



President
Greg Marino
president@nocoastro.org

Vice President
Greg Halac
vp@nocoastro.org

Treasurer
Charlie Davis
treasurer@nocoastro.org

Secretary
Kathy Lowry
secretary@nocoastro.org

Northern Colorado Astronomical Society – minutes from meeting on 8/6/2026

The meeting was held in the Otterbox Dome at the Fort Collins Museum of Discovery and was presided over by President Greg Marino.

Refreshments (provided by Kathy Lowry) and the August “Tonight’s Sky” video presentation preceded the formal meeting.

Agenda:

1. Reports:

Treasurer –Charlie Davis
New Members –Greg Marino
Outreach –Greg Halac

2. Announcements

3. Guest Speaker: Chip Kobulnicky
“Searching for Giant Exoplanets Around Type M Stars.”

Attendance:

In person = 47 Online = 20 Total = 67

Membership: We currently have 167 active members

1 – Reports

Treasurer's Report – Charlie Davis

STATUS of ACCOUNTS									
G/L Code	Account Title		Each	No.	Actual		Current On		Last Month
	No. of 2026 Active Members				167		Saved to this PC 3-Aug-2026		159
	Checking Account				\$1,547.54		3-Aug-2026		\$1,547.54
	PayPal Account				\$1,274.64		3-Aug-2026		\$1,034.68
	CD				\$2,130.79		23-Apr-2026		\$2,130.79
	T-Shirt Inventory		\$20.00	4	\$80.00		2-Mar-2026		\$80.00
Total					\$5,032.97				\$4,793.01

NCAS 2026 INCOME									
G/L Code	Account Title	Each	Actual		Budget*		Remaining \$	% of Budget Received	Since Last Month
18000	Memberships Paid in CY 2026	\$30.00	133	\$4,050.00	167	\$4,779.00	\$729.00	85%	\$240.00
19000	Donations			\$84.54		\$250.00	\$165.46	34%	\$12.00
20000	T-Shirt Sales	\$20.00	1	\$20.00	5	\$100.00	\$80.00	20%	\$0.00
21000	Equipment Sales			\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00
Total				\$4,154.54		\$5,129.00	\$974.46	81%	\$252.00

* membership dues shown are after estimated PayPal fees are subtracted

2026 ACTUAL vs. BUDGET YTD EXPENSES									
G/L Code	Account Title	Due	Each	No.	Actual	Budget	Remaining \$	% of Budget Remaining	Since Last Month
1000	FoCO MOD Donation	FEB	\$800.00	1	\$800.00	\$800.00	\$0.00	0%	0.00
2000	Insurance	JAN	\$315.00	1	\$403.75	\$315.00	(\$88.75)	-28%	0.00
3000	Member Meetings		\$40.00	12	\$357.13	\$480.00	\$122.87	26%	0.00
4000	Dark Sky Membership	JAN	\$100.00	1	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$0.00	0%	0.00
5000	State of CO Filing Fee	JUN	\$25.00	1	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	0%	0.00
6000	AL League Dues \$10+	JUN/OCT	\$6.00	167	\$952.00	\$1,012.00	\$60.00	6%	0.00
7000	PayPal Fees		\$1.54	150	\$197.77	\$231.00	\$33.23	14%	(12.04)
8000	Outreach Supplies		\$55.00	12	\$368.41	\$660.00	\$291.59	44%	0.00
9000	Printing				\$312.00	\$800.00	\$488.00	61%	0.00
10000	Special Events		\$125.00	2	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	100%	0.00
11000	Scope Loan Program				\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	100%	0.00
Total					\$3,516.06	\$4,873.00	\$1,356.94	28%	(12.04)

New Members Report – Greg Marino

Greg welcomed the following 7 new members to the Club!

Allison Chen
Lucretia Krause
Richard Robbins
Zinedine Guezmir

Alyssa (Levi) Pryor
Samuel King
Michael Ciraula

Outreach Report – Greg Halac

COMPLETED EVENTS

Date	Start	Site	Duration	Guests	Volunteers	Notes
7/3/26	20:30	FCNA Bobcat Ridge	2.5	561	6	Clouds early - Aurora!
7/10/26	20:30	RMNP Park & Ride	2.5	387	11	
7/11/26	21:00	LCP Hermit Park	2.5	44	3	Good night - no fireflies
7/13/26	21:00	Drala Mtn Ctr	2.5	43	6	Outstanding night - dark
7/17/26	13:00	RMNP Visitor Ctr	3	225	6	Long hours under hot Sun
7/17/26	20:30	RMNP Park & Ride	2.5	280	10	Good, dark, cloud-dodging
7/18/26	13:00	RMNP Visitor Ctr	3.5	325	6	Long hours under hot Sun
7/18/26	20:30	RMNP Park & Ride	2.5	400	6	
7/24/26	20:00	Fossil Crk Pk	2.5	5	2	Seestar & StarSense help
8/1/26	20:30	Lvld Prairie Ridge	2	27	7	Clear but smoky

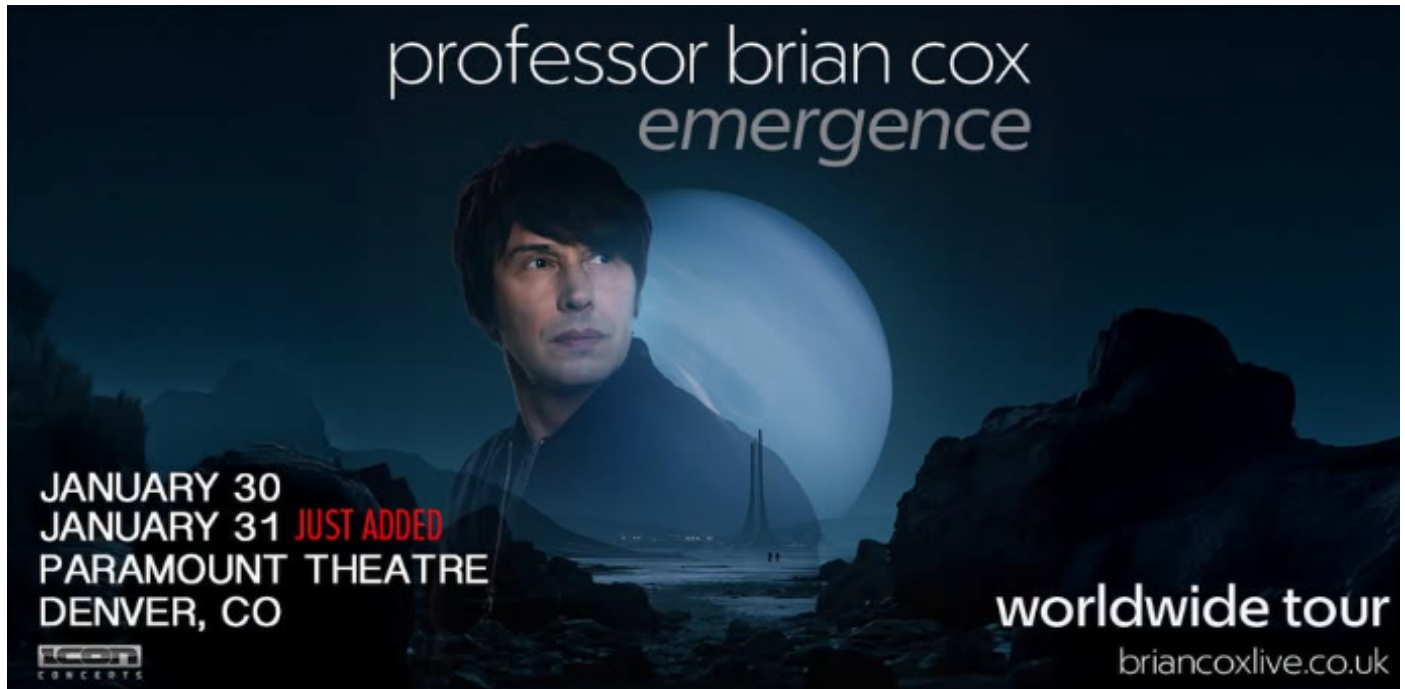
CANCELED EVENTS

None!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Start	Site	Event	Duration
8/7/26	20:30	RMNP Park & Ride		2.5
8/8/26	20:30	LCP Eagle's Nest		2
8/12/26	20:30	Drala Mtn Ctr	Private	2
8/13/26	20:30	CSP Lory		2
8/14/26	20:30	RMNP Park & Ride		2.5
8/15/26	20:00	FCNA Bobcat Ridge		2
8/17/26	20:30	Poudre Learning Ctr		1.5
8/22/26	20:00	Lvld Prairie Ridge		1.5
8/27/26	20:30	LCP Horsetooth Mtn		3
8/28/26	19:30	Fossil Crk Pk	Help Nite	2
8/29/26	10:00	FC Old Town Lib	Solar	2
9/3/26	20:00	CSP Lory		2

2 – Announcements



Professor Brian Cox is one of the best in the world at bringing astrophysics and science in general to the public. He just added a second show on January 31!

September NoCoAstro Membership Meeting – Lory State Park

Annual Meeting with Club Observing

6p: Social Time with Refreshments

6:30p: Business meeting: Announcements, Reports (Treasurer, Outreach, Education)

7:30p: Program: "Show and Tell":

Dwarf Labs Smart Telescope – Greg Halac

SeeStar S30 Pro – Robert Sireno

TBD

TBD

Auto-running slideshow of member astrophotos from the past year (Sep 25 - Aug 26)

Observing:

7:30p: Sunset, Scope setup observation/demo, Q&A encouraged - scope owners describe what they are doing & why

8p: Observing: Venus at start, Saturn "decent" by ~9:45p

10p: Shut down and pack up

We still need two more member presentations. These should be approx. 15 minutes long, and could include equipment, accessories / gadgets, observing tools, astronomy books or magazines, etc. Please see Greg Halac if you would like to do a short talk at Lory!

3 – Tonight's Guest Speaker – Chip Kobulnicky

“Searching for Giant Exoplanets Around Type M Stars”

Chip Kobulnicky has been professor of physics & astronomy at the university of Wyoming since 2002. His observational astronomy interests include cosmic chemical compositions, close binary stars, and extra-solar planets.

Chip served as director of the Wyoming Infrared Observatory on Mt. Jelm 2007-2017. He has directed a summer STEM camp for high school students at UW since 2003.

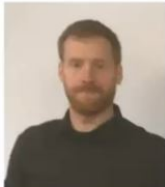
His astronomical avocation dates to circa 1983 when Santa brought him a K-mart telescope which he used to view the rings of Saturn and the moons of Jupiter from a suburban Chicago back yard.

His academic path includes the Universities of Iowa, Minnesota, California Santa Cruz, and Wisconsin.

From his presentation:

This team is working to find and confirm Exo-planets using the two telescopes in Wyoming (mentioned below).

Chip Kobulnicky
University of Wyoming
Department of Physics & Astronomy

						
David Kasper PhD 2019 → U. Chicago	Cristilyn Gardner- Watkins PhD 2023 → CfA	Brock Parker B.S. 2023 → U. Arizona	Xander Larsen B.S. 2025	Ethan Cotter '25 Tera Swaby '24 →	Ian Karfs '26 EPIC Data Systems	Alexina Birkholz '26

Overview

- Exoplanets & Transit Detections
- Hot Jupiters & Atmospheric Characterization
UW 2.3 m telescope & transmission spectroscopy of HJs
- Planets Around Low-Mass Stars (M dwarfs; TESS mission followup)
UW Red Buttes 0.6 m campaign on transits
Planets and non-Planet discoveries



The 2.3 m telescope is primarily used by the team to look for Hot Jupiter planets.
The University of Wyoming's Physics department is holding an open house on Oct. 9 this fall to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this scope and program.

The Observing Campaign

Facility: WIRO (2.3 m telescope)
Built 1977, 25 miles SW of Laramie, WY
9700' elevation

Instrument: doublePrime Imager, 45' FOV

Observation Dates: Summer of 2017–2022

Observers:

- Faculty: Chip Kobulnicky
- UW Graduate Students: David Kasper, Evan Cook & Ashley Piccone
- UW Undergraduate Students: Brock Parker, Michael Lindman, Dax Galloway, Corinne Komlodi, McKell Lyon, Aman Karr, Aylin McGough
- 2 REUs (1 led by David Kasper in 2017): Cade Freels, Sabrina Helck, Samantha Wilkerson, Kaitlin A. Doublestein, & Ted Bucci



The Red Buttes' 0.6 m telescope is being used by the team to search for "Small planets around Small Stars". They also contribute to the GEMS study: "Giant Exoplanets around M-dwarf Stars"

Red Buttes Observatory Transit Photometry

0.6 m DFM telescope
8 miles S of Laramie, WY
Built in 1993, Automated in 2014
25' FOV with 4096 Kodak 16803 chip with 9 micron pixels
UBVRI filters, no diffuser

I<16 limit for 4-minute exposures
dI/I = 500 ppm



The presentation and meeting concluded with NCAS member Q&A and expressions of our thanks to Chip Kobulnicky.

Minutes respectfully submitted by NCAS Secretary, Kathy Lowry