

# MEMBERSPOTLIGHT



## THE GREAT BASIN OBSERVATORY

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### THE GREAT BASIN OBSERVATORY

A century ago, star-filled night skies were taken for granted. Today, our night skies are imperiled and our national parks are among the few places we can see the stars as our ancestors did. Indeed, preserving and interpreting dark night skies is an important goal for the National Park Service.

On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed into law the Organic Act, creating the National Park Service to “preserve and protect our heritage for future generations.” The Great Basin Observatory (GBO), dedicated during the Park’s centennial celebration, is proud to be part of the growing movement to protect and preserve dark sky resources.

Set at an elevation of 6,825 feet, with no significant man-made light for 70 miles in all directions, the observatory is a state-of-the-art, remotely operated, optical astronomical telescope, the first research grade observatory ever built in a U.S. National Park.

### A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The GBO is a collaborative effort of Great Basin National Park; the Great Basin National Park Foundation; and four partner universities: University of Nevada, Reno; Western Nevada College in Carson City; Southern Utah University (SUU) in Cedar City; and Concordia University in Irvine, CA.



“We have six organizations differing in size, location, and mission, but working together, united by a commitment to teach, learn, and discover. We cherish our shared privilege to gather light from the cosmos at the GBO,” says John Kenney, GBO Operations Chair and Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Physics at Concordia University.

Something unique about the GBO, is that it draws in a variety of undergraduates from partner universities. For example, [the Double Star Research Group at Southern Utah University](#) is composed of students majoring in chemistry, philosophy, criminal justice, math, biology and human nutrition. The ability to operate the telescope remotely helps with its accessibility. Even high school students have been able to use the GBO to do original research and publish a scientific paper.

*Background Image: M78-LRGB taken from GBO*



## OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Because of the creation of the GBO, the Great Basin National Park Foundation is now doing outreach presentations to K-12 students in the large rural counties surrounding Great Basin National Park. "We are so excited that the Foundation is expanding our outreach efforts," explains Nichole Andler, Great Basin National Park's Chief of Interpretation, "through outreach and education to local schools we are creating long lasting friends and supporters of the Park and inspiring our surrounding communities to protect and preserve the unique resources of the Basin and Range, especially the dark night skies."

## LEARN MORE

Please visit our websites to learn more about research and access resources for educators: [www.greatbasinobservatory.org](http://www.greatbasinobservatory.org) and [www.greatbasinfoundation.org](http://www.greatbasinfoundation.org)

In October we will be holding our second annual Starfest student symposium at SUU. Students and professors from our university partners will have opportunities to collaborate, train and present research. New this year, will be an opportunity for high school teachers to attend.

Working together we are preserving dark skies and inspiring bright minds!



*M43LRGB taken from GBO*



*M27-RGB taken from GBO*



*LRGB taken from GBO*



*Lagoon Nebula taken from GBO*