and everyone interested in learning what the sky has to offer. We encourage all to take advantage of the many community opportunities available for stellar viewing.