



Proposed Observatory and Nature Center adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park

**SKY'S THE LIMIT**  
*Observatory and  
Nature Center*

**A Committee of the  
Basin Wide Foundation**

73980 29 Palms Highway  
Suite B  
Twentynine Palms  
California 92277

760-367-7222 telephone

[www.skysthelimit29.org](http://www.skysthelimit29.org)

Tax ID # 33-0688147

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Dean Arvidson  
*Los Angeles*

Peter Bertain  
*Yucca Valley*

Ann Congdon  
*Twentynine Palms*

Randy Councill  
*Twentynine Palms*

Jerri Hagman  
*Twentynine Palms*

Eva Kinsman  
*Twentynine Palms*

D.J. Masker  
*Twentynine Palms*

Jerry Mattos  
*Twentynine Palms*

Bob Harris  
*Twentynine Palms*

Jason Moyer-Schmit  
*Twentynine Palms*

Wally Pacholka  
*Long Beach*

Genevieve Salisbury  
*Twentynine Palms*

Judi San Juan  
*Twentynine Palms*

Bill Souder  
*Yucca Valley*

Margot Spangenberg  
*Twentynine Palms*

Ken Wright  
*Joshua Tree*

Ray Yeager

September 15, 2007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Jerri Hagman**

**760-367-7222**

**OBSERVATORY AND NATURE CENTER  
EMPHASIZES ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

Twentynine Palms, CA – Sky's The Limit's planned Observatory and Nature Center adjacent to the Joshua Tree National Park in Twentynine Palms, will be celebrating its official Groundbreaking Ceremony from 3-5pm Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>.

This momentous occasion marks the beginning of the first of three phases of development, which includes the construction of an Orrery, sun circle, amateur telescope area, sculpture garden, picnic area, outdoor lecture area, interior roads, public restrooms and landscaping. Phase Two will feature construction of the observatory, building/lecture hall, and amphitheater, with Phase Three completing the Observatory and Nature Center upon construction of the classrooms and research facilities.

Phase One's Orrery, a representation of the solar system showing the orbits of the planets, is over 100 feet in diameter and the centerpiece of a circular roadway leading to the dome and main buildings. The property entrance will feature a sculpture garden, the first of which will be dedicated at the Groundbreaking Ceremony later this month. The sun circle, an early form of celestial calendar used by ancient humans, will be connected by walkways to the Orrery and twelve amateur telescope viewing pads with adjacent picnic areas.

Throughout the planning and building process, environmentally-sensitive methods are being utilized with the assistance of volunteer scientists and educators. Prior to beginning the project, biologists surveyed the ten-acre site to note sensitive areas, plan nature trails, and arrange for plant relocations. In keeping with the theme of environmentally-friendly construction, roads, pathways and the handicapped-accessible trails have been designed to be permeable, thereby reducing the impact of water runoff on native plant and animal habitats.

Design consultant Ann Congdon is personally committed to encouraging a facility that demonstrates the viability of environmentally-friendly and sustainable building techniques. The

Observatory and Nature Center will utilize recycled and earth-based building materials, with an emphasis on natural lighting, heating and cooling systems. Scientists and educators alike are volunteering their expertise in support of this opportunity for students to learn firsthand about green building techniques and environmental conservation through their assistance during each phase of construction. Students and adults throughout the area are invited to participate in the many planned activities by contacting Sky's The Limit and asking to be placed on the volunteer list.

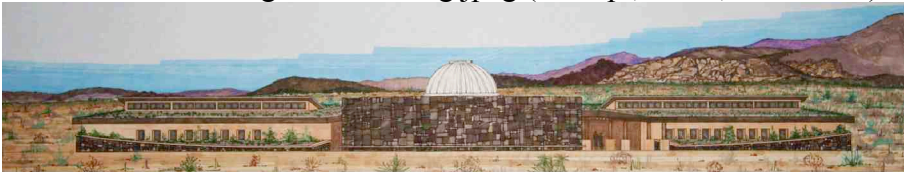
The three phases required for the Observatory and Nature Center are expected to take up to six years to complete. During this time, curriculum and public activities will be introduced utilizing the elements of each completed phase. Outdoor lectures and nature walks will begin with Phase One and will continue throughout all phases of the project. In addition to volunteers and interested donors, a main source of support for Sky's The Limit, a committee of the Basinwide Foundation, is the Galaxy 72 Investor's Club whose members pledge a 72-month contribution of at least \$10 per month to help the group establish its validity for grants and additional funding. To join Galaxy 72 or to donate to the project, contact Sky's The Limit or visit the membership table at the Groundbreaking Ceremony.

The public is invited to attend this historic, community celebration of the Phase One Groundbreaking which will include a blessing of the land, a breaking of the ground ceremony, and the dedication of its first art installation by renowned sculptor Simi Dabah. On hand to celebrate the event will be local supporters, educators, business leaders and government officials, as well as parents and students. The participation of student representatives in the Groundbreaking Ceremony will usher in a new era for the Morongo Basin's reputation as a premier dark-sky educational and tourism destination.

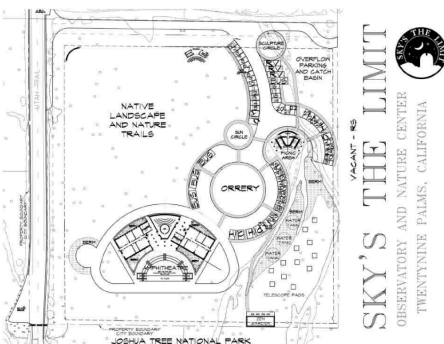
Visitors to the celebration will meet at the Joshua Tree National Park Oasis Visitor's Center on Utah Trail at National Park Drive in Twentynine Palms at 3pm. They will be shuttled to the observatory site. To maintain public safety, there will be no parking or drop-offs at the site. For more information visit Sky's The Limit website at [www.skysthelimit29.org](http://www.skysthelimit29.org), or contact them at 760-367-7222 or by email at [contact@skysthelimit29.org](mailto:contact@skysthelimit29.org).

**ATTACHED GRAPHICS:**

STL Groundbreaking Site Drawing.jpeg (300 dpi, 476K, 1" x 4.75"):



STL Observatory Site Map.jpeg (300 dpi, 240K, 2.5" x 4"):



# # #