

Palisades-Dows Preserve and Observatory

1365 Ivanhoe Road, Mt. Vernon, IA 52314

Cedar Amateur Astronomers

Founded in 1979, The Cedar Amateur Astronomers promotes Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) through astronomy. We host observing sessions and special programs available to community organizations, scouting, church groups, schools, colleges, universities, and the general public at the Eastern Iowa Observatory.

1. Introduction.

The Eastern Iowa Observatory and Learning Center (EIOLC) is a 4,600 square foot facility consisting of a classroom, large presentation room, small catering kitchen, bathrooms, library, and exhibit areas. The observatory has five fixed mounted telescopes including a seven-foot-long six-inch refractor and a 24-inch research grade reflecting telescope - weighing 3500 pounds! Other resources include a second observing building with removable roof, a 16 foot dome, several portable telescopes and concrete observing pads with electrical power.

2. Public Presentations at EIOLC.

The CAA hosts a minimum of twelve public events each year at the EIOLC which include astronomy related educational programs, observing sessions, and supervised access to permanently mounted telescopes. Presenters may be CAA members, college and university staff, or special guests. All CAA events are supported solely by

volunteers and donations. For additional information, visit www.cedar-astronomers.org.

3. Group Visits at EIOLC.

Groups of 15 or more may arrange a visit with a specifically targeted astronomy related program. Contact the observatory to set up a reservation and program as shown on the CAA web site at the tab *Request For Services*.

4. Summer Schedule.

From April through October, the observatory **may be** open for special events like comets, auroras, eclipses, etc. if volunteers are available. Watch the CAA Facebook Group page for more information.

Public Programs 2026			
January 10*	7:30	August 22	3:00
February 7*	7:30	September 5	7:30
March 14	7:30	September 19	7:30
April 11	8:00	October 3	7:30
May 9	8:30	October 17	7:30
June 6	8:30	November 7	7:30
July 18	8:30	December 5*	7:30
August 8	8:00	* Virtual Only	



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(319) 848-2068 + Inquiries@Cedar-Astronomers.org
<https://www.cedar-astronomers.org>

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Palisades-Dows Preserve

The Palisades-Dows Preserve is a 162 acre preserve and home to the Eastern Iowa Observatory and Learning Center (EIOLC). The park grounds are maintained by Linn County Conservation for use of the general public. Please obey park rules posted at the park entrance.

Trails & Hiking at Palisades-Dows Preserve: While there are no mowed or maintained trails at Palisades-Dows Preserve, many people enjoy getting off the beaten path here and going for a stroll in the timber. You can walk cross country to as far as the Cedar River across from Palisades-Kepler State Park. A GPS is recommended for longer hikes as there is no marking maintained or permitted. CAUTION: Hiking in unimproved forest land can be dangerous and there are high rock cliffs along the Cedar River bank.

Picnicking: Take out what you bring in. No water or bathroom facilities. There are a few picnic tables.

Mushrooming: During the spring the preserve is popular for hunting morel mushrooms.

Birding: Wooded preserves are home to many Iowa native bird species.

Nature photography: Quiet and little used preserve area that is good for photographing undisturbed timberland and river basin flora and fauna.

Geocaching: There are at least five geocaches in the park area. If you have a hand held GPS or GPS enabled smart phone/tablet and enjoy hunting hidden treasures, this sport may interest you.

Night Sky viewing: The Palisades-Dows park area has level concrete pads and grassy areas suitable for lying on the ground or setting up lawn chairs and observing the night sky with binoculars or portable telescopes. Even when the observatory is

not open, there is parking outside of the gate and a short walk across the parking lot will get you to an open, reasonably dark sky observing area. Perfect for meteor showers, observing passing satellites, eclipses, or just appreciating some dark sky.

The Eastern Iowa Observatory: The observatory is operated by, and all telescope and related equipment is owned by, the Cedar Amateur Astronomers (CAA). See the next page for more about CAA and the Eastern Iowa Observatory operation.

If the gate is open at times other than scheduled events as noted on the following page, please park outside the gate and walk in. Someone may be working at the observatory and will want to lock the gate when they leave.

<http://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Linn.aspx>

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