



STELLAR VISTA  
OBSERVATORY

# 2024 Year in Review

Stellar Vista Observatory's mission is to provide observational experiences for people to enjoy, appreciate, and comprehend what we can see in southern Utah's starry night skies.

[StellarVistaObservatory.org](https://StellarVistaObservatory.org)

## Letter from the Board

Dear Friends of Stellar Vista Observatory,

As 2024 draws to a close, we are proud to share with you this year's extensive list of achievements, made possible by your support and the diligent work of our board of directors and working group. Outreach activities at SVO expanded dramatically this year, connecting residents and visitors in our community with the beauty of the night sky.

Thanks to your generosity and the award of three new grants, SVO has achieved several important goals, and is now prepared in the coming year to begin constructing Kanab's new nonprofit educational astronomical observatory, a first of its kind in Utah. The unmatched beauty and clarity of southern Utah's starry night skies is a treasure of humanity's collective heritage. Providing opportunities to appreciate this, we delivered 35 free public star parties and nearly 150 private night sky experiences in 2024, nearly all in Kane County. Continuing our collaboration with Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park, we advanced their effort to install dark sky friendly lighting, and strengthened our partnership with the Kane County Water Conservancy District, host for the future Stellar Vista Observatory facility, to be located on their Jackson Flat Reservoir property in Kanab.

We are grateful for the ongoing trust placed with SVO and for the investments made in preserving the visibility of the night sky by our supporters, city and county officials, area businesses, and community partners. Together we are creating a legacy of investment in preservation of the night sky for the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of curiosity among residents of Kane County and visitors exploring southern Utah.

Thank you for being a part of Stellar Vista Observatory's development. With your continued support we look forward to announcing even greater achievements in 2025 and beyond.

With gratitude,  
The Trustees of Stellar Vista Observatory



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## 2024 By the Numbers

**51**

Free Star Parties &  
Youth Events

**1500+**

Community Members  
& Visitors Engaged

**\$228,200**

Grant Funds & In-Kind  
Donations Received

**137**

Private Night Sky  
Experiences

**1700+**

Volunteer Hours  
Donated

**\$82,800**

Donations & Private  
Event Revenue

In Memoriam: Special thanks to the family of John Mosley, a formerly illustrious member of SVO's Advisory Committee who produced our outstanding series of 130 consecutive Weekly Sky Reports. John's family donated his beloved 18" Starmaster Dobsonian Telescope to our nonprofit, a gift valued at \$7,000!

## Community Programs & Education

### Public Star Parties

Stellar Vista Observatory hosts one or more free public star parties in the community each month, often at Jackson Flat Reservoir, and during special events at locations such as Kanab City Library, Kanab Center and Jacob Hamblin Park. Our star parties and presence at other events brought the wonders of the night sky to residents and visitors during Women's History Month, International Dark Sky Week, Trailfest, Nightscapers Conference, and more.



(Photo Credit: Tom Sims)

### The Solar Science Experience

Thanks to a generous grant from the Utah STEM Action Center and donations received from both residents and visitors, SVO acquired a new Coronado SolarMax III 70mm solar telescope this year. With this remarkable instrument, we hosted 16 youth-focused activities, engaging children and teens under 18 in the wonders of solar astronomy, reaching over 200 young participants from groups such as Girl Scout troops, church youth organizations, homeschool groups, Red Rock Studios, Rascal Rodeo, and STEM Fest, among others. It is an honor to share the inspiring world of science and astronomy with such bright and inquisitive children.

### Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park



(Photo Credit: Dave Lane)

Stellar Vista Observatory partnered with Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park to support their goal of joining 12 other Utah state parks that have already achieved International Dark Sky Park Certification. To assist, we are providing four free star parties annually at the park and secured a 2024 Utah Outdoor Recreation grant to update park lighting with dark sky friendly fixtures (fully shielded and 3,000K or lower). Thus far, 29 fixtures have been replaced, moving the park closer to its goal of certification. SVO is assisting Coral Pink Sand Dunes by drafting their application, gathering letters of support, conducting a lighting inventory, measuring sky quality, and documenting light domes on the horizon.

### Rich Csenge, Super Star Donor

Over the past three years, SVO's president and founder, Rich Csenge, has delivered more than 200 public and private night sky experiences for guests at the exclusive Amangiri resort in Big Water, Utah. This ongoing activity has enabled Rich to personally secure nearly \$100,000 in revenue for the nonprofit from proceeds earned at Amangiri toward the creation of Kanab's Stellar Vista Observatory facility. His frequent nighttime travel and substantial commitments of personal time to the advancement of SVO's goals, as well as to the resort's expanding night sky program, are tremendously inspiring. Our trustees are extremely grateful to Rich for his tireless service, long-term vision, perseverance and leadership, as well as to the Amangiri Resort for making this extraordinary fundraising opportunity available.

# Sharing the Sky



## Desert Starlight

SVO's first major event to help develop astrotourism in Kane County sold out with a waiting list! Supported by a grant from Kane County Office of Tourism, nearly 30 guests from far and wide gathered at Kanab's Dark Sky RV Campground for dinner, astro- photography, and extraordinary stargazing.

We are delighted to demonstrate that people are now visiting Kane County specifically to experience its starry skies, resulting in an increasing number of overnight stays for the region's hospitality businesses. Special thanks go to SVO's astro- photographer extraordinaire, Dave Lane, for providing his expertise, to Roger and Sara Mortensen for catering such delicious food, and to our hosts at Dark Sky RV Campground.



## Private Night Sky Experiences

Among SVO's many fund-raising initiatives, our private night sky experience program has drawn wide ranging interest. In addition to serving residents and visitors, participants have included Western Leisure Tours, Vacation Races Trailfest, Autocamp Zion, and Utah State University's alternative spring break group.



## Telescope Training

Alongside telescope operation and night sky interpretation training for its own volunteers, SVO has developed a "Train the Trainer" program to help tour operators launch or enhance their own star parties. Open to anyone interested, this program has brought about successful partnerships with East Zion Adventures and Expedition Kanab, providing the skills and information needed for others to successfully conduct night sky interpretative activities.

**"Stellar Vista Observatory is a stargazing gem! The areas around Kanab, Utah, are the perfect place to observe the night sky with unobstructed views and almost no light pollution." -Klaas, Ontario, CA**



# Observatory Construction

## Phase I construction is moving forward!

In an exciting outcome involving several years of planning, Stellar Vista Observatory and the Kane County Water Conservancy District have entered into an agreement to build a public educational astronomical observatory on property owned by the Conservancy at Jackson Flat Reservoir in Kanab. The Water Conservancy District will manage construction of the project and own the facility while SVO will finance its design and construction and provide programming for the Observatory under a long-term lease with the Conservancy.

In May, 2024, SVO was awarded a grant for \$199,500 by the Utah Governor's Office of Outdoor Recreation for Phase I construction of its observatory. Features include a large outdoor plaza for open air stargazing and solar activities, an equipment storage room, restrooms, walkways, parking, a shade structure adjacent to the Sherry Belle Trail, and an informational scale model of our Solar System along the 3.2 mile Sherry Belle Trail. Additional funding has been provided by the Kane County Recreation and Transportation Special Service District and by the Kane County Water Conservancy. Groundbreaking is expected in early 2025. Robert Kaczowka, AIA, owner of Mesa Design in Kanab is the architect for the project.



Phase I (Credit: Robert Kaczowka)



Back: Bob Kaczowka, Sylvia Timothy-Sims, Natalie Brannon, Eric Sims. Front: Ben Clarkson, Mike Noel, Rich Csenge (Photo Credit: Ty Gant)



Phase II (Credit: Robert Kaczowka)

# Together we can reach the stars!

Want to make an impact? SVO will become the largest nonprofit public astronomical observatory within 250 miles of Kanab. Get involved by donating or by joining our Working Group or Advisory Committee. We welcome your participation!

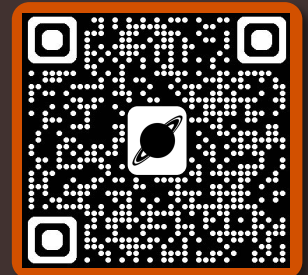
## One-Time Gift

Your gift provides immediate support for SVO's programs, equipment, and ongoing star parties. Every dollar you give can be multiplied through matching grants. Your gift will help build an educational astronomical observatory in Kanab for all to enjoy now and for generations to come!

## Monthly Giving

Monthly giving provides reliable support for SVO's year-round astronomy programs, including dark sky preservation. Your monthly gift can also provide foundational funding, enabling SVO to strengthen its long-term impact.

## Scan to Donate



[StellarVistaObservatory.org/Donate](https://StellarVistaObservatory.org/Donate)



All donations are processed securely.

### Board of Directors

Rich Csenge, Natalie Brannon, Eric Sims, Sylvia Timothy-Sims, VonDel Chamberlain, Dave Lane, Steve Medrano, Paul Barron

### Working Group

Bob Kaczowka, Josh Klina, Kyle Slaton, Ella Elman, Charlee Alred, Jordan Steed, Art & Marie Cloutier, Megan Smith, Ron Sharpless, Mark Palmer, Matt Fisher, John Van Noy

### Advisory Committee

Nicole Bonham Colby, Jonathan Stone, Ben Beckstead, Colin Littlefield, Paul Ricketts

SVO is a member of:

- NASA Night Sky Network
- Dark Sky International
- Utah Nonprofits Association
- Kanab Area Chamber of Commerce

SVO is also an active participant in Utah State University's Colorado Plateau Dark Sky Cooperative

Contact: [info@stellarvistaobservatory.com](mailto:info@stellarvistaobservatory.com)

SVO is a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable organization based in Kanab, Utah. Donations made to SVO are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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