



2017
Festival
Hosts



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Frequently Asked Questions?

What is the Thebacha & Wood Buffalo Dark Sky Festival (DSF)?

The Dark Sky Festival (DSF) is a multi-day family festival hosted by TAWBAS and Parks Canada that provides visitors to Fort Smith and Wood Buffalo National Park with an opportunity to explore the wonders of the universe and the science that makes it all work. We offer a variety of afternoon activities where we attempt to answer questions from you about space and science through fun and interactive programs.

Evening programs includes a healthy serving of our legendary northern hospitality. Entertainment will also include presentations and other activities in a relaxed setting. Once the sky darkens, mother nature takes the spotlight by putting on a spectacular display in the night sky.

Where does this event take place?

The festival takes place in both the community of Fort Smith (Thursday and Friday) and in Wood Buffalo National Park (Saturday and Sunday).

I'm new to astronomy, and don't have a telescope. What activities are available for me at DSF?

During the DSF there will have a variety of telescopes setup for people to view through. As well, there will be workshops on basic telescope use, navigating the night sky and more.

Who can register and attend?

Registration to the DSF is open to anyone.

Minors (those 18 or under) can attend but must be accompanied and under the supervision of an onsite registered adult.

Can I just show up at the event and then register?

NO. All participants must register by the August 15th deadline. This helps us ensure the overall quality of the festival. As well it allows us to properly coordinate activities, provide enough food and organize all the other logistical needs.

A portion of the festival takes place at Pine Lake (58 kms from Fort Smith) and we need to transport all of the equipment and materials that are required to put on an event of this complexity.

Do we have to register if we want to attend for just one day or night?

Yes. Registration for the festival is an "all-inclusive" event package. This is to assure a quality experience and to allow for proper planning. All festival activities (day or night), are for registered participants. If you desire, you can pick and choose from what events to attend.

How much does it cost to register?

As noted, registration for the DSF is an "all-inclusive" event package that includes your camping fees in WBNP and three meals and snacks.

TAWBAS members; \$ 65.00/adult, \$ 15.00/kid

Non members; \$ 90.00/adult, \$ 20.00/kid

Can I camp at the Pine Lake DSF site?

Your registration includes WBNP camping fees and permission for up to 3 nights at the Pine Lake Dark Sky Observation Site.

Camping at the festival site is allowed for registered attendees only.

I'll be arriving late. Will I be able to find a place to camp and set up my scope?

The camping field covers several acres. You will have no problem finding a place to set up no matter when you arrive. Please be sure to observe lighting restrictions if arriving after dark and park in the "designated" parking area (see map of the site).

Do cell phones work at DSF?

Yes, and NO. While in Fort Smith you will have cell phone service.

There is no cell phone service beyond 25 kms of Fort Smith and no service at Pine Lake.

What if there is an emergency while I am at Pine Lake?

Parks Canada staff members are on site and are trained in a variety of emergency services in wilderness settings, including First Aid.

A satellite phone is also on site should it be required.

Where can I stay if I'm not interested in camping?

Fort Smith has 2 motels and several Bed & Breakfast or guest houses.

If you do not want to camp at Pine Lake, you will have to drive back to Fort Smith (58 kms).

Where can I buy food and supplies?

Fort Smith has a two grocery stores, and a variety of other shops and convenience stores.

There are no commercial facilities located in Wood Buffalo National Park. We will provide a snack on Saturday afternoon, dinner on Saturday night and breakfast on Sunday morning

Is electricity available at the observing site?

There is NO electricity at Pine Lake. There will be generators operated by the organizers and if you need to charge batteries for observing equipment, arrangements can be made for that.

What kind of facilities are at the Pine Lake site?

The festival site at Pine Lake provides very basic necessities for an enjoyable weekend of camping.

Of specific interest, there are porta-potties (*modern outhouses*). You will also find in the general festival area (short list);

- Potable water
- Wash stations
- Fire pits and fire wood
- Shelter canopies and picnic tables in the general area

I am unable to attend the festival because _____, can I get a refund?

If you cancel before August 15th, we will refund your registration fee (minus any fees we were assessed for credit-cards, e-transfers, etc.).

There will be NO refunds offered after August 15th registration deadline.

If the weather is bad for or during the festival can I get a refund?

NO. The star party is a rain or shine event. We are prepared to entertain you in any circumstances!

I wasn't able to register before the deadline. Can you make an exception for me?

To be fair to all and for planning purposes, we have to adhere to the registration deadline and our capacity limit. We cannot make exceptions.

Can I volunteer at the DSF?

The organizers can always use an extra hand or two during the festival. We can assure you that there will be plenty of on-site opportunities available. Just let the festival organizers know you are interested...

What if I have a not-so Frequently Asked Question?

Contact Mike C (*the festival coordinator*) and he will provide you an answer.

info@tawbas.ca or call (867) 872-0243