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## COCHISE COUNTY SKIES IDEAL FOR ASTRONOMY

**Cochise County, Ariz.** – Many have wished upon a star. But, how many people have ever taken the time to really explore the night sky's wonders? Cochise County, with comfortable temperatures year-round and clear skies free from city lights, is ideal for a stargazing holiday. All it takes is one of Cochise County's many idyllic areas or great off-the-beaten-path camping spots. Whether novice stargazers or expert astronomers, Cochise County takes visitors on a galactic journey with some of Arizona's best astronomy.

**Vega-Bray Observatory and Astronomer's Inn near Benson** – Founded in 1990, this privately owned observatory is dedicated to public education. It houses eight major telescopes, including some by renowned Phoenix optician, Max Bray and boasts an electrically controlled 14-foot Ash viewing dome. Unique to Vega-Bray is the Astronomer's Inn, a bed and breakfast adjacent to the observatory that overlooks the San Pedro River Valley—a perfect place for amateur or professional astronomers to rest their heads after a stargazing night. Vega-Bray also houses a science museum, classroom and planetarium. **Contact: 520-586-7906** or [www.astronomersinn.com](http://www.astronomersinn.com).

**Sunglow Ranch in Pearce** – Sunglow Ranch is a nature lover's paradise. Surrounded by the arrestingly beautiful Chiricahua Mountains, Sunglow Ranch offers vibrant views of the night sky free from the distracting lights of the city. Astronomy pads are available by reservation; famous photographers and astronomers have frequented the popular area since its inception. Diverse wildlife surrounds the ranch making it an ideal locale for families interested in hiking, biking and birding in addition to astronomy. **Contact: 1-866-786-4569** or [www.sunglowranch.com](http://www.sunglowranch.com).

**Patterson Observatory in Sierra Vista** – Located at the University of Arizona's South Campus in Sierra Vista, this research observatory is open to the public by reservation only. It includes a 16-foot dome housing a Ritchey-Chretien telescope, a classroom suitable for teaching or lectures and a second observatory with a number of telescopes that are operated remotely. Through the telescope, visitors may observe both directly in real time with video cameras that feature real-time connected monitors that are attached to the telescope. **Contact: 520-458-8278** or <http://www.uas.arizona.edu/observatory/>

**Huachuca Astronomy Club's Observatories in Sierra Vista** – With 15 local observatories owned by amateur sky-watchers, this premier astronomy club in Cochise County enjoys sharing the boundless skies with groups and visitors. Some of the observatories are open to the public, by reservation; other open-to-the public events are the monthly star parties hosted by the club. These parties are held to educate newcomers to planetary and astral wonders. **Info: <http://www.hacastronomy.com/>**

*Located in southeastern Arizona, Cochise County is one of the most culturally, historically and geographically diverse areas in the American Southwest. Its legendary communities—Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Tombstone, Sierra Vista and Willcox—were strategically located less than a day's journey by stagecoach and are now just a short drive from one another. For more information about Cochise County, contact the Cochise County Tourism Council at 1-800-862-5273 or visit their website at [www.explorecochise.com](http://www.explorecochise.com).*

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