

# **RCA Observing Site Committee Site Search and Acquisition Plan Adopted June 6, 2005**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In November 2003, a group of club members organized an Observing Site Committee *to lead and coordinate efforts of the Rose City Astronomers (RCA) in securing and managing a variety of observing sites for private use by members, and for community outreach and special events organized by the RCA.*

Based on information and input from a variety of sources - including a survey of Club members - the Committee proposed and received support from the RCA Board for a long-term vision of securing access/control of a variety of site-types to serve different observing purposes and desires of the Club.

- One or more **close-in** site (15-30 minutes from downtown Portland) where the Club and members have "permission" to schedule public star parties and/or use on drop-in basis
- A **nearby site** ( $\pm$  one hour from Portland) that is available for "drop-in" use by members only as well as Club events. Skies are reasonably dark and site is secured with some improvements.
- A **remote site** (2-3 hours from Portland) that is available for multi-night use by members only and Club events. Skies are very dark and site is secured with some improvements.

The following sections of this Plan discuss and outline a strategy proposed by the Observing Site Committee to achieve this vision.

### **Submitted by Committee Members**

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## **I. Search and Selection Priorities**

Based primarily on a survey of the general membership and confirmed through discussion among Board members, efforts should focus on identifying and securing observing sites in generally this order of priority – though potential non-priority sites should be pursued when viable opportunities emerge.

### **A. Nearby Site**

- Within 1 hour drive from downtown Portland
- Darkness: Class 4-5
- Outside of Metro urban growth area

### **B. Remote Site**

- Within 2-3 hours drive from downtown Portland
- Darkness: Class 1-2
- East of Mt Hood

### **C. Close-In Site(s)**

- Within 1/2 hour drive from downtown Portland
- Within 15 minutes from downtown Beaverton, Gresham or Tualatin
- Darkness: Class 6-7

## **II. Search Process**

The Observing Site Committee will utilize a variety of methods and strategies to identify potential observing sites, including but not limited to:

- Real estate agents and listings
- Classified ads
- Public agency inquiries
- Word of mouth
- Member referrals
- Media coverage
- Internet postings

### **III. Site Assessment**

When the Observing Site Committee becomes aware of a potential site they will generally undertake a variety of activities to obtain more information on the property necessary to evaluate and assess its suitability, such as:

- Visit the site in daylight, and at night
- Determine ownership
- Determine terms of availability (e.g., for sale, lease, permitted use)
- Assess site characteristics (e.g., horizon, topography, nearby lights, access, etc.)

### **IV. Recommendation Process**

If the Observing Site Committee determines that a site is generally suitable and realistically available, the Committee will prepare a report and recommendation to the RCA Board. The report will generally contain the following information, depending on the type of site and acquisition method.

1. Summary of property information
2. Assessment of site characteristics
3. Terms of availability
4. Proposed RCA offer/Acquisition Plan
5. Proposed fundraising or payment plan
6. Proposed site improvement/maintenance plan
7. Proposed site management plan

## **V. Acquisition Plan**

If the RCA Board approves the Site Committee recommendations, including any modifications desired by the Board, the Site Committee will proceed to attempt to acquire the property per the approved Acquisition Plan.

As acquisition and negotiations proceed, the Site Committee will keep the Board President informed of progress and/or the need for the Board or an authorized Officer to approve some decision or expense.

If acquisition is successful, the site management and maintenance plan will be initiated.

## **VI. Funds Management**

- A.** Funds received and dedicated to the RCA Observing Site Fund will be maintained by the RCA Treasurer in a separate fund or bank account, and be reported on and audited in the same manner as other Club Funds.
- B.** The Observing Site Director, with pre-approval of the Board President and Club Treasurer would be permitted to use nominal amounts of money from the Observing Site Fund from time-to-time to cover costs of fundraising and site acquisition efforts (e.g., postage, printing, raffle prizes, mileage reimbursement).
- C.** The RCA Board will retain overall control of the Site Fund and must approve any other expenditure or commitment of funds from the Site Fund consistent with the established purposes of the Fund and according to normal Board approval procedures.

## **VII. Decision Making Process**

- A.** Any decision to enter into a land purchase agreement, a property lease, or other type of on-going use agreement would be made by the RCA Board based on a recommendation from the Observing Site Committee.
- B.** The Observing Site Director, with approval of the Board Observing Vice President or Board President would be permitted to enter into single-use permits for public or private property on behalf of the Club in order to evaluate site observing conditions.