

Kiski Astronomers at Cherry Springs - April, 2014

Hi all,

Bob K and I made our 1st trip of the year to Cherry Springs.

Over the winter, I purchased a new camper, A Tab Clamshell, and I wanted to break it in on a short trip.

Thursday 4/24/2014:

I took the long way to the park, sticking to the interstate until I got use to how the new trailer towed. (had to have a brake controller installed for the electric brakes, and I needed to tweak the settings on the drive). Once at the I80 DuBois Rt 255 exit, I went back to the usual scenic drive up thru Elk country. It was interesting, being able to follow the contour of the land, as most of the trees had yet to leaf-out. The steep brown hills made a colorful contrast against the dark blue skies.

I arrived mid-afternoon, and setup next to Bob K, who had been there for about an hour. We had to move over a row, as the power was out in our normal 'Kiski' location on the observing field. Several folks from the Hidden Hollow club had been there for several days already, along with Gary H and a few others. All told, probably about a dozen of us there. The 'iffy' weather forecast for the weekend held back a number of folks from attending.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-00.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-01.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-02.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-03.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-04.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-05.jpg>

The weather that afternoon continued to be excellent, and Thursday night delivered very good observing. Using my 6" RC on the CGem mount and my StellaCam-3, I video-observed a ton of galaxies up in Leo, particularly enjoying all the little fellas in the Abell-1367 galaxy cluster.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/vidcap/images/abell1367-wide-04242014.jpg>

Additionally, I observed, for the 1st time, the fading supernova in M82.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/vidcap/images/m82-SN-04242014.jpg>

Later in the evening, with the constellation of Hydra hitting the meridian, I slewed the telescope over to M83. There's an interesting article in the May 'Sky&Tel' on the HII star-forming regions in that galaxy which are visible in amateur telescopes. With a little post-processing back at home, I was able to match a number of regions to the picture from the article. I think I could have seen them even better if M83 had a higher elevation in the sky. But it's a pretty low object from Cherry Springs!

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/vidcap/images/m83-HII-04242014.jpg>

While I was chasing down galaxies, Bob spent the evening trying out a new field-flattener. The sky was beautifully clear till about 1:30am, when the clouds began building along the horizon. By 2:30am, it was all over, so we covered up the telescopes and went to bed.

Friday 4/25/2014:

Rained off/on all day Friday. That afternoon, Bob and I drove down to the Ben Franklin hardware store to pick up a few items for my camper. The evening continued to be a wash-out, so we spent the evening reading and watching movies. An early night to bed!

Saturday 4/26/2014

Saturday was partly sunny, but very windy during the day. Took a stroll across the road to check-out the new berm and parking area that the park had recently constructed. You can no longer pull directly out from the public area across the road from the observing field entrance. This should help with keeping car headlights from shining into the northern section of the observing field at night.

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-06.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-07.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-08.jpg>

<http://home.comcast.net/~lemastro/conventions/CS-April2014-09.jpg>

In the middle of the afternoon, a 36 MPH gust took out my easy-up tent, severely bending the canopy struts on one side. That night was supposed to be clear, but all the forecasts were wrong, and it clouded up around 6:00pm, and stayed that way.

Another night of reading,,,,,,

Sunday 4/27/2014:

Sunny and a little chilly in the morning, made for good packing up weather. So, except for Thursday, the weekend was a lost cause. But one night at CS was worth the trip! Plus, I was able to break-in my new Tab camper, and came home with a short list of modifications to make before the next trip in May.

Larry McHenry

Astronomical Webportal:

<http://home.comcast.net/~lsmch/>